



# Primary Prevention Talking Points



These talking points are meant to add more depth to the “Prevention Recipe Card,” assisting you in framing and explaining primary prevention work to your agency and community. This is meant to be a resource for you, and is not intended for distribution.

**yes**  
changing the future  
with fresh ideas  
and effective tools.

## Consider the following...

- About 1 in 5 high school girls are physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. <sup>1</sup>
- In Virginia, black women are victims of family and intimate partner homicide at a rate almost three times higher than the rate for white women. <sup>2</sup>
- In Virginia, the majority of first-time sexual assaults (among both women and men) occur when the victims are younger than 18 years old (78% and 95% respectively). <sup>3</sup>

**Is it possible to build a Virginia free from sexual and domestic violence?**

**YES! How?**

**Changing the future with FRESH IDEAS and EFFECTIVE TOOLS.** The answer lies with primary prevention. **Primary prevention** means figuring out what causes people to initially perpetrate sexual and domestic violence, and interrupting that process so that sexual and domestic violence no longer occur.

## **PRIMARY PREVENTION of Sexual Violence & Domestic Violence**

Primary prevention efforts seek to bring about change in individuals, relationships, communities, and society through strategies that: 1) Promote the factors associated with healthy relationships and healthy sexuality, and 2) Counteract the factors associated with the initial perpetration of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. This work values and builds on the strengths of diverse cultures to eliminate the root causes of sexual and intimate partner violence, and create healthier social environments.

### **o FRESH IDEAS**

Looking at sexual & domestic violence through a lens of public health has provided us with lots of useful concepts to make prevention work manageable and achievable. These concepts - such as the “social ecological model” - do a great job of concretely describing how and where we can create the social change articulated since the earliest days of the sexual & domestic violence fields. This public health framework also encourages new partnerships (such as working with sexual health organizations, youth-serving and mentoring agencies, and faith communities), and directly connects with underserved and marginalized groups.

## ◦ EFFECTIVE TOOLS

One hallmark of primary prevention work is that it is very intentional. Great effort is put into defining goals, and determining how to reach them with a given set of resources. Discovering how different activities affect various types of people, and then feeding that information back into subsequent prevention strategies is central to this work. Using such evidence to inform our endeavors means that prevention programs become increasingly effective. The Action Alliance is engaged in several projects to help ensure that Virginia's prevention initiatives are operating as effectively and intentionally as possible.

- **Virginia's Guidelines for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence & Intimate Partner Violence** are the product of an on-going collaboration between the Action Alliance and the Virginia Department of Health to build the capacity of Virginia communities to do primary prevention work. It was created to assist Virginia sexual and domestic violence agencies in developing effective primary prevention initiatives.
- **Action Alliance prevention trainings** provide an introduction to the public health approach to the primary prevention of sexual violence and intimate partner violence.
- **Virginia's Plans for the Primary Prevention of Sexual & Intimate Partner Violence** are the products of year-long processes driven by a diverse statewide steering committee. This 10-year plan outlines a set of evidence-informed strategies, all geared to reach 5 goals. The goals in each plan address important aspects of preventing first-time perpetration of sexual and intimate partner violence in Virginia.
- **[www.vsdvalliance.org/primary\\_prevention](http://www.vsdvalliance.org/primary_prevention)** is the Action Alliance website dedicated solely to primary prevention. Here, you can learn about statewide and local projects, and discover publications and resources about the primary prevention of sexual and intimate partner violence.
- **The Prevention Recipe Card** is the resource you can use in your community to explain primary prevention in a fun and simple way.

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Silverman, J.G., Raj, A., Mucci, L., Hathaway, J., Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy and suicidality. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2001; 286(5): 572-9.

<sup>2</sup>Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, (2007) Family and intimate partner homicide: Virginia 2005, Richmond, VA.

<sup>3</sup>Masho, S. W., Odor, R. K., & Adera, T. (2005). Sexual assault in Virginia: A population-based study. *Women's Health Issues*, 15, 157-166.



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence  
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