



It's time ... to talk about it! Your voice. Our future. Prevent sexual violence.

Tips for partnering with youth-serving organizations

Children spend time outside the home involved in athletic teams, camps, faith-based groups, and clubs. For this reason, youth-serving organizations play a pivotal role in keeping kids safe and creating respectful, healthy spaces for children and teens. This resource offers suggestions for sexual assault centers to partner with youth-serving organizations to prevent child sexual abuse. These recommendations can also be used by youth-serving organizations in their efforts to support the development of healthy, safe, and happy children and teens.

Getting started

To begin, make a list of the groups and organizations in your community that serve youth. This list might include faith-based youth groups, Big Brothers Big Sisters, youth theater organizations, the YMCA/YWCA, and your local library. Think big when it comes to potential partners and consider schools, athletic programs and scouts. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community groups, Planned Parenthood, and other local resources often have teen groups. Children have an opportunity every day to come into contact with safe, supportive adults who can play a role in creating a healthy community.

Education as the first step

Approach the leaders of these groups with a specific request, such as giving a workshop to adult volunteers about the role that they play in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. Give the group practical information, like warning signs that an adult is violating a child's

boundaries and how to intervene. You may want to prepare a brief handout so that they can refer back to the information at a later date.

Be prepared for the participants to share their own experiences or knowledge of child sexual abuse. Do your best to focus on how people can use their own experiences to help others, especially children, and refer participants to supportive resources in the community if they are in need of further assistance.

Along with educating the adults in youth-serving organizations, get the youth involved. Youth involvement is a powerful way for children and teens to help in their own way and make a difference. Draw on their talents and creativity and allow them to brainstorm their own unique ideas for raising awareness and preventing child sexual abuse.

Once you begin these partnerships, keep them involved in your work. Youth-serving organizations may want to have a fundraiser, wear teal bracelets, volunteer at an awareness event or participate on a local committee.



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SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT A GLANCE

- One in six boys and one in four girls will experience a sexual assault before the age 18 (Dube et al., 2005).
- Of women surveyed in a national study, 12.3% experienced the first completed rape when they were age 10 or younger (Black et al., 2011). More than 25% of male victims in a national sample reported their first rape was when they were 10 years of age or younger (Black et al., 2011).
- In a national prevalence study, more than one-third of women who were raped under the age of 18 were also raped as adults (Black, et.al, 2011).
- In one study, 71% of children who experienced sexual assault, were assaulted by someone they were acquainted with or knew by sight (Finkelhor, Hammer, & Sedalk, 2008).

Develop policies & support safe spaces

Organizational policies can provide very concrete strategies for employees and volunteers at youth-serving organizations. Work with administration and leaders at these agencies and groups to make sure they have policies and procedures regarding:

- Screening and background checks for employees and volunteers.
- Guidance on visitors and clearance for individuals interacting with children and teens that are not employees or volunteers.
- Examples and guidance for appropriate behaviors and interactions between adults and children and teens.

- Training requirements and standards regarding reporting suspected child abuse.
- Training and education on sexual violence prevention (Saul & Audage, 2007).

Sexual violence prevention is a valued priority when organizations invest in creating policies that protect children and teens and create spaces where respect and trust are paramount.

One safe, supportive adult can make all the difference in the life of a child; empower adults in youth-serving organizations to be that person.

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Engage participants as active bystanders

Community-based rape crisis centers can educate leaders of youth serving groups, children, and teens on bystander intervention. "An engaged bystander is someone who intervenes before, during, or after a situation when they see or hear behaviors that promote sexual violence"(National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2013 p.2). There are many bystander education programs that target difference audiences.

- **Mentors in Violence Prevention targets high school and college athletes:** www.mvpstrategies.net/
- **Green Dot targets communities, schools and other audiences:** www.livethegreendot.com



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- **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center's "She did WHAT?" "He said WHAT?" targets early childhood educators:** <http://www.barcc.org/>

Learn more on the engaging bystander approach and tips on how to implement a bystander intervention campaign or program in your community.

- **NSVRC's *Engaging Bystanders to Prevent Sexual Violence* information packet:** <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications-information-packets/engaging-bystanders-prevent-sexual-violence>

Using bystander education programs can educate youth leaders on how appropriately intervene when they see or hear problematic behaviors that promote sexual violence. Youth leaders and youth can develop their own scenarios and role plays using situations that are familiar to them. Practicing scenarios and interventions can help develop appropriate responses to these situations, and involving youth will help to create responses that resonate with this audience and match the reality of their lives.

Resources

- **Darkness to Light:** www.d2l.org
- **Kidpower:** www.kidpower.org
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:** www.missingkids.com
- **Stop It Now!:** www.stopitnow.org/

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