

Overview of Primary Prevention Activities and Exercises for Groups of Youth

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Bystander Intervention*

Source: Men Can Stop Rape

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: Bystander intervention refers to a person deciding to voice their opinion about someone else's language and/or behavior, thereby working to prevent violence or abuse. This activity provides participants with intervention strategies that they in turn apply to given scenarios. Consequently, participants discuss when, why and how they feel comfortable or uncomfortable intervening when they hear or see something inappropriate, hurtful, abusive or dangerous and leave the session equipped with the tools they need to intervene in the future. Reacting to the scenarios gives participants a chance to practice intervening in a safe environment and to witness the attempts of others. Additional resources on bystander intervention available at: [PreventConnectWiki](#) and [NSRVR](#).

Continuum of Harm to Women*

Source: Men Can Stop Rape

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: In this activity, participant's place cards with different situations along a continuum that ranges from "not at all harmful" to "most harmful" to women. Interesting debates and discussions about gender, violence and their connections tend to result from situations that participant's disagree on. The major point of the activity is to show participants how all of the situations, when viewed together, create and sustain violence against women and a rape culture. The exercise helps participants recognize that we must pay attention to both the intent and the impact of our actions. In addition, participant's are encouraged to think about which situations would invoke a reaction from them and to break their silence the next time they are confronted with one of those situations.

Dominant Story of Masculinity Presentation

Source: Men Can Stop Rape

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: This activity provides a space for participants to work through the messages about masculinity they have received and think about positive alternatives to this dominant and mainstream message, i.e. men are tough, sexual, unemotional intimidating, etc. The presentation includes the [Real Man and the Strongest Man exercises](#), which draw a comparison between how we conceptualize male strength in society versus our own lives. This is a thought-provoking, empowering and non-judgmental approach to get discussions about masculinity, male privilege, and identity construction rolling.

Act like a Man

Source: Oakland Men's Project

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: This exercise introduces discussions about gender roles, how gender roles are enforced and the connection to violence. This activity can be expanded to include "Act like a Woman" and used with groups of men, women or both. It can also be used to connect to how gender norms and other forms of oppression such as racism and heterosexism.

*Currently on WCADV website

Everyday Violent Language *

Source: Ohio Network Against Domestic Violence

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: Language is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to empower or oppress. Our language is full of commonplace violent phrases that people rarely think about when using them, like “give it a shot” or “when push comes to shove”. Participants are asked to write down and share all of the commonly used violent phrases they can think of. After sharing the phrases, participants discuss the implications behind these phrases, especially in reference to prevention efforts.

Healthy Relationship Lesson Plan

Source: Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: This lesson plan contains three activities that engage teenagers in discussions about dating violence, power and control and healthy relationships through the use of dating relationships power and control and equality wheels, a questionnaire about one’s current or potential partner and relationship, and fighting fair role plays. The wheel exercises provide students with the opportunity to distinguish between healthy and abusive relationships by filling in the example sections of blank wheels. The questionnaire inquires about the power, problem-solving, and methods of communication utilized in one’s relationship, causing the respondent to think through the dynamics of his or her relationship. The fighting fair role play looks at trust, communication, conflict resolution skills & more.

Hotdogs for Breakfast: How Culture and Social Attitudes Shape Intimate Partner Domestic Violence*

Source: Adapted from work of Debby Zelli of the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: What do hotdogs for breakfast have to do with primary prevention and changing social norms? This exercise uses the idea of why we don’t (or do) eat hotdogs for breakfast to demonstrate: the power of culture; the cultural construction of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (KABBs); and the ways in which cultural ideas about KABBs are transmitted. It could even change what you eat for breakfast.

Social Norms Pie*

Source: Adapted by Theresa Kuehl of Domestic Abuse Intervention Services and Julie Andersen of Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence from the exercise “Causal Pie”

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: This exercise offers the opportunity for groups to gain a shared understanding of the six social norms that influence violence against women and to explore which of these norms have the greatest impact as to why domestic violence occurs within their community/society.

Sexual and Dating Awareness Activity*

Source: Adapted by DAIS & Youth Services of South Central Wisconsin

Proposed Audience: Grades 9-12 & Beyond

Summary: This activity allows participants to see that Sexual and Dating Violence is a spectrum of actions that adversely affects everyone, not just survivors of an isolated and/or violent assault. Participants stand in a line and take a step forward if they answer yes to the statements about sexual and dating violence and sexual harassment (although they are not given labels in the activity).

*Currently on WCADV website

Positive Self Image

Proposed Audience: Grade K-3

Source: "Violence Free: That's Me!" from Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (651) 646-6177
Summary: This activity, which includes lecture, class discussion and creative projects, gives children a sense of their own uniqueness and worth, regardless of the situations that may be occurring in their environment. It teaches them about what a positive self image is, how their image is affected by others, and what they can do to maintain their positive self image despite difficult personal or environmental circumstances. In addition, the exercise offers several activity options for older children that reach the same objectives, i.e. helping children identify their special and unique qualities thereby building a positive self image.

Sticks and Stones- Bully Proof

Proposed Audience: Grade 4-6

Source: "Bully Proof" By Nan Stein

Summary: This activity provides students with a story that illustrates gender roles and sexist language in the context of a girl wanting to play a sport with a group of boys (something the students should be able to relate to). The objectives of this activity are to brainstorm courageous steps one can take after a bullying incident takes place, to understand the meaning of sexist behavior, to consider the terms "tomboy" and "sissy", and to think about the different cultural expectations for boys and girls. The lesson plans include a story, homework and discussion questions.

Eco-Map

Proposed Audience: Grade 6-8

Source: "Teen Healthy Relationships"

Summary: This exercise helps participants recognize the power of relationships. The eco-map is a visual representation of the individual in relation to the people, places, activities, communities, institutions and/or systems with which they interact. Through eco-mapping they identify how relationships can be both supportive and stressful. The exercise is a helpful precursor for encouraging bystander intervention and ways to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Be a "Lady"/ Be a "Man"/ Be "Yourself" Collages

Proposed Audience: Grade 6-8

Source: "Teen Healthy Relationships"

Summary: Through this activity, participants are able to think through and identify gender roles and gender stereotypes in a creative and expressive manner. Participants are split into three smaller groups, assigned a collage topic, and given the materials needed to produce a collage containing magazine images that perpetuate or break gender stereotypes. The exercise challenges students to consider the stereotypes they hold and ways they might identify with different aspects in themselves that challenge the stereotypes.

Other Resources

Making the Peace & Making Allies, Making Friends

Audience: Middle & high schoolers in classroom, after-school or residential programs

These two complementary curricula designed for young people can be used on their own or integrated together. They are written to help young people break away from violence, develop self-esteem, and regain a sense of community. They provide exercises, role-plays, in-class handouts, homework sheets, and discussion guidelines to explore issues such as dating violence, gangs, interracial tension, suicide, sexual harassment, and the social roots of violence.

Prevent Connect

PreventConnect.org is a national online project dedicated to the primary prevention of sexual assault and domestic violence. Make sure you check out the [Prevent Connect Wiki](#) to read about state-of-the-art primary prevention of violence against women. The PreventConnect Wiki Project will be your guide to explore important issues in developing and sustaining comprehensive primary prevention efforts.

Prevention Institute

The Prevention Institute is your source of information for “all things prevention”. Go to the [Preventing Violence](#) section to learn how Prevention Institute has taken a leadership role in designing strategic initiatives, tools, and alliances for preventing violence.

Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund)

This website offers information, tools, and exercises designed for: Women & Girls, Men & Boys, Tweens & Teens, and more.