

News Flash: Primary Prevention Rawks – Lessons Learned Support this Premise





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Peer Solutions hosts STAND & SERVE, a primary prevention initiative designed to cultivate positive social change including a world free from sexual violence. We believe, Primary Prevention is about empowering others to work together to demonstrate and create a world where safety, equality and respect are the true norms. A world where everyone knows how to prevent sexual violence and when “it” does happen, “it” is met with an empathic and compassionate response with adequate resources for those harmed and harming others. Below is a list of lessons we have learned since the birth of STAND & SERVE in May 1996 until the present.

0. The most important lesson is that we must **TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES!** If we are not healthy, we can't do the work. Try to sleep 8 hours a night. Take deep breaths. Laugh. Keep joy alive in your personal and professional life. Naps rawk.
1. **Build & Maintain Authentic Relationships.**
Get to know participants. Build trust, be honest, ask questions, listen, remember names, know and respect everyone for exactly who they are. Use their names. Make sure to budget extra time for this. We build relationships at schools with:

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|  Students |  Nurses |
|  Teachers |  Special Ed Staff |
|  Teacher Sponsors |  Counselors school & community |
|  Families |  Resource Officers & Security |
|  Cafeteria Workers |  Bookstore Managers |
|  Principals & Vice Principals |  Maintenance |
|  Office Assistants |  Community Partners |
|  Copy Room Staff |  Everyone |

Hints:

-  Obtain a mail box and an office at your school if possible.
-  You are there to help them, this is their school.
-  Work with those that want to work with you. If you get resistance, it's ok to move on.
-  No one wants someone they care about getting hurt.

2. **A Positive Approach Works.** We teach, model and show the positive and the truth. Please do not model myths or stereotypes. To name is to reinforce. We Say NO to scare tactics and fear-based, emotional appeals. This approach helps establish ownership, is fun and cultivates the change we wish to see in the world.
3. **To establish ownership, it works best if students/participants design and lead activities** with support of staff to meet the needs of each school and/or organization we are serving. We must include students, staff, family and community in development, implementation and evaluation of activities to create relevancy and meet the needs of participants. We hold activities at a time and location when students, family and community members are able to attend and make sure to include a wide variety of activities to accommodate different learning styles. Students serve on our board and facilitate locally and nationally. It is critical that we are inclusive of all identities including cultures and ethnicities and we meet language needs. Primarily Spanish.
4. **Activities are best if Interactive, Ongoing, FUN and full of food!** We ask participants what they like, want and think is fun. It helps with recruitment and retention. Hula hoops & face painting are very popular. We keep middle school students moving, especially after school. Think outreach. If you table, make sure you have an interactive activity with follow up. Food is a great incentive to get participants in the door and keeps them coming they come back for more. Many students would not eat if we did not provide food. Snacks for after-school activities are essential. Keep it healthy. Peanuts and bananas are inexpensive.
5. **Stress academic achievement** as a positive outcome. School comes first. Add homework into activities. Older students can help younger students. *Note:* Young people are very busy. Although there is a year round flow of students in S&S, 250 weekly, many are not with us year round. They may have sports, plays, concerts, school work, other clubs, work, family &/or many other obligations. Therefore matching pre/posts are not always as plentiful as we would like. We are starting to test three times a year and adjust grant objectives to reflect accurate numbers.

More Hints:

- 🔗 Ask before you put anything up.
- 🔗 Students & staff do listen to and read announcements.
- 🔗 Adults like prizes and fun too.
- 🔗 Keep your people active during the summer. Think year round.
- 🔗 Try not to pay for space & leave it cleaner than when you found it.
- 🔗 Begin 2wks after school starts in fall/spring. Good to put program on hold during testing & finals. Each school is different, make sure to be mindful of needs. ASK

6. **Address Media with Positive Media Attention** – Monthly press releases work. Share successes and happy stories. 90% of behavior is learned through modeling. Submit students and your program for awards.

7. **Research/Theory really is Important!** It helps us design activities and know if what we are doing is effective. It also helps share with others that what we are doing is effective which makes them more likely to support efforts. With research and theory including our own, we have learned that to prevent sexual violence with primary prevention efforts also prevents child abuse, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, poor school performance, suicide, depression, oppression, homelessness, criminality, poverty, self-injury, child pornography/sexualization of children, eating disorders/negative body image, harassment/bullying(cyber), family/dating/gang/school/gang/additional sexual violence & more. This approach **greatly expands funding options**. Peer Education, Diffusion of Innovation, Community Development, Social Norms and Change, Positive Youth Development/Developmental Assets Theories and the 9 Principles of Effective Prevention guide our efforts. Search-Institute.org has wonderful research they share. Schools love it & they are fab for grants.

We take a STAND & SERVE our communities as we cultivate safety, equality and respect for all as the true norms as a means to countering the perceived norms that allow sexual violence to thrive. According to the Prevention Institute, unhealthy norms contributing to sexual violence include:

1. **Silence/Denial** - Privacy, where norms associated with individual and family privacy are considered so sacrosanct that secrecy and silence is fostered and those who witness violence are discouraged from intervening
2. **Power/Control Over Others** - Power, where value is placed on claiming and maintaining control over others;
3. **Negative Gender role socialization** - Gender roles that promote domination, control and dangerous risk-taking behavior; that promote objectification
4. **Violence Perceived as the Norm** - Violence, where aggression is tolerated and blame is attributed to persons victimized.

http://preventioninstitute.org/documents/VP_RWJ_IntimatePartnerViolence_RWJFformatting.pdf

We see examples of #1 through #4 above every day, all day long. We must work together to model and demonstrate a world of RESPECT, EQUALITY & SAFETY. Everyone, regardless of identity needs to see and practice this all day long in every way. (Allowing for human error of course, we have to believe and try.) A world free from sexual violence is possible. This is social change and Primary Prevention at its finest in our humble opinion.

8. **Language Matters A Lot**

- 🎗️ Gender Inclusive Language is critical- Watch Heterosexism. When no blame or labels are attached, it is easier to talk about issues. Avoid he/she examples when possible.
- 🎗️ We use Victimization & Perpetration as Verbs – We like to **avoid all labels...**our goal is to prevent the behaviors. We try not to label as part of our strategy to eliminate blaming persons harmed.
- 🎗️ Never blame or spend time on who is responsible for what. You only have so many hours. Spend your time cultivating positive words & actions.
- 🎗️ Use only positive stories for emotional appeal – Think about how you feel when you hear a sad story... Now think about how you feel when you hear a happy story. We need to see and hear the good.
- 🎗️ There is never a need for anyone to feel bad. If someone is offended by a word or example, just change it. Agree to disagree. It's just semantics.

9. **A Safe Bystander Approach works very well for Primary Prevention efforts across the Ecological Model** – On a societal, community, relationship and individual level, PP efforts cultivate a world where everyone knows how to prevent SV and when it does happen, there are adequate resources for all. As safe bystanders, (*not the person harmed or harming others at the moment*), we are in the most amazing position to advocate for positive social change, a world of safety, equality and respect. And, at the same time, we believe we must also advocate for the need for inclusive services. We use and need effective intervention to support PP work daily, our efforts are equally important. **We are all partners in change.**

10. **We all want the same thing**, a world of Peace, Love & Happiness. This is a world free from sexual violence that must start in our hearts and move to our homes, schools, workplaces and communities. We are always willing to learn, change and grow. If we find a more effective way, we share with others. We all have a slightly different approach and that is ok because we agree to disagree. Together we really are better. ***We are all Peers, We are all the Solution!***

DID YOU KNOW? According to the American Psychological Association in 2008, 53% Female & 38% Male students reported being harassed by adults at school. When students perceive that school staff tolerate sexual harassment there is a corresponding increase in peer harassment.

Thank You Carol Hensell, ADHS, CDC, SVP providers & Peer Solutions staff/board for your dedication to ending SV. Together we are better. We are family.