Ending Rape: Effective Strategies for Reducing Sexual and Relationship Violence on a College Campus

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Abstract

This capstone was done in conjunction with the Maxwell Citizenship and Civic Engagement program (CCE) and consists of a CCE Action Plan conducted in Spring 2017 as well as this accompanying essay. The action plan created a program called "Don't Cancel That Class" that encourages professors who would otherwise have to cancel class to instead have the Office of Health Promotion (OHP) use the time to conduct a training session on sexual and relationship violence prevention. As part of the action plan, I worked with OHP to develop a webpage where professors can easily request a program. Don't Cancel That Class was developed based on the work presented in this paper, which analyzes how to best craft an effective campus strategy to prevent sexual and relationship violence.

http://healthpromotion.syr.edu/Resources/dont-cancel-that-class.html

Executive Summary

This capstone includes an action plan created for the Maxwell Citizenship and Civic Engagement senior capstone project as well as an additional essay written for the Renée Crown Honors Program. The action plan is based on research done on how to create an effective college campus sexual and relationship violence prevention strategy. The following paper is an analysis and interpretation of this research. Drawing on the work of Nation et al., the Centers for Disease Control, and other research, it offers concrete tools and initiatives to assess and improve a college's violence prevention efforts.

Effective strategies include comprehensive programming that goes beyond one-time events and is integrated into the entire campus and throughout the academic year. Rape culture is recognized on campus and efforts actively work against it. Bystander intervention programs on campus provide tools to students invested in ending SRV and sexual violence is recognized as an issue that impacts people of all genders.

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Preface

It is important to acknowledge that I am a cisgender, heterosexual, white, middle-class, enabled male with enormous privilege. I have never been the victim of sexual or relationship violence. I am an advocate because I'm a feminist who cares deeply about how patriarchy and rape culture negatively people of all genders. This paper is written from a Western world perspective in a country that has participated in genocidal colonialism both domestically and abroad, and my perception of effective ways to combat rape culture is couched within this geography and ideology. Although rape culture impacts everyone, marginalized groups are disproportionately victimized by SRV and I am not a member of any of these marginalized groups.

The impetus for this capstone comes from my involvement in the summer of 2016 with the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault. As any intern at MNCASA, drawing on literary research and insights from a Minnesota campus summit on violence prevention, I created an initial framework for how to assess a college sexual and relationship violence prevention program.

Acknowledgements

Glossary of Terms

FETI technique	A method of trauma informed interviewing that allows the victim of sexual violence to describe their experience both physically and emotionally. For more: http://www.mncasa.org/assets/PDFs/FETI%20-%20Public%20Description.pdf
Heteronormative	Of, relating to, or based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality (Merriam Webster)
Patriarchy	A political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (hooks, n.d).
Peer-educators	Students who are trained to provide programs for fellow students regarding healthy relationships and sexual and relationship violence prevention.
Rape Culture	The system that supports male sexual aggression, normalizes violence against women, and blames women for the violence perpetrated against them (American College Health Association, 2008).
Restorative Justice	Crime violates people and violations create obligations. Justice should involve victims, offenders and community members in a search to identify needs and obligations, so as to promote healing among the parties involved (Zehr, n.d.)
Risk reduction programs	Efforts that focus on how women can protect themselves from being raped or assaulted.
Transformative Justice	Transformative justice goes beyond restorative justice and acknowledges the inequalities that exist in social structures and works to transform those inequalities.
Victim-survivors	An individual who has experienced sexual or relationship violence.

<u>Introduction</u>

  Rape Culture is all around us. It is the system that supports male sexual aggression, normalizes violence against women, and blames women for the violence perpetrated against them (American College Health Association, 2008). It is inherently heteronormative, assuming that normal sexual interaction exists <u>only</u> between men and women (and that men and women are the only two genders), with men inhabiting <u>a</u> dominant role and gaining power and prestige from their sexual conquests. Within rape culture, women act as gatekeepers of men's sexual satisfaction – allowing them to fulfill the masculine role that patriarchy constructs. Women are expected to withhold sex from men as long as possible as if sex was something to give up and that women lose something <u>by doing so</u> (Valenti, 2010). Rape culture makes male sexual aggression and violence acceptable. It perpetuates the idea that "boys will boys" and blames victims for putting themselves in positions to be raped.

  Within this gatekeeper model of rape culture, sex and sexuality are not viewed as healthy, normal expressions for men and women equally. Sex has been normalized to focus only on pleasure for the men often at the expense or duty of women. This model creates a double standard in which men gain status from sexual interactions while women are viewed poorly for having too much sexual experience. These dynamics also focus only on heterosexual relationships, further marginalizing populations that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientations. This heteronormative lens is used to justify violence and can be seen statistically as these groups are more likely to be victimized. These cultural norms translate to victims of sexual violence facing many barriers to seeking justice. An estimated 90% of rapes on campus are unreported (Fisher et al. 2000) and the vast majority of rapists never see a day in jail. <u>R</u>ape culture <u>arises from the</u> societal attitudes that construct masculinity in such a way that men

need to prove their manhood through sexual conquest. It is a system that is upheld by and also

mutually reinforces patriarchy and male supremacy. Patriarchy is the dominance of men over

women, as bell hooks writes:

> Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating,
>
> superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with
>
> the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through
>
> various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (hooks, n.d).

This system of dominance allows for rape culture to exist, while rape culture at the same time

works to further women's subjugation by forcing women into a cycle of fear, violence, and

trauma. Rape culture is buttressed by patriarchal objectification of women, because after all, one

doesn't ask an object for consent. Fundamentally, rape continues to occur because of cultural and

societal attitudes that allow rape culture to persist (ACHA, 2008).

The purpose of this paper is to develop an effective strategy to tackle rape culture on

college campuses. I analyze the available literature on effective ways to prevent sexual and

relationship violence (SRV) on campus and then present recommendations on how to craft an

effective SRV prevention program.

Principles for Effective SRV Prevention

The most comprehensive and authoritative study on effective prevention programs was

conducted by Nation et al. and has been endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Nation's team of researchers examined the available literature on prevention programs focused

on four content areas: drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, school failure, and juvenile

delinquency. The team reviewed studies of prevention programs within these areas to identify

common components of effective prevention programs. Through this process they determined

nine key elements of effective prevention programs. According to their research, effective prevention programs were: (1) comprehensive, (2) used varied teaching methods, (3) had a sufficient dosage, (4) were theory driven, (5) displayed positive relationships, (6) were appropriately timed, (7) were socio-culturally relevant, (8) had documented outcomes, and (9) had well-trained staff.

Traditionally, many rape prevention programs focused only on risk reduction. Such programs focused only on how women could prevent themselves from being raped (Gibbons, 2013). Women were taught never to walk home alone at night; never to accept a drink unless they had seen it poured; and never to go upstairs with a male at party. While it's important to reduce the risk of victimization, this puts the onus on preventing sexual assault on the victim and leaves bystanders and perpetrators out of the discussion of sexual violence prevention. In this way, risk reduction programs are reproducing a narrative within rape culture: that men are incapable of changing their behavior and are only focused on sexual conquest. These programs are not what Nation et al. has deemed to be comprehensive.

A comprehensive program provides multiple interventions to prevent the unwanted behavior. In the context of SRV prevention, this could mean a mix of the following: (1) primary prevention efforts of reframing masculinity; (2) providing consent education; (3) empowering bystanders to recognize warning signs of sexual violence and providing tools to intervene; and (4) providing risk reduction strategies for potential SRV victims.

SRV can occur anywhere and is perpetrated much more often than not by people that the victim knows, which means on a college campus it is likely to occur in dorms, off campus housing, fraternity houses, and bars. A comprehensive prevention program, as Nation et al. imagined it, engages with multiple settings. Comprehensive programs address each of these

locations and provide interventions at each space. For example, providing bystander intervention training to local bartenders to help prevent gender-based violence that may occur in bars.

Figure 1. Example of a Comprehensive Campus-Based Primary Prevention Strategy for Sexual Violence Perpetration
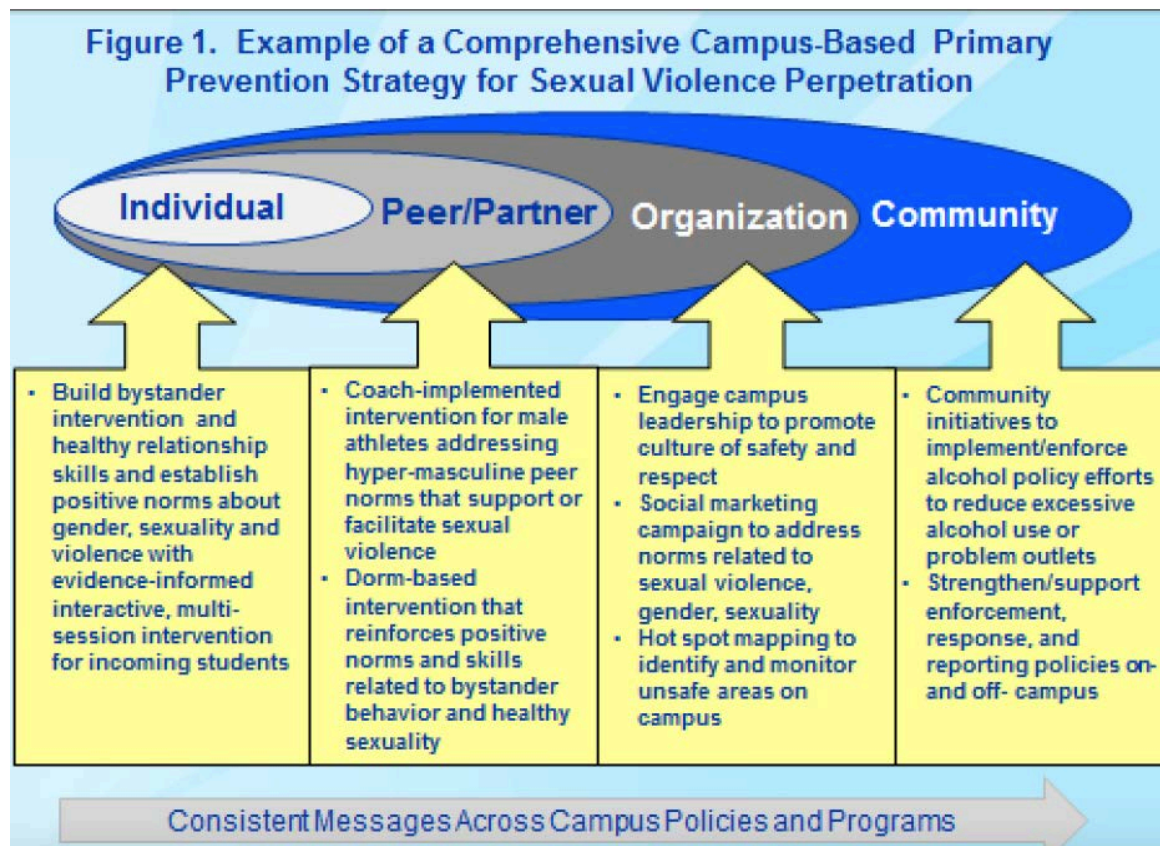
(CDC, 2014)

In addition to addressing various geographic areas that could be hot spots for SRV, comprehensive programs address multiple levels of influence. The CDC recommends a four–level model (seen in Figure 1) of influence: individuals, peers and partners, organizations, and the community (Centers for Disease Control, 2014). Figure 1 provides an example of how comprehensive prevention programs could address these different levels of influence. Operating on the individual level may address risk factors for violence perpetration like being male, habitually denigrating women, and condoning the use of violence and coercion in other areas of life. Such a focus recognizes that men are nearly always the perpetrators of sexual and relationship violence and it seeks to critique violent masculinity and discourage coercive

behavior. This can be done by encouraging all people to call out rape culture when they see it, not to tolerate sexism, and to practice healthy relationships. Programs engaging with the relationship level (peer/partner), account for the influence that friends, family, and intimate partners can have on the likelihood of SRV. For example, young men who experience care and support from peers and family are less likely to perpetrate violence than men who have peers that encourage sexual coercion (ACHA, 2008). With this understanding, a good program would seek to establish positive relationships on campus – aiming for safe and supportive residence hall and learning environments. It would also take advantage of relationships that already exist by encouraging coaches, professors, and resident advisors to get actively involved with the fight to end rape on campus. These efforts target changing individuals' behavior and fostering peer relationships that encourage a harm-free campus. Student organizations, sports teams, and campus leaders must be engaged to support the effort to end rape. University and community policies must encourage survivors to report sexual violence and support them throughout the reporting process (Gibbons, 2014). Similarly, interventions at the community level are needed to fight back against rape culture and work to reframe social norms. Rape culture should not be accepted as a natural fact of life, and perpetration should never be excused. Perpetrators need to be held accountable for their actions rather than protected or hidden.

Developing a comprehensive program will go a long way toward creating an effective program, but Nation et al.'s other pillars offer additional important strategies. "Varied teaching methods" indicates that strategies go beyond one type of pedagogy. Programs may employ some combination of online modules, interactive instruction, skill development, large mandatory training sessions, small-scale discussions, and other sessions. The need for "sufficient dosage" is based on research showing that one-time only prevention methods are not effective and that

"booster shots" of SRV prevention programming are needed. "Theory-driven" programs would infuse training sessions with information about the ways that rape culture and gender construction create a system that supports rape. They would situate the available information within the theoretical systems like rape culture and patriarchy. "Positive relationships" within programs refers to the promotion of positive relationships between peers. This refers back to the need for peer/partner intervention and indicates that when individuals have positive and supportive relationships with others, sexual violence can be prevented. In addition, it's important to model healthy supportive relationships within training sessions. It's particularly helpful to have male and female facilitators and to demonstrate an egalitarian, balanced relationship. "Appropriately timed" and "socio-culturally relevant" principles refer to the need to tailor programs to the target population. Within the context of a college campus, early intervention is important and orientation programs are encouraged as appropriate timing (but not by themselves). Socio-cultural relevance indicates the need to customize programming to be accessible and attuned to the cultural attitudes and ideologies of the target audience. On a college campus this means being attentive to age as well as the racial, ethnic, and class makeup of the students (Nation et al., 2003).

Bystander Intervention

A particular type of program that can be an important part of a college SRV prevention strategy focuses on bystander intervention. The archetypical bystander intervention scenario occurs at a party with a friend bringing a visibly drunk woman upstairs. Bystander intervention programs help teach students some tools on how to intervene in these situations. One example of an evidence based bystander program is the Green Dot Bystander intervention program, which lays out three different ways to intervene: direct, delegate, and distract. Direct action is the most

forward, like going up and confronting someone and telling them not to take that drunk woman upstairs. Delegation helps to get past barriers to direct action: it may be safer or more comfortable to point out a potentially harmful situation to a friend, a bartender, or someone in authority. Doing something distracting like spilling a drink or striking up a conversation can diffuse tension or anger in a situation and potentially prevent violence (CALCASA, n.d). Bystander intervention must also be proactive to create culture change. This helps bystanders interrupt rape culture when they see it by speaking out against the objectification of women, opposing oppressive gender roles, and reacting against other aspects of patriarchy.

These programs aim to engage all people in the fight to end SRV by empowering those who may witness a potentially violent situation to intervene (The Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, 2014). The inherent inclusivity in bystander intervention approaches engage everyone and broaden the scope of the narrative beyond women practicing risk reduction and being responsible for protecting themselves. Furthermore, rather than treating all men as potential perpetrators, bystander approaches bring men into the conversation and train them to recognize potentially harmful situations. In doing so, moreover, they may reflect on their own behavior as well. This avoids the unproductive scenario of alienating men when training sessions implicitly treat them as perpetrators. It keeps responsibility on everyone and makes excuses like "I'm not a rapist so I don't have to pay attention to any of this" invalid. Within this conversation it's particularly effective to expose the dangerous ways that masculinity is constructed, to reveal the violence inherent in mainstream male sexual practices, and to discuss the ways that sexism exists in everyday life. When men are made to understand these aspects of patriarchy, they can have a profound impact on their peers (ACHA, 2008).

In addition bystander intervention programs get past a potential "preaching to the choir" failure of prevention strategies, in which programs only reach those students least likely to perpetrate SRV. Those individuals who are deeply embedded in rape culture are likely to opt out of going to SRV prevention trainings. However, folks who are already invested in fostering healthy relationships and fighting against rape culture make fantastic bystanders when given the tools to intervene effectively.

Don't Cancel That Class

In order to provide more opportunities for bystander intervention and other trainings to reach students on campus, my Citizenship and Civic Engagement action plan created a new campus program called "Don't Cancel That Class." The initiative encourages professors to bring in the Office of Health Promotion (OHP) to do SRV prevention training during classes that they would otherwise have had to cancel. It makes use of this free time to bolster SRV prevention on campus and gives students an additional booster shot of consent education and bystander intervention training. Early on in the project, I sent a survey to students and professors to determine whether the program could be successful. The results indicated that most professors cancel at least one class per semester, and more than 90% of students would attend a program if attendance was being taken or extra credit was offered. A significant number of professors also responded that they would be willing to use bring in the OHP if they had to cancel class.

The program was piloted in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. I made presentations to both Maxwell and Falk professors and administrators to make them aware of the new program, to encourage them to take part, and to give them an opportunity to ask questions and offer critiques. A new webpage was created on the OHP website specifically for this initiative. The website allows

professors to input information about their class and request a program quickly and <u>easily</u>.

<u>However, requests must be made</u> 48 hours <u>in advance</u>. This website can be accessed here:

http://healthpromotion.syr.edu/Resources/dont-cancel-that-class.html

<u>Campus SRV Prevention Strategy Framework</u>

To provide a visual for thinking about how to craft an effective SRV prevention strategy, I

wanted to include something I created as a part of my internship last summer. This framework

provides some ideas behind what a college campus should consider when creating a campus-

wide strategy. The goal of the template is to highlight some of the questions that colleges need to

consider and to provide concrete examples and innovative ideas on how to address those

questions.

Model for Assessing a College Campus SRV Prevention Plan

Does this College Campus…?	What could that look like?
Comply to State and Federal Legislation?	
Have a survivor-centered response program?	- Advocates with privileged confidentiality are available 24-hours. - Victim-survivors are believed and all reports of sexual violence are taken seriously. - Victim-survivors are offered a range of services including no-contact orders and alternative housing for the accused perpetrator and/or the victim-survivor. - Victim-survivors have autonomy over making decisions throughout the reporting process. - Victim-survivors are interviewed using FETI techniques. - Restorative and transformative justice opportunities are available at the victim-survivor's request. - Appropriate consequences exist when students are found responsible for sexual assault or violence. - Student feedback shows that victim-survivors feel supported. - A healing process exists independent of campus adjudication system. - Victim-survivors are able to be a part of prevention efforts.

	• There is a strong collaboration between on-campus resources and off-campus and community response systems. • Campus personnel, including those involved in adjudication process, are trained on how to talk to victim-survivors and the effect of trauma on the brain. • Students are able to go to a professor or staff member that they trust with a report of sexual assault and be given proper resources and guidance.
Have a comprehensive prevention plan that goes beyond the bare-bones of complying to the legislation?	• Trainings are embedded within first-year seminar courses • Peer-educators have programming and presentations throughout the year • "Don't Cancel That Class" program provides time for trainings • Bystander Intervention program is implemented • Students demonstrate good understanding of consent on campus surveys. • Leaders of student organizations are required to go through a training. • Sex-positive programming is available
Support marginalized groups?	• Advocates, Title IX officials, and other on-campus resources reflect the diversity of the student population • Resources are available for marginalized students that are sensitive to their intersecting needs. • Victim-survivors are treated as whole people
Address environmental issues and how drinking/party culture and rape culture intersect?	• "Hot spots" on or near campus have been located • Efforts have been made to address hot spots – improve lighting, bartenders have been training in intervention, etc. • Public safety officers are available 24-7 to provide rides to students. • Discussions around how alcohol and party culture are involved in rape on campus are embedded into trainings and discussions with students.
Engage men as bystanders?	• Often men don't truly understand how to get consent, and may be perpetrating without realizing it. The bystander lens can help to understand what getting affirmative consent looks like. • Campus trainings do not tolerate victim blaming and instead focus on construction of masculinity. • Healthy masculinity is modeled on campus throughout sports teams, clubs, and organizations. • Sexual assault is understood as impacting all genders.
Have sufficient resources and personnel to ensure	• Campus has enough staff dedicated to this issue to

continued improvement of prevention efforts and future compliance to legislation? In other words, is everything on this chart is sustainable?	properly serve community • Partnerships with other colleges and local resources allow for creative tackling of future problems • Visible commitment from administration to continue to make SA prevention a priority. • Campus has established MOUs with local law enforcement

Conclusion

The Don't Cancel That Class action plan portion of my honors capstone was created to improve the SRV prevention strategy at Syracuse University. It was informed by the literature reviewed in the above essay and helps Syracuse University to uphold more of Nation et al.'s pillars, including sufficient dosage and varied teaching methods. The long-term goals are~~is that this capstone with provide insight into how to improve campus prevention programs as well as~~to created~~d~~ tangible improvements ~~to the~~in the University's SRV prevention strategy ~~at Syracuse University~~, to reduce the prevalence of rape culture, and to reduce the incidence of sexual violence.

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