![WCASA - Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault]

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WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT   INFORMATION SHEET SERIES

Prevention Works!

- Based on 27 control group studies, a meta-analysis reported that children who participated in prevention programs performed significantly higher than control group children on outcome measures used in the studies, indicating improvements in knowledge and skills concerning sexual abuse. (David & Gidycz, 2000).

- In a study of 825 female undergraduate students researchers found that young women who had not participated in school-based prevention programs were nearly twice as likely to have experienced child sexual abuse as young women who had participated in a program (Gibson & Leitenberg, 2000).

- The Community Services Preventative Task Force recommends universal, school-based programs on the basis of strong evidence of effectiveness in preventing or reducing violent behavior. In reviewing 55 studies of violence prevention programs across multiple grade levels, the Task Force found a median 15% relative reduction in violent behavior among students who received a program. (USA.gov, http://www.thecommunityguide.org/violence/schoolbased-programs.html)

Sexual Violence Prevention

Education has been an important component of the anti-sexual violence movement since its beginning. Early efforts focused on raising awareness about the prevalence and impact of sexual violence. More recently, primary prevention has emerged as an important public health issue (Lee, 2007). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classifies sexual violence prevention approaches based on when they occur (CDC, 2004):

- Primary Prevention: Approaches that take place before sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization.
- Secondary Prevention: Immediate responses after sexual violence has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of violence.
- Tertiary Prevention: Long-term responses after sexual violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence and sex offender treatment interventions.

Comprehensive prevention strategies should address the factors that influence sexual violence. The social-ecological model can help identify these factors on four levels (Dahlberg et al., 2002): individual, relationship, community, and societal.
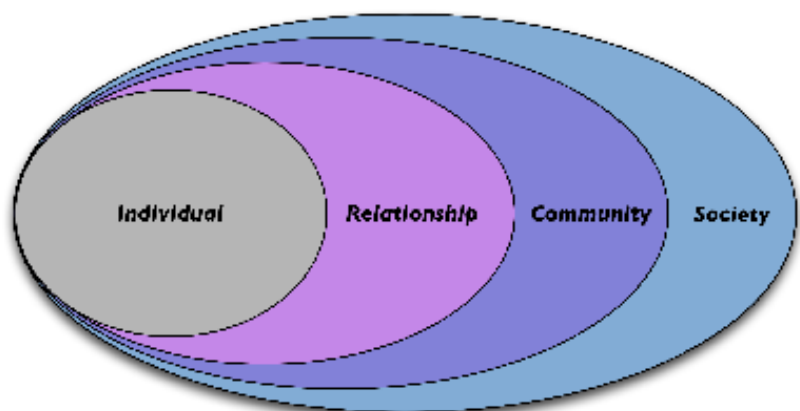
Prevention strategies should include a continuum of activities that address all four levels described in the model:

Individual	The individual level identifies biological and personal history factors like age, gender, and history of abuse that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence. Prevention strategies at this level are often designed to promote healthier attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that ultimately prevent violence.
Relationship	The relationship level examines close relationships such as those with peers and family members that may increase the risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence. Prevention strategies at this level may include peer education programs designed to reduce conflict and promote healthy relationships.
Community	The community level explores the settings, such as schools and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with sexual violence. Social norm and social marketing campaigns are often used to foster community climates that promote healthy relationships.
Societal	The societal level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is accepted. These factors include social and cultural norms. Other large societal factors include the health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

Where to find evidence-based programs to prevent violence!

- WCASA webiste http://www.wcasa.org/pages/Prevention-BestPractice.php
- World Health Organization Violence Prevention Evidence Base http://www.preventviolence.info/evidence_base.aspx
- Prevention Evidence-Based Practice Registries https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/evidence/ebp_registries.cfm

Research shows that prevention programs based in theory are more likely to meet objectives (Glanz, 2005). Promising practices and evidence-based programs exist to address risk and protective factors related to sexual violence. These programs can be found on the WCASA website or in a variety of evidence-based directories.

Additionally, a review of prevention programs called 'What Works in Prevention' identified several characteristics associated with effective prevention programs. They include:

- Varied teaching methods
- Sufficient dosage
- Theory and outcome driven
- Appropriately timed
- Socio-culturally relevant
- Well-trained staff

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). Sexual violence prevention: Beginning the dialogue.

Dahlberg L.L., Krug E., Mercy J.A., Zwi A.B., & Lozano R (2002) World report on violence and health. World Health Organization, 1–56.

Lee, D. S., Guy, L., Perry, B., Keoni Sniffen, C. K., & Alamo Mixson, S. (2007, April). Sexual violence prevention. The Prevention Researcher, 14(2), 15-20.