

# Sexual Violence Prevention E-News

January 13, 2005

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## In this issue:

1. [Opening this Friday, January 1, 2005, \*The Woodsman\*](#)
  2. [Reminder: \*Helping Society Grow Up: Moving Beyond Shame, Control and Domination\*, Friday, February 4, 2005](#)
  3. [The Council on Crime and Justice Sponsors Parenting Classes for Ex-Felons](#)
  4. [International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking, October 3-5, 2005](#)
  5. [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Announces New Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)
  6. [Child Pornography: Patterns From NIBRS](#)
  7. [Rubén Rosario: Here's a lifeline when things fall apart](#)
  8. [Wakanheza Train the Trainer Workshop](#)
  9. [Every Student Connected: Building a School Climate Where All Students Belong](#)
  10. [Adolescent Sexual Health and the Dynamics of Oppression: A Call for Cultural Competency](#)
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## 1. Opening this Friday, January 1, 2005, *The Woodsman*

This Friday, *The Woodsman*, a movie starring Kevin Bacon, will open in the Twin Cities. This movie is likely to generate public interest in the topic of child sexual abuse and Stop It Now! Minnesota's staff and Advisory Board had the opportunity to preview it. *The Woodsman* is ground breaking in that it may be the first feature movie based on the point of view of the person who abused a child.

It is a disturbing look into the life of a man and his anguish over his physical attraction to young girls and his desire to be "normal." It portrays the complexity of this topic and the dilemma that families experience - how you can love the person who has abused while hating their behavior. There are some shortcomings to *The Woodsman*. Some aspects of the movie may not always be accurate, such as the types of abuse it portrays, the role of police, and the absence of any controls through probation. Also, because the movie focuses primarily on the story of the person who sexually abused children, the equally compelling stories of the children who were abused are really underdeveloped.

Stop It Now! Minnesota still believes this is an important movie that can educate people about child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse thrives in an atmosphere of silence. Stop It Now! Minnesota hopes that the movie can be a "call to action" for adults to learn about the warning signs of people at risk to sexually abuse children and to learn about how we, as individuals and in our communities, can take action to prevent child sexual abuse before a child is harmed and before an adult, youth, or child acts in a sexually inappropriate way

towards a child. Hopefully the movie will raise awareness of Stop It Now! Minnesota and the tools available to help adults take action to prevent child sexual abuse.

One of the most powerful and most disturbing aspects of the movie is it shows that often people who sexually abuse children are not “monsters”. In our work, we recognize that it is often hard for people to make the leap from knowing that most children are abused by someone they know to believing that someone we know and often love could also act in a sexually inappropriate way towards a child. If we are going to prevent child sexual abuse before a child is harmed, we as adults need to be willing to entertain the idea that someone who is acting in a sexual way towards a child may be at risk to abuse a child and we need to learn how to speak up about our concerns as soon as we have them.

While Stop It Now! Minnesota believes *The Woodsman* will be important as an impetus for community conversations about this topic, people should think carefully about whether or not to see this movie. If someone has been hurt by child sexual abuse, it could be re-traumatizing. Stop It Now! Minnesota believes that people are going to leave the movie with one of two primary feelings: hope that Walter, the abuser, is going to make it and is learning how to control his sexual attraction to children OR fear that there is nothing we can do to prevent child sexual abuse. Stop It Now! Minnesota is able to help with that fear and to let people know there are things we can do.

### **Call To Action**

If you see *The Woodsman*, use it as an opportunity to have conversations with friends, families, and colleagues about the realities of child sexual abuse as portrayed in this movie. [Stop It Now!](#) has developed a discussion guide for *The Woodsman*.

Consider organizing a discussion of *The Woodsman* for staff, board members, constituents, etc. Stop It Now! Minnesota can help identify experts to help with this discussion. Contact [Yvonne Cournoyer](#) if you are interested in organizing a discussion.

Help Stop It Now! Minnesota turn any public interest this movie generates into taking action to prevent child sexual abuse. For a list of Stop It Now! Minnesota resources available for adults to learn to recognize warning sign behaviors and to take action contact [Ann Lindstrom](#).

Top of Page

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## ***2. Reminder: Helping Society Grow Up: Moving Beyond Shame, Control and Domination, Friday, February 4, 2005***

Presented by [Dr. Michael Obsatz](#), Associate Professor of Sociology at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN where he has taught for 37 years. He is a workshop leader, and author of 3 books, including the award-winning *Raising Nonviolent Children in a Violent World*, two plays about bullying, and a film called *That's Enough*, about bullying and school shootings.

*Helping Society Grow Up: Moving Beyond Shame, Control and Domination*

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

[MDH Snelling Office Park](#), St. Paul, MN

*Lunch will be provided.*

## **Agenda**

11:00 a.m. - noon: Welcome, introductions and information sharing (including a brief presentation from invited guest Eric Lipman, Governor's State Sex Offender Policy Coordinator)

Noon - 12:30 pm: Lunch

12:30 pm. - 2:00 pm: Presentation

R.S.V.P. required by Monday, January 24, 2005

Contact Amy Kenzie, (651) 281-9810

Anyone interested in or working in the field of sexual violence prevention is welcome to attend the Sexual Violence Prevention Network meetings.

Please note: Requests for special accommodations must be made by Monday, January 24, 2005. Please provide name, telephone number and type of accommodation needed to Amy Kenzie.

### ***Remember to Bring Resources to Share (announcement and/or handouts)***

The Sexual Violence Prevention Network is a quarterly gathering to support information sharing, networking and collaboration, co-hosted by: the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, and the Minnesota Department of Health, Sexual Violence Prevention Program.

Top of Page

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## **3. The Council on Crime and Justice Sponsors Parenting Classes for Ex-Felons**

Starting on March 3, 2005, the Council on Crime and Justice will be hosting a 12 week parenting class at the office near downtown Minneapolis. The class is open to any parents who are ex-felons.

The class will cover positive discipline, how to best relate to children at different ages, non-custodial parenting, breaking generational patterns of family abuse, and other topics. The Council has taught this class for more than 10 years in prisons and the community. This series will be taught by Lance Handy, (612) 348-7874.

Please help spread the word about this class by forwarding this information to people who might be able to refer people to the class. Participation can be either voluntary or required as part of another program or sentence.

Top of Page

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## **4. International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking,**

October 3-5, 2005

End Violence Against Women International presents the International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking, October 3-5, 2005, Inner Harbor - Baltimore, MD.

International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Marriott Rewards Category Level: 5)

202 East Pratt Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

(410) 547-1200 (Voice)

(410) 783-9676 (Fax)

(888) 511-7809 (Toll free)

Conference Room Rates: \$149.00

Top of Page

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## 5. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Announces New Suicide Prevention Hotline

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announces the launch of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK). The national hotline is part of the National Suicide Prevention Initiative (NSPI)-a collaborative effort led by SAMHSA that incorporates the best practices and research findings in suicide prevention and intervention with the goal of reducing the incidence of suicide nationwide.

In the United States, suicide currently is the 11th leading cause of death among all age groups, accounting for approximately 30,000 deaths annually. More than 100 crisis centers in 39 states currently participate in the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. SAMHSA is committed to working with state and local organizations, such as the Mental Health Association of New York City, the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, and community crisis centers, to expand the availability of suicide prevention and intervention services.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is funded by a 3-year \$6.6 million grant from SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services, which has been awarded to the Mental Health Association of New York City and its partners - the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Columbia University and Rutgers University. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a network of local crisis centers located in communities across the country that are committed to suicide prevention. Callers to the hotline will receive suicide prevention counseling from trained staff at the closest certified crisis center in the network. A nation-wide public education campaign to raise awareness about suicide and the national hotline is under development.

Top of Page

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## 6. *Child Pornography: Patterns From NIBRS*

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) announces, *Child Pornography: Patterns From NIBRS*. This 8-page Bulletin, part of the Crimes Against Children Series, was written by David Finkelhor, Ph.D., Director, and Richard Ormrod, Ph.D., Research Professor, Crimes Against Children Research Center.

The validity of research findings often depends on the quality of the data. The redesign of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system has resulted in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which could become a helpful tool in efforts to control the dissemination and sale of pornography depicting juveniles by collecting data from law enforcement.

At present, NIBRS data are available from only a fraction of the law enforcement jurisdictions, covering about 14 percent of the U.S. population. Given the limited amount of data available from other sources, this information merits examination to provide a profile of the nature and extent of this crime as known to police.

Top of Page

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## 7. *Rubén Rosario: Here's a lifeline when things fall apart*

Taken from the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Monday, January 10, 2005

### ***Here's a lifeline when things fall apart***

RUBÉN ROSARIO

Numbers on a phone. In this case, 612-379-6367. For many of us men, summoning the courage to dial those 10 digits is a vastly more terrifying ordeal than scaling Mount Everest or surrendering to a colonoscopy.

The macho side of us rarely, whether privately or publicly, acknowledges emotional crisis, even if we are drowning in it. We are always in control. Yeah.

Give us a masculine way out that we can trust. Give us an outlet that reasonably safeguards our anonymity and listens without judgment or recrimination. Give us a safely distant but accessible haven for conversational intimacy. Give us an empathetic way station where we can freely cry, sob, release pent-up feelings and bare our souls as much as our gender counterparts are allowed to do in real life and popular culture.

For the past seven years, the Men's Line, a gender-specific, 'round-the-clock crisis phone service perhaps unique in the country, has fielded 5,000 such calls for help. Many are teetering-at-the-edge calls that could have led to serious physical or psychological harm to the callers or others.

"Its initial goal in 1997 was to provide a resource to men in our community to call with their questions and concerns - to give them someone to talk to, break isolation and ultimately to prevent acts of domestic and community violence," explains Donald Gault, manager of the healthy communities section of the St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health division.

Gault is an unsung Don Quixote-type who figured out early in his social work that much of society's violence

was male-oriented, but little was being done to address it in a preventive or proactive manner.

Gault and other like-minded individuals involved in violence prevention on both sides of the river brainstormed a hot line to provide counseling and referral service for men in crisis. A sampling of last year's calls offers a glimpse:

"Caller depressed, going to be homeless ... has a felony on his record, unable to find landlord who will rent to him. Sober for three months. Referred to after-care and to several possible landlords."

"Man was sexually abused as a child, he still is haunted by memories of it, has never had counseling for it. No one else knows it occurred - he often has depression and doesn't get out of the house - when called felt unable to leave house. Had no pen available but said he would call back another time to get referral numbers for help."

"Caller very angry because girlfriend of many years took his paycheck and his car. Afraid he may express anger physically - had called police. Counselor validated feelings; had to terminate call because police arrived."

Ed, a phone-line supervisor and seven-year veteran who asked that his last name not be used because of the need for anonymity among hot line workers as well as clients, notes that two emerging trends involve men who state they are being physically assaulted or emotionally harmed by female companions and others in child-custody situations.

"Minnesota is known as a state with a national reputation for creating or promoting programs to address women's issues," he said. "That is just fine. But a lot of the concerns we hear are from men in need who believe there are not enough programs or other things to address their concerns. I generally tend to agree."

Patsy Bartley, Crisis Connection's executive director, longtime counselor and former 3M human resources executive, says the gender-specific approach was designed to generate calls from men who normally would be reluctant to call such a service with the word "crisis" in it. Bartley said a lack of funds is preventing the effort from establishing a toll-free line that would make the service available statewide.

Shawna Johnson vouches for the line's success and its potential to curb self-destructive behavior that easily can lead to violence.

Johnson is a veteran Ramsey County probation officer whose clientele is exclusively domestic violence offenders. She recently referred a client to call the service.

"I met with a client of mine who was extremely distraught; his best friend had died, his mom was dying, and he was having serious relationship issues with his girlfriend. He said he felt like drinking (given the defendant's serious abuse of alcohol in the past, this was a serious cry for help)."

"I met with my client again," she wrote in a testimonial. "He had used the men's line. He said it had gotten him through that tough time and he did not use. Given the high anxiety and hopelessness the client exhibited in my office, I'm sure the men's line kept him from not only using, but from something far more serious."

"He told me that he believes that it saved his life," Johnson said last week.

NEED HELP?

To contact the Men's Line, call 612-379-6367.

Rubén Rosario, 651-228-5454.

Top of Page

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## 8. Wakanheza Train the Trainer Workshop

(Wakanheza pronunciation: Walk-on-zha)

### **What is the Wakakheza Project?**

Wakanheza is a community initiative aimed at reducing the incidents of harsh treatment of children in public settings, as well as to help teens feel that the community is a place that values and respects them. The project's goal is to provide community members with knowledge and tools of how to better support parents, youth and families in stressful settings. By doing this we can reduce incidents of harsh treatment of children and, ultimately, child abuse. We can also help to increase the sense of belonging young people have in relationship to their community.

Wakanheza is a very powerful idea. When used by a community, its members become influential instruments of change. Wakanheza supports and proves that one person's actions have meaning and can make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families.

When acted upon, the Wakanheza method offers empowerment. Those who choose to use Wakanheza have made a conscious decision to expand and change their view of children, youth and families. When caregivers are stressed they can react to children and situations in ways that may leave much to be desired. These moments are often the result of frustration and the overwhelming sense of responsibility parent's carry with them everyday. When we view these situations as "abusive", or parents as "bad", we only serve to distance ourselves from supporting a caregiver in a current challenging moment. Wakanheza reminds us that all people are sacred beings and that simple actions can impact lives in ways that are larger than we could ever imagine.

### ***Wakanheza - Train the Trainer Workshop***

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

9:00 am - noon

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches

1671 Summit Ave. (get directions through [Mapquest](#))

Saint Paul, MN 55105

Free!

### **Trainers**

Darleen Simmons & Kathy Hedin, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health

### **RSVP**

Please contact [Jan Pierson](#), (651) 266-2408

### **Questions**

Please contact Darleen Simmons, (651) 266-2597

### **Why would we want to do this?**

- ▶ We make our communities safer
- ▶ People feel valued
- ▶ When people feel valued they give back to their communities
- ▶ We reduce the incidents of harsh treatment toward children and reduce the risk of child abuse
- ▶ We increase the likelihood that teenagers will feel valued and respected by their community, and will be more likely to have a sense of belonging to their community

By participating in the workshop, you will be under no obligation to become part of the Wakanheza facilitators group; but after completing the training you will be equipped and welcomed to become a facilitator should you wish to do so and see it as a good fit for your work/life.

### **Wakanheza Project Vision**

By lending a hand to parents, children and youth we can make our community a better place.

### **Philosophy**

If we were all to regard children as “Sacred Beings”, and if our actions were to reflect this, our communities would be far more welcoming and supportive places for children, youth and families.

Please join us on February 15 to learn more and in depth about the powerful, positive effects of Wakanheza in action.

*To quote a staff person from the Saint Paul Libraries, "This is a very easy public service technique that you will find usable in many different situations." (The Saint Paul Libraries are planning that all their staff will eventually have this training.)*

Top of Page

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## ***9. Every Student Connected: Building a School Climate Where All Students Belong***

The Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department, the Initiative for Violence-Free Families, and the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office are sponsoring *Every Student Connected: Building a School Climate Where All Students Belong*. This multi-effort forum is meant for individuals who want to:

- ▶ Join practical strategies for middle and high schools
- ▶ Find out why school climate and connectedness matter
- ▶ Hear about current efforts to reduce bullying behaviors
- ▶ Learn about lessons others have already learned
- ▶ Gain new approaches and skills for creating a better learning atmosphere

Topics include:



- ▶ Building strong connections with students from specific cultural populations
- ▶ Identifying low-cost approaches to building positive climate and connectedness
- ▶ Examining one example of district-wide bullying policy and its implementation at a middle school
- ▶ Challenging cyber bullying
- ▶ Using a restorative approach to bullying
- ▶ Getting a conversation on bullying started (Let's Get Real)
- ▶ Reviewing 2004 Minnesota Student Survey Data to determine Hennepin County trends on school climate and connectedness

***Every Student Connected: Building a School Climate Where All Students Belong***

March 1, 2005

8:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ramada Inn Thunderbird Convention Center

2201 E. 78th St.

Bloomington, MN

Registration and prepayment is due by Feb. 17, 2005.

Space limited to 150 participants.

Workshop fee: \$30 Individual

\$100 Team (four people)

\$15 Students

Call Hennepin County Community Health for registration or with questions, (612) 348-5618.

Top of Page

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## ***10. Adolescent Sexual Health and the Dynamics of Oppression: A Call for Cultural Competency***

Youth who face prejudice and discrimination by virtue of their identity, life experience, or family circumstances disproportionately experience teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Such young people may include youth of color, those from low-income families, immigrants, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. Research often focuses on the socioeconomic factors—such as poverty, family distress, and access to health care, which contribute to teenage sexual risks. Little research, however, focuses on the effect on young people of discrimination based on their age, race/ethnicity, gender, class, and/or sexual orientation.

*Adolescent Sexual Health and the Dynamics of Oppression: A Call for Cultural Competency*, is a new paper from *Advocates for Youth* and encourages those who work with youth to understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination on vulnerable adolescents, to assess and address their needs, and to build on their assets. In prevention programming, it is essential to empower young participants by involving them in all aspects of designing and running programs for youth. It is equally essential to provide culturally appropriate interventions, with culturally competent adult and youth staff.

Sexual Violence Prevention Network E-News is brought to you by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with support from the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Contributed items are solely the responsibility of the contributors, and do not necessarily represent official views of, or endorsement by the MDH or the CDC.

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