

UPROOT!

A Primary Prevention Newsletter from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

October 2008

Preventioneer

\pri-'ven(t)-shə-niə

n. One who, through innovative and pioneering means, seeks to create lasting social change with the intent of preventing sexual

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Revisiting a Holistic Approach to Sexual Violence

by Morgan J Curtis

*holistic: relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts**

In April 2007, I introduced my model for what a holistic approach to sexual violence would look like as a way to explain how primary prevention fit into the rest of our efforts. I want to revisit the notion of a holistic approach to sexual violence in order to examine how our efforts can be integrated in a way that feels more consistent and logical to the members of our communities.

To be holistic means to take a complete look at an issue, rather than breaking it into parts, in order to understand the unique way the parts act to create the whole. This does not mean that the parts cannot be addressed individually, but rather suggests that the way the individual parts operate together is unique and must also be examined. The chart on page three gives a very

basic and general idea of a holistic approach to sexual violence. Namely, this approach emphasizes addressing the causes of sexual violence, sexual violence itself and its consequences. Typically we have addressed the aspects of sexual violence that appear within the dotted line (acts, dynamics, and consequences.) Here our work has the potential for the most immediate and tangible results, but as long as we are only working within that box, sexual violence will continue. If we step out of this box and also address the risk factors, then we will have fewer perpetrators in our communities and therefore fewer victims. Fewer victims means that we might finally be able to serve all the victims who need services. Additionally, if perpetration is less likely, then there is also less need for risk reduction.

One of the traps we've fallen into when talking about primary prevention is discussing it as though it must be distinct from our
(continued on page 3)

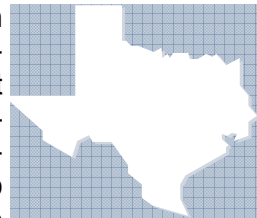
Around the State: Stitching Together a Solution

by Emiliano Diaz de Leon

To raise awareness and fundamentally change the way a small community thought about sexual violence, the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Hispanic outreach program, in conjunction with Impact Church, embarked on the Act to Stop Sexual Assault Project (ASAP). ASAP was an effort between both groups to engage faith communities. Through this endeavor, HAWC staff members met weekly with female community members from Impact Church. In their sessions, the women, who were primarily Latinas, learned about the root causes of sexual violence, shared their stories of survival, and empowered one another to take their message to a larger audience.

The women have been responding to the needs of women in their community, seeking training on how to support victims of sexual violence and challenging church leadership and church practices to create equal space and opportunities for both the men and women of the church. Their efforts are leading to changes in church policy to ensure equity based on gender. In addition, Impact Church is trying to create more of a bridge between its Spanish speaking congregation and its English speaking congregation through the women's group.

Despite having no prior experience with or knowledge of quilting, the group decided that they wanted to create a quilt that would serve as a visual representation of what they had learned and discussed in their sessions. In addition to these changes the quilt helped facilitate in the church where the project originated, the quilt also became a vehicle for discussion and action among other community members around the issue of sexual violence. Now, because of the success of this project, HAWC is expanding its effort to other church groups and plans to engage several of the women from Impact Church to provide guidance for this effort, hoping that these groups will in turn choose a unique project of their own to spread the word about ending sexual violence.





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About Morgan

This month, her favorite color is crimson. She prides herself on being an amateur coffee geek and an aspiring yoga teacher (what have you done for your chakras today?) She has a penchant for coining new terms by combining two or more existing words (e.g., preventioneer) and learned her favorite real word, prestidigitation, from a Shelley Winters interview on Bravo.



Emiliano Diaz de Leon
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About Emiliano

His favorite color is blue, which reminds him of WEEZER's first album. He looks forward to tuning into Private Practice every Wednesday on ABC to follow the life of renowned surgeon Dr. Addison Forbes Montgomery. With his return to Austin, he has re-established his addiction for used books and CDs and is running out of space for them all.



Tim Love
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About Tim

His favorite color is orange – a direct reflection of his favorite cartoon character, T - i - double gah - er. He is a father, partner and preventioneer. He enjoys playing goalkeeper for a soccer team, and is thinking of going pro, once his team actually wins a game. Until his pro career starts, he looks forward to helping end sexual violence.

10 Reasons Why You Might Need Technical Assistance

by Tim Love

The primary prevention team at TAASA is anxious to help you and your community with your efforts to end sexual violence. We've found that spending time with rape crisis centers and their community partners discussing prevention efforts and needs and brainstorming how to overcome challenges, can be highly productive. Below you will find some of the humorous and frustrating reasons you may want technical assistance from us. We look forward to hearing from you.

1. Your community meetings still end up in conversations about increasing awareness of sexual violence and improving services for victims.

We can talk through some of the different ways you can explain primary prevention, and ways to try to keep folks focused on primary prevention efforts.

2. You could hear the community leader in the background say, "Tell them I'm not here" when you called for the fifth time to ask them to participate.

Finding ways to frame the issue of sexual violence prevention that speaks to various community leaders can be difficult. We can help you develop different ways to frame the issue and different talking points.

3. Your community meetings are more like family reunions – all the same faces.

We are available to provide ideas and resources for your ongoing community engagement efforts, including how to engage new partners.

4. When you ask the community workgroup about doing prevention work with adults in the community, the resulting discussion inevitably gets back to youth education in schools.

We can help you broaden your group's scope to include other prevention activities which are not focused on education of youth.

5. All of your efforts to talk with your workgroup about engaging youth in primary prevention efforts lead to conversations about stricter curfews and bad parenting.

We can help you move your community group's focus on youth away from increasing control and toward engaging youth in leadership roles within your prevention efforts.

6. The only thing you've learned from your needs and resources assessment is that you need help with it.

Call us if you are having trouble finding either quantitative (demographics, prevalence) or qualitative (focus groups, surveys) data, or with interpreting the data you've collected.

7. The only men at your community meetings and events came with their mothers and are still in diapers.

Let us help you figure out ways to get men, young and old, involved in your efforts to end sexual violence.

8. You've been staring at a blank computer screen for, say, three weeks trying to start writing materials for a community wide bystander program.

If you are trying to develop materials to support some of the efforts you and your community are planning to implement, but can't get started, or need an extra set of eyes to look it over, send us an e-mail or give us a call.

9. Your workgroup has come up with what they consider to be a manageable number of strategies and activities to end sexual violence in your community. They hope to get to the first 10 of 30 in the first six months, and then figure you can wrap up the rest on your own within two years.

Once you've completed your needs and resources assessment, we can help you develop realistic goal and outcome statements and prioritize those goals.

10. When you talk about inequality as a risk factor for sexual violence, your community insists on telling you that racism is over and that sexism is too much to take on.

We can help you with the language to link various forms of inequality to sexual violence and recognize how they manifest in people's everyday lives. We can also help you talk about inequality through a global lens while still highlighting specific steps individuals can take to address inequality in their own lives.

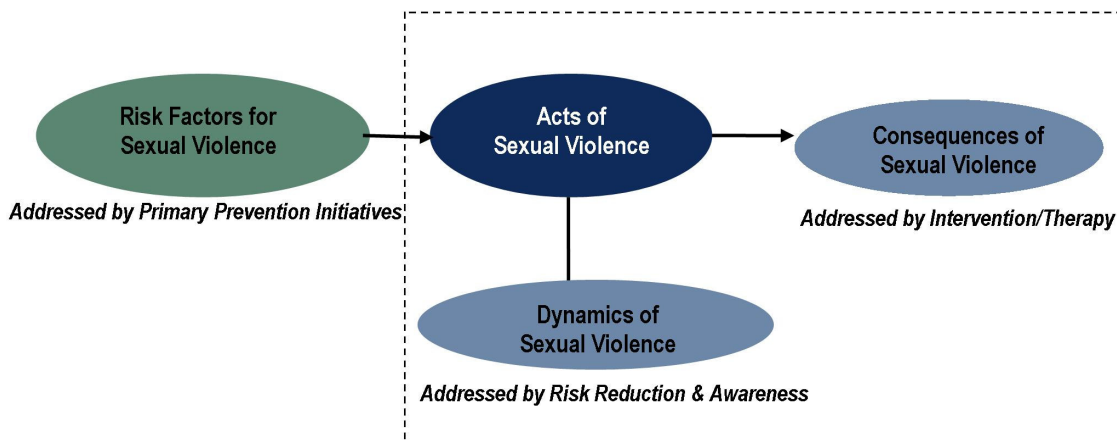
If you ever need help with your prevention efforts, please call or e-mail one of our preventioners or e-mail all of us at prevention@taasa.org. We are available to chat with you or even provide on-site technical assistance.

"What if we discover that our present way of life is irreconcilable with our vocation to become fully human?"
 – Paolo Freire

Holistic Approach, cont'd

A Holistic Approach to Sexual Violence

[A more detailed version of this chart is available in the April 2007 Primary Prevention E-newsletter]



other efforts. Although efforts that could be classified as “primary prevention” certainly must meet certain criteria, that doesn’t mean that such efforts can’t be seamlessly integrated into our overall strategy to address sexual violence. Much of the time, we get mired down in either/or thinking – an approach is either prevention or intervention and never the two shall intersect. Yes, there are profound and important differences between prevention and intervention, but that doesn’t mean an overall strategy can’t involve addressing the issue from multiple angles. Once they learn about the problem, many people, want to know what they can do to stop it and also want to know how to help a victim of sexual violence. Part of changing norms about the issue of sexual violence will involve helping our communities to take ownership of the entire problem.

Let me give you some examples. As part of their primary prevention planning, the Hays-Caldwell Women’s Center in San Marcos reached out to the faith leaders in their community. In doing so, they invited all interested faith leaders to attend a luncheon that involved education about preventing sexual violence as well as time for the attendees to share what they were already doing that contributes to sexual violence prevention. In addition to following up with these new partners about their continued work to prevent sexual violence, these faith leaders also received resources to help with their response to victimization within their congregations and communities.

Another example is SafePlace’s Help Cut out Sexual Assault! Campaign. This campaign focused initially on recruiting salons and hair stylists who work primarily with the African American community to train them as first responders to sexual violence and also to use salons as a place to post educational and outreach materials for sexual violence. These components of the overall strategy were awareness and outreach based, but the second tier of the program was to use the new network that had been created to help change norms about sexual violence and to engage these folks as agents of social change.

Offering information and skills related to both prevention and intervention is a strategic way to engage members of the community who show interest in the issue of sexual violence. As we move forward in our efforts to bring primary prevention to our communities, it is pertinent to look for meaningful ways to integrate primary prevention work into the other important work we are doing. Primary prevention does not ask us to ignore the fact that acts of sexual violence are still occurring, and we do our communities a great disservice if we engage in intervention work without prevention work or vice-versa. I challenge you to start thinking about the various ways that you can integrate your prevention and intervention efforts and continue to work toward a holistic approach in your community engagement efforts.

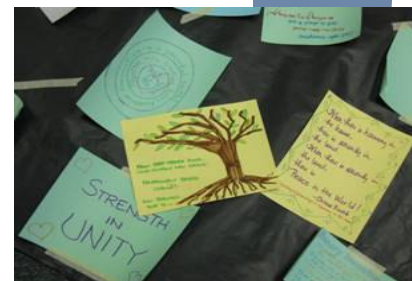
* definition from www.m-w.com



Tim Love and Sean Tate demonstrate how the dynamics of a scene can change when the gender of the characters changes



Geeta Cowlagi of Interactive Peer Programs Consulting introduces a peer theatre performance.



During the closing, participants created images of what they would take away from the training.

The 2008 Primary Prevention Institute, Social Justice Skill Building: Tools to End Sexual Violence was a great success. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to such a profound learning experience.

Resources

News/Updates

New look! New name!

By now, you have probably noticed that our e-newsletter got a makeover and a new name. We hope that you enjoy the new look as much as we do. Each quarter we will be including fun information about the prevention staff, as we did in this one, in addition to our usual articles, information and resources. The new title **Up-root!** is meant to highlight our continued commitment to ending sexual violence by addressing the root causes of that violence. Please let us know if you have feedback about the newsletter or would like to include information in it. We look forward to hearing from you.

Regional trainings are coming

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey we conducted this month regarding your ongoing educational needs. We are currently looking over the results of those surveys and will be scheduling regional trainings and creating some materials based on your feedback.

Speaking Out.

Don't forget to check out the TAASA Blog, *Speaking Out*. The blog contains articles on topics related to social justice and primary prevention that might be useful in your efforts to discuss root causes of sexual violence in your community. (www.taasa.org/taasa_blogs).



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Resources galore

TAASA is pleased to announce that we are building a social justice library and have already acquired a good number of books related to social justice and primary prevention. A list of our new books is below. These books are available to be checked out - that's right, if you are a current TAASA member, we will mail them to you. If you have questions or would like to borrow a book, please contact Emiliano.

Books

Muy Macho by Ray Gonzales

Educating for a Change by Rick Arnold, Bev Burke, Carl James, D'Arcy Martin, Barb Thomas

Organizing for Social Change Midwest Academy Manual for Activists by Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, Steve Max

Consensus Organizing: Building Communities of Mutual Self Interest by Mike Eichler

We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity by bell hooks

The Will to Change by bell hooks

Color of Violence : The INCITE Anthology

Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity by Robert Jensen

The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege by Robert Jensen

The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help by Jackson Katz

Men's Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears Our Lives Apart by Paul Kivel

I Can Make My World A Safer Place by Paul Kivel

Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School by C.J. Pascoe

Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism by Suzanne Pharr

Toolkits

Black Radical Traditions in the US South: A Toolkit for Community Education & Liberation by Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

The Critical Classroom: Education for Liberation & Movement Building by Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

The Roots of Terror by Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide