



**Charting the Way Ahead for
the University of Minnesota
System: Creating a Climate to
Inhibit and Reduce Sexual
Assault and Sexual
Harassment**

University of Minnesota

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Alan Berkowitz

Agenda

- Goals and challenges for sexual misconduct prevention programs
- What we know about effective prevention
- The influence of social norms
- Bystander theory, research and intervention skills
- Lessons learned and case studies
- Recommendations

Assumptions

- Prevention programs must be theory based and research driven
- Interventions must be based on a correct understanding of the problem
- Barriers and challenges must be addressed
- Infra-structures must be created to deliver the product
- Prevention is a community-wide process and efforts must be adapted and modified over time

Culture change is the responsibility of all



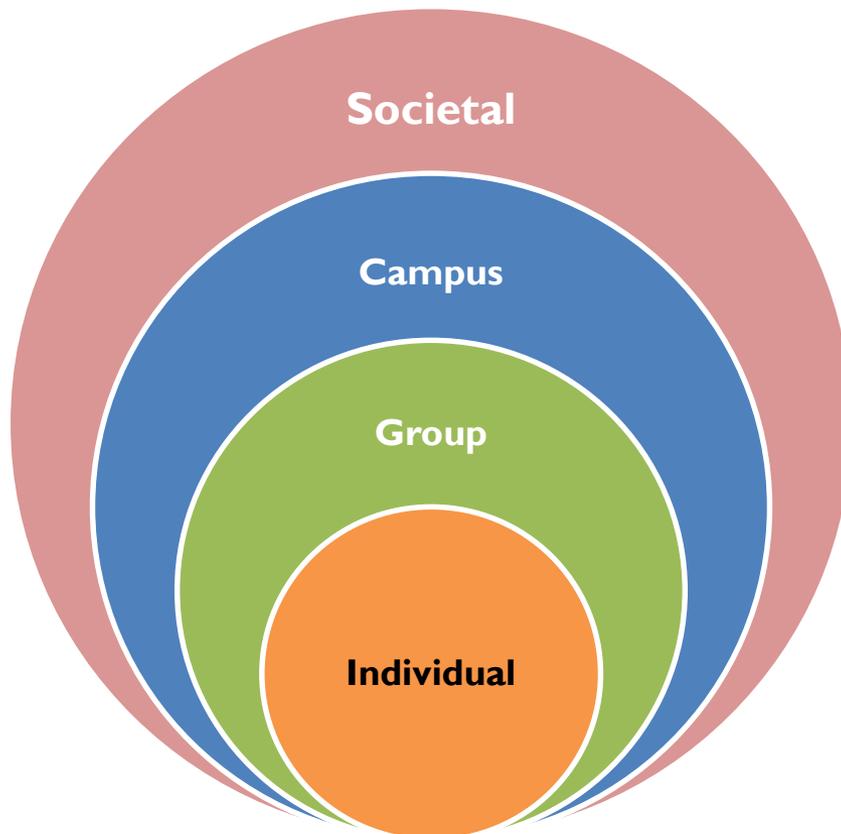
A Paradox

*We must believe all victims who report
and at the same time help ensure that all
accused individuals are treated as
“innocent until proven guilty”*

Understanding the Problem

Examining risk & protective factors across the ecological model will help identify things that may be changed (i.e., goals) and how to apply what is known about what works in changing them.

The Social Ecological Model



Larger social influences
Marginalization and mistreatment
Laws, regulations, requirements
(Dangers of a compliance focus)

Policies, practices, procedures
Data gathering
Training of trainers for programs
Coordination-collaboration (Task Force)

Education & awareness programming
Group-specific social norms clarification
& bystander intervention skills training

Increased awareness and empathy
Skills and knowledge to reduce risk
Changes in perceived norms
Increased intervention skills

Effective Prevention and Response

- **What** we do (content, theory, participants)
- **How** we do it (delivery system, institutional readiness, buy-in etc)
- The integration of “how” and “what” into a **comprehensive, intentional, planned** effort that is consistent and synergistic across programs and departments



Three Domains of a Comprehensive Program

- Policies and procedures
- Services for victims

and

- **Prevention** (primarily for men) and
- **Risk-reduction (Rape Avoidance)** for women and other at-risk groups

No quick or easy solutions

- ...for the first time *in eight years*, our annual student survey of health and risk behaviors is showing significant reductions in alcohol use, anonymous reports of sexual assault, and risk factors for suicide - all indices are going down at the same time, which suggests to us that we are seeing culture change on campus.
- Although we are unable to determine which of our comprehensive prevention program elements is contributing to these positive changes, we have evidence that our interventions are working. Our major interventions include our bystander intervention campaign, a social norms campaign, screening and brief intervention for alcohol use, early intervention for suicide risk, and consistent policy enforcement.

Who do we focus on?

- Potential victims?
- The minority who assault (5%)?
- The majority who are bystanders (95%)?
- Recent research has confirmed that approximately 5% of men commit approximately 95% of sexual assaults, while another 20-25% admit to some form of sexually coercive behavior
- Most men are not assaultive or coercive
- Previous victims, women and/or marginalized groups are most at-risk for subsequent victimization

Environments either serve to inhibit or foster behavior

How do we?

- Teach at-risk individuals to reduce risk without victim blaming?
 - Identify and respond to risky situations
 - Reduce self-blame
 - Teach self-defense
- Inhibit perpetrators from perpetrating?
 - Understand perpetrator motivations and M-O
 - Create an inhibiting environment
- Encourage bystanders to intervene?
 - Understand and reduce barriers to intervention
 - Teach intervention skills
 - Strengthen norms that inhibit violence

Models of Prevention

Always focus on the positive

- Identifying and responding to risk situations
- Teaching consent
- Understanding gender socialization
- Engaging the bystander
- Correcting misperceived norms

Which of these approaches will help us to support victim recovery, engage bystanders and inhibit perpetrators?



Overall Strategy

Develop mutually reinforcing, synergistic programs to foster a comprehensive environment of change that reduces harassment and assaults (within and between campuses)

One intervention alone or disconnected interventions will not change the climate sufficiently to reduce violence against women and others

Avoid “scattershot” programming

Challenges to Prevention

The community must understand:

- The issue of false accusations
- Victim trauma and victim blaming
- Perpetrator methodology and characteristics including warning signs
- That prevention is everyone's responsibility
- That most people want to do the right thing

Two questions

- Do you know someone who has had an unwanted sexual experience?
- Do you believe this person?

False accusations occur but are very rare.

Most victims are telling the truth.



Understanding What We Are Trying to Prevent: Men who Sexually Assault

Almost all sexual assaults - including those of women in same-sex relationships and of other sexual minorities - are committed by men who identify as heterosexual

Hyper-masculinity is the strongest predictor of assaultive behavior

What We Know about Perpetrators

- Seek out vulnerable individuals and use strategies to increase their vulnerability
- Are almost always repeat offenders
- May be respected and have 'plausible deniability'
- The facts of the case may conspire to make the perpetrator look blameless and the victim responsible
- Care more about what men think than what women think
- Serial predators account for over 95% of sexual assaults

What do we know about undetected rapists?

- Do not use a weapon
- Alcohol as the primary “weapon”
- Use of instrumental, not gratuitous violence
- Have access to consensual sex
- Engage in “hyper-masculine” behavior
- From all racial and ethnic groups and sexual orientations
- Are not mentally ill and may be highly respected
- Have extreme over-perceptions of the other men’s acceptance and support for their attitudes and behaviors (false consensus norms)

Strategies of Sexual Predators

- Stalking vulnerability: scouting for a target
- Grooming of victim
- Intentionally increasing victim's vulnerability
- Isolation of victim
- Cognitive distortions

What will work to inhibit predator behavior?

- Correct perpetrator misperceptions about other men's support for what they think and do
- Correct misperceptions that keep bystanders from intervening
- Teach bystanders to actively intervene
- (Empower women and other at-risk groups through effective risk reduction/ rape avoidance programs)

The Role of Social Norms

- “Social norms” refer to the acceptability of an action or belief, i.e. they are unspoken rules about what is “normal” for a group or setting
- Misperceived norms are a strong influence on behavior and:
 - are used as self-justification by perpetrators,
 - influence how men define consent and whether or not they intervene, and
 - reinforce “rape culture” and promote victim blaming

College Student Misperceptions

- Men and women overestimate other's
 - sexual activity (# times & # partners)
 - belief in rape myths
 - willingness to use force
 - having sex without partner's consent
 - *perpetrators overestimate to a much greater degree than non-violent men*
- Men underestimate other men's
 - discomfort with sexist & violent behavior
 - willingness to intervene
 - discomfort with male socialization
- Perpetrators over-estimate others support for their attitudes and behaviors

*Misperceptions create a climate in which
it is easier to perpetrate*



Social Norms: Underlying Beliefs

- ***Pluralistic Ignorance***: the incorrect belief that one's private attitudes, judgments or behavior are different from others
- ***False Consensus***: the incorrect belief that one represents the majority when one is actually a minority

Effects of misperceptions

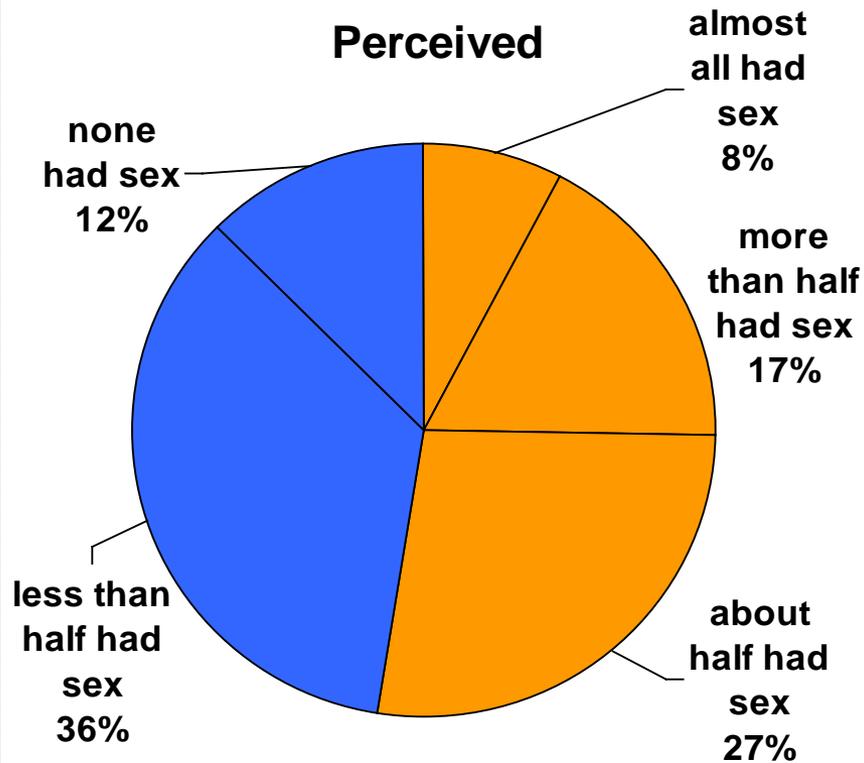
- Men's willingness to intervene to prevent sexual assault is correlated with men's perception of other men's willingness to intervene
- Likelihood of assaulting increases when men believe that other men are more likely to endorse rape myths or more likely to engage in coercive behavior. This effect is greatest for rape-prone men.
- Victim blaming (self and other) is increased when support for rape-myths is over-estimated

College Men's Attitudes about Rape Florida State University

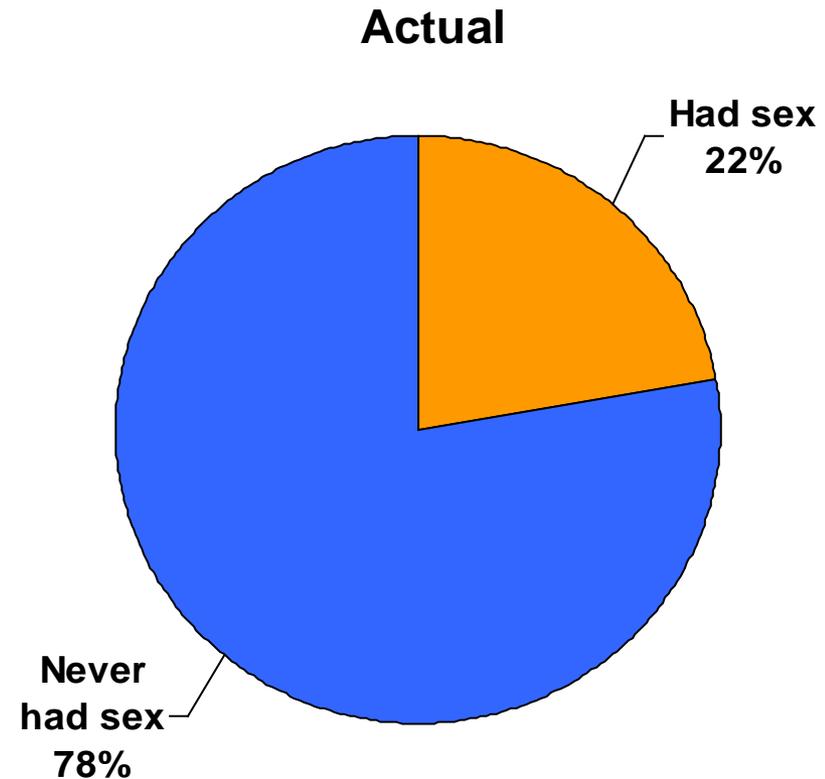
	% who <i>disagree</i>	
	Actual Norm (Self)	Perceived Norm (Most guys)
It is only women who dress suggestively that are raped	79%	44%
If a woman is willing to go home with a man consent to have sex is implied	73%	35%
A lot of women lead a guy on and then cry rape	61%	45%

Girls perceived vs. actual intercourse

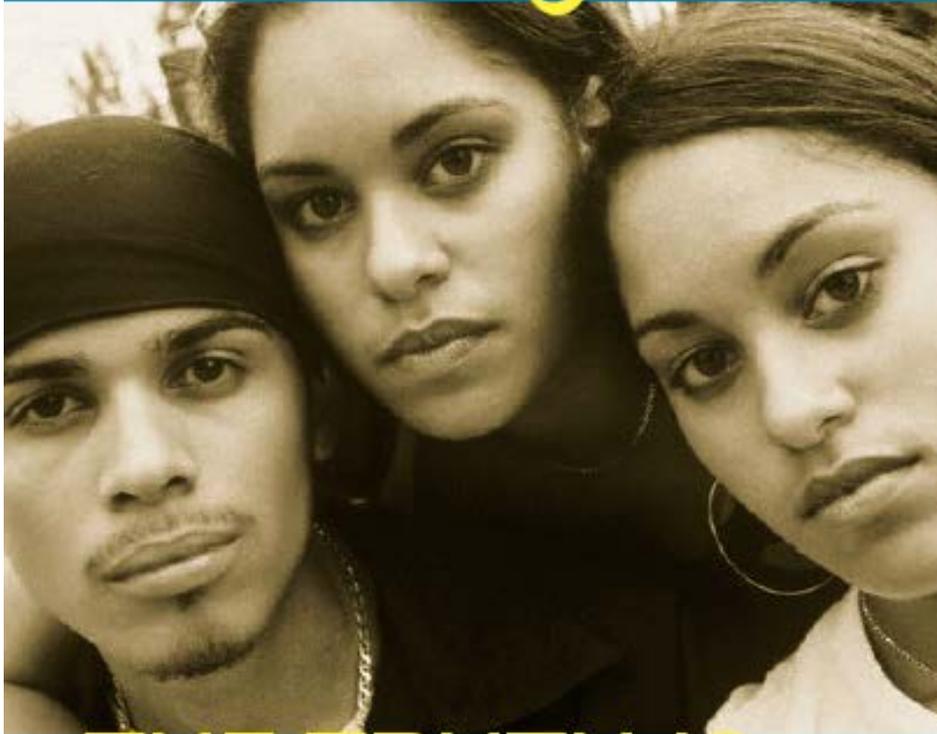
By the end of the eighth grade, how many girls do you think have had sexual intercourse?



Have you ever had sexual intercourse (had sex, made love, gone all the way)?



THINK AGAIN -



**THE TRUTH IS,
MOST PS 140 6TH-8TH
GRADERS THINK SEX
IS FOR ADULTS**

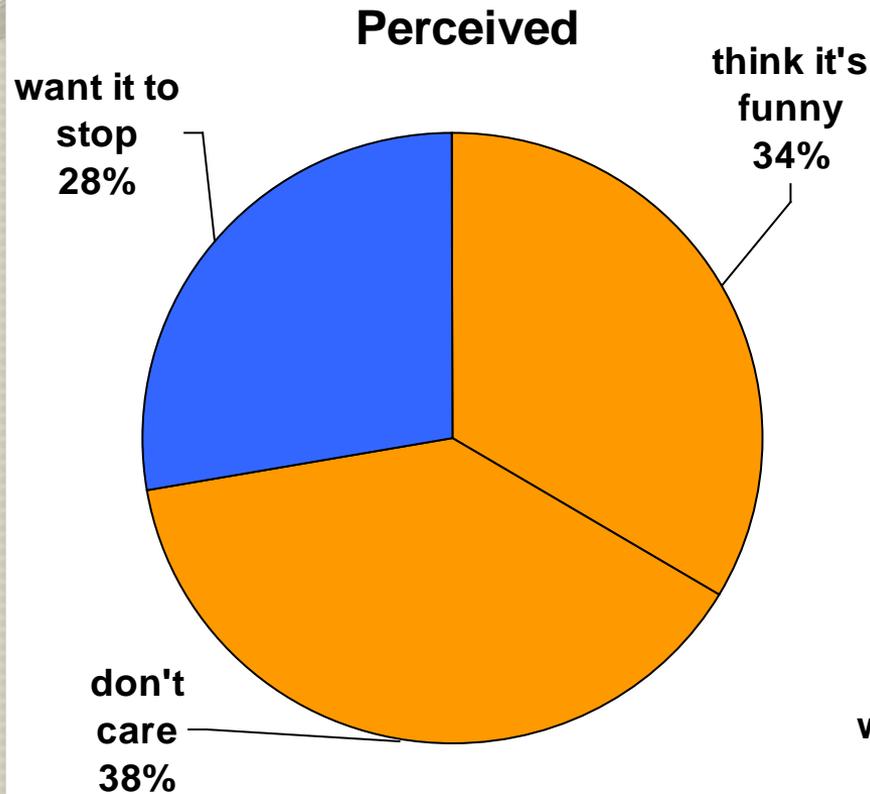
**HOLLA BACK!
GROWING UP GREAT**

According to a September 2002 survey of PS 140 6th - 8th graders, 67% believe that sexual intercourse is for adults in committed or married relationships.

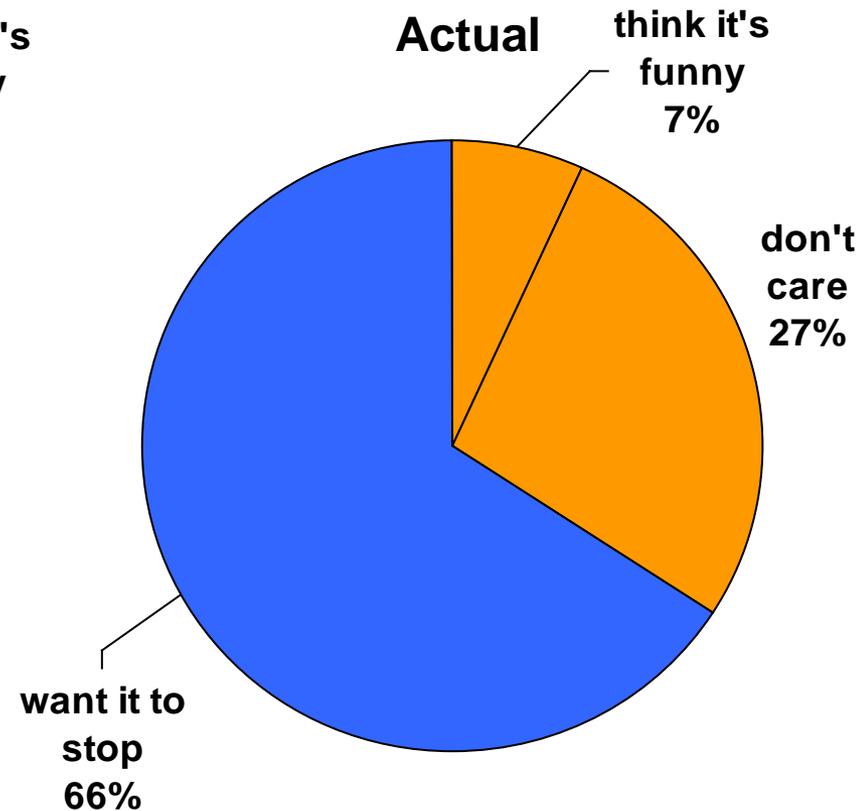
“According to a September 2002 survey of PS140 6-8th graders, 67% believe that sexual intercourse is for adults in committed or married relationships.”

Reactions to harassment

How do you think MOST KIDS IN YOUR GRADE feel when they hear another kid making sexual comments about someone in public?



How do you feel when you hear another kid making sexual comments about someone in public?



Bystander Behavior Stages

(from being a passive to an active bystander)

- Notice the event
- Interpret it as a problem
- Feel responsible for dealing with it
- Have the necessary skills to act

Reasons for Bystander Behavior

- Assume that it isn't a problem because others don't intervene (social influence)
- Fear of embarrassment (audience inhibition)
- Assume that someone else will do something (diffusion of responsibility)
- Believe that others' aren't bothered (social norms)
- Fear of retaliation or negative outcomes

Intervention Options

- Direct versus Indirect: Talk to the person directly or to the others who are present
- On the spot or later: Do something right away or wait
- Types of interventions

Confront the person/impose consequences,
express feelings

Shift the focus (change the situation)

Shift the person (change the person)

Goal: To have more options for responding and feel better about your response



Ingredients for a Successful Intervention

- There is a context or relationship that allows you to intervene
- You see something you feel needs to be addressed
- You are involved in the situation in some way
- You are willing to bring about change

Different Situations May Require Different Types of Intervention

- With peers
- With subordinates
- With superiors
- On or off campus or international
- Student or staff/faculty

Intervention is situation-specific and must take into account personality, culture, power-differences, and potential dangers

Confrontation

- Make it clear that certain behaviors and/or remarks are not appropriate and will not be tolerated (confrontation)
- Forcefully tell the other person how you feel about their actions (express feelings)



Shifting the Focus (Changing the Situation)

- Non-participation
- Deflection (change the subject)
- Shift the focus (by addressing the underlying assumption)

Changing the Person (“Shifting Attitudes”)

- Is non-confrontational
- Reduces defensiveness
- Address the “ouch”
- Helps the person understand **why** the behavior is problematic
- Fosters deeper change by correcting the underlying assumption
- Is not a good idea with “toxic” individuals

(www.ncbi.org)

Active Intervention Options

Decide to Intervene



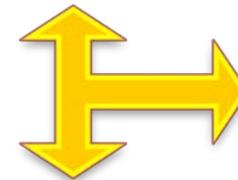
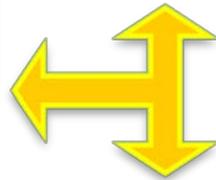
**Indirect
(to the
bystander)**

**During the
incident**

**Direct
(to the
offender)**

OR

**After the
incident**



Assess norm
Engage allies and bystanders
Make a plan
Develop support for next step
Offer support to the victim

- Confrontation
Set limits or express feelings
- Change the focus
Non-participation
Change the subject
Shift the focus
- Change the person/shift attitudes





To Get Bystanders to Intervene

- Reduce barriers
- Correct misperceptions
- Teach a range of intervention skills
- Provide mentorship, practice, and de-briefing for bystander events
- Create a campus culture that supports intervention

What we know about effective programming

- Benefits of tailored programs, especially separate gender programs
- Focus on bystander response-ability in addition to self-responsibility
- Delivered by peers in interactive formats
- Create environments that inhibit perpetrators
- Address male victimization



Effective programming cont'd

- Approach men as allies and not as problems
- Emphasize role of male peer culture
- Examine men's discomfort with male socialization and hyper-masculine behavior
- Correct men's misperceptions of other men with respect to causes of violence and intervening against it
- Teach women and other at-risk groups rape avoidance skills and self-defense

The Process

- How do we move the campus community through the bystander intervention stages?
 - notice the event
 - interpret it as a problem
 - feel responsible for dealing with it
 - have the skills to act
- How do we teach and mentor bystander skills?
- How do we reduce misperceptions and other barriers to action?

What do we know?

- The social norms approach and bystander intervention are promising best practices
- The two seem to work better together than either alone
- Violence is gendered and a gendered approach is necessary (but also allow for a questioning of gender assumptions)
- Interactive-tailored programs are more effective when reinforced by synergistic campus-wide efforts
- For violence prevention, norm-correction is not sufficient by itself and all programmatic efforts must be designed to be mutually reinforcing



Case Studies of Successful, Integrated BI and SN Programs

Ohio University

Gateway High School

University of Central Missouri



Putting it all together

A Model Rape Prevention Program for Men

- Developed by Alan Berkowitz
- Tested by Christine Gidycz of Ohio University in a CDC funded study
- Incorporates definition of consent, normative feedback (about men in the workshop and men on campus), and practice in bystander intervention strategies (responding to scenarios)
- Offered in parallel with a women's program
- Workshop recipients were men and women in residence halls with matched control groups
- Intensive peer-facilitator training & supervision

Findings for Men at Four and Seven Month Follow-up

- Perceived that their peers would be more likely to intervene (including sexually aggressive men)
- Perceived less reinforcement from peers for sexually aggressive behavior (among sexually aggressive men)
- Associated less with sexually aggressive peers
- Less likely to engage in sexually aggressive behavior (1.5% experimental versus 6.7% control)*
- Less use of pornography

**Rebound at 7-month follow-up*



A Model Social Norms Marketing Campaign to Address Dating Violence

Gateway High School
(Springfield, MASS)

Special Thanks to Monica Moran

Boys Attitudes and Perceptions of “Trash Talking” Girls

“I don’t like to hear boys talk trash about girls or women.”

- 83% of male students agree or strongly agree with the above statement.
- 63% of male students agree or strongly agree that most other male students agree with the above statement.

4 Out of 5 Gateway Guys Really Don't Want To Hear Trash Talk About Girls.



In a survey taken by Gateway High School students in January 2006, 83% of male students agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement, "I don't like to hear other guys talk trash about girls or women."

Here's what they do about it:

- TELL THEM TO STOP
- LEAVE THE CONVERSATION
- CHANGE THE SUBJECT
- WARN THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT THE PERSON
- WARN THE PERSON BEING TALKED ABOUT

YOUR SURVEY. YOUR RESULTS.

This campaign is a collaboration between Gateway High School students and the Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force. **Artwork by Gateway students.**

Project funded in part by a grant awarded to the Town of Chester for the Southern Hilltown Community Assistance Program by the HUD, and the DHCD MA CDBG program.

More than 80% of you agree that in most relationships at Gateway...



- **Couples share decision making**
- **Each Person is allowed to have outside friendships**
- **Each Person chooses how and where they spend their free time**

Data from a survey taken by 349 out of 419 Gateway High School students in January 2006.



This campaign is a collaboration between Gateway High School students and the Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force. **Artwork by Gateway students.**

YOUR SURVEY. YOUR RESULTS.

Project funded in part by a grant awarded to the Town of Chester for the Southern Hilltown Community Assistance Program by the HUD, and the DHCD MA CDBG program.

Two- year follow up findings

- Boy's misperception of other boys' comfort with trash talk is corrected
- Boy's misperception of norm for consent is reduced by half (from 73% to 82% with norm of 97/95%)
- Students who report that they have a friend who has been abused increases by 44% (from 18% to 26%)
- Increase of 32% in boys who do something in response to hearing "trash talk (from 38% to 52%)



University of Central Missouri EPIC Program “Encouraging Positive Interventions in Chapters”

- Collect actual and perceived norms in Greek chapters for alcohol-related bystander scenarios
- Share results of data with chapters in tailored workshops
- Social norms media campaign
- Active BI Video contest
- Also offered as an in-class program on sexual assault for first year students

Program Overview

- 90 minutes
- Shared social norms data and taught theory
- Taught bystander intervention theory and skills
- Used clickers to teach, check understanding and reflect
- Practiced skills with role plays and scenario worksheets



Data Collected

- Norms for alcohol use
- When I would like someone to intervene on my behalf
- When I would intervene in a situation
- How much I am bothered by risky situations

How much does the following bother you? (fraternity)

Noticing an intoxicated chapter member harassing or bothering someone

	Perception	Reality
Not at all	7.7%	11.5%
Somewhat	50.0%	11.5%
Very much	38.5%	73.1%



What I want from my sisters...

(Data from one sorority)

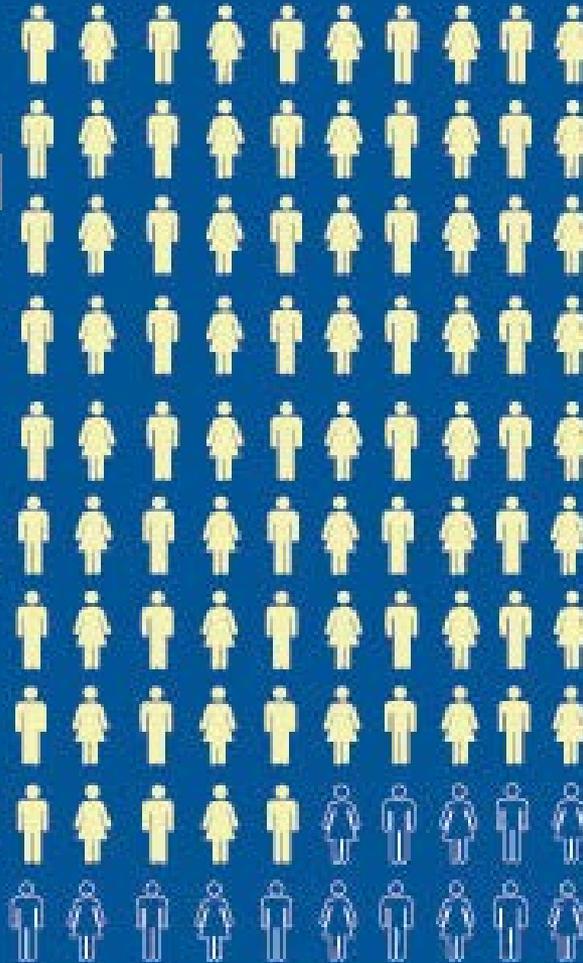
- 100% of my sisters said they want their sisters to...
 - Step in when I'm drinking to the point of harming myself
 - Step in if I'm drinking to the point of putting the health & safety of others in jeopardy
 - Step in if I'm intoxicated and embarrassing the chapter

What are the "what I want from my peers" questions for sexual assault?

Did You Know?

85% of UCM
Greek students
think it's
unacceptable
to miss class
due to alcohol.

Data collected from Fall
2009 EPIC survey.



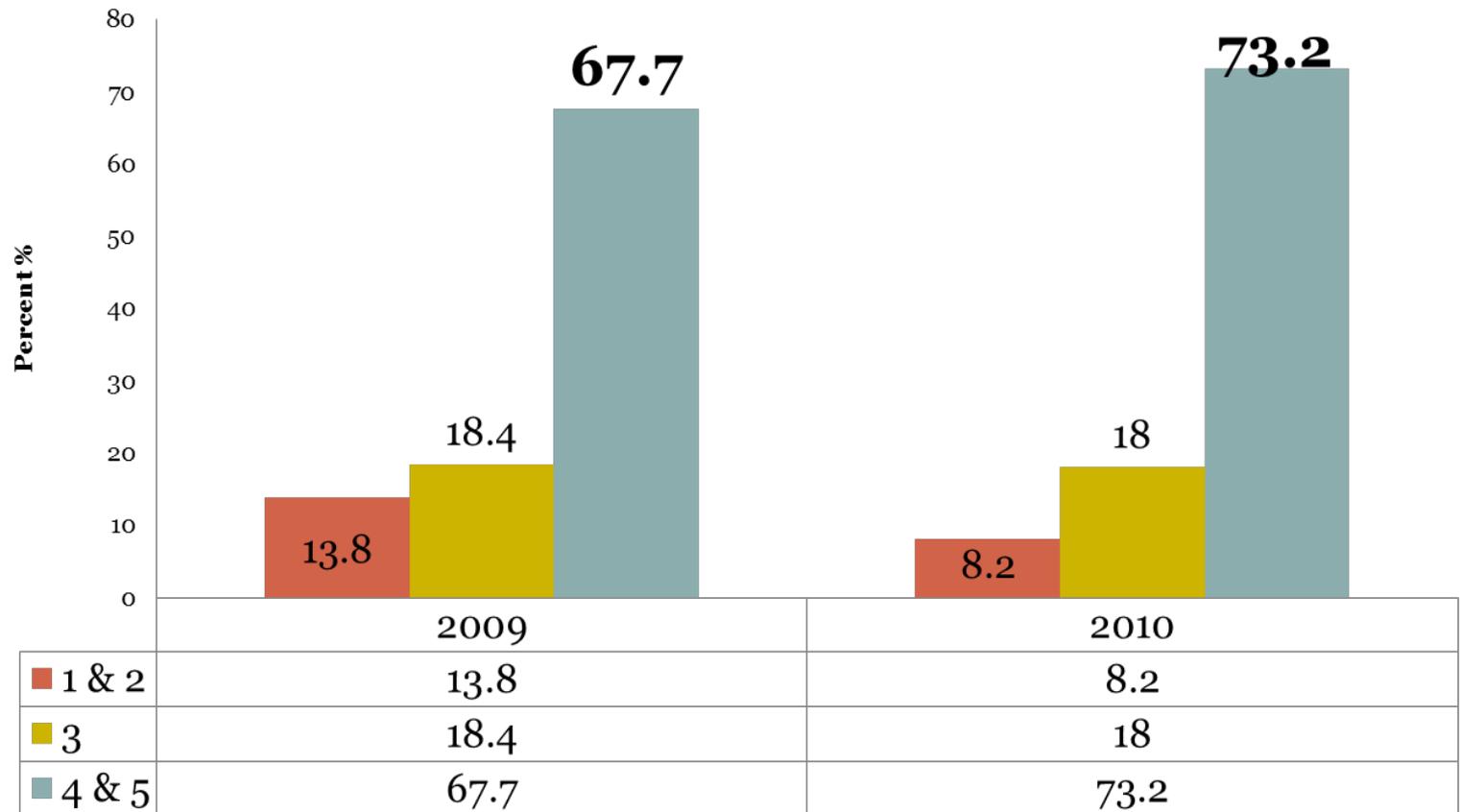
The contents of this ad were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. For more information contact the VSAP office at (650) 543-4044.



Intervening Data

Comfort level- Cutting off a chapter member

Scale 1-5, 1 = Not at all, 5 = Very



The Role of Leadership

- Environmental factors inhibit or permit problems
- Leadership is an important environmental factor
- Do leaders set a climate that serves to inhibit problems and encourage individuals to seek help?
- Are leader messages consistent across campus?
- Are bystanders expected to intervene?
- Is there too much focus on the “problem”?
- Is positive behavior rewarded and reinforced?
- Are leaders perceived as accessible and sympathetic to individuals who might have something to report?
- Are efforts visible and proactive?
- Who are the “carriers of the misperception”?

Summary: Elements of Success

- May be single issue or multiple issue
- Contains multiple synergistic elements (including curriculum infusion)
- Addresses barriers and educates the community
- Has an interactive component
- Reaches students and staff through multiple channels and venues
- Trains leaders in skills
- Involves key stakeholders
- Uses an oversight coordinating committee
- Sustained over time
- Positive focus, discernible steps, actionable
- Is adapted/tailored to the campus
- Develops methods of measuring the problem, evaluating changes, and collecting data for use in prevention programs

Conclusions

- Identify and support healthy norms
- Focus on bystander intervention (BI)
- Avoid scare tactics and don't focus exclusively on the negative
- Create environments that inhibit perpetrators and problem individuals
- Create programs that are mutually reinforcing, synergistic and consistent for both prevention and response across issues and structures
- Educate the community about victim blaming and false accusations and teach consent in the context of BI



Remember:

No quick or easy solutions

- ...for the first time *in eight years*, our annual student survey of health and risk behaviors is showing significant reductions in alcohol use, anonymous reports of sexual assault, and risk factors for suicide - all indices are going down at the same time, which suggests to us that we are seeing culture change on campus.
- Although we are unable to determine which of our comprehensive prevention program elements is contributing to these positive changes, we have evidence that our interventions are working. Our major interventions include our bystander intervention campaign, a social norms campaign, screening and brief intervention for alcohol use, early intervention for suicide risk, and consistent policy enforcement.

Concluding Remarks

- Change takes time and collaboration
- Doing less can be more effective than trying to do too much
- Address barriers before proceeding
- Have a long-range vision and how you want to get there and a steering committee to implement it
- Get key stake-holders on board and to understand of what is involved
- Address policy-enforcement issues
- Create synergy and resource sharing between campuses and share best practices

Recent Articles

- Getting in Touch with My Ism's: Lessons Learned in the Journey of an Aspiring Ally
- Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence and Abuse: The Social Norms Approach
- How College Men Feel about Being Men and “Doing the Right Thing”
- RESPONSE ABILITY: The Complete Guide to Bystander Behavior
- A Grassroots Guide to Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence in Our Communities: A Social Norms Toolkit (NJCASA)
- With CA Gidycz, and LM Orchowski. Preventing sexual aggression among college men: An evaluation of a social norms and bystander intervention program. *2011 Violence Against Women, 17(6):720-742.*
- With LF Salazar, A, Vivolo-Kantor, & J Hardin. A Web-Based Sexual Violence Bystander Intervention for Male College Students: Randomized Control Trial. *2014 Journal of Medical Internet Research, 16(9):e203.*

Available at www.alanberkowitz.com



**Thank you for your
willingness to lead by
expressing values in action**



Contact Information

Alan Berkowitz
Independent Consultant
Mount Shasta, CA 96067

alan@fltg.net

www.alanberkowitz.com