The still-unfolding stories—across all industries and sectors—only confirm what too many of us already know: sexual violence and harassment are pervasive at all levels of our society.

A few years ago, we identified a set of norms that increase the risk of sexual violence. Norms shape our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, and influence our sense of what’s acceptable and not acceptable within a community or society at large. When we understand norms as a key factor that shapes the likelihood of sexual violence and harassment, we can see more clearly what needs to change and which strategies will be effective. The norms that increase the risk of sexual violence and harassment promote rigid gender norms that associate masculinity with control and femininity with compliance; abuse of power over others; aggression and violence; and the expectation that sexual violence should be treated as a private problem, not a public concern.

Here are some ways these norms manifest themselves in our society:

1. **Harmful norms about masculinity**: Rigid gender norms about masculinity that promote domination, control, and risk-taking are expressed in workplaces and other settings as an expectation that men and others will push rather than respect boundaries, e.g., “No means try harder.”

2. **Harmful norms about femininity**: Rigid gender norms about femininity that promote compliance and sacrifice show up in the workplace as an expectation that women and others will accept and even blame themselves for boundary violations, e.g., “Go along to get along.”

3. **Norms that support abuse of power**: Our society places a lot of value on claiming and maintaining power, which too often gets expressed as power over other people. Harmful norms about power promote exploitation by people with more power (i.e., adults, bosses, documented residents, and citizens) of those with less power (children, employees, undocumented residents), e.g., “What do you expect? That’s what strong leaders do.”

4. **Tolerance of aggression and violence**: Violence is pervasive in our society and is often deployed as a mechanism for addressing conflict or resolving problems. Norms that promote tolerance for aggression and violence can be seen in behaviors that excuse people who act violently, e.g., “He’s the star athlete of the school, and we need to let him play,” and blame victims, e.g., “Why was she there? Why did she wait so long to say anything?”

5. **Sexual violence as a private matter, not a public concern**: A healthy respect for privacy can turn into harmful inaction when sexual violence is erroneously conflated with private sexuality. In schools, workplaces, and other settings, peers and people in authority who adhere to this norm turn away from what’s happening, e.g., “It’s none of my business.”

These and other norms interact with and exacerbate one another, especially when multiple forms of power inequity coincide—for instance, in the service industry, where women, people of color, people with low incomes, and people with undocumented immigration status are overrepresented.

Norms are reinforced by culture, policies, and modeling by leaders. Powerful individuals in government, entertainment, sports, the media, and other arenas of public life—due to their visibility and perceived credibility—can promulgate these damaging norms, through comments and actions, or inaction.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Norms can and do change. We only need to think of the shift from smoke-filled workplaces, restaurants, and airplanes to the largely smoke-free air we breathe today to see how much can change. We need this kind of sea change in norms when it comes to sexual violence and harassment. We need to move from norms that reinforce inequalities of power to equity; from tolerance of abuse to accountability and justice; and from rigid and harmful norms of masculinity and femininity to a more expansive understanding of gender, rooted in respect for all human beings to live...
free from harassment and coercion.

**A call to Action**

To change norms, we need to think big and adopt comprehensive strategies, from building the skills of individuals to organizing within coalitions for broad organizational and policy changes.

Our Spectrum of Prevention tool helps identify effective, multi-level approaches to shift norms and create environments where sexual harassment and violence are less likely to occur. When businesses, schools, faith communities, athletic leagues, government, and other sectors all take action, dramatic shifts in norms are possible. Below are some examples of strategies to prevent sexual violence and harassment across the Spectrum:

**Influencing policy and legislation**

Enacting laws and policies that support healthy community norms and a violence-free society

**Workplaces:** Federal, state, and local policies that strengthen economic supports for women and families and reduce poverty, economic insecurity, and power imbalances between women and men can help to prevent sexual violence in workplaces. The ONE FAIR WAGE campaign seeks to abolish the tipped minimum wage, which increases tipped workers’ exposure to exploitation, wage theft, financial insecurity, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Additional examples include Wyoming’s effort to close the gender wage gap (see Fostering Coalitions and Networks) and California’s policy efforts such as AB1978 to promote workplace equity for janitorial workers to stop “rape on the night shift.”

**Schools:** Schools can adopt interventions to shift norms among students. Through the Shifting Boundaries project, New York City middle schools adopted policies to address sexual harassment and other boundary violations through enforceable “Respecting Boundaries Agreements.” Students who violate others’ boundaries are taught the skills they need to respect victims’ needs and prevent
future violations.

**Community settings:** Through a public policy of “gender mainstreaming,” Vienna, Austria, has undertaken major changes to its public transit system, parks, housing, and streets to address concerns about equal access. This work requires a deep understanding of how people use public resources and what barriers they face, such as safety concerns about poorly lit streets after dark. Designing public spaces with the experiences of the people who use them in mind can foster a sense of safety and belonging, and shut down avenues for harassment.

**Changing organizational practices**

Adopting regulations and shaping norms to prevent violence and improve safety

**Workplaces:** Organizational practices to prevent sexual harassment go beyond mandated online curricula focused on legal definitions and procedures. A holistic organization-wide strategy to ensure a civil, equitable, and inclusive workplace culture includes policies and practices that promote equity and transparency in pay and promotions; training for leadership and supervisors on how to promote a positive climate where employees feel safe and respected; training for staff on how to speak up when witnessing harmful behavior; and consistent action and follow through when staff raise concerns. Futures Without Violence is working with employees and employers, community associations, and anti-violence advocates to develop workplace policies and trainings within low wage industries such as service industries where women, people of color, undocumented immigrants, and people of low income are overrepresented. Workplace policies and practices to promote worker safety and economic security are critical in industries where the extreme power differentials create openings for exploitation and abuse.

**Schools:** Higher education institutions can implement a range of practices to promote healthy norms and create safer campus environments, including: making changes to how complaints are handled; ensuring that administrators and staff speak up about the importance of the prevention of sexual harassment and violence; integrating prevention programming into student success centers, wellness centers, and other support services; hiring dedicated violence prevention staff; and implementing gender and culturally specific activities with athletics programs, fraternities, sororities, and other student groups.

**Fostering coalitions and networks**

Bringing together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact

**Workplaces:** Wyoming consistently has one of the largest gender pay gaps in the United States, with women on average earning 64 cents for every dollar a man earns. The Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is challenging the narrative that the wage gap is a matter of “choice” and is employing a collective impact model to organize and advocate for pay equity. Together with the Wyoming Health Council, these organizations are bringing together partners from across the state to organize around the common goal of closing the gender wage gap.

**Schools:** In Austin, Texas, the Expect Respect project promotes school environments free from sexual harassment and other forms of violence through coalitions that include school faculty, parents, youth, healthcare providers, and community organizations.

**Educating providers**

Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others and model positive norms

**Schools:** The US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has a number of resources for school staff on how to prevent sex-based harassment, including curricula that demonstrate steps administrators, counselors, and teachers can take to create a learning environment free from harassment through policy and practice changes.

**Community:** Recognizing the important role that faith leaders play in shaping community norms, ACCESS, a nonprofit organization in Dearborn, Michigan, has partnered for many years with faith leaders in Arab-American communities to

(Continued from page 2)

(Continued on page 4)
build shared understanding and develop and embed culturally-rooted, strengths-based messages about gender equity into their sermons and counseling.

**Athletic leagues:** High profile athletes are uniquely positioned to model positive behaviors on and off the field to strengthening sports communities’ capacity to create safe environments. A new effort is Ralliance’s Sport and Prevention Center, recently launched with a multimillion dollar grant from the National Football League. Changing the way we play and celebrate sports culture holds tremendous potential to create a safer game for players and healthier conceptions of masculinity.

**Promoting community education**

Reaching groups of people with information and resources to prevent violence and promote safety

**Community:** ACCESS also has a Coordinated Community Response Team - comprised of school staff, administrators, city council members, and religious leaders, as well as community leaders from marginalized groups, such as youth and new immigrants - that promotes gender equity. They focus on the positive outcomes of healthy relationships, safe families, and peaceful communities, and communicate about the positive association between education for girls and these outcomes.

South West PA Says No More in Pennsylvania engages influential people in the community, like athletes and business leaders, to mobilize for healthy gender norms. For example, the organization hosts a corporate leadership conference around the topic of gender-based violence prevention to increase the number of people talking about the issue and build political will for action.

**Strengthening individual knowledge and skills**

Enhancing an individual’s capability of preventing violence and promoting safety

**Workplaces:** Workplace trainings and educational material can help strengthen workers’ knowledge about what is acceptable behavior and what is not to strengthen individual knowledge that sexual harassment is not tolerated at the workplace. The most effective trainings are conducted in-person by people with expertise, and build the capacity of supervisors to create a safe work environment.

**Schools:** Teaching students to stand up rather than stand by when they see behavior that puts others at risk for sexual violence is an evidence-based approach to changing norms in high school and college settings. **Bringing in the Bystander** and **Green Dot** are two programs that teach young people to speak up against sexist language and other behaviors within their peer groups, and reinforce positive social norms, such as stepping in to help others.
racism, transphobia, and ableism, and social systems that reinforce power over others.

**What does it mean to prevent sexual violence online?**
There are ways we can keep our online spaces safe as leaders and as individuals. Leaders can take steps to secure their online spaces from outside threats, implement policies that promote equality and respect, take reports of harassment or abuse seriously, and hold those responsible accountable. Individually, we can step in when we come across problematic or harmful comments, behaviors, or content. Individuals can also educate others and advocate for leaders to take meaningful action.

**Community-level prevention** means making changes to larger-level environmental factors, climate, and policies to reduce the likelihood that people will perpetrate sexual violence. Community-level prevention refers to more than just communities of people within a town — it can also mean workplaces, campuses, organizations, or any space, (online or otherwise) that has its own policies and rules that impact others.

Community-level prevention benefits everyone in the community, even if they weren’t aware of the prevention efforts taking place.

**What does community-level prevention look like?**
Let’s look at one example of community-level sexual violence prevention. One of the underlying causes of sexual harassment is sexist attitudes and behaviors. So it makes sense that in order to stop sexual harassment from happening in the first place, we need to change sexist attitudes and behaviors.

Workplaces could practice community-level prevention by implementing policies around equal pay, family leave, and promotion practices. Policies like this can help to shift attitudes within the workplace culture from reinforcing gender inequality to gender equity and help level the playing field in terms of pay and benefits.

Equitable policies also set a tone for the values that the workplace is built on and send a message that sexist attitudes and behaviors will not be tolerated on a policy level or on an individual level.

**Implementing community-level prevention in online spaces**
Just like in in-person spaces, online spaces can develop their own policies and rules that promote respect and discourage harmful behaviors. Whether you’re taking part in an online classroom, workspace, or social space — you can take steps to ensure the safety of yourself and others.

**Leaders who are facilitating the space can:**
- **Create community agreements** with participants so the expectations around respectful communications are clear to everyone involved. Rather than issuing a zero-tolerance policy around sexual harassment, name specific behaviors that will not be tolerated and how those who do harm will be asked to take accountability.
• Provide a way that victims can make a report about harassment or abuse if another group member’s behavior is making them uncomfortable.

• Establish community norms around appropriate ways for group members to communicate with one another. For instance, this might mean identifying which hours of the day that group members should contact one another, on what apps or platforms, etc.

• Keep participants safe by making sure the platforms you use are secure.

Actions to take when you see harmful content or comments
Behaviors or actions like sexist jokes, victim-blaming language or comments may seem like not that big of a deal, but they contribute to the same way of thinking that fuels violence. Although they only reflect the point of view of the person making them, their public visibility normalizes not taking sexual abuse seriously. In other cases, they may cause harm by re-traumatizing victims of abuse or assault who read them.

Recognizing victim-blaming or minimizing language
Victim blaming comments may include:

• Comments that question the victim’s actions prior to an assault or after an assault took place — for instance, how long it took to make a police report or questioning why a report wasn’t made.

• Comments that minimizes what happened to a victim. For instance, a journalist may use terms like “forced sex,” “sexual encounter,” or “underage sex” when they really mean sexual assault or statutory rape.

The reality is that the digital world is not separate from in-person spaces. They both make up the world we live in, and the impact of our actions can be just the same. If you wouldn’t do or say something to someone in person, then you shouldn’t say it to them online.

We can step in when we observe harmful behaviors online:

• Report inappropriate content If you see sensitive or violent content on a social media platform, you can report it to the platform it was shared on (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube etc.) in order to have it flagged or removed. Different platforms have their own guidelines on what counts as inappropriate and what actions they will take, but that process starts with you making a report.

• Speak out when you see harmful comments When you see comments that blame victims for what happened to them, you can respond by refocusing accountability on the perpetrator. While you might not change the mind of the person who left the comment, others will see that not everyone agrees with them.

• Show your support to victims of online harassment Check in with the person that comments have been directed at to show your support. Or consider volunteering to be a moderator in certain contexts to help prevent future harassment.

When all of us see our role in keeping others safe online by stepping in when we see harmful content or comments, we can create an environment where this type of content cannot thrive.

Additional resources: We Can Stop Sexual Assault, Harassment, and Abuse Before They Happen by NSVRC. What is Community-Level Prevention, Anyway? Podcast by NSVRC.
Your Strength is Our Strength!
Because of YOU, We’ve Accomplished So Much!

For far too long, domestic violence and sexual assault has affected our homes and communities.

Your continual generosity to our organization allows us to meet the needs of individual survivors and families in crisis. It ensures that SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition has the financial support to innovate, grow and lead for years to come, and reduces dependency on fluctuating government support. In short, it creates lasting change for generations to come.

Auction for A Cause was a Virtual event this past year and amazingly helped our organization raise $9,355 for victims and survivors of domestic & sexual violence.

The Uptown Sertoma Club committee members had to learn an entirely new format and successfully hit it out of the park.

We are so appreciative of Uptown Sertoma, our volunteers, the donors, the sponsors, and our community. Thank you for making 2020 such a success!

The Shop Motorcycle Club, a local non-profit group of motorcycle enthusiasts, volunteered their time to collect toys, gifts & monetary donations for the 36th Annual Toy Run on December 5, 2020.

Over 200 motorcyclists were in the convoy to our final destination, including SANTA. Everyone’s support and generosity helped us to raise $11,450.

A huge thank you goes out to those who sponsored the Toy Run, participated and gave to those we help! You made many children very happy :-(

Ways you can support survivors of domestic and sexual violence:

- **Amazon Smiles**: Support Safe Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition at smile.amazon.com
- **SHRCC Wish Lists**: Shelter, Therapy & Sexual Assault Closet Wishlist is available on our website (www.shrcc.org) under the Donate Page

Donate Online ~ Shop Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DomesticShelters.org Wish List</th>
<th>Donate through PayPal</th>
<th>Walmart Registry for Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Frontlines**

**United Way Funding Partner**

**NEWS FOR YOU**

- - - - - - - - -

**ARE YOU A SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR?**

Are you looking for an anonymous support group? SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition is launching a new online tool for Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault.

**SAFEHOMESRAPECRISIS.COM**

**NEWS FOR YOU**

How can you help us change our community?

Take action. Volunteer. Support!

We are looking for YOU! Help us....

- **24-Hour Crisis Line**: Listen, Help, Refer
- **Clerical Duties**: Answer Phones, Make Copies, Filing
- **Educations**: Community Health Fairs
- **Emergency Shelter**: Groups, Babysitting, Give
- **Legal Advocacy**: Assist, File, Organize
- **Thrift Store**: Sorting, Organizing, Pickups
- **Special Projects**: Silent Witness Vigil, Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Awareness Months, Auction for a Cause, 1VoiceHubCity

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Lindsey Smith at lindsey.smith@shrcc.org

**SAVE THE DATES FOR 2021**

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH (SAAM)

UNMASKING SEXUAL VIOLENCE & FINDING SAFETY ONLINE EVENT

DENIM DAY IS APRIL 28, 2021. WEAR JEANS WITH A PURPOSE, SUPPORT SURVIVORS, & EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT. ([https://www.denimdayinfo.org/](https://www.denimdayinfo.org/))

1VOICEHUBCITY ~ COMING IN OCTOBER!

NEW CHANGES. MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE. CALLING ALL ARTISTS SIGN-UP COMING SOON!!

UNITED WE STAND...PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER (INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE CONFERENCE) SLATED FOR OCTOBER WITH PREVENTION & INTERVENTION TRACKS!

AUCTION FOR A CAUSE ~ VIRTUAL EVENT COMING BACK IN NOVEMBER! STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS!
Most college students, fraternity and sorority members in particular, have become desensitized to the concept of the drunk hookup. Drunk sex has not just become trivialized – it has become the rule, and not the exception, for many college students.

Need proof? Consider the content from an article recently posted to the Total Sorority Move (TSM) website entitled “The Most Scandalous Big/Little Sex Story You’ll Ever Read.” After describing a post-party foursome involving her big sister in the sorority and two random guys, the author concludes with:

“That’s right, my big and I had sex with two of the same guys. In the same night. In the same room. Isn’t that how everyone bonds with their big? No? Just us?”

After that, the rest is history. We wake up with no memory of what happened, and I proceed to puke in front of an unsuspecting family. Pretty casual Thursday night if you ask me” (ChampagneShowers, 2015).

Waking up with no memory of what happened the night before is an all too common refrain for those who investigate Title IX cases. It happens much more often than most people would care to admit. In the fraternity/sorority world, I would guess that it happens every single night on every college campus in America.

The sexual episode described in that article, if true would constitute a sexual assault. The oft-quoted “one in five” statistic comes from a 2007 study funded by the National Institute of Justice (Krebs et al, 2007). In that study, women were asked to respond to the question, “When you were drunk, high, drugged, or passed out and unable to give content, how many people ever had vaginal sex with you?” A response of any number greater than 0 classified that woman as a rape victim and included her in the “one in five” statistic.

However, when you read the fine print of that study, the numbers get tricky. Of the women who responded that they had engaged in incapacitated sex, less than 40% of them self identified as rape victims. 64% did not consider themselves to have been sexually assaulted, even though their experience met the technical definition of sexual assault. The woman who described her four-way big sister sex party in the TSM article certainly does not appear to consider herself a rape victim. The disconnect between how researchers and practitioners define rape and what students think constitutes a sexual assault is vast. What might be rape to one person is just a drunk hookup to another.

All of this is a big problem.

It is a problem for college administrators as they struggle to comply with complex federal laws while being able to differentiate drunk sex from sexual assault (Hess, 2015). It is a problem for prevention specialists who struggle to find the best approach to prevent sexual assault in an environment where the technical definition of assault does not meet the practical definition used by most students, and it is a problem for students who have become desensitized to the concept of sexual assault by being bombarded with experiences and pop-culture messages telling them that drunk hookups are normal and acceptable. The remainder of this article will examine this problem from the various perspectives of those most affected by it and end by offering some strategies to address this problem.

POTENTIAL VICTIMS

If you conduct a Google image search for “passed out drunk girl” you will find pages and pages of images many of which have transformed into clever (or not so clever) memes trivializing alcohol-induced blackouts. I often use on of these pictures as an illustration of the problem involving sexual assault and capacity.
I will post an image on the screen and ask the question, “If this person went home with a guy, and they had sexual intercourse, and she woke up the next morning with only a vague recollection of what happened, who would define whether that experience constituted a sexual assault?”

The answer, of course, is that she would define her own experience. She may consider it a sexual assault and she may not. Whether or not she was actually sexually assaulted will be a very fact-dependent determination depending on whether or not the person who had sex with her knew, or should have known, that she is incapacitated.

There are a number of reasons why someone who wakes up with only a vague recollection of what happened the night before would not define their experience as rape—the most likely reason is that they wanted to have sex with the person, and the fact that they don’t remember everything that happened is inconsequential. But the evidence that 64% of the women who have this experience do not consider themselves to be rape victims makes things exceptionally more difficult for the 36% who do. By creating a norm where drunk sex is “just” drunk sex, those outside of the norm (those who define the experience as rape) often find themselves having their interpretations of what happened (and often their motives, judgement, or decision-making) questioned by others. The reason the “rape vs. regretted sex” conversation often swirls around these cases is because a substantial number of women who engage in sex under the influence do not define their experience as problematic. In fact, as seen in the TSM article, these experiences are often trivialized and laughed about.

Because of this trivialization, it is common for someone who defines their experience differently—someone who defines it as rape—to come forward with an allegation and to have their interpretation of what happened questioned. We have heard the victim blaming lines before—“are you sure you aren’t just regretting what happened” or “why did you go home with him if you didn’t want to hook up?” It is understandably difficult for young people to grapple with these questions and to misunderstand their experience, or to alter their understanding of what happened to them based on the norms of their peer group. Someone who initially felt that they were assaulted may come to feel differently because of how their experience is interpreted by those in their peer group, especially if that peer group is one in which drunk sex is an accepted norm.

The drunk sex phenomenon does not just affect others because of the norm that it creates. Drunk sex also affects those who engage in it and normalize it internally. Imagine, for a moment, that a woman has engaged in multiple drunken hookups about which she has a vague recollection at best and then has an experience that she defines differently. That is, she has several drunk hookups that she is ok with, and then has one that she is not okay with; with someone she did not want to be with. It is easy to think of multiple reasons why, after multiple wanted drunken hookups, someone who then experiences an unwanted assault may have difficulty characterizing that experience as a rape or, even worse, may blame themselves for what happened. “I really didn’t want to have sex with that guy last night. Why did I even go home with him?” “I shouldn’t have been so drunk. I need to be more careful next time.”

POTENTIAL PERPETRATORS
While various studies reveal different results, a widely cited national study by Koss et al (1987) demonstrated that while 1 in 12 men engaged in activity that meets the technical definition of sexual assault, less than 20 percent of the men who engage in those activities consider what they did to be sexual assault. There is a disconnect between what most college students define as a sexual assault and what actually constitutes a
sexual assault. Many men engage in behavior that is, by definition, sexual assault but do not consider themselves rapists.

These findings can be attributed, at least in part, to the culture of the drunken hookup. Through their experiences with consensual drunken sex, men become numb to the possibility of drunk sex being sexual assault. Consider the two young men depicted in the aforementioned TSM article. Their experience may tell them that drunk sex is okay because the women with whom they had engaged in drunken sex defined what happened as okay, even though those women have no recollection of what happened and were, in fact, incapacitated. If this happens multiple times, and on every occasion the behavior is positively reinforced as okay, the lines between acceptable sexual behavior and rape become further blurred. Then, at some point, the line between drunk sex and sexual assault is crossed, and a victim who is beyond drunk—someone who is truly incapacitated—defines what happened differently than previous partners. As a result, two lives are forever changed because we failed to help students understand the difference between drunk sex and rape.

SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

Imagine, for a moment, that you are one of the men described in the aforementioned TSM article. You have just had a foursome with your best friend and two women. You were all intoxicated at the time, and you also only have a vague recollection of what exactly transpired.

Imagine now this is not the first experience you have had with a drunk hookup. In fact, you have had several. You are a bright, good-looking student, and women tend to be attracted to you. You have never had any difficulty talking to women. You routinely go to parties and meet women, and these meetings often lead to sexual encounters. The encounters have always been positive. You have never knowingly taken advantage of someone, and you generally respect appropriate boundaries regarding sex. But you often find yourself in situations involving sex and alcohol.

Now, imagine that your fraternity brings in a speaker from the campus women’s center to discuss sexual assault prevention. This person discusses consent and capacity, and at some point in their program stats that intoxicated females cannot consent to sexual intercourse. How would you respond upon receiving this information?

“What that person is talking about is rape. I have never/would never rape anyone. What she is saying doesn’t apply to me.”

“What is that person talking about? I have sex with drunk girls all the time, and it isn’t rape.”

“If what that person is saying is true, then I’m a rapist, which is ridiculous.”

While not all men are having four-ways with sorority sisters as pairs, many college men, fraternity and otherwise, are fully accustomed to the concept of the drunken hookup. And when they are told that someone who is under the influence of alcohol cannot consent to sexual activity, it goes against everything they have learned and personally experienced, thereby diminishing the credibility of the message they are receiving. Another opportunity for education goes down the drain because we have failed to meet students where they are and create prevention messages that are consistent with the reality of their lived experiences.

Unfortunately, many well-intentioned prevention programs feature statements like “intoxicated people cannot consent to sexual activity.” In addition to alienating students who may regularly mix alcohol and sex, these statements are not technically or legally accurate. “Incapacitated” is the law regarding sexual consent, and “incapacitated” is a different threshold than “drunk.” While one does not need to be passed out or completely unconscious in order to be incapacitated, the person does need to be more than just “drunk” or “under the influence” (Sokolow, 2005). It is important that we begin helping students to understand the
difference between drunk sex and incapacitated assault because helping students to understand and navigate the fine line between those two things may be the most important thing we can do in preventing sexual assaults on college campuses. Frankly, our prevention conversations with students need to be more sophisticated than “drunk people cannot consent to sexual activity.” In order to really reach students on this topic in a way that will prevent incapacitated assaults, we have to be comfortable acknowledging that sometimes drunk sex is OK and begin helping students understand the line at which it becomes problematic.

A person who is incapacitated does not have the ability to make reasonable, rational decisions, and cannot appreciate a given situation and address it consciously. In other words, they do not fully comprehend who they are with, where they are, and what they are doing, or have the mental wherewithal to stop something from happening that they do not want to happen (Sokolow, 2005). The “Who, Where, What, Wherewithal” test is a great way to explain capacity to students. Instead of a watered down and legally inaccurate “drunk people cannot consent to sex” message, we instead need to begin focusing on the subtle difference between a drunk hookup and an incapacitated sexual assault so students can understand the two. Failing to engage in this conversation will likely result in students tuning out a “drunk sex” message because it is so inconsistent with the norm on most college campuses. Professionals engaging in prevention work must be able to understand and articulate the difference between “drunk sex” and an incapacitated sexual assault, and begin educating students on those differences. A message that helps students understand “drunk sex” versus “incapacitated sex” and reinforces a message of “better safe than sorry” is likely a much more promising prevention strategy than a message of “drunk sex is rape.”

REFERENCES

Promoting Healthy Masculinity: Beginning the process of engaging men in sexual violence prevention

Prevention, at its core, is about changing social norms and beliefs that make violence acceptable in society. Sexual violence is connected to all forms of oppression, but sexism (or the belief that women and girls are less valuable than men and boys), is one of the strongest forces. Although the anti-sexual violence and feminist movements have done tremendous work and education around sexism and how harmful it is to women and girls, men and boys have not historically been part of this conversation.* This Technical Assistance Bulletin will offer suggestions and provide resources for agencies looking to engage men as part of sexual violence prevention.

Working with men and boys is sexual violence prevention

As the anti-sexual violence movement progresses, engaging men as activists will further the work around promoting new models for healthy masculinity. Sexism, rigid gender norms, and homophobia limit the ways in which men and boys can relate to one another and the world around them. For example, when a boy or young man acts in a way that is not acceptable or in line with gender norms, he is called any number of degrading names or threatened with physical violence. The names he is called are connected to beliefs that anything feminine /female or any desire other than heterosexual is bad.

Engaging men as activists and allies in anti-sexual violence work will provide opportunities to help beyond their interpersonal relationships with women and girls. Men will be able to model respectful, healthy masculinity for the

(Continued on page 11)
boys in their lives.

What is healthy masculinity?

One of the ways we can do this work is by promoting a model for masculinity that encourages social justice and action. Patrick McGann, Director of Strategy and Planning at Men Can Stop Rape, posted a working definition of healthy masculinity on the organization’s blog. His definition is one that may serve as a starting point for thinking about the evolution of men and boys engaging in sexual violence prevention (McGann, 2011). Each of these components requires training, support, and behavior change – all necessary for changing social norms.

Healthy masculinity is...

- Recognizing unhealthy ways in which masculinity is defined or acted out in his community – ways that are harmful to the self and others. **EXAMPLE:** A young man realizes that the tradition of calling male members of the chess club “wussies” or other hurtful names is connected to negative ideas about what is masculine.
- Actively working toward replacing unhealthy and violent masculine language and actions with nurturing behaviors and attitudes that benefit men and others. **EXAMPLE:** A group of male high school students get together to mentor middle school boys around friendships, healthy relationships, technology, school and planning for the future, and being a good community member.
- Visibly supporting gender equity and other forms of equity. **EXAMPLE:** A local business owner writes to the newspaper about sexist advertising used to market an upcoming event or product.
- Practicing social and emotional skills that positively challenge unhealthy masculine attitudes and behaviors. **EXAMPLE:** A man speaking up at a local bar or get-together where sexist or harassing comments are made about women’s bodies.

Next Steps

Creating or expanding opportunities for men to help is a great first step when an agency is interested in engaging men as activists and allies in the anti-sexual violence movement. There are a number of organizations who focus on engaging men and boys and promoting healthy masculinity. The following online resources have a number of free downloadable toolkits and materials for use in local communities.

Coaching Boys into Men

Futures Without Violence, formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund, developed Coaching Boys into Men as a strategy for using the unique position and influence men have in their communities to prevent domestic and sexual violence.

Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation

The Group Education Manual

The ACQUIRE Project/Engender Health and Promundo put together a comprehensive guide for educating young men and boys about social justice. The guide covers topics such as gender norms, healthy sexuality, healthy relationships, and healthy conceptualizations of fatherhood.

Men Can Stop Rape

Men Can Stop Rape’s (MCSR) Men of Strength clubs are prevention programs focused on giving young men the space to explore masculinity and discover new models for healthy interactions and community engagement. MCSR also has a public norms campaign, Where do you stand?, that encourages bystander action and ally behavior. The Where do you stand? Campus programming guide is also available on the MCSR website.

Where Our Boys At? Involving Young Men as Allies to End Violence against Girls

The Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team’s toolkit offers tools and resources developed through a multi-year program development process. Resources offered include discussion guides, workshop outlines, and a reading list.

* Within this resource, discussions of men and boys will use traditional understandings of men and masculinity. PCAR acknowledges the contributions of male allies, as well as how men who identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender have worked tirelessly in ending sexist oppression for decades.

*This Technical Assistance Bulletin was created by PCAR’s Engaging Men Workgroup and authored by Liz Zadnik, Education and Resource Coord.
SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition (SHRCC) provides services to victims of domestic violence in Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union Counties and victims of sexual assault in Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties.

**Mission**

Our mission is to use our collective voice to address the impact of domestic and sexual violence by providing quality services to those affected and to create social change through education, training, and activism.

**Vision**

We envision a community liberated from all forms of domestic violence and sexual assault.

---

**Upcoming Events**

**April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault Awareness Month</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Child Abuse Prevention Month</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Crime Victims’ Rights Week</strong></td>
<td>April 18-24, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Seek Justice. Ensure Victims’ Rights. Inspire Hope</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Denim Day/Wear Jeans with a Purpose</strong></td>
<td>April 28, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="http://www.denimdayinfo.org">www.denimdayinfo.org</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Violence Awareness Month</strong></td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Bullying Prevention Month</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1VoiceHubCity (Date TBD)</strong></td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Putting the Pieces Together: (Date TBD)</strong></td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>An Interpersonal Violence Conference</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*<em>Unity Day 2021. Unite against bullying- Wear and Share Orange!</em> (<a href="http://www.pacer.org">www.pacer.org</a>)</td>
<td>October 20, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auction for A Cause</strong></td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Please let us know if you would like to receive Frontlines via email?

Contact: SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition
236 Union Street Spartanburg, SC 29302
Phone: 864.583.9803 ~ Fax: 864.583.9611 ~ admin@shrcc.org

---

*Frontlines* archives can be viewed on our website [@www.shrcc.org](http://www.shrcc.org) under About Us Newsletter Archive

---

*Frontlines* is published by SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition, 236 Union Street, Spartanburg, South Carolina 29302. Issues are released during April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

For more information about SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition or comments about *Frontlines*, please contact Jennifer O’Shields, Editor, @ 864.583.9803 or e-mail at jennifer.oshields@shrcc.org.