

Prevention Team Helps Stop Sexual Violence Before It Starts

Issue

Rape is a major crime and health problem in our country today. It is estimated that one in four women and one in six males will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. The number of forcible rapes reported to law enforcement in South Carolina is only about 25% of the number of clients served in the state's 16 sexual assault centers.

In 2005, staff and volunteers from the 16 Sexual Assault Centers reached over 156,180 citizens with sexual assault prevention and education messages through health fairs, community education seminars, and classroom presentations in child care centers through college classes. With the new push from the Centers of Disease Control to move our education efforts to concentrate on primary prevention, preventing sexual violence (sv) before it has even occurred, it was clear that our education efforts needed to be revamped.

Intervention

With current Block Grant funds in the amount of \$98,246 funding less than two FTE's, it was imperative that a way was found to reach a statewide audience with a consistent sexual violence primary prevention audience. A team of professionals in sexual violence prevention consisting of two sv community educators, a sv educator from a major university, a sv program person from the state coalition and the state health department came together and participated in the CDC's PREVENT Institute throughout the year. The team surveyed the centers and quickly realized center staff lacked the training, tools and information to make this move to sv primary prevention education.

The Team's goals were to create cadre of trainers at the 16 sexual assault centers so there would be a more systematic approach to primary prevention of the spectrum of sexual violence and to provide information, curricula and materials to assist this effort.

Impact

In July, the Team provided training to approximately 30 individuals at a statewide SV conference. The audience included a broad range of individuals including law enforcement, mental health professionals, and social service workers. Another training for Center staff is being planned in October 2006.

Prevention Action Kits are in the process of being assembled and include: examples of curricula, bookmarks, PowerPoint presentations, fact sheets, info card templates, sample op-ed pieces, videos, and CDs.

Sexual Violence is a serious public health problem that can have lasting, harmful effects. It is important to begin building the primary prevention foundations so we can help stop the problem before it ever starts.

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