

What You Can Do

Spectrum of Prevention – a few ideas

Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills

- **Regard your own actions and behaviors honestly and objectively**
American culture often inundates males with negative values that appreciate and propagate male dominance, rather than love, respect, and the worth of other human beings. As males, we can be aware of this and feed those values that support positive male “norms” that will sustain, rather than destroy, our communities. Link to Winona Key Characteristics?
- **Learn to recognize sexism, and challenge yourself to stop it when it occurs**
Sexism can be defined as culture’s insistence that people have to follow certain rules about how they should act, based on their gender, and that the roles of men, and men’s lives, are valued, respected and rewarded at a greater rate than women. It is the institutional and cultural notion that men are generally better than women and therefore rightly situated as primary decision makers in the home, at work, at school, in faith communities and in the government.
- **Challenge and interrupt sexist and otherwise inappropriate remarks, jokes, stories, and behaviors**
We all have been in a situation in which we have heard a joke, remark, or story that made us uncomfortable. In a situation when this takes place, what was your reaction? Did you laugh politely? Did you go along with the flow in order to avoid an uncomfortable situation? Did you speak up in order to express your distaste with the inappropriateness of the remarks?
Most of us will probably never see a rape in progress. However, we will all see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and that promote rape. We all have a moral responsibility to those around us to both safeguard the rights of individuals and to make every attempt to limit the culture of male dominance that exists in America.
- **Recognize and oppose sexual harassment and sexually inappropriate behavior**
Sexual harassment is often an attempt by one individual to hold power over another. We as males can stop sexual harassment and other forms of sexually inappropriate behavior by recognizing it when it occurs and by voicing our concern or disapproval to its perpetrators. This can very often require nothing more than a simple statement that lets the individual know that you are aware that he or she has crossed the line of appropriateness.
- **Talk with and listen to women**
In order to understand those around you, it is important to find out about them. What better way can there be to come to understand how to interact with women than by simply spending some time getting to know them? Ask women about

their work lives, and ask how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives. Talk with your mother, your sister, your grandmother, your girlfriend or wife, or even your coworkers about how they are treated both in and outside of the workforce, and ask them about the kinds of things that men can do to create a community of equality. This type of communication can be beneficial in building both professional and personal relationships in that it removes uncertainty and makes sure that you and those with whom you interact are on the same page.

- **Talk About Sex**

Many of us grow up with unrealistic beliefs about sex: that we should instinctively know what to do; that we should be ready to achieve an erection instantly and maintain it for hours; and that it is un-masculine to have to talk about what gives us (or our partner) pleasure. These beliefs and others keep us from knowing our own sexuality and from enjoying our sexual relationships. Sex without discussion does not allow consent, or even minimal expectations, to be communicated. Without mutual agreement, sex becomes rape. Sex is healthy when it reflects the free and mutual sharing of one another. When we discuss what makes us comfortable and uncomfortable and try new ways to express ourselves, we also greatly reduce the risk of sexual assault.

- **Discuss your Expectations**

Expectations are hopes crystallized by silence. Acting on our expectations without sufficient information can cause serious misunderstandings and can lead to rape. There is nothing wrong with feeling sexual desire, but all too often, we do not communicate our desires, find out our partner's feelings, or establish **consent**. Instead, we project our interest in sex onto our partner, we assume she or he feels as we do, and we misinterpret any friendliness as invitation. Establishing consent for sexual (or physical) contact at one point does not reduce the need to **re-establish consent** later. A person's consent to come to your apartment, to kiss you, or to touch you is not the same as consent to any other sexual acts. Neither do so-called nonverbal cues such as someone's winking at you, drinking with you, or starting to undress you imply consent for sexual intercourse. Even if we think our partner is sending us "mixed messages" it is up to us to get clarification.

- **Note Your Own Treatment of Women**

If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, economically or sexually controlling or abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help immediately.

- **Be Cognizant of Your Surroundings**

If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.

(The items above were adapted from [Men Against Sexual Violence](#))

Promoting Community Education

- Holding community men's meetings/forums
- Participating in a speakers bureau for local sexual assault centers
- Coordinating speakers to present at your community of faith, civic group, business luncheon, community forum, etc.
- Developing or Distributing Public Service Announcements on TV, Radio
- Organizing men's rallies to prevent sexual violence
- Organizing fund raisers for local victim service centers focused on prevention efforts
- Promote men's involvement through community accountability measures that help restore victims. These can include donated time from male therapists for women and children, pro bono work from attorneys, donated time from lock smiths, auto mechanics (to repair damage done by husbands and boyfriends), carpenters, moving companies, etc. (see organizational practice changes)
- Participating in local parades – having a men preventing sexual violence float or banner etc
- Develop and/or distribute social marketing materials on billboards, in magazines, in newspapers, brochures, etc.
- Developing web sites, blogs, chat rooms etc related to men's prevention efforts and responsibilities
- Write a letters to the editor of your local paper
- Sign up to teach a class on healthy sexuality
- Sign up to teach a class on healthy relationships

Educating Providers

- Provide training to youth service providers on sexual respect, integrity and equality
- Train health professionals and traditional healers to discuss respectful sexual relationships with their clients.
- Train traditional healers, health professionals and clergy about abuses of power and sexual abuse prevention.

- Train and support teachers in all levels of education to promote positive male roles and role models
- Work with coaches to provide guidelines to athletes regarding competition, power, sex and privilege.
- Work with university fraternities regarding respectful relationships and sexual integrity
- Speak with clergy and traditional healers about prevention strategies to promote from the “pulpit”, during ceremony, or in counseling sessions or discussions with parishioners and/or participants in ceremony.
- Meet with politicians (tribal and non-tribal) to educate them on how they can promote male social norms that provide for safety in our communities.
- Provide training for youth organizations on sexual violence prevention and integrate prevention messages in all aspects of programming.

Fostering Coalitions and Networks

- Set up a meeting of other interested men in your tribe and/or community to begin exploring how you can make your community the first in the state to be free of sexual violence.
- Identify the social “norms” that contribute to sexual violence. Identify the personal and institutional practices and policies that support those norms. Begin to collectively change those practices and policies that create an environment of sexual violence and threat.
- Call your local Sexual Assault Center and ask them how you and/or a group of local men could assist them in their efforts at prevention
- Find other men in your state and/or in Indian country that are working to end sexual violence. Speak with them to gain ideas and inspiration.
- Collaborate with other groups of men to form or participate in a broader network (regional, state, national) of diverse men working to promote male models of respect for women, children and each other.
- Develop coalitions and networks that respect the diverse communities of men and acknowledge the historical role acts, and accusations, of sexual violence has played in subjugating one group of men against another, either by race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or other stated differences.

- Build alliances with women's and/or victim services organizations who have been leaders in the world wide effort to prevent sexual violence and heal those wounded by the atrocity.
- Locate and speak with established men's organizations to see how they might involve themselves in sexual violence prevention activities. This could include local and state civic organizations, communities of faith, culturally specific organizations, sportsman's clubs, athletic organizations, alumni associations, business groups etc.
- Network with state and tribal governments and department heads to ascertain how they could participate in the effort to stop sexual violence before it begins.
- Speak with political parties to make prevention efforts a campaign issue
- Organize with labor unions to take a public stand promoting male attitudes and behaviors that promotes sexual respect and dignity.

Changing Organizational Practice

- Ask if the organization you work for, or other organizations in your community have sexual harassment policies. If not, help them put one together. If yes, how is it monitored and does it work?
- Talk to mainstream book store owners and management about removing pornography from their collection.
- Set a policy not to support businesses that create or sell products that contribute to the environment that supports sexual violence or sexual subordination/objectification.
- Develop criteria for government agencies purchasing policies regarding vendors. E.g. require that government financed conferences or events take place in hotels and convention centers that do not provide adult videos in their sleeping rooms that promote sexual subordination/objectification.
- Set standards for athletic recruitment practices.
- Make job requirements for coaches to include training on sexual violence prevention.
- Require routine training and monitoring of fraternities and athletic teams to assess the environment as it relates to sexual violence and/or respect.
- Boy Scouts develop merit badges on sexual integrity and respect. Develop programming on respect of women and girls and critical awareness of social messages that promote the sexual disrespect of women and girls.

- Develop and/or implement district wide curriculum in schools that speaks to healthy relationships and healthy sexuality predicated upon the foundations of mutual respect and value.
- Develop marketing practices that do not sexually objectify women, children and men.
- Review how the news media reports sexual assaults. How do they portray the crimes. Do they use language that holds the alleged offender accountable? Do they protect the identity of victims?

Influencing Policy And Legislation

- Contact your legislator and talk about your concerns and ask what they are doing to prevent sexual violence ie: Funding, legislative initiatives support. (This is quite different from catching and locking up offenders. While consistent and effective intervention is critical, we want to stop the violence before it even begins.)
- Make men's participation in the prevention of sexual violence a campaign issue.
- Review corporate citizenship by the messages and merchandize they produce, distribute, and sell. This includes all sectors of the economy from the mass media, to video games, athletics, manufacturing, the internet, the hospitality industry, to health care. Tie government subsidies to a set of criteria for ethical corporate responsibility as it relates to sexual violence prevention.
- Tie governmental subsidies to sexually respectful, equitable workplace policies including hiring, promotions, sexual harassment, work place violence, and marketing campaigns.
- Develop local or state ordinances that restricts or regulates businesses which support the sexual subordination and exploitation of women and/or children. Eg. Strip clubs, pornography shops.
- Provide legislation that would include comprehensive sexuality education for youth that would include issues of consent, sexual respect and integrity.
- Create legislation that allows individuals to sue the pornography industry if they can show that they were harmed by the manufacture, distribution, or selling of the material.