

BEST PRACTICES IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION: A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

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OVERVIEW

- ◆ Defining sexual violence
- ◆ Prevention approaches
- ◆ Strengths-based prevention
- ◆ Limitations/future directions
- ◆ Group Brainstorming
 - How do these concepts apply in your communities and local environments?

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS WELCOME!

- Please feel free to interrupt us to ask a question or share a comment as they come to mind.
- This is a conversation between all of us!
- The handout is a guide to prompt potential discussion from the presentation and how this information could be applied in your setting
 - Please write anything down that could be shared during our brainstorming session!

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A QUICK LOOK

- 4,816 new victims of domestic or sexual violence received services in North Dakota
- One in five women in the U.S. will be raped across their lifespan (NCIPC, 2010)
- 45% will experience other forms of unwanted sexual violence (NCIPC, 2010)

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COLLEGE STUDENTS

- A recent, in-depth survey of 9 colleges across the U.S. found, during the 2014-2015 academic year:
 - 10.3% (range of 4.2% to 20%) of women experienced **completed sexual assault**
 - 3.1% (range of 1.4% to 5.7%) of men experienced **completed sexual assault**
- When the time period was expanded to "...since entering college"
 - 21% (range of 12% to 38%) of women reported experiencing **completed sexual assault**
 - 7% (range of 3.7% and 11.8%) of men reported experiencing **completed sexual assault**
- And lifetime prevalence rates...
 - 34% (range of 26% to 46%) of women reported a **completed sexual assault**
 - 11.2% (range of 8.4% to 16.3%) of men reported a **completed sexual assault**

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: UND PILOT DATA

- **Campus Climate Survey: April 2016 (AAO Office)**
 - 697 UND students surveyed
 - "I have experienced unwanted sexual contact while attending this institution."
 - No: 82.4% (n=565) Yes: 14.1% (n=97) Prefer not to answer: 3.5% (n=24)
 - "I experienced unwanted sexual contact prior to becoming a student at this institution."
 - No: 75.4% (n=517) Yes: 20.9% (n=143) Prefer not to answer: 3.8% (n=26)
 - "I know someone who has experienced unwanted sexual contact as a student at this institution."
 - No: 59.0% (n=405) Yes: 39.0% (n=268) Prefer not to answer: 2.0% (n=14)
- **Pilot Data from Our Project - 2015-16:**
 - 65.4% of women (n=34) who participated had experienced sexual violence since age 14
 - 51.9% (n=27) had been raped
 - 17.9% (n=7) of those who completed the post-test had experienced sexual violence – in the last month alone

TRADITIONAL PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

- a) Bystander approach
 - Aimed at providing individuals with skills needed to recognize and intervene in situations involving sexual violence (Banyard, Moynihan, & Crossman, 2009)
- b) Public health approach
 - Targeting risk reduction for violence perpetration (Degue et al., 2014)
- c) A risk reduction and protective factors enhancement approach for potential victims
 - Resistance tactics or self-defense training often emerges as an effective tool (Hollander, 2014; Senn et al., 2011, 2015)

EMPIRICALLY SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING: BYSTANDER

- CDC lists 2 programs as effective violence prevention programming for college students:
 - 1) RealConsent
 - Online bystander training in prosocial behaviors and sexual violence perpetration (Salazar, Vivolo-Kantor, Hardin, & Berkowitz, 2014)
 - 2) Green Dot
 - Comparison study found that interpersonal violence victimization/perpetration, stalking, sexual harassment, and psychological dating violence were lower on the campus using Green Dot vs. campuses with no bystander training
- Meets the requirement for colleges that receive Title IX funding to provide bystander intervention programming

RISK REDUCTION AND PROTECTIVE FACTOR ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

- 3 effective programs based on a review by Degue et al. (2014)
 - 1) Safe Dates (Foshee et al., 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005)
 - 2) Funding provided by the Violence Against Women Act (Boba & Lilley, 2009)
 - 3) Shifting Boundaries (Taylor et al., 2011, 2013)
- *None of these programs are specific to college students and campus climates*
- *All college-specific programs in this review were deemed as **not effective or potentially harmful***

INEFFECTIVE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES
(BRECKLIN, 2008; NORRIS, 2010)

- Advising people (predominantly women) to curtail activities, such as:
 - walking alone at night or consuming alcohol
 - limit their personal freedom
 - promote victim-blaming attitudes

AN INTEGRATED, STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

Based on the best available evidence then, we asked.....

What if we created a program that integrated the best of all prevention efforts, with additional strengths-based components?

Relationships, Sex Positivity, and Society

Strengths-based prevention approach

- Diverges from the typical approach of embracing one type of programming
- Focus broadly on healthy relationship skill development, regardless of whether one is a victim, perpetrator, or bystander of sexual violence
- Program integrates the best available evidence from:
 - Enhancing inter- and intrapersonal risk reduction and protective factors (e.g., increasing assertiveness) and bystander approaches (e.g., challenging social norms around rape myths)
 - Centralizes healthy, positive sex education, and positive relationship behaviors as mechanisms of change

Relationships, Sex Positivity, and Society

- a) Decreasing risk factors and enhancing protective factors approaches in a *non-victim blaming manner* (e.g., assertiveness training (Orchowski, Gidycz, & Raffle, 2008; Senn et al., 2015))
- b) Bystander approaches (e.g., changing social norm beliefs to better recognize and assess situations),
- c) Positive sex education and healthy relationship skill development (e.g., women's sexual agency and rights and affirmative consent) (Senn et al., 2011).
- d) Incorporates all best practices in prevention recommended by Nation et al. (2003)

THE BASICS

- Curriculum for college women was developed at the University of North Dakota in 2015-2016 (Raymond & Hutchison, 2015)
- Curriculum for college men was piloted Summer 2016 – implementation and evaluation begins Fall 2016
- Currently offered as a 1-credit class to all students
 - Weekends: Saturday and Sunday, ~8 hours/day
 - Weeknights: 4 weeks, 4 hours each evening
- Follows a discussion-based format – no readings, homework, etc.
- Small Class Size – no more than 18 students
- Overarching emphasis on empowering women's choices and encouraging positive relationships and respectful communication

CLASS GOALS

- Develop healthier **attitudes** by:
 - Challenging myths about sexual violence, gender role expectations, sexuality, and relationships (Module 2, 3, 4)
 - Teaching media literacy (Module 2)
 - Fostering a positive sexual self-understanding (Module 3)
 - Naming and challenging psychological barriers to assertiveness (Module 4)

CLASS GOALS

- Challenge **social norm beliefs** through:
 - Establishing respectful group norms (Module 1)
 - Focusing on the socialization of sexual violence, societal-level entrenchment of rape culture, and gender role ideologies (Module 2)
 - Building empathy for victims and changing blame attributions (Module 2)
 - Promoting comprehensive sex education that includes a focus on women's desires and sexual agency (Module 3)
 - Debunking myths related to feminine weakness and assertiveness (Module 4)

CLASS GOALS

- Increase **Perceived behavioral control** through:
 - Empowering women to explore their sexual choices, rights, and relationships (Module 3)
 - Teaching effective communication and affirmative consent skills (Module 3)
 - Practicing individualized verbal and nonverbal assertiveness techniques and boundary setting (Module 4)
 - Rehearsing expressing what participants want in relationships (Module 4)

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION AND GROUP BUILDING

1. **Informed Consent and Overview of Class Content and Research Component**
 - Risks/discomforts, and the participants' right to withdraw without penalty
 - Subject of the seminar is discussed (*positive sexuality or sex positive education and sexual assault prevention*)
2. **Initial Assessments**
 - Assessments are filled out three times (now; in one month; in four months) and the opportunity to continue each six months after for continued incentives
3. **Introduction and Expectations for Discussion**
 - Participants become acquainted and discuss reasons for attending the seminar
 - Respect for a wide range of differences in sexual orientation, sexual experiences, and beliefs are established
 - Maintain empathy for survivors – set the stage to prevent victim-blaming
4. **Discussion of Sexuality and Sexual Assault**
 - Debunk myths that there is nothing to be done about sexual assault
 - Empowering oneself sexually and learning and practicing defensive behaviors can help women move freely in society
 - General information about sexual violence and its impact are shared and discussed by facilitators and participants

MODULE 2: MYTHS AND THE MEDIA

1. Discussion of Rape Myths
 - Beliefs in traditional gender roles
 - Victim-blaming attitudes
 - Tolerance for sexual harassment
2. Discussion of Media Myths of Female Sexuality
 - What women should look and act like
 - What kind of sex they should be having
 - How they should be feeling about it

Teach media literacy: Documentary *Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women*
3. Develop empathy for victims of violence and properly contextualize sexual assault to reduce self-blame
 - Promote overall understanding of the differences between healthy and unhealthy sexual relationships

MODULE 2: MYTHS AND THE MEDIA

Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women



MODULE 3: SEX POSITIVE EDUCATION

1. Positive Conceptualizations of Sexuality and Sexual Rights
 - Define Sex Positivity: A model of sex positive education that teaches consent and communication while giving women a safe place to explore and acknowledge their own sexual desires may be their strongest defense against many physical and emotional risks associated with sex, including victimization. For women, learning what they do want is a crucial stepping-stone to learning how to stop what they do not want.
2. Affirmative Consent and Communication
 - Includes an examination of consent and communication in sexual experiences, supported by the viewing of a documentary on affirmative consent, *Asking For It: The Ethics and Erotics of Sexual Consent* (Jhally, 2010; Mueller & Peterson, 2010).

➤ Sex positive education begins with facilitating a conversation about female desire, and ends with women who are empowered to act on, and protect, their desires.

MODULE 3: SEX POSITIVE EDUCATION

Clip of *Asking For It: The Ethics and Erotics of Sexual Consent*



MODULE 4: VERBAL ASSERTIVENESS

1. Psychological Barriers to Self-Defense or Assertiveness
 - Feeling a sense of obligation; "they're just being nice, I owe it to them"
 - Sociocultural Specific: "North Dakota Nice"
 - Fear of angering a date, partner, or friend – broad conceptualization of assertiveness
 - Myth that women are weak and cannot defend themselves

➤ Dismantling psychological barriers may help empower women to be more assertive in a variety of situations (McCaughy, 1998; Orchowksi et al., 2008)
2. Verbal and Nonverbal Assertiveness
 - Practicing setting boundaries, e.g., "Take your hand off my knee," "You're too close to me right now" – your body, your boundaries
 - Practicing not apologizing, treating "No" as a complete sentence
 - In potentially dangerous situations, yelling loudly "GET AWAY FROM ME!" or "BACK OFF!"
3. Discussion of Continuing Journey and Process
 - Self-defense and assertiveness training teaches women the skills by which they learn that they really do stand a chance in combat with an attacker, and can considerably increase their assertiveness, self-efficacy, perceived control, and competence (Bandura, 1997a; Brecklin, 2008; Hollander, 2004; Orchowksi et al., 2008).
 - 4 out of 5 women who attempt to resist a perpetrator do so successfully

OUTCOME EVALUATION

"A systematic outcome evaluation is necessary to determine whether a program or strategy worked."

- Focus groups
 - Four nights of focus groups were held in July 2015
 - Campus and community women gave feedback on all aspects of the program
- Quantitative
 - Pilot testing Pre-test, post-test and 4-month follow-up on outcome variables
- Qualitative
 - 12 women participated in semi-structured interviews about their experience
 - These interviews are currently being analyzed to supplement the quantitative findings
 - Opportunities for quantitative AND qualitative feedback will continue to be offered to participants

RESEARCH PARADIGM

- Program of Research Grounded in Feminist-Multicultural Research Principles
 - Mentorship, Egalitarianism, Sharing Space, and Reflexivity
- Mixed Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative
 - Dependent variables:
 - Positive sexual self-understanding (Snell, 1998)
 - Sexual assertiveness (Morokoff et al., 1997)
 - Self-blame (O'Neill & Kerig, 2000)
 - Sexual communication (Hanson & Gidycz, 1993)
 - Self-defense self-efficacy (Marx et al., 2001)
- Influenced by Participatory Action Research
 - Voices of stakeholders critical (e.g., survivors, sexual violence prevention coordinator)
 - Researchers as Participants; Participants as Researchers
 - Program evolution – pilot, pilot, pilot!

EARLY RESULTS FROM PILOT

- **Descriptive data indicate a need for prevention programming**
 - 65.4% of women (n=34) who participated had experienced sexual violence since age 14
 - 51.9% (n=27) had been raped
 - 17.9% (n=7) of those who completed the post-test had experienced sexual violence – in the last month alone
- **Program participation increased participants' self-defense self-efficacy**
 - $F(1, 34) = 12.62, p < .01$
- **Differences in the other four variables, though nonsignificant, were trending in the desired directions**
- **Qualitative results (still to be formally analyzed) support the impact of the program on women's lives**

RURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Even on college campuses with thousands of students, many students come from rural communities (approximately 6,000 of UND's 14,000 students are from rural counties or rural areas in North Dakota and Minnesota)
- Rural context presents unique issues related to sexual violence prevention (Annan, 2006)
- Among rural communities, reporting of sexual violence tends to be low, and even those who wish to report face unique challenges regarding confidentiality or access to services.
- Our intent is to address rural socio-culturally issues in relevant manner (Nation et al., 2003)

SUSTAINABILITY: Maintaining prevention programming without funding

- Institutional support
 - Work with administrators
 - Build relationships w/staff - Coordinator for Sexual Violence Prevention, Counseling Center, Cultural Centers
 - Course Credit (tuition \$)
- Marketing and Advertising
 - What does your setting offer?
 - Dining services, texting, emails, class talks, committee meetings, social media, electronic displays, etc.
- Training facilitators
 - Mentoring and regular trainings
- Funding
 - External grants – CDC
 - GRA Support

CONTINUED FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Congruent with current federal Title IX legislation
- Class Credit – uses existing infrastructure (e.g., space, utilities, trained graduate student instructors) at little additional cost to the institution
- In 2015, the only cost was advertising and printing materials that amounted to approximately \$68 for a semester, including 30 students
- However - facilitators are volunteer graduate student counselors and counseling psychologists-in-training
 - Realistic sustainability efforts would need to offer instructors a stipend and/or tuition remission depending on their background and integrate the course into departments that train competent instructors (e.g., future mental health providers)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS/LIMITATIONS

- Men's Involvement, Community Expansion, College / HS / MS Expansion
- In our study of 52 women that took this class, 65% had already experienced sexual violence since age 14
- College is too late!
 - So when do you start, and how do you start it?

DISCUSSION POINTS AND Q/A

- Personal Reflections
 - How do your experiences relate to the information presented here?
 - What can you take away from this presentation that could help you rethink services or response to sexual assault prevention?
 - How do these concepts apply in your local environment?
- Rural Considerations:
 - What would this approach look like in practice when you have one practitioner serving a five+ county radius?
 - How can you implement prevention when resources are limited?

EXTRA SLIDES

- **Are you interested in any of the following?**
 - Participating in future research
 - Joining our team
 - Bringing one of our programs to your community?
- **We would love to hear from you!**
- **Contact Us: Positive Sexuality Research Team**
 - Website: <http://undpositivesexuality.weebly.com>
 - Email: ashley.hutchison@und.edu OR UND.positivesexuality@und.edu
 - Phone: (701) 777-3744