

Success
Stories

Evaluating NJ's Sexual Violence Prevention Strategies

New Jersey is implementing evidence-informed bystander intervention and media literacy prevention strategies. We need to know whether the strategies being employed are achieving their intended outcomes.



Challenge

Youth and young adults face a daily barrage of messages from a variety of sources. These messages shape their attitudes, thoughts and behaviors in regards to gender equity and sexually violent behaviors. Many of these messages present negative stereotypes about women, men and relationships. It is important we offer tools to assist them in as they process media, so it does not become an accepted "norm." They also need tools to feel confident to intervene as a responsive bystander when they observe behaviors that are sexually violent or might contribute to sexual violence. How can we know if the RPE-funded Sexual Violence Programs' prevention strategies to address these challenges are implemented as intended, in a way that helps achieve our goal of preventing sexual violence?

Solution

A Bystander Intervention/Media Literacy Workgroup consisting of the Prevention Coordinators from each of the RPE funded Sexual Violence Programs was convened in 2010 to explore the implementation and evaluation of the prevention strategies. Co-facilitated by NJCASA's Prevention Director and an Empowerment Evaluator, this workgroup met (and continues to meet) on a monthly basis to provide a collaborative learning forum for idea sharing and mentoring related to prevention strategy implementation and evaluation. This workgroup took on the responsibility of creating and piloting process and outcomes evaluation tools for both the bystander intervention and media literacy prevention strategies. The process evaluation tools ensure that the core principles and content of each strategy are implemented as intended, and document any adaptations to the core components to guide continuous quality improvement. Additionally, the workgroup created a New Jersey Prevention Guidance Document that provides definitions, guidelines and standardized processes for the consistent implementation of prevention strategies and collection of evaluation data. These implementation and evaluation guidance tools can also be found on NJCASA's website at: <http://njcasa.org/prevention/evaluation>.

Highlights

New Jersey wants to know if the evidence-informed strategies being implemented by the RPE-funded Sexual Violence Programs are having a positive impact in preventing sexual violence. A workgroup of Prevention Coordinators from the RPE funded Sexual Violence Program was convened to create process and evaluation tools, and a guidance document to ensure consistency of statewide evaluation. In addition to the implementation and evaluation tools created, there were several other positive outcomes from this collaborative process.

Results

There were several positive outcomes from the collaborative process by which the evaluation and guidance tools were created:

- The tools ensure that evaluation is consistently conducted statewide leading to more meaningful data and an increased quality of that data.
- This shared effort of each RPE funded Sexual Violence Program also resulted in each Program having a strong understanding of the importance of evaluation, commitment to implementing each strategy as intended (e.g. fidelity) and buy-in to the evaluation process.
- The combined efforts of each Sexual Violence Program participating on the workgroup that created these tools resulted in a true collaborative peer-based learning forum for idea exchange, resource sharing, and mentoring related to implementation and evaluation. The workgroup will continue to meet as data results are submitted to continuously review and revise the tools and processes, thereby ensuring statewide prevention strategy fidelity and the best quality of statewide data.
- The evaluation and guidance tools will be easily accessible for all new prevention staff joining any RPE funded Sexual Violence Program, and will provide all the core information needed to implement and evaluate strategies. Additionally all new prevention staff will be encouraged to participate at the monthly meetings of the workgroup. This will help to significantly reduce the learning curve when there is staff turnover.

"Evaluation is the key component that allows us to learn from our challenges and build upon our successes. Our capacity to share outcomes with our community partners is confirmation that the primary prevention process is moving forward."

- Kathryn Cleary, Prevention Coordinator

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