

## 2005 SAAM Campaign – **Activities and Events**

### Plan “*A Day to End Sexual Violence*”

NSVRC encourages all agencies, programs and coalitions to plan a Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) event or some awareness-raising activities for **April 5, 2005**. This year emphasis is on **building healthy, respectful relationships**. The important aspect of planning for this day is that we all do “something” on the same day, no matter how small or unique. The more events that occur on this day, the more impact we will have raising awareness of sexual assault nationally.

The NSVRC realizes that many of you have events throughout the month of April, and you may decide to plan larger events for other days. **April 5<sup>th</sup>, “A Day to End Sexual Violence,”** should be thought of as a day to do something that will be part of the national impact. We do not expect that the event you plan for that day will necessarily be the central focus of your SAAM campaign.

To assist you in planning an event, the NSVRC provides a variety of ideas below; several of these ideas concern events that focus on healthy relationships. Use one of these suggestions or create your own. Some are relatively easy to plan and may not require a lot of time or resources; others require more lead-time, planning and resources. All of the ideas are general suggestions and may be implemented in a broad range of ways. The scale of each event may be adjusted to fit your needs and the size of your community.

We offer the following ideas merely as suggestions. We encourage you to visit the SAAM calendar on the NSVRC website ([www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)) for a review of planned activities from across the nation. We have a new feature that allows you to add your activity to the national calendar. **As always, we suggest that you check with your state, territory or tribal coalition to see if they are coordinating any statewide events.**

### **Highlight educational opportunities and materials that promote healthy relationships.**

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a good time to do outreach to schools, libraries, the media and the public about materials that focus on building healthy relationships. This would be a good opportunity to take resources and materials such as palm cards and posters into the healthcare community. Consider places such as doctors’ offices, hospitals, and health clinics. Check with your state coalition and other organizations about materials, games and activities that your community can access and use to build relationship skills. For example, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape has a two-volume curriculum entitled, “Building Healthy Relationships” for grades, K-5 and 6-12. Such resources can help to define and bring focus to the positive benefits of healthy relationships. You can plan an event around the information or develop some material and article for the local paper on the importance of forming supportive, non-threatening relationships.

### **Host a movie night with discussion.**

Select several movies that feature positive, healthy relationships and show them for one or several evenings. After the films, conduct a discussion about the characteristics and benefits of healthy, non-threatening relationships. Be sure to contact your local media to see if they can report on the event. This will be a good opportunity to give handouts and products about healthy relationships.

### **Create a mural of healthy relationships.**

Conduct a public awareness rally at a public place such as a mall. Be sure to obtain permission in advance. Cover the basics about healthy relationships and provide handouts. Then ask the public to participate in drawing a mural, or making a collage on the subject. Be sure to take pictures and invite the media.

### **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, healthcare professionals, 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.

### **Recruit Assistance of 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 of April 20, 2004 as a charitable donation. Or ask if you may put out 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 April 20<sup>th</sup>. Finally, it is always good to ask if you may hang a poster in a public area of the restaurant.

### **Radio and Television**

Raise awareness of your organization by posting event announcements on your local public access television station. Also consider contacting your local radio station—don't forget about college radio stations—to ask for free or reduced cost creation and/or airing of public service announcements. Another option is to secure time on a public affairs show to discuss the issues and your organization's services. Reaching community members through radio and television stations does not need to be expensive to create awareness and provide publicity.

## **Library**

Partnering with your local library can also 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). Another option is to offer prevention education programming to children by reading books on and discussing good and bad touches and self-esteem. You may wish to develop bookmarkers for distribution in the library. All of these options will educate your community members and increase awareness of your organization.

## **Mock Trial**

Mock Sexual Assault Trials are used across the country to educate communities about the legal process and address myths and facts about sexual assault. Mock Trials are condensed re-creations of actual or imaginary trials. This dramatic style of presentation enables an organization to pull in judicial representatives, theater groups, students, and a wide variety of community members. Mock trials have also been used to train first responders about their role in the criminal justice process and inform survivors of what might be involved in pursuing criminal charges. Some communities have adapted the mock trial to explore the campus judicial hearing process.

Developing a Mock Trial takes time; we suggest allowing sufficient time for planning. Mock Trials rely on a script, actors/community members and good marketing. If you do not have the time to develop your own script, videos and scripts are available (in the NSVRC library) for adaptation. Local service providers such as police, judges, attorneys and forensic examiners make for great actors. You may be able to hold the mock trial in your area courthouse, town hall or educational institution. Mock juries often struggle with the same issues as actual jury members. Some organizations have included a video, script or scene to depict the events leading up to the sexual assault as a way to close the presentation no matter what verdict the jury decides.

## **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 at least six 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 the legal status of your event and safety issues.

