

*Imagine... our lives without sexual violence or exploitation.*

*We would have more ... Safety + Equality + Dignity + Respect + Confidence + Trust + Caring, respectful relationships + Freedom*

## *The Promise of Primary Prevention*

*A Five-Year Plan To Prevent  
Sexual Violence and Exploitation in Minnesota*

# *Executive Summary*



*We can stop sexual violence and exploitation in Minnesota. Prevention works!*

## Executive Summary

# *The Promise of Primary Prevention*

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### ***Who has developed this plan?***

The Minnesota Department of Health and a group of multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural partners have developed a plan to prevent sexual violence and exploitation in Minnesota. The plan, *The Promise of Primary Prevention: A Five-Year Plan to Prevent Sexual Violence and Exploitation in Minnesota*, is available at ([www.health.state.mn.us/svp](http://www.health.state.mn.us/svp)).

### ***Sexual violence affects everyone.***

Someone you know -- your mother, your sister, your son or daughter, your spouse or friend -- has experienced it. In Minnesota, we know the costs and the extent of sexual violence. In 2005, the costs were almost \$8 billion and 61,000 people were assaulted.<sup>1</sup> This plan has strategies to **change the attitudes and policies** that contribute to a sexually-toxic environment.

## **The Spectrum of Prevention**



From: Prevention Institute

The plan suggests strategies which address different levels of the **Spectrum of Prevention**, created by The Prevention Institute.<sup>2</sup> The Spectrum shows six levels in which prevention can occur. When people work on strategies at more than one level of the Spectrum, their actions are more effective.

<sup>1</sup> Ted R. Miller, Dexter M. Taylor, Monique A. Sheppard, *Costs of Sexual Violence in Minnesota*, Minnesota Department of Health, July, 2007. Available at:

[http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/pub/MN\\_brochure21FINALtoWeb.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/pub/MN_brochure21FINALtoWeb.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Prevention Institute, <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/home.html> . Accessed 5/1/2008.

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***Sexual violence prevention is a public health issue!***

- It affects all of us.
- Its consequences are long-term, for the individual and for society.
- Relying solely on criminal justice has not effectively reduced or prevented it.
- Public health focuses on stopping it before it starts.

The plan has six goals. Within each goal are multiple strategies to achieve the goal. The strategies are described in more detail in the full plan.

**Goal 1. Strengthen social norms that encourage healthy and respectful relationships.**

- Communicate primary prevention messages and norms.
- Raise awareness about all forms of sexual violence, including sexual assault, prostitution, human trafficking, and pornography.
- Evaluate, modify, and fund social marketing campaigns.
- Teach sexual respect and healthy relationships.
- Engage men in preventing sexual violence.
- Emphasize public and private responsibility to prevent sexual violence.

**Goal 2. Identify and train leaders across the state to educate people**

- Help community leaders and elected officials understand that sexual violence is wrong, harmful, and preventable.
- Educate leaders about implementing strategies across the spectrum of prevention.
- Promote and share model prevention programs from various cultures.
- Increase parents' and guardians' confidence in taking action when children are at risk.
- Encourage parents to mentor, befriend, or support other parents to reduce isolation.

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### **Goal 3. Ensure that all voices are heard in order to prevent sexual violence.**

- Ensure that people from under-represented communities have opportunities to share their unique issues and solutions.
- Arrange forums for speakers from non-traditional groups to become involved in sexual violence prevention and to communicate the issues and motivate others.
- Ensure that social marketing campaigns are appropriate to non-traditional communities.
- Deliver messages about healthy, respectful relationships and sexuality, particularly in early childhood and adolescence.
- Share information about local resources and encourage community members to make use of them.
- Include ethnic and racial variables in hospital discharge data on sexual violence.

### **Goal 4. Increase the ability of individuals, groups, and communities to prevent sexual violence.**

- Conduct a statewide conference on sexual violence prevention focused on how individuals, groups, and communities can take action.
- Develop tool kits and materials on sexual violence, primary prevention, and action steps to take, that can be adapted locally.
- Identify partners and build state, regional, and local coalitions to improve networking and spread messages.

### **Goal 5. Seek action by local and state public policy entities.**

- Create ongoing funding for sexual violence prevention from private and public sources, with appropriate measures of effectiveness.
- Network with state agencies to plan policy and to analyze and disseminate information.
- Expand county funding for local public health prevention programs.
- Review and seek changes in policies that promote sexual harm, and seek policies that promote healthy development, in the following:
  - The Minnesota Department of Health and other state agencies – example: not doing business with companies that promote sexual harm.
  - Businesses and chambers of commerce – example: reducing harmful advertising messages, availability of pornography.
  - Colleges and universities – example: promoting positive messaging to men and women.
  - Youth-serving organizations – example: policies to prevent child sexual abuse.
  - Law enforcement – example: decriminalize prostitution, increase penalties for traffickers, pimps and johns.

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**Goal 6. Implement and evaluate data and best practices for preventing sexual violence.**

- Identify the best practices in sexual violence prevention, with a focus on preventing sexual violence before it starts.
- Develop a pilot study of the risk factors for and system responses toward perpetration.
- Improve data collection to better count sexual violence, its costs, and its prevalence and incidence, particularly in high risk communities.
- Partner with universities to acquire research funding, for example, to study the impact of pornography on children, teens, and adult males.
- Convene state, local, and national agencies to support ongoing research.

***Who will implement the plan?***

The plan has many strategies and needs to be applied at many levels –

- Minnesota Department of Health
- businesses and organizations
- victim advocates
- offender treatment programs
- groups representing people who are at special risk for sexual violence
- public health agencies
- local and state public policy bodies
- YOU and other individuals!

***Who is leading the work?***

Action teams have been formed to carry out the work of the Plan. They are currently working on:

- Framing and messaging
- Data and research
- Policy and legislation

**You are invited to be part of any or all of these teams.** You can participate by attending meetings or by joining e-mail distribution lists. Send your preference to [injury.prevention@health.state.mn.us](mailto:injury.prevention@health.state.mn.us)

The complete plan includes the full list of strategies, data on sexual violence, risk and protective factors, definitions, lists of contributors, and more. The plan and other sexual violence prevention resources and information are on the Minnesota Department of Health Sexual Violence Prevention Web site, <http://www.health.state.mn.us/svp>

**Imagine ... a world without sexual violence. We all can do something to prevent it.**

**It is time to act!**