

FORWARD WISCONSIN

A Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence

2010–2015



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

WCASA MISSION

*The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
creates the social change necessary to end sexual violence.*



INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence includes an array of violations—harassment, stalking, rape, trafficking, and unwanted contact—which use sex or the threat of sex as a weapon. It occurs when offenders believe that they are entitled to the power they exert over others. The reasons why some feel entitled and choose to act in a violent way are complex, and rooted in inequities and power differentials that may be historical but persist. Over the course of the last 100 years, the necessity for increasing victim services has been at the forefront, while interest in addressing the influences that result in environments that support sexual violence has grown. This plan is a response to the growing recognition of the influences these environments have on preventing sexual violence before it happens.

To bring formal structure to the shift from traditional to primary prevention activities, the CDC asked recipients of Rape Prevention Education (RPE) funding to develop a statewide primary prevention plan. The Wisconsin Sexual Violence Prevention Program contracted with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), to engage in an expert/community driven effort to develop recommendations and strategies to end sexual violence. Communities play a significant role in shaping local beliefs and attitudes. By addressing sexual violence issues, communities become vital change agents in breaking down the rape culture in which we live.

The plan clearly states Wisconsin's commitment to all residents. It is designed to be deliberately flexible in its language so as to be inclusive of all citizens and communities who seek to prevent sexual violence regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, or age. In using this plan, communities are advised to collaborate with existing and new non-traditional partners to identify and implement effective prevention language and strategies, build community support and leadership, empower community members to be active in changing social/cultural norms that support violence, and to seek additional resources to support community-focused activities to prevent sexual violence.

There are factors associated with sexual violence that alone are not causative, but which contribute to the attitudes and behaviors that support it. As the plan is implemented we will be mindful of these factors, knowing that addressing them in a simultaneous fashion with other components of the plan is necessary. We also acknowledge that these factors are associated with many other socio-cultural characteristics and will seek partnerships with others seeking to change them.

These include:

- 1. Inequitable partner relationships**
- 2. Objectification of women**
- 3. Alcohol and other drug use**
- 4. Desire to exert power over another**
- 5. Sex and violence in popular culture**

ABOUT FORWARD WISCONSIN

This document describes strategic approaches to increase awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence, the impact on individuals and communities, and steps that can be taken to become engaged at the statewide or local/community level to prevent sexual violence.

It is the intention of Forward Wisconsin to provide infrastructure through which a sustainable movement to prevent sexual violence can happen. Recommending actions at the state and local levels, Forward Wisconsin focuses on statewide and community-based partners to implement effective prevention strategies, build community support and leadership to change social norms that support violence, while seeking additional resources to support community-focused activities to prevent sexual violence.

The plan itself centers on six focus areas, four of which are the core components of an injury prevention program. For each focus area, there are two synergistic recommendations: one for statewide level activity, and a second that can be implemented at the local level.

Focus Area I: Data Collection, Analysis and Dissemination

Focus Area II: Designing, Implementing, Evaluating Strategies

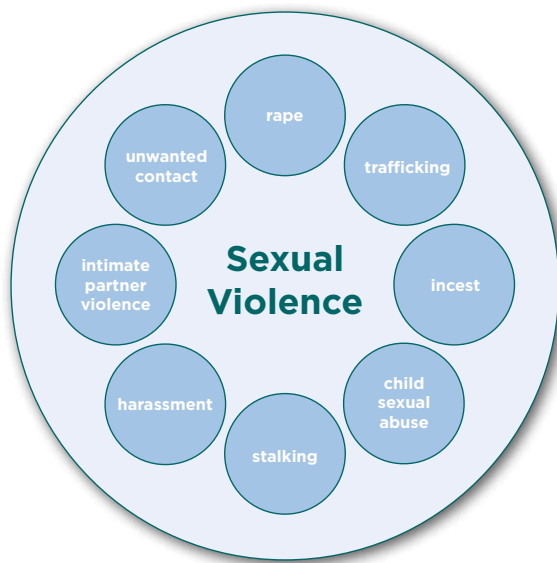
Focus Area III: Public Policy

Focus Area IV: Sexual Violence Prevention Infrastructure

Focus Area V: Community and Offender Accountability

Focus Area VI: Communication

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? AN OVERVIEW OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual contact; it can take the form of sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, incest, or sexual harassment; anyone can become a victim or offender.

It is estimated that one in seven or 14% of Wisconsin women over the age of 18 has been raped at some point in her lifetime¹. Yet the number of sexual assaults reported to law enforcement in Wisconsin averages only about 5,046 annually². The low number of reported assaults is attributed to many factors, including confidentiality, stigma, fear of being blamed, shame, and retribution. More women receive help for assault than report the crime to law enforcement, but even that number is a fraction of the estimated experience of sexual violence among Wisconsin women.

¹ Kilpatrick, D.G., & Ruggiero, K.J. (2003). *Rape in Wisconsin: A Report to the State*. Charleston, SC: National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center, Medical University of South Carolina.

² American FactFinder, US Census. *Wisconsin population by age and sex*.

Sexual assault is an act of aggression no matter the gender or age of its victim. About 3% of American men surveyed in a national study³ reported being raped in their lifetime. Similar to women, rape occurs at an early age, with 48% of men reporting they were younger than 12 years old when first raped, and 23% were between the ages of 12-17 years. In 2010, the victim was male in 15% of reported sexual assaults in Wisconsin⁴.

14% of women over 18 years of age are raped in their lifetime:

- 27,281 women in Dane County
- 8,848 women in Kenosha County
- 5,618 women in Eau Claire County
- 2,443 women in Douglas County
- 1,586 women in Lincoln County
- 13,318 women in Brown County
- 309,496 women in Wisconsin

Based on 2010 U.S. Census of women age 18 and over in each county

Sexual violence is often called a tragedy of youth. Children are most vulnerable to the exertion of power that characterizes sexual violence, and because of their age the impacts extend over a longer period of time. In 2005–2009, the rate of substantiated child maltreatment in Wisconsin was 3.3/1,000 children. In 2009, 23% of substantiated child maltreatment reports were identified as sexual abuse⁵.

3% of men over 18 years of age are raped in their lifetime:

- 529 men in Barron County
- 61,868 men in Rock County
- 1,318 men in Sheboygan County
- 1,966 men in Winnebago County
- 842 men in Wood County
- 64,104 men in Wisconsin

Based on 2010 U.S. Census of men age 18 and over in each county

Vulnerability continues into adolescence and the already challenging teen years are complicated by experiences of violence. Teens are reporting violence in their dating relationships, with 1 in 4 adolescents indicating verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner within the last year⁶. When entering into young adulthood these experiences can continue, often exacerbated by the pressures and isolation of moving away from home, starting college, and new job opportunities. A 2000 report on sexual victimization among college women found that 1 in 4 female students experienced a completed or attempted rape⁷.

3 Tjaden, Patricia, Thoennes, Nancy. "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Rape Victimization Findings from the National Violence Against Women's Survey; National Institute of Justice, January 2006.

4 2010 Sexual Assaults in Wisconsin, Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance.

5 Child Abuse and Neglect Report, Wisconsin department of Children and Families, 2009.

6 Foshee VA, Linder GF, Bauman KE, et al. The safe dates project: theoretical basis, evaluation design, and selected baseline findings. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 1996; 12(2): 39–47.

7 Fisher, Bonne; Cullen, F.T., and Turner, M.G., "The Sexual Victimization of College Women," U.S. Department of Justice Research Report, December 2000.

COSTS—THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence has a profound and life-long effect on its victims, and along with victims/witnesses of other forms of violence, places them at increased risk for compromised economic, health and social outcomes.

Mental health issues are most closely associated with experiences of violence, but new research is documenting the role of violence as a determinant of a broad spectrum of physical health, including development of cancer, chronic disease, sexual health, and unhealthy behavior choices that may further increase risk for disease and early death.

The health of communities is not only dependent on health of individual residents, but also the presence and tolerance for violence, and the financial burden that caring for victims and offenders entails.

A conservative estimate of the cost of adult rape and sexual violence is \$87,000 per crime⁸. This estimate does not include cost of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of offenders. Nor does it include the lifelong costs of medical and mental health care for victims.

| Impact of Sexual Violence | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Individual | Community |
| Mental health | Health care costs |
| Chronic disease | Law enforcement costs |
| Sexual health | Criminal justice system |
| Brain development | Costs |
| High risk behaviors | Community safety |
| Early death | |
| Increased addictive behaviors | |
| Decreased stability | |
| Decreased productivity/fulfillment | |
| Increased costs | |

⁸ Miller, Ted R.; Cohen, Mark A.; Wiersma, Brian. "Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look," National Institute of Justice, January 1996.

HOW DO WE MOVE “FORWARD”?

To best utilize the information in Forward Wisconsin it is necessary to understand the definitions of prevention used. This will also assist in recognizing what prevention work may already be going on in a particular location, as well as identify where there are opportunities to start.

Prevention of sexual violence is a continuum of activities related to stopping sexual violence, which can include raising awareness, protective behaviors, and offender and community accountability. Prevention activities most often focus on individual change.

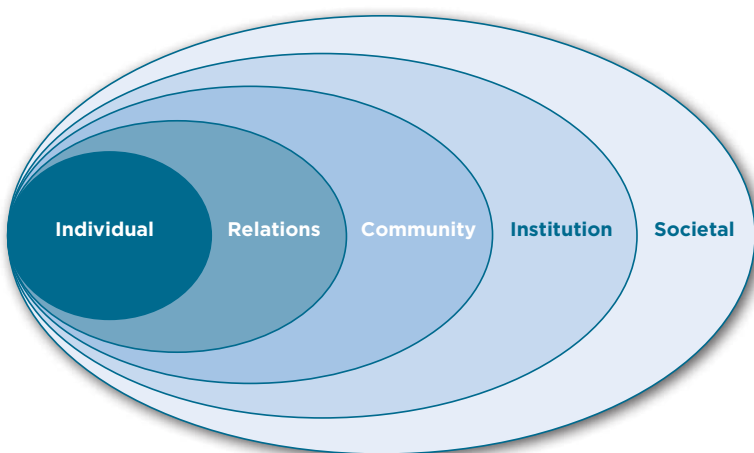
To prevent sexual violence before it happens, prevention activities should exist within a larger primary prevention plan.

Primary Prevention seeks to prevent individuals from becoming *new* victims or *new* offenders by creating environments and norms that stop sexual violence before it occurs. This requires activities to change systems that impact and shape the environment.

FORWARD WISCONSIN:

A Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence

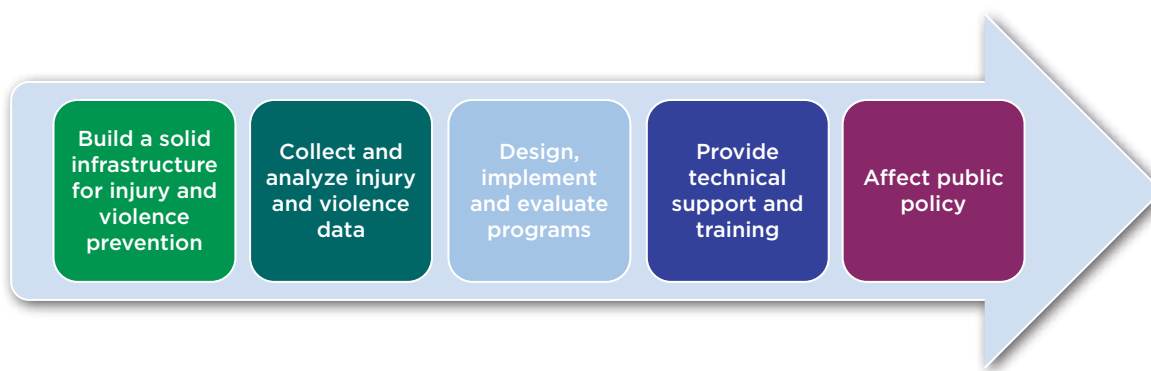
To change community and individual expectations around violence requires interventions at multiple levels that are parallel yet synergistic, addressing the priorities of a variety of different audiences. The use of interventions at multiple levels allows for the consideration of a variety of strategies—working in conjunction with the strengths of the organization/agency implementing the strategy—at multiple points along the continuum of sexual violence service provision. It provides a structure for building understanding for synergy of components within a comprehensive plan for prevention.



Preventing sexual violence requires work at multiple levels to bring about community change.

The levels of intervention for Forward Wisconsin are based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST). The EST argues that, although sexual violence is perpetrated by an individual, these behaviors take place in a socio-cultural context. Every individual is influenced by family, friends, and close associates, who are themselves influenced by the immediate community and larger society within which they reside. In this regard, efforts to reduce sexual violence must occur on individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. As a result, Forward Wisconsin: Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence strategically addresses these levels in the Focus Areas of the plan. Each Focus Area has two recommendations. The statewide recommendation addresses the societal/state community level. The local recommendations fall under individual, relationship and local community levels of the model.

The components of the plan are those that will build a sustainable infrastructure to support the multi-year/multi-generational efforts required to change long-standing beliefs and behaviors. These are derived from the core components of an Injury Prevention Program outlined by Safe States:



State of the States: 2009 Report, Atlanta (GA): Safe States Alliance; 2011



Focus Area I: Data Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination

Rationale:

- Data is needed to effectively plan, prioritize, and evaluate programming while maximizing use of resources.
- Data can be used effectively to describe the burden of sexual violence at the community and statewide level.
- There are challenges in collecting and interpreting data related to sexual violence including under-reporting, varied definitions, and the difficulty of documenting something that is being prevented.
- An additional challenge is to determine measures of change in attitude, behavior, and community.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, increase the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data related to sexual violence.

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, increase the collection, analysis and utilization of data to guide program development at the local level.

Focus Area II: Design, Implement, Evaluate Strategies

Rationale:

- To maximize limited resources and impact, and demonstrate change, prioritize strategies that have been evaluated and measured for desired outcomes.
- At present, limited evidence-based strategies are identified specific to primary prevention of sexual violence.
- Parallel strategies that measure change in attitude, behavior, and community norms can be identified and may be applied to the field of sexual violence prevention.
- A comprehensive approach to providing information and technical assistance to implement and measure evidence-based/evidence informed (EB/EI) strategies is needed.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, develop and maintain a clearinghouse for information and resources to implement and evaluate evidence-based/evidence-informed (EB/EI) strategies for the prevention of sexual violence.

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, increase the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based/evidence-informed (EB/EI) strategies for the prevention of sexual violence.

Focus Area III: Public Policy

Rationale:

- Establishing laws/policies to support violence-free community norms occurs at state, local and organizational levels.
- Policy changes are an effective means to bring awareness to the issue, create buy-in and bring focus to best practices for preventing sexual violence.
- A change in organizational practices to prevent violence and promote safety can set expectations for model behavior, serve as an example for other organizations, and affect norms.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, develop and support state level public policy initiatives that support sexual violence prevention.

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, increase SASP (sexual assault service provider) and other community partner understanding and participation in policy advocacy at local and state levels.

Focus Area IV: Sexual Violence Prevention Infrastructure

Rationale:

- The success of a comprehensive statewide plan for the prevention of sexual violence requires statewide infrastructure to provide coordination, guidance, and to secure and use resources effectively.
- Infrastructure should be developed with comprehensive knowledge of primary prevention.
- The statewide infrastructure must provide the following resources and skills: for data collection and dissemination; to advance policy change; to provide research and evaluation on prevention intervention strategies.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, expand and sustain infrastructure to guide primary prevention of sexual violence in Wisconsin.

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, increase collaboration with SASPs and community partners to support the development of an infrastructure for primary prevention in communities.

Focus Area V: Community and Offender Accountability

Rational:

- The overall clearance rate for sexual assaults reported in 2009 was 57%, compared to 88% for murder.
- Promoting community norms to prevent sexual violence requires environments where consistent consequences for illegal, disrespectful, inequitable, hate motivated, and sexually aggressive behavior are expected.
- Increasing the skills and capacity of individuals and groups to speak up and step out when confronted with aggressive/violent behaviors can empower action.
- Increasing the responsiveness of systems to hold offenders accountable in a consistent manner creates an environment where sexual violence is not tolerated or supported.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, increase partnerships and collaboration with statewide partners related to offender accountability

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, support the implementation of best practices to promote offender accountability.

Focus Area VI: Communications

Rationale:

- Sexual violence can be a difficult public discussion, which can result in denial and isolation for victims, as well as the absence of community wide initiatives for change.
- Increased understanding by the public of the impact of sexual violence on individuals and the community can serve to normalize discussions.
- Using social marketing is a proven way to “make specific behavioral changes resulting in the social good,” and the prevention of sexual violence.
- Simple, memorable, and clear messages that remain consistent over time will be a component of sustaining primary prevention of sexual violence.

Statewide Recommendation:

By 2015, increase the visibility of sexual violence through the use of social media, social marketing, and communications.

Local Recommendation:

By 2015, increase the visibility of sexual violence through local use of social media, social marketing and communications.

Through building community recognition of and support to prevent sexual violence while adhering to the following assumptions . . .

- It is a basic human right to live free of sexual violence
- Everyone has a role and a responsibility in the work to end sexual violence
- The work is not done in isolation, and the importance of collaborations and alliance building is vital
- The work is driven by survivors' voices
- Diverse and safe, accessible services are fundamental to social change
- The power of advocacy, education, prevention, and driving public policy as agents of social change

. . . a future can be made when all children grow up free of sexual violence, and women and men live a violence-free life.

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