

# Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention

Sexual violence is preventable. Communities are vital in the development of effective sexual violence prevention strategies. Local initiatives are in a good position to respond to the needs of their community and involve participation of community members. This fact sheet provides information about the *Spectrum of Prevention*, a tool developed by the Prevention Institute and tailored by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, to assist communities in developing

comprehensive sexual violence prevention initiatives. Designed for broad scale change, it focuses not just on individuals, but also on the environment, including systems and norms that contribute to sexual violence. An outline of the six levels of the *Spectrum* follows. By working at all six levels simultaneously, communities can design an effective plan that promotes confidence that their relationships, homes, neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, and workplaces are safer.

Level of Spectrum	Definition of Level
<b>1</b> Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills	Enhancing an individual's capability of preventing violence and promoting safety
<b>2</b> Promoting Community Education	Reaching groups of people with information and resources to prevent violence and promote safety
<b>3</b> Educating Providers	Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others and model positive norms
<b>4</b> Fostering Coalitions and Networks	Bringing together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact
<b>5</b> Changing Organizational Practices	Adopting regulations and shaping norms to prevent violence and improve safety
<b>6</b> Influencing Policies and Legislation	Enacting laws and policies that support healthy community norms and a violence-free society

# Spectrum of Prevention: Sample Activities

## 1 Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills

- Provide multiple session skill-building programs that teach healthy sexuality and healthy and equitable relationship skills to high school students.
- Build the skills of bystanders to safely interrupt behavior such as sexist and homophobic harassment.

## 2 Promoting Community Education

- Teach parents to address attitudes and behaviors in their children that support sexual violence.
- Stage community plays that reinforce positive cultural norms, portray responsible sexual behavior, and model bystander action.
- Hold religious and political leaders accountable for providing clear and consistent messages that sexual violence is not appropriate.
- Develop awards programs to publicly recognize responsible media coverage and community leadership to prevent sexual violence.

## 3 Educating Providers

- Train little league coaches to build skills to interrupt and address athletes' inappropriate comments and behaviors that promote a climate condoning sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Train health care providers, mental health professionals, educators, foster parents and other professionals on the principles of healthy relationships.
- Collaborate with musicians, song writers, and artists about positively impacting young people.

## 4 Fostering Coalitions and Networks

- Foster partnerships between researcher/academics and community providers to strengthen evaluation approaches.
- Engage art organizations to promote community understanding and solutions.
- Engage the business sector to foster workplace solutions and build support.

## 5 Changing Organizational Practices

- Implement and enforce sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention practices in schools, workplaces, places of worship and other institutions.
- Implement environmental safety measures such as adequate lighting and emergency call boxes, complemented by community education and enforcement of policies.
- Encourage insurers to provide resources and materials promoting healthy sexuality.

## 6 Influencing Policies and Legislation

- Promote and enforce full implementation of the Title IX law.
- Establish policies at universities to provide sexual violence prevention curriculum to all students and training to all staff, and include funding as a line item in the university's budget.
- Pass middle and high school policies to offer comprehensive sex education programs that include sexual violence prevention and address contributing factors in the school environment.

For more information about the application of this model to sexual violence prevention, view the NSVRC's publication, *Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention*, at <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/sexual-violence-and-spectrum-prevention-towards-community-solution>. The Spectrum of Prevention was developed by Larry Cohen of the Prevention Institute. The original framework is available at [http://www.preventioninstitute.org/tool\\_spectrum.html](http://www.preventioninstitute.org/tool_spectrum.html).



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