“NEVERTHELESS, THEY PERSISTED”

Arts-Based, Youth-Focused Programming in Resistant Rural Communities
• Background and context
• Considerations, logistics, and framing for programming in resistant communities
• Arts-based programming – why and how?
• Programming examples and options
• Evaluation and next steps
BACKGROUND: OUR AGENCY

- Located in northeastern WA, serve three counties
- Direct services advocacy to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes
- Children’s Advocacy Center for victims of child sexual abuse and physical abuse/neglect
- Community Engagement programming with outreach, education, and prevention initiatives
- Recipient of the CDC Rape Prevention Education grant, variety of state and community DV/SA prevention grants
COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

- Service area spans 7,115 sq. miles – three counties, two reservations
- Largest city is about 5,500 people
- 86% White, next highest demographic is Native American
- 20% of individuals are below the poverty line
- 70-80% voted conservative in recent elections
- High rates of poverty, very traditional gender roles, rampant homophobia, deeply evangelical Christian, strong family-rights movement
- Neo-nazi and anti-government communities located in and around the area

NEWS > SPOKANE

Rep. Matt Shea takes credit, criticism for document titled ‘Biblical Basis for War’

‘I’m just standing up for people’s rights’: Police chief in tiny Republic says he won’t enforce new gun law
READYING RESISTANT COMMUNITIES

Conduct a needs and readiness assessment

- Helps determine community knowledge and readiness to discuss existence or prevention of violence
- Can be beneficial in identifying relevant stakeholders and gatekeepers

Don’t be deterred by a community with high need and low readiness

- Primary prevention is achievable with the correct framing and level of intervention
- Primary prevention was made for rural communities!
If readiness is not adequate, focus on relationship building within the specific area that programming is desired.

- Offer support and assistance (if allowable) to other organizations that present opportunities to them.
- Education programs, community stakeholder coalition meetings, etc.
Community connections are vital! Use your network

Start with one school, one school district

Collect data to show to other school districts (evaluate!)

Opt-in lunch programs or athletic/theater/after-school programs can be effective if classroom isn’t an option

Offer to meet with administrators and/or teachers for monthly or bi-weekly check-ins
FRAMING YOUR PREVENTION PROJECT

Find topics that have overlapping risk and protective factors and highlight those intersections
Ex: mental health or youth violence (gun violence)

Focus on positives of student or youth participation
Ex: “Opportunities for community service, add to high school resume”

Focus on positive-skill building, creating “healthy and productive community members”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain prevention terminology, make an FAQ for schools/parents</th>
<th>• 8th grade reading level – accessibility is huge!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPV and SA are loaded terms – find more delicate ways of framing</td>
<td>• Ex: “bullying, peer to peer aggression, drama, unsafe social spaces, etc.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List sample topics/curriculum that are “neutral”</td>
<td>• Ex: empathy, healthy communication, conflict resolution, boundaries, etc.</td>
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DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM

• Start with risk and protective factors that are realistic and achievable
• Keep sustainability in mind – be patient, take it slow, foster relationships
• Develop or adjust content to error on the side of caution, audience readiness
• It is possible to do primary prevention without openly discussing IPV or SA, at least initially
• Choose a focus or lens that is non-threatening to the average person in your area…like art!
WHY ART?

• Easily accessible, socio-culturally relevant, a “universal language”
• Non-threatening curriculum
• Doubles as a healthy coping skill for students
• “Art” is a fluid category
• Shared commonalities and positive outcomes between art programming and goals of IPV/SA prevention
"Art is not always about pretty things. It's about who we are, what happened to us, and how our lives are affected."

ELIZABETH BROUN
WHAT CAN AN ARTS-BASED PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

- Does not require an art education or expertise
- Any budget, any art supplies
- Be creative with the definition of art! Mix it up regularly
- Pinterest and “art therapy” searches are full of great ideas
TYPES OF ART

- Drawing
- Painting
- Pastels
- Block or screen printing
- Poetry
- Dance
- Pottery
- Music
- Cooking or baking
- Call and response
- Slam poetry
- Zines
- Sewing or cross-stitch
- Body movement
RURAL RESOURCES VICTIM SERVICES: PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- Primary Prevention of DV, SA, and other forms of oppression-based violence
- Individual, relationship, and community levels of socio-ecological model
- Arts-based programming, K-12th grades
  - Classroom programming
  - Peer education programming
ACTIVIST ARTS

- Weekly classroom programming, year-long
- Follow same cohort as long as possible
- Emphasis on individual skill-building
- Occasionally engage in peer education with younger grades or other classes
- Typically takes place in Health or English classes, but can be wherever is convenient for teachers and school
# Risk and Protective Factors: Classroom Programming

**Risk Factors**

- Lack of non-violent social problem-solving skills
- Hostility towards women
- Desire for power and control in relationships
- Attitudes accepting or justifying IPV/SA
- Lack of empathy
- Adherence to traditional gender role norms
- Hyper-masculinity
- Emotional dependence and insecurity

**Protective Factors**

- Social support
- Emotional health and connectedness
- Empathy and concern for how one’s actions affect others
SPHYR: STUDENTS PROMOTING HEALTHY YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

- Weekly lunch program
- All are welcome!
- Middle or High School
- 50% individual learning, 50% peer education and leadership
- Discuss issues of oppression, violence, social norms, school/family/community environment
- Student-led and unique to each school
# Risk and Protective Factors: SPHYR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factors</th>
<th>Protective Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association with sexually aggressive, hypermasculine, and delinquent peers</td>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General tolerance of IPV/SA within the community</td>
<td>Community cohesiveness/support/connectedness, mutual trust, and willingness to intervene for the common good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak community sanctions against IPV/SA perpetrators</td>
<td>Emotional health and connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy, possessiveness, and negative emotion within an intimate relationship</td>
<td>Empathy and concern for how one's actions affect others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural norms that support aggression toward others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional gender norms and gender inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social isolation/lack of social support</td>
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ARTS-BASED PROGRAMMING: PEACE AND VIOLENCE TREE

- Begin by going over elements of art
- What does an “angry” line look like, what does a “happy” color look like, etc.
- If appropriate, discuss oppression as it intersects with art
- Shadeism/colorism/racism is perpetuated when darker shades are considered “violent” or “unhappy”
• Keeping the elements of art in mind, ask students to draw a tree that is “peaceful” and a tree that is “violent” or “angry”

• Depending on time and resources, allow students to use different art mediums to make their trees colorful, 3D, and detailed
• Ask students to share their pieces if they feel comfortable

• Facilitate a discussion about commonalities between different pieces
• If appropriate, use the angry tree as a metaphor for the root causes of violence, types of violence, and outcomes from violence.

• Use the peaceful tree as a metaphor for root causes of peace (protective factors), what peace looks like (individually, relationship, community, society), and the positive outcomes of peace or happiness
ARTS-BASED PROGRAMMING: MUSIC ANALYSIS

- Target unhealthy messages about violence, strict gender roles
- Utilize healthy coping skills (listening to music)
- Thinking about feelings that certain music evokes
- Unpack social norms about relationships, dating, love, sex/consent
- Discuss barriers and opportunities to push back against social norms
- Explore empathy (how do you think this song makes ______ feel when they listen to it)

*Optional* - Explore oppression and privilege as it relates to the chosen music
MUSIC ANALYSIS: PART I

Have students bring in their favorite songs + lyrics

Discuss or write about how they feel when they listen to that music, whether they focus on the beat or the lyrics, what they think about the song overall, what is the song about, etc.

Begin to unpack (discussion, small group, with a partner, individually) what messages the song sends about relationships, gender roles, love, sex, social expectations of men/women/people, etc.

Ask students to brainstorm ways to push back against these messages

Other options: songs that are currently popular, songs that their parents listen to, assign students a song or two

Not watching YouTube music videos, maintaining awareness of what they’re consuming and who they’re sharing music with, etc.
Develop a litmus test based on group discussion of messages – a rubric the class could universally agree on.

Categories: limited or no derogatory names for women, promoting healthy/unhealthy relationship ideals, expectations of male roles/female roles, presence of consent, etc.

Have students individually find two or three songs that score well on the rubric. Facilitators can compile a student playlist on Spotify, continue to add requests throughout the program.

Ask students to think of someone in their life that they care about – using the rubric, have them develop a playlist for that person that would be empowering and validating.
SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Financial accessibility – purchase (cheap) earbuds or iTunes gift cards if necessary
- Student access to music is key – not all students have smartphones, computers, internet at home
- Spotify, Apple music, and Soundcloud accounts are free for the basic streaming service, relatively cheap for monthly advanced streaming service
- Facilitator should have several examples of their own
- Stay away from shame-based discussions – validate popularity, catchiness of songs and lyrics, feelings of the listener
- Many things can be true at once – it is possible to love a song and dislike the message, music can be empowering and problematic at the same time, etc.
Kintsugi: Japanese art form, involves repairing broken pottery with gold lacquer, based on premise that something that has been broken still has beauty and still deserves to be displayed proudly

*Bonus*: opportunity for discussion about cultural appropriation versus appreciation, fetishization, racism, xenophobia, etc. if audience readiness is there.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variety of types of ceramic (donations are key!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic tubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gorilla glue, instant dry spray</td>
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<tr>
<td>De-bonder, pumice stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paint brushes, gold paint</td>
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</table>
Let each student select a piece of ceramic.

Wrap the ceramic in a towel, place in plastic bin.

LIGHTLY tap ceramic with hammer until piece breaks.

Unwrap and glue pieces together – if they don’t fit back together perfectly, that’s okay!

When ceramic is glued back together as much as possible, paint along the break lines with gold paint and let dry.
**DISCUSSION POINTS**

**What did you notice about the different types of ceramic?**

- Different sizes, shapes, colors – why is that relevant?
- Violence affects ALL people, regardless of stereotypes about who can or can’t be hurt

**What was the process of breaking like?**

- Short period of time
- Hard to break or easy? Did not take much physical force
- Some shattered more or differently than others

**What was the process of repair like?**

- Noticed a lot of frustration
- Some people had an easier time putting their ceramic back together than others
- It was way easier when you had help – role of facilitators as support, no shame or embarrassment asking for help
- Some people wanted to make their ceramic perfect again, some didn’t care if it came back together
ARTS-BASED PROGRAMMING: SOCIAL NORMS

- Student led and designed through all parts of process
- Collected data on oppressive statements commonly used among peers
- Discussed which interventions would be most effective
- Designed poster concepts and layout
- Targeted areas of schools with most impact
- Shared widely on social media throughout the community, received requests from 3 other school districts to implement similar campaigns
I DON'T SAY "MAN UP."

It's not cool.

BECAUSE
1. IT LIMITS WHAT A BOY CAN BE
   AND
2. IT'S NOT A BAD THING TO BE A GIRL.

I DON'T SAY "NO HOMO."

Because it LIMITS our expressions of kindness to others and DISRESPECTS an entire group of people.
I DON'T SAY "MAN UP." BECAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE IN GENDER NORMS.

I DON'T SAY "YOU'RE PLAYING LIKE A GIRL."
It's not funny, and IT'S NOT A BAD THING TO BE A GIRL.
EVALUATION

- Required for grants
- Provides data to use in future program pitches to other schools
- Useful for breaking down barriers in hostile, resistant, rural communities
- Strengthens program efficacy
- Allows for mid-course correction if necessary
- Legitimizes what we already know to be true
**TYPES OF EVALUATION**

**Classroom Observation Form**
- Captures changes in student behavior that they can not yet self-identify
- Tally system
- Open space to write notes of what worked and what didn’t.

**Attendance Data**
- Work with schools or keep track of attendance during programming
- RRVS saw a 60% increase in student attendance on Thursdays, the day of programming

**Retrospective surveys**
- In addition to pre/post surveys
- Qualitative/Quantitative
- Asks students to reflect on their own learning, rather than over- or under-estimate what they think they know
- Before this class, I... // After this class, I...
NEXT STEPS

Follow
- Follow the same cohort if possible

Compile
- Compile data in readable, attractive format, share data with key gatekeepers

Leverage
- When pitching to other schools, leverage that data, especially attendance data!

Ask
- Ask for follow-up meetings, feedback
NEXT STEPS

• Can eventually expand to include community-level interventions, like on-going teacher training, assistance with revising or providing recommendations on school policy and procedure to disclosures, etc.

• Create a binder or portfolio with lesson plans, observation forms, samples of artwork or activities, pictures, etc.

• Very useful for sharing with prospective schools, parents, gatekeepers
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