

# ATTACHMENT D: RAPE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM FACTSHEET

## **What is the Impact of Sexual Violence?**

Sexual violence is a significant public health problem which affects the lives of millions of people in the United States. Sexual violence can lead to serious short and long-term health consequences including physical injury, poor mental health and chronic physical health problems which contribute to a substantial public health burden. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2011 data:

- More than 23 million women and nearly 2 million men in the United States have been raped at some time in their lives.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 43.9% of women and 23.4% of men experienced sexual violence other than rape during their lifetimes, including sexual coercion and unwanted sexual experiences.<sup>1</sup>
- Victimization often occurs for the first time before the age of 25 (e.g., 40% of female victims of rape in the U.S. report that they were first raped before the age of 18 and 38% report that they were first raped between the ages of 18-24).<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of victims of all types of sexual violence knew their perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of both female and male rape victims had male perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>

**Rape and other forms of sexual violence are preventable.**

## **What is CDC's Role in Preventing Sexual Violence?**

As our nation's health protection agency, CDC provides leadership to keep America safe and healthy and to save lives and resources through prevention. CDC's role in sexual violence prevention is unique; no other federal agency is working to prevent sexual violence perpetration and victimization before it begins. This means promoting comprehensive approaches to address the factors that contribute to risk for sexual violence and fostering the factors that protect against sexual violence.

CDC's goal is to reduce the incidence of sexual violence in our communities and society.

## **What is CDC's Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE)?**

The RPE program provides funding to state health departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. RPE grantees work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders, including state sexual violence coalitions, educational institutions, law enforcement entities, rape crisis centers, community organizations and others to guide implementation of their state sexual violence prevention plans. These collaborations have strengthened states' sexual violence prevention systems, leveraging resources and enhancing prevention opportunities.

## **How was the Rape Prevention and Education Program Established?**

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew J. Breiding, PhD, Sharon G. Smith, PhD, Kathleen C. Basile, PhD, et al. Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization—National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. MMWR 2014;63(No. SS-8)

The Violence Against Women Act, passed by Congress in 1994, established the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program at CDC. The RPE program seeks to develop and strengthen sexual violence prevention efforts at the local, state, and national level.

### **What guides the work of the RPE program?**

Primary prevention--stopping violence before it begins-- is the cornerstone of the RPE program. Program activities are guided by a set of principles that include:

- Preventing first-time occurrence of sexual violence;
- Reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors linked to sexual violence perpetration and victimization;
- Using the best available evidence when planning, implementing, and evaluating prevention programs;
- Incorporating behavior and social change theories into prevention programs so that behavior patterns, cultural values, and norms contributing to sexual violence will change over time;
- Analyzing state and community data, such as health and safety data, to inform program decisions and monitor trends; and
- Evaluating prevention efforts and using the results to improve future program plans.

### **What are the current activities of the RPE Program?**

The RPE program encourages the development of comprehensive prevention strategies using a public health approach and including multi-sector efforts and a continuum of activities to address the way individual, relationship, community and societal factors impact sexual violence.

This approach is more likely to prevent sexual violence across a lifetime than any single intervention and is also more likely to benefit the largest number of people and achieve reductions in sexual violence.

RPE grantees are currently engaged in a range of activities, including:

- Delivering community and school-based primary prevention strategies such as engaging bystanders, educating youth about healthy relationships, and changing social norms;
- Working collaboratively with universities and colleges to implement campus-based sexual violence prevention strategies;
- Addressing the prevention of alcohol-facilitated sexual violence; and
- Strengthening the ability of states and communities to plan, implement, and evaluate their sexual violence prevention efforts.

Evidence about what works to prevent sexual violence is emerging, and CDC's Injury Center is providing tools, training and technical assistance to RPE programs to promote use of the most current evidence of effectiveness to inform their efforts.

Additionally, states are working to strengthen their ability to collect program evaluation data about their sexual violence prevention strategies and use that data to improve their

work. Ultimately, the innovative work of RPE programs will contribute further to our knowledge, understanding and practice to prevent sexual violence.