

# Indiana's Commitment to Primary Prevention: A State Free of Sexual Violence ~ 2010-2015

## Goal Rationale and Needs Statements

### **Goal #1: To facilitate stakeholder awareness of and participation in the implementation of the Indiana sexual violence primary prevention plan.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** In order for the Indiana Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Plan to truly make an impact in all of the various settings, organizations, and institutions targeted in subsequent goals of the plan, there must be an army of representatives from these groups to support it. These representatives must truly believe in the value of and need for investment into sexual violence prevention, and understand that their sectors can be used as a catalyst for social change.

Subsequent goals and outcome statements specifically target state-level policy, the schools systems and the Department of Education, the for-profit sector, and others. Some of the sectors mentioned in the goal are already integrally involved in plan development and implementation, but additional support and capacity can only improve the reach and impact of the plan. Through direct involvement of representatives from the sectors mentioned on the Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council, as well as supplementary follow-up through personal conversations and easily accessible resources related to the plan, the Council will facilitate a broader cross-section of stakeholders represented in the plan. In turn, stakeholders will assist in opening doors and accomplishing plan outcomes.

### **Goal #2: To build and strengthen capacity to prevent sexual violence in Indiana.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** The effectiveness of prevention efforts depends upon the existence of systemic and organizational support of violence prevention priorities. Because the risk factors for and protective factors against sexual violence can be impacted in the context of the many formal and informal organizations and systems in which people live their everyday lives, prevention professionals and service providers must engage these systems and build their capacity to support prevention.

Specifically:

- During the qualitative community-based data collection process, many forum participants emphasized that legislative and organizational policies designed to promote environments that foster healthy relationships are essential in laying the foundation for broad-based prevention efforts. The social ecological model, which shows that the societal/government level shapes the context of other levels of influence on people's lives, supports this data. Therefore, prevention practitioners should educate policymakers and stakeholders about the enormous economic, health and social impact of sexual violence on Indiana's population, and work to build financial and political support to make prevention a priority.

- Professionals identified insufficient funding for primary prevention as a major barrier to implementing comprehensive, evidence-informed initiatives and rigorous evaluation. Strengthening the funding arm of the prevention system must be a priority in the plan. Financial support for prevention cannot be entirely derived from government funding. Communities must continue to build their own networks of investment.
- The qualitative data collection process revealed many forum participants' belief that school systems are highly influential on youth behavior and development. While school systems and corporations cannot be the only avenue for reaching youth with prevention programs and messages, they do provide daily structure and focus for the majority of Indiana's children and young adults. Therefore, the Council and practitioners must understand the environment of and efforts in primary and secondary schools to target risk factors for and protective factors against sexual violence and strategize to enhance programs and messages delivered. Some Rape Prevention and Education community-based prevention programs are very involved in the corresponding local school systems, but on a state level, there is a lack of understanding and standardization of what is required and implemented.
- Youth spend a significant amount of time in school and are influenced by their school environment, but they also live with their families and are influenced by other organizational settings. In an effort to reach youth and their families outside of school with prevention programs and messages, youth and family-serving organizations are included in this goal.
- National data reveals that the risk of perpetrating or experiencing sexual violence among the college population is very high. The qualitative data collection process also revealed unique risk and protective factors among the college-aged population. As another system in which many young adults come to full maturity, there are many opportunities to foster healthy relationship development and influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. A successful and long-standing comprehensive campus initiative (Indiana Campus Sexual Assault Primary Prevention Project) has existed for twelve years in Indiana, and will continue to expand its reach through this goal.
- Adults spend much of their time in another "system"—the workplace. There are many opportunities to improve a comprehensive approach to workplace violence and harassment and market tools and resources, but there is little knowledge of the extent of policies and programs that already exist among mid-size Indiana employers. Learning what exists and building upon existing successes will help advance prevention as a priority in workplaces.

**Goal #3: To support communities in using evidence-informed strategies and programs for sexual violence primary prevention through technical assistance.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** This goal encompasses several different concepts: increasing community efficacy to prevent sexual violence (identified as a protective factor in the literature and reinforced throughout the qualitative data collection process), assisting community-based programs in using the best evidence available to shape their

prevention programs, customization and tailoring of technical assistance to better meet practitioners' needs, and raising standards for program evaluation.

Specifically:

- Many forum participants in the qualitative data collection process, specifically, community-based practitioners and service providers, believed that community-based prevention programs and prevention-focused coalitions have the power to enhance protective factors against sexual violence perpetration and victimization. Capitalizing upon community resources and coalitions and enhancing effectiveness through training and technical assistance will be an effective way to ensure progress toward prevention.
- Professionals identified a lack of understanding of how to comprehensively implement evidence-based prevention strategies and programs as a barrier to measuring progress toward social change. As representatives of state-level entities that have access to the latest information and research about evidence-based approaches, the SVPPC should provide this framework.
- Professionals and Council members emphasized a need for training and technical assistance in creating and recognizing benchmarks for true social change. Demonstration of outcomes leads to continued momentum and sustainability of prevention initiatives. Indiana will look to the CDC's Indicators and Measures Project for guidance.
- With the recognition that resources are limited, alternative training and technical assistance methods will be explored, such as site visits, mentoring systems, and online learning.

**Goal #4: To enhance social norms that promote sexual violence primary prevention.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** Sociologists have defined social norms as the formal and informal rules that a group of people uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Social norms can be implicit or explicit, and encourage positive or negative behavior. During the qualitative data collection process, including the public forums and focus groups with selected populations, participants identified social norms that they believe contribute to occurrence of sexual violence in their communities. Examples of social norms identified include: cultural and social expectations that implicitly condone sexual entitlement for males, a lack of feeling responsibility to intervene in situations, what types of crimes are ignored versus what types are prosecuted in communities, what types of problems are acceptable to discuss outside of the family and what types are not, and unspoken expectations of relationships between young men and women. Each community experiences different institutional and social norms that can be risk factors for sexual violence.

This goal aims to promote positive change in values and beliefs that were identified as encouraging sexual violence. Because different groups cited different social norms based on cultural, institutional, social and community context during the qualitative data

collection process, the SVPPC felt that it would be impossible to universally define the exact social norms to be addressed for each community. Instead, the outcome statements under this goal require communities to conduct their own qualitative data collection processes to identify social norms that may encourage sexual violence within their own populations. Then, communities will be asked to create an action plan to modify those social norms through strategies of healthy relationships skill-building, bystander intervention, positive youth development, and social marketing through appropriate organizations and venues.

*Note: The focus of this goal is identifying and addressing social norms among males that contribute to sexual violence. This is not meant to imply that women cannot be perpetrators of sexual violence. Women can and do commit acts of sexual violence. However, national and state data shows that men are the primary perpetrators of sexual violence. Because there is a more limited understanding of female perpetrators in Indiana and less capability to address the problem, the focus for the period of this state plan will be to address social norms among males. As awareness and understanding of female perpetrators increases, Indiana will be better positioned to explore social norms that contribute to sexual violence perpetration among females.*

**Goal #5: To ensure the inclusion of priority populations in state and local sexual violence primary prevention efforts.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** Throughout the history of sexual violence prevention efforts in Indiana, several populations have been engaged in prevention efforts through culturally compelling strategies that served their unique needs, most notably the migrant farm workers and the American Indian and Tribal population. Over the years, a strong rapport has developed between project staff and key stakeholders. Although the populations mentioned do experience unique and heightened risk factors for sexual violence perpetration and victimization, they represent a relatively small proportion of Indiana's population. Work with these selected populations was based on the expertise and connections of project staff.

Indiana's population dynamic is changing rapidly. There are many other culturally and socially diverse populations in Indiana that are disparately or differently impacted by sexual violence—including but not limited to different communities within the Latino population (5% of Indiana's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, and growth is projected), African-American communities, the Mennonite faith community in rural northern and southern areas of the state, different immigrant neighborhoods and communities concentrated in the northeastern part of the state, people of diverse sexual orientation, developmentally disabled people, homeless people, and others who may not yet have been identified. It must be a priority to consciously consider the needs of these communities in state-level prevention efforts.

Different populations experience sexual violence differently, and prevention solutions must ultimately be generated and executed by the community the problem affects. In recognition of the fact that engagement of this nature requires significant time and

resources, the fifth goal calls for a strategic assessment of disparately impacted populations currently not being reached by mainstream primary prevention efforts, and subsequent leadership development to address sexual violence prevention in three of the prioritized populations.

**Goal #6: To enhance sexual violence data collection, analysis, and sharing.**

**Rationale/Needs Statement:** Reliable and accurate data informs the development of any effective public health intervention. It is the basis of knowing where to focus efforts, as well as a tool that can be used to garner support from policymakers and the general public. Data gathered for evaluative purposes also measures the effectiveness of prevention interventions. Enhancing Indiana’s capacity for better sexual violence data collection, usage, and sharing is absolutely essential to increase understanding of sexual violence and prevention solutions.

Current data collection, analysis, and sharing systems in Indiana are insufficient for the purposes of pinpointing priority populations and assessing the impact of prevention efforts. Therefore:

- The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) will explore possibilities to expand epidemiological support for sexual violence.
- The ISDH will improve its knowledge of sexual violence prevalence among adult males and females through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).
- The ISDH will maintain knowledge of and take steps to participate in the latest and most accurate methods of sexual violence data collection (for example, the National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Surveillance System). Even the best data collection systems currently available do not offer enough insight into the dynamics of perpetration. Additionally, a lack of uniform definitions for different types of sexual violence poses problems for trend analysis and comparison. Nationally, top public health officials recognize these issues and are working to address them. Maintaining current knowledge of initiatives on the national level will assist Indiana in acquiring better data for program design and evaluation.
- The ISDH will collaborate with groups who hold reported incidence of sexual violence data to determine how to better share and interpret it.
- The ISDH will assess exposure of Indiana youth to sexual violence prevention and healthy relationship messages and initiatives (both in-school and out-of-school) through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Resulting data will help to evaluate progress towards inclusion of sexual violence prevention and healthy relationships messages and initiatives within both in-school and out-of-school curriculums and programs.

Conclusion

This section describes the rationale behind each goal as a priority in the state plan. Additional sections lay out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's scientific framework for sexual violence prevention, describe the Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council's planning process, and outline the goals, outcome statements, strategies and action steps, and logic models for Indiana's sexual violence primary prevention state plan.