Helpful Prevention Information and Tools

Sexual violence prevention can seem very complicated and feel overwhelming, but MNCASA is here to help make things a little bit easier. You can learn more about what prevention is, understand common prevention terms, find examples of different areas of prevention, and access commonly-used tools within prevention.

MNCASA's prevention staff is able to assist with prevention questions and/or conversations at any time. Throughout the year, MNCASA's prevention team hosts webinars, trainings, and other educational opportunities for MNCASA's membership and the broader community. Anyone is able to follow the *Be The Change* prevention blog or join the prevention e-mail list. To contact the prevention team, email us at prevention@mncasa.org.

Prevention Information

Primary Prevention
Primary prevention means stopping sexual violence *before* it occurs, including before someone is harmed and/or causes harm. Primary preventing requires comprehensive strategies that address an array of factors and root causes of violence.

Prevention and Communities
Communities impact individual behavior, and by facilitating community level change strategies, we increase our impact.

Community change strategies include the following:

- **Social norms change**
  Changes that engage community members in reinforcing positive social norms including respect, equality, civility, healthy relationships and healthy sexuality.

- **Community mobilization**
  Creating change in communities by facilitating community ownership and action to prevent sexual violence.

- **Coalition building**
  Bringing individuals and organizations together to achieve a common goal. Coalition building engages a broad spectrum of the community and encourages collaboration by exchanging information, modifying activities and sharing resources, responsibilities, risks and rewards.

- **Policy education**
  Influencing policy on a Federal, State, and even an organizational level. Communities and individuals have more power in policy than they maybe realize. Policy education can connect people to their legislators and keep them aware on current legislation changes.

Perpetration Prevention
For a long time, sexual violence efforts focused on preventing victimization by teaching people skills to help them avoid becoming victims of sexual assault or child sexual abuse. Perpetration prevention focuses on how to prevent people from developing the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that lead to perpetrating sexual violence**.**

Prevention Tools

Perpetration Risk Factors
[According to the CDC](#), risk factors are associated with a greater likelihood of sexual violence perpetration. They are contributing factors and may or may not be direct causes. Not everyone who is identified as "at risk" becomes a perpetrator of violence. A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of becoming a perpetrator of sexual violence.

- **Community and Society level**
  - Low social capital (e.g. community connectedness)
  - Lack of social norms to shape positive social interactions (e.g. acceptance of violence as response to conflict)
  - Low levels of social responsibility (e.g. no sanctions for violence/sexual violence, racist, sexist, heterosexist behaviors)

- **Relationship level**
  - Unhealthy relationships and lack of supportive parents/adult caregivers
  - Acceptance of violence
  - Belief in strict gender roles
  - Association with delinquent/anti-social peers
  - Lack of support for healthy sexuality
  - Lack of closeness, attachment, and problematic youth-guardian interactions

- **Individual level**
  - Low social competencies (emotion regulation and conflict management)
  - Substance use/abuse
  - Attitudes/beliefs about gender roles (stereotypes and myths which support sexual violence and root causes)
  - Social isolation
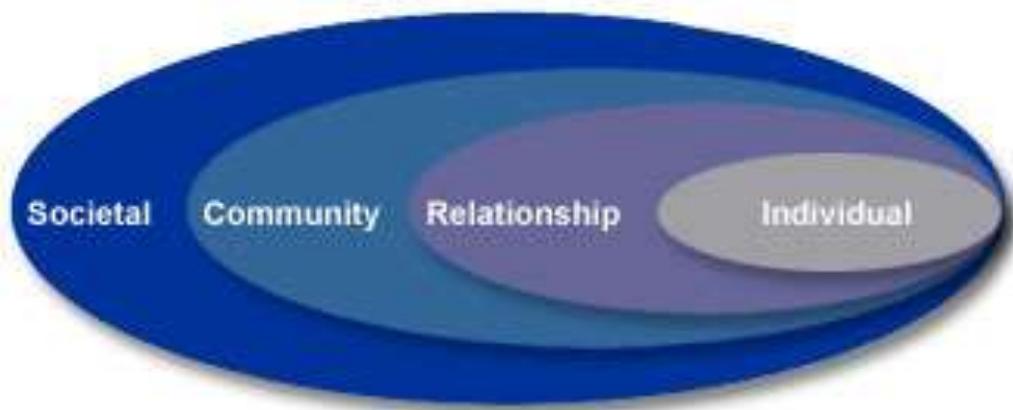 - Anti-social, delinquent, violent behavior

Prevention Strategies

The CDC created the [STOP SV: A Technical Package](). The resource package highlights five strategies that assist communities in preventing and reducing sexual violence. The strategies focus on protective and risk factors for sexual violence perpetration, an individual engaging in sexually violent behavior. The last strategy is not a primary prevention strategy, but it is equally needed and necessary in sexual violence work.

STOP SV

	Strategy	Approach
S	**Promote Social Norms that Protect Against Violence**	• Bystander approaches • Mobilizing men and boys as allies
T	**Teach Skills to Prevent Sexual Violence**	• Social-emotional learning • Teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents • Promoting healthy sexuality • Empowerment-based training
O	**Provide Opportunities to Empower and Support Girls and Women**	• Strengthening economic supports for women and families • Strengthening leadership and opportunities for girls
P	**Create Protective Environments**	• Improving safety and monitoring in schools • Establishing and consistently applying workplace policies • Addressing community-level risks through environmental approaches
SV	**Support Victims/Survivors to Lessen Harms**	• Victim-centered services • Treatment for victims of SV • Treatment for at-risk children and families to prevent problem behavior including sex offending

The Socio-Ecologic Model
The socio-ecologic model recognizes that our behavior is influenced by many things including with whom we spend our time, the neighborhood or community we live in, and the society around us. Since these settings impact our behavior, to be effective, ***prevention efforts must focus on more than just individual behavior***. Prevention cannot be effective it in only impacts an individual, consistent messaging must occur on all levels of this model.

The Spectrum of Prevention
The Spectrum of Prevention was developed by Larry Cohen of the Prevention Institute. Along with the socio-ecologic model, it recognizes that creating the widespread changes will take more than increasing awareness and educating individuals. It can be useful for effectively developing a comprehensive prevention strategy. The Spectrum outlines six levels of prevention work which can lead to broad scale changes, focusing not only on individuals but also on changing the environments, systems, and norms.

THE SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION

Influencing Policy and Legislation

Changing Organizational Practices

Fostering Coalitions and Networks

Educating Providers

Promoting Community Education

Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills