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1. Action is the word!:
Data Resources, Healthy Environments in Schools, Spiritual Communities, Media

Four Action Teams, with diverse statewide membership, are now working on short-term goals, to be completed by December 2011. This issue reports on their work, plus other progress toward achieving The Promise of Primary Prevention (PDF: 4.3MB/53 pages).

- Data Resources Action Team
  The team has planned a Minnesota Symposium:

  ![Image](primary_prevention_of_sexual_abuse_and_violence_applying_research_to_policy_and_practice.png)

  This invitation-only event will bring together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to learn current trends in sexual violence research.

  8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  Friday, August 26, 2011
Snelling Office Park, St. Paul
Speakers will include

- Raymond A. Knight, Brandeis University, one of the nation’s leading authorities on primary prevention of sexual abuse.
- Sandy K. Wurtele, University of Colorado, co-author of *Preventing Child Abuse: Sharing the Responsibility*

To suggest people who should be invited, contact Sharon Haas at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Healthy Environments in Schools Action Team
This team is developing an online resource kit for school employees, parents, and interested community members, to help develop a healthy, respectful environment in schools. Some topics:

- Welcome – purpose of the site, target audience
- Art/theater/literature
- Bullying
- Crisis numbers
- Policies
- Promising programs
- Scenarios – including sexting, cyberbullying, sexual harassment
- Resources – curricula, video, interventions, research, online resources
- Frequently asked questions – what can I do about sexual violence in schools?

The new site is expected to be released this summer. If you have comments or suggestions, contact Patty Wetterling.

Spiritual Communities Action Team
Through surveys and interviews, this team has collected information from spiritual communities and created guidelines/actions organized by each level of the *Spectrum of Prevention*. Based on these guidelines, the team has developed a visual “prevention tree” … spiritual understandings as the roots, prevention values as the trunk, and opportunities for prevention as the branches. Next steps may include focus groups or roundtables to discuss how this model applies to various spiritual communities. The end result will be shared with spiritual communities to raise awareness of what they can do to create healthy, respectful spiritual environments that do not sexually exploit children. If you have comments or suggestions, contact Amy Kenzie.
Media Action Team

The team’s major projects:

- Developed the following definition of sexually-exploitive advertising:
  
  Sexually exploitive advertising depicts people as sexual objects, valuable primarily as things for others’ use.
  
  Non-exploitive advertising depicts people without sexual objectification, degradation or violence.
  
  Further explanation:
  
  In sexually exploitive advertising, girls and women are often treated as commodities and men are often depicted as users and abusers. This advertising feeds into gender inequality and creates a market for those who are objectified. Such advertising contributes to the creation of norms that support sexually exploitive behaviors and negatively affect the emotional and relational development of children and adolescents.

  Non-exploitive advertising presents sexuality with a sense of caring, connectedness, and sexual respect. It presents women and men with power equal to the other and portrays intimacy as one part of a relationship, rather than all of it. Such healthy advertising portrays children and youth in age-appropriate roles and suggests that the value of all of its subjects lies not solely in their physical attractiveness, but rather more wholly in their full potential as human beings.

In addition to the definition, the Media Action Team:

- Has drafted a fact sheet on the impact of sexually-exploitive advertising on children.
- Is testing the definition and fact sheet to evaluate various types of advertising.
- Is developing a process by which advocates can respond to both positive and negative media.

If you have comments or suggestions, contact Evelyn Anderson.

2. Activities Beyond the Action Teams: SVPN, Champion Communities, TDV

The Sexual Violence Prevention Network

The May 13 quarterly meeting/videoconference of the Sexual Violence Prevention Network describes the prevention initiative from the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA). “Demand the Change, Change of Heart” mobilizes communities and engages broader audiences in to make
social change. Speakers are Cordelia Anderson and Lindsay Gullingsrud.

For more information and to register for this presentation visit the Sexual Violence Prevention Network web page. Information and materials from past presentations are at SVPN archives. To join the network to receive an e-mail newsletter and information about the quarterly meetings, contact Amy Kenzie.

**Champion Communities Throughout Minnesota**

MDH and MNCASA partnered with the Minnesota Men’s Action Network to conduct trainings to create “Champion Communities” in Pelican Rapids, Bemidji, Duluth and Rochester, Mankato, and St. Paul. At each training, participants took part in lively discussion on how to engage more community members in primary prevention of sexual violence, and how to change community norms. Follow-up meetings now are taking place to provide technical assistance as communities build their prevention teams.

**Teen Dating Violence Prevention**

MDH and 13 partner organizations are part of the State Alliance on Healthy Youth Relationships. Minnesota is one of six states that received a CDC grant to assess current teen dating violence (TDV) prevention activities and to develop a state prevention plan by July 31. Minnesota’s Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program has interviewed programs that help youth develop healthy relationships and prevent TDV. Youth are sharing their experiences and insight through focus groups. Prevention policies are being analyzed so that effective policies can be shared.

**MDH commemorated TDV Awareness and Prevention Month (February) by pioneering a quiz for MDH employees: 172 people answered questions about TDV and how it relates to other conditions such as asthma, diabetes, STDs, and maternal and child health.**
3. A final note from Patty Wetterling

The Leadership Team has been doing an amazing job of collecting stories of activities to promote our statewide plan. We are grateful for all of the volunteer hours and so much commitment to preventing sexual violence across the state. We are in the process of creating a more formal assessment. We do know, however, that Minnesota is striving to turn our theme -- “Imagine a world without sexual violence” -- into reality. Thank you!

Want to know more? Visit Minnesota Sexual Violence Prevention Program.