

## It's time ... to create a campaign

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a great opportunity to create a community-wide campaign addressing sexual violence. Public education campaigns play an important role in changing social norms and providing basic facts and education to members of your audience. Social marketing campaigns aim to change behavior and require a different planning process that emphasizes understanding why people do what they do. The following steps are necessary in planning a successful campaign to raise awareness and public knowledge about an issue.

### Step 1: Identify your audience

Everyone in your community has a role to play in ending sexual violence, which makes selecting a specific audience for a public education campaign difficult. However, research shows that choosing a narrow audience and tailoring your message to that audience is the most effective method to raise awareness about an issue.

Your community has many audiences to choose from – parents, teachers, law enforcement, health care providers, students, and more. When selecting the audience for your campaign, consider which group has the least knowledge and awareness of sexual violence. It may be helpful to consider the groups that are at highest risk for certain types of sexual violence, or consider those that may have the most impact in preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place (like opinion leaders). It is also important to consider the demographics of your community, making sure to include under-represented groups

in ways that speak to their particular needs and barriers when dealing with sexual violence. Consider conducting a needs assessment to help determine which audience would benefit most from your campaign.

For information on how to conduct a needs assessment, visit:

- **The Community Tool Box**

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>

- **Iowa State University Extension**

[www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/assess/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/assess/)

- **The University of Arizona Library**

<http://digital.library.arizona.edu/nadm/tutorial/index.htm>

If you are unable to do a needs assessment at this time, you can look into existing information about sexual violence in your community. You can also access crime statistics. Ultimately, choose your audience based on your knowledge of the community and your organization's resources and goals.

## Step 2: Write objectives

This step goes hand-in-hand with choosing a target audience. In planning a public education campaign, it is critical to clearly articulate why you chose to participate in this campaign. It is often helpful to outline objectives for your campaign. Detail the specific knowledge or attitude change you wish to see in your selected audience (remember that you are not changing behavior with this campaign, but changing knowledge, attitudes, and/or beliefs). Do you want people to know the truth behind rape myths, to know how to help a survivor, or to understand what they could do to intervene when they see sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence? Here are some sample objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Increase knowledge about the range of behaviors that constitute sexual violence.
- **Objective 2:** Increase knowledge about community sexual assault services.
- **Objective 3:** Increase ability of individuals to identify and counteract common rape myths.
- **Objective 4:** Increase people's knowledge around how to intervene when witnessing sexual harassment or sexual violence.

## Step 3: Devise strategies

Once you outline your objectives, determine strategies to use in this campaign that accomplish your goals. Examples of strategies include:

- Create posters containing information and statistics about sexual assault
- Write a "Letter to the Editor" for your local newspaper
- Invite speakers to talk to a group

about community involvement in preventing and/or responding to sexual violence.

- Distribute brochures and/or palm cards containing facts and information about sexual violence to individuals and/or businesses at sporting events, concerts and community festivals.
- Create public service announcements.
- Distribute campaign messages via emails, Facebook or Twitter.
- Stage a theater performance

Select strategies that resonate with your target audience and are realistic for your organization based on your resources and timeline.

## Step 4: Talk to your audience

Before you design materials, touch base with some members of your audience using surveys or focus groups to verify the message(s) you chose are appropriate and provide them with new information. This can sometimes feel overwhelming, as your schedule and budget may be barriers to planning and conducting formal focus groups. One option may be to partner with other organizations and attend their meetings to get feedback and spread awareness. These interactions can be informal; the goal is to obtain insights about your messages from the people you are trying to reach.

Conducting focus groups will help to determine if the messages you plan to use are effective with your audience. Share the facts you want to include and ask for reactions. Would this fact make sense if they read it on a poster? Is it something your audience doesn't know? Questions like this will help you decide what to ultimately include in your educational materials.

### **Step 5: Develop messages**

If you were able to conduct a needs assessment of your target audience, you should have a clear understanding of their specific knowledge gaps in relation to the objectives of this campaign. Alternatively, if you have learned that many people understand that sexual assault is a problem, but don't know how to help someone who has been victimized, choose to present information about community services and victims' rights.

If conducting a needs assessment wasn't possible, see if you can locate other research about community-wide attitudes and beliefs toward sexual violence. For example, perhaps a local college has conducted independent research on this topic that you could use. If your program does peer education, inquire about any pre- and post-test surveys that might provide insight about beliefs and attitudes. Ultimately, you will have to choose 3-5 facts or messages to convey to your target audience.

### **Step 6: Get creative**

Once you gather information from your target audience, start putting your campaign together. If you plan to develop something that requires graphic design, such as a poster or brochure, consider talking with a local art school or college to find students or faculty willing to create artwork at no cost. Likewise, research other organizations that have developed similar campaigns and messages. Contact the National Sexual Violence Resource Center at 1-877-739-3895 or [resources@nsvrc.org](mailto:resources@nsvrc.org) for help in locating additional resources.

### **Step 7: Go back to the audience**

Allocate time to retest your campaign materials with your target audience. After all your hard work and planning, you'll want to feel confident in your messaging and materials. Make changes to better meet the needs of your audience. Ultimately, your campaign will only be effective if your audience pays attention to your message, so this is a crucial step.

### **Step 8: Implement strategically**

After making necessary revisions to your materials, consider how and where you'll distribute them. For local outreach, ask staff at hospitals, libraries, malls, universities and gyms about posting your materials on their bulletin boards. Reach online audiences through e-mail and social networking sites.

### **Step 9: Evaluate**

Effective evaluation is an important element of any public education campaign. Some simple steps for evaluation include keeping track of the number of materials you distribute or how many times a PSA was shown. Data collection and evaluation will help shape future campaigns and assist you in using resources judiciously. If passing out brochures was not successful this year, redirect your staff to do something different for next year's campaign.

It's helpful to compare your target audience's knowledge and awareness before and after the campaign was launched. Conducting a pre- and post-campaign survey is one way to determine effectiveness. Connect with experts in your community who may be willing to volunteer. For more, visit [www.nsvrc.org/saam/resources](http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/resources).

## Timeline

If possible, begin planning your campaign 6-8 months before you wish to launch. You will need a month or two to collect information about sexual violence in your community and identify gaps in knowledge to help you select your target audience. It may take you a few weeks to come up with your main messages based on your audience and objectives.

Allow approximately a month to recruit focus group participants and obtain feedback on your messages. Creating campaign materials can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months, depending on who you are working with to create content and how many items you plan to have made. If you are working with a professional designer, factor in more time for brainstorming and revisions. If you are working with someone within your agency, you may be able to move through this stage more quickly. Try to obtain high-resolution art files such as your agency's logo early in the process so you'll have them on hand for future projects.

For your convenience, the Sexual Assault Awareness Month logo is included on this CD. If you have questions regarding the usage, please email [resources@nsvrc.org](mailto:resources@nsvrc.org).

Once you have materials in hand to show your audience, allow 3-4 weeks to hold another focus group. Depending on the feedback you receive, you may need to make significant changes to your materials. Give yourself 2-3 weeks to make changes and finalize everything before printing in bulk and implementing your distribution strategy. Evaluation should be factored in throughout the process, but particularly if you plan to have pre- and post-tests. You will need about a month to administer and evaluate pre/post-test data at the beginning and end of the campaign. Other evaluation measures may not take much time, such as checking data regarding website traffic.

If you are unable to start planning your campaign far in advance, consider how you might be able to break up the work into a multi-year effort, with background research and planning during year one, and implementation during year two. Or, work on the campaign in smaller pieces over a longer period of time when you, your staff and volunteers have breaks in the workload. While it is important that you follow the steps outlined in this guide for maximum effectiveness, there are creative ways to plan and implement a flexible campaign.