



Speak Out: It's About Time to Prevent Sexual Violence Sexual Assault Month 2006

Activity Examples

This section provides activity/event ideas for programs during SAAM. If programs requested, detailed information is included for upcoming activities.

Activities Planned for SAAM 2006⁹

The Sexual Violence Center

Government Center Displays

The West Suburban Office does displays in government centers in Carver and Chaska counties about sexual assault. They have gotten great feedback in past years!

Awareness-Raising Breakfast

SVC holds this awareness and fund raising breakfast each year in April. It's an opportunity to gather community members around this issue and raise some money for programs.

Contact the Sexual Violence Center Minneapolis Office at 612-871-5100 or the West Suburban Office at 952-448-5425 for more information on these events.

⁹ MNCASA was alerted to these activities by Member Programs via e-mail.

Listening Ear Crisis Center

Self Defense Classes

Listening Ear Crisis Center will be co-sponsoring two self defense classes at The Northwest Martial Arts Academy on April 5th and April 19th. Call 320-763-6638 for more information on registration.

Classroom Presentations and Lunch and Learn

Listening Ear will be hosting a Lunch and Learn at Alexandria Technical College on April 27th. It is an hour long session for students to learn about sexual assault and stalking. They will also be presenting on sexual assault in 6 health classes in local schools on March 24th as a precursor to SAAM.

Staff Training

Listening Ear will be holding staff diversity training in April. They will also be having social group discussions on related issues.

Contact Listening Ear Crisis Center at 320-763-6638 for further information on any of these planned activities.

Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard Counties

April Media Campaign

SAPBCH will be launching a media campaign for SAAM, which will include radio spots which will address statistics and reveal myths about sexual assault. They will also be submitting weekly articles on sexual assault to local papers and contacting television media to cover marches and rallies.

Teal Ribbon Campaign

All local schools will be given teal ribbons for the students to wear the week of April 3rd-7th. Each school was also given a list of SAAM activities students can participate in.

Law Enforcement Partnership

Local law enforcement has agreed to distribute posters and information during the month of April.

Poetry Slam

April 6th, A Day to End Sexual Violence, SAPBCH will host a poetry slam.

Take Back the Night and other Marches

A Take Back the Night March is in the works; a date has not yet been set. Other SAAM marches will be held April 9th, April 23rd and April 30th. Survivors will be invited to speak at the marches.

For further information on any of the planned SAAM activities for the Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard Counties, call (218) 444-9524.

Suggested Activities¹⁰

Poetry Slam

Poetry Slams have become increasingly popular since they began in the 1980s. Poetry Slams are events in which poets perform their work and are judged on their writing and performance, encouraging poets to focus on what they're saying and how they're saying it. In April 2006, the NSVRC encourages programs to sponsor SAAM Poetry Slams in their communities, with an emphasis on the awareness and prevention of sexual violence. These events can be large or small. You may partner with campus organizations and local colleges to locate a venue for the event. University English and Performing Arts Departments may be interested in co-sponsoring the event. Ask local businesses to sponsor your event. Additionally, invite your local media to advertise and cover the event. Finally, you may wish to partner with your local radio stations for DJs, judges, and hosts.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes events have become very popular and have grown each year since 2001, when Frank Baird first proposed *Walk a Mile in Her Shoes: Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Violence* to the Valley Trauma Center in California. These marches are designed to benefit rape crisis centers, but also provide a fun opportunity for men to educate the community about sexual violence. These events also rally the community to discuss the connection between gender relations and sexual violence, and to take action to prevent sexual violence. During the marches, men walk one mile in women's high heeled shoes to help men gain a better understanding and appreciation of women's experiences. This is a great way to get men involved in the prevention of sexual violence. You may partner with male groups on college campuses, especially fraternities, or male leaders in your community. Consider partnering with local businesses to provide women's shoes, such as Famous Footwear, Payless Shoes or Marshall Field's. You may also invite your local media to cover the event. Make sure to connect with local law enforcement to make sure an event of this nature is registered correctly.

Tree/Flower Planting Ceremony

Tree and flower planting ceremonies during Sexual Assault Awareness Month give recognition to those who have been sexually assaulted in our communities. These events provide the community an opportunity to honor a relative, friend, or other victim and/or survivor with the new life of a tree or plant. These ceremonies may be held in conjunction with Arbor Week, Earth Day or Arbor Day, and provide excellent opportunities for you to partner with local home improvement businesses and greenhouses, such as Home Depot or Frank's Nursery and Crafts. You may consider

¹⁰ Suggested activities from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

asking these companies to donate trees or flowers to plant during your event. These events may take place in local parks, on college campuses, or in communities. You may need to contact local officials or campus administrators to find out what their procedure is for approving such events in your area. Finally, inviting public officials and knowledgeable speakers may bring more media attention to your event.

Clothesline Project

Sponsoring a Clothesline Project event can be a very effective means of raising awareness about sexual violence. The Clothesline Project is a program started on Cape Cod, MA, in 1990 to address the issue of violence against women. It began as a vehicle for women affected by violence to express their emotions by decorating a shirt. They then hang the shirt on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of violence against women. Today, Clothesline Projects provide awareness about sexual and domestic violence, hate crimes, and child abuse. Many communities have developed culturally specific Clothesline Projects (i.e., Asian Clothesline Project in MA). Most events include a shirt making session, held in conjunction with a display of recently or previously created shirts. Alternatively, you might arrange simply to display previously created T-shirts. The shirts may be color coded to show the form of abuse and whether the victim survived the abuse they experienced. You may also consider asking local businesses, such as Target or Kmart, to provide the shirts and other supplies for this event.

Partner with a Local Restaurant

There is a range of ways you can incorporate a local restaurant into your SAAM activities. Find a local restaurant that will provide an organizational discount and then host a corporate/legislative breakfast to (re)introduce your agency and board to the community. Another possibility is to ask for a small percent of the profits on "A Day to End Sexual Violence" (April 6) as a charitable donation. Or, ask if you may put brochures or teal awareness ribbon pins near the cash register. You may want to produce a napkin or placemat with awareness information and ask the restaurant to use them on "A Day to End Sexual Violence." Finally, it is always good to ask if you may hang awareness posters in a public area of the restaurant.

Open House

Having an open house reception can be a simple but very effective way to raise awareness of sexual assault and of your agency/program's role in the community. An open house provides an opportunity for you to raise your profile in the community and to provide valuable information. You can place brochures, signs and educational information on a table as well as provide information about volunteer opportunities. The open house can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. Your staff may decide to provide snacks and refreshments. Or if your budget permits, you may choose to have a catered reception. Invite your board members and local public officials and of course, find some way to get the word out to the public. See the section below about radio and television for ideas. You may also

want to invite school administrators, and guidance counselors, as well as local businesses and chamber of commerce. If possible, send out invitations in addition to a general public announcement on the radio and community bulletin. Finally, you may want to include some high profile officials and speakers. Just remember, even a small open house will provide a large opportunity of raising awareness.

Library Events

Partnering with your local library can provide you with several low-cost, yet high-value, opportunities. Set up a display with relevant books, brochures and other materials. Focus both on the issue and your organization's services. Or, consider hosting an author or poet's reading of her/his sexual violence-related work(s). Offer prevention education programming to children by reading books on and discussing good and bad touches and self-esteem. You may develop bookmarks for distribution in the library. All of these options will educate your community members and increase awareness of your organization.

Take Back the Night

Take Back the Night (TBTN) is an international phenomenon that began in the early 1970's in Germany in response to a series of sexual assaults and murders. TBTN rallies and marches have been held throughout the United States since the late 1970's. Local communities in the United States, Canada, Latin America, India and Europe have been organizing TBTN marches and rallies to unify individuals to stand against violence in their communities. It serves as an empowering educational process. As activism has grown over the years, this public event has been adapted to meet individual community needs. Consider your unique community priorities when encouraging participants and planning this event. While these events can be large or small, we encourage organizers to begin planning several months prior to the event date. TBTN can include a candlelight vigil, a rally, a survivor Speakout, and a large-scale public march. Many organizations have incorporated the arts into their event with banner making contests, musical performances, poetry and exhibits like the Clothesline Project that presents t-shirts that display the feelings and stories of survivors. Be sure to check with your local law enforcement official regarding legal status of your event and safety issues.