

# PISC

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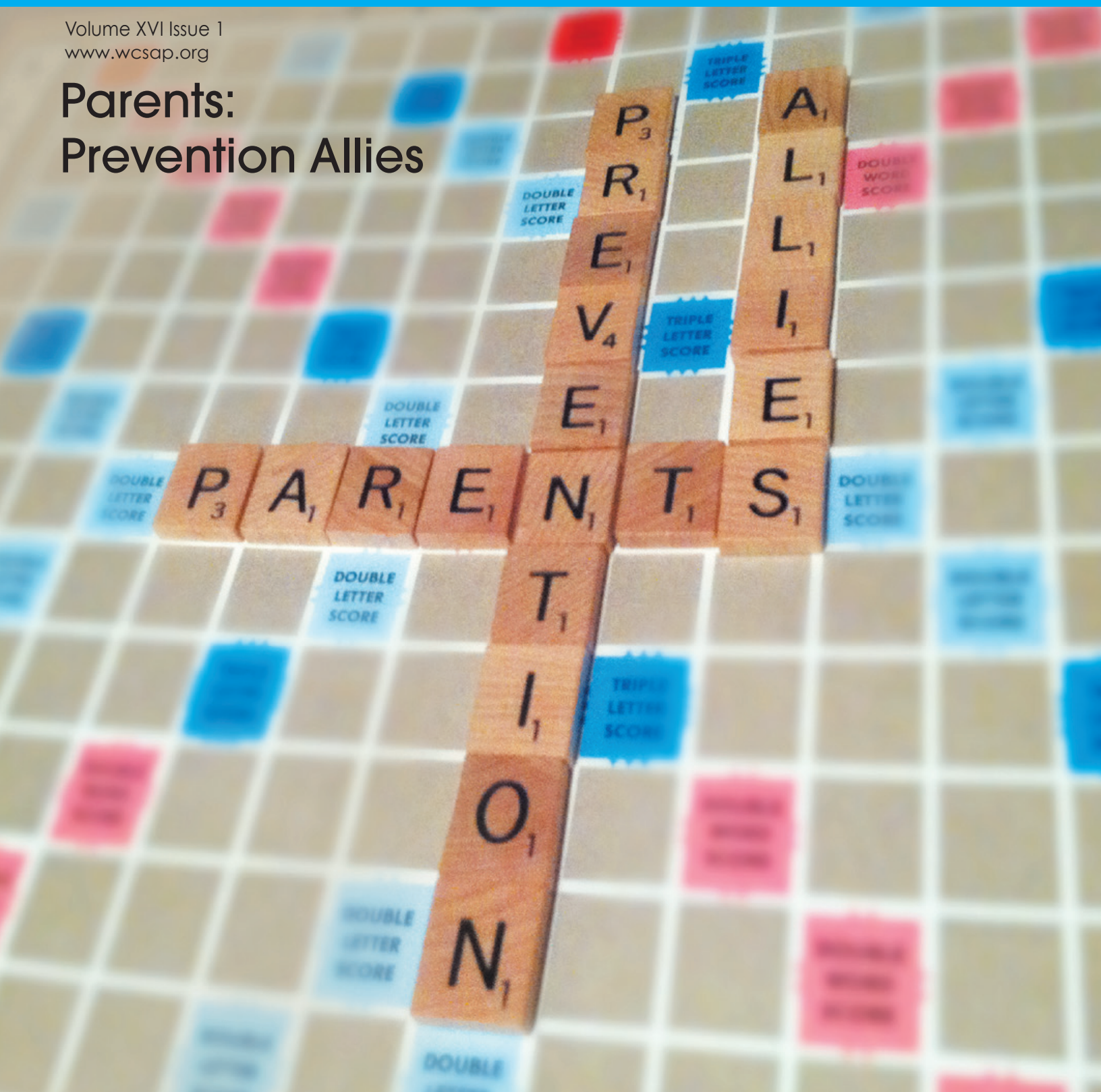
A Publication of the  
**Sexual Assault  
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engaged in sexual  
violence prevention  
in Washington State

WASHINGTON COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS

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## Parents: Prevention Allies






**T**eens are often the focus of sexual violence prevention in community projects and national resources. This is a great audience since teens are developing their identity and sexuality, figuring out how to navigate friendships and relationships, and are sponges for information! Teens soak up both good and bad messages about sex and violence from their peers, family, community, and the larger society. As part of the public health approach, we strive to engage all of these spheres of influence when working to create a healthy environment. Much of our work has focused on engaging teens as bystanders and giving them tools to help their friends. We may even give them opportunities to discuss and analyze pop culture and the media. But what about the messages teens receive from parents and families?

In this issue of Partners in Social Change, we examine the influence that parents have with their teens and how this can be supported and enhanced to increase the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention. In the articles that follow, you will read about why parents should be engaged and how you can facilitate that process. We share a sexual health expert's great "Top 10" list of talking points that parents can use when they talk to their teens about sex and sexual violence. Next, we review a framework for a parent engagement curriculum and guidance for creating a program. Jane Doe Inc. describes their innovative

project that engages and empowers fathers to talk about sex and gender with their sons. We highlight one of the great programs here in Washington State that has created an online tool to start conversations with teens. Finally, we conclude with Question Oppression and prevention resources to support ongoing work with parents.

We hope this issue will provide you with ideas and tools to engage the parents of teens in your community in your efforts to end sexual violence. We welcome feedback at [prevention@wcsap.org](mailto:prevention@wcsap.org). 

Cordially,

Kat Monusky, Prevention Specialist  
WCSAP, Prevention Resource Center

### EDITORS NOTE

Throughout this issue of PISC we have chosen to use the word "parent" to refer broadly to any parent, guardian, caregiver, or family member who has a central role in raising a teen.





**WCSAP**  
Washington Coalition of  
Sexual Assault Programs



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PARENTS: PREVENTION ALLIES

*The mission of the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs is to unite agencies engaged in the elimination of sexual violence through education, advocacy, victim services, and social change.*

*The Prevention Resource Center is a project of WCSAP, designed to provide support and technical assistance to individuals, communities, and agencies engaged in sexual violence prevention within Washington State.*

### **Partners in Social Change**

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*For membership information, visit [www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org).*

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# **PISC** | PARTNERS IN SOCIAL CHANGE

WINTER 2012

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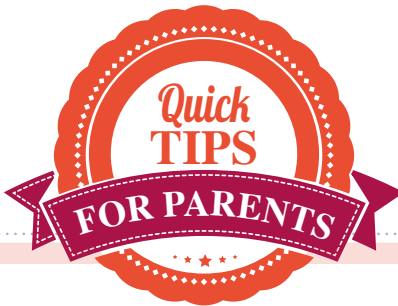
# Parents: Children's Primary Sexual (Violence) Educators

Karen Rayne, PhD  
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**P<sub>3</sub>** arents are the primary sex and sexuality educators for their children from a very young age. This is an oft-stated fact by providers, faith leaders, and teachers, and many parents find it both empowering and unnerving. Yet we also know that as children develop into adolescence, other influences such as media and peers become very loud voices. This is why it is crucial that parents continue to have dialogue with their teens about sex.

The level of responsibility parents feel about being their child's sexuality educator can be overwhelming because the stakes can seem so high. In response, some parents simply stop talking about the topic entirely. Some parents revert to a lecture format where they attempt to fend off their children's future mistakes with a downpour of words. Some parents surreptitiously leave choice books lying around the house and then never bring them up. Without guidance about how to start and continue these conversations, parents can feel lost at sea. As a prevention educator, you can help guide parents through these tough times by providing them with resources and support.



- 1 **Know yourself.** Sexual violence is scary, and many men and women have personal experiences with sexual violence. Having a thorough understanding of your own emotions around this issue will help you stay present for your teenager.
- 2 **Remember that it's not about you.** Teenagers will run the gamut of reactions in their initial conversations on sexual violence. If they are able to connect emotionally to the pain of a victim of sexual assault, they may be very emotional. If they are not able to connect emotionally, they may not be emotional at all. Independent of his or her other emotions, your teenager may be confused about any number of things, including why sexual violence exists and what should be labeled sexual violence. Your position in this conversation should not be highly emotional regardless of your teen's reaction.
- 3 **Stop talking!** When talking about scary topics, it is easy to forget yourself and talk too much, to monopolize the conversation. Silence, particularly in difficult conversations, is golden. It allows both of you to think deeply about what has been said.
- 4 **Start listening!** Initial attempts at conversation about something as troubling and confusing as sexual violence can be hesitant and can include fumbling for vocabulary. Your teenager may be trying to convey a lot of emotion in a few words. Listen very carefully for the meaning.
- 5 **You only get one question at a time.** Too many questions at once can be overwhelming for anyone. Since you are asking only one question for each conversation, spend some time and make it a good one that can't be answered with a "yes" or a "no." Spend some time mulling over it. You will have a chance to ask your other questions during other conversations.
- 6 **Do something else.** Anything else. Many teenagers, especially boys, will have an easier time talking about sexual violence while engaging in another activity that can diffuse some of the tension.
- 7 **Talk about pleasure and pain.** Sexuality can have very positive, life affirming effects yet sexual violence can have very damaging, life draining effects. Well-rounded parent/child relationships discuss both aspects in a balanced way. In conversations about sexual violence, which are primarily about the negative and painful side of sex, you can still bring balance by addressing consent and healthy sexuality as the alternative.
- 8 **Be cool like a cucumber.** It is only when you manage to have a calm, loving demeanor that your teenager will feel comfortable talking with you. This is particularly true when it comes to such emotional topics as sexual violence. However, this does not mean you need to be emotionless. This is an emotional topic, and it is important that you allow your teenager to see the pain it brings you. Just do not let that pain overwhelm you.
- 9 **Bring it on!** Your teenagers will have tough questions about sexual violence. You may not know the answer to them, you may not want to talk about them, and you may be very pained by the fact that your teenager is even asking. Nevertheless, with the exception of personal questions, working with your teenager to find answers to their questions (or at least an in depth conversation) be highly beneficial to each of you individually and your relationship.
- 10 **Never surrender.** There may be times you feel like quitting, and who can blame you? This is a difficult, painful conversation between any two people, and your love for your teenager only ups the ante. But you can't give up. The biggest way to fail is to not talk at all, so keep at it!



Many parents value their role as sexuality educators and want to offer their children support in this area. Even for these parents, guessing at what is age appropriate can be scary. Many parents' biggest fear is that they will guess incorrectly what information their child already knows and what they should know. Providing too much information, parents worry, will scare (or even scar!) their child and drive them to experimenting sexually. Too little information may come too late, not be useful to the child, and may make an already existing gulf between parents and their children even larger. When I asked one parent what her biggest fear was, she said, "That I'll do it all wrong."

When I talk with my students, regardless of their age, it is rare for me to hear about a parent who has done it all wrong, who has utterly failed. The kind of failure I hear about most frequently is a failure to bring up the topic entirely. By and large, parents don't fail in the ways they talk about sex and sexuality with their children and teenagers; they fail in the ways that they don't talk about it. Sexual violence is no different.

Sexual violence is one of the scariest of the sex and sexuality topics. Because of this, I have found that it is one of the least-talked about topics. With the exception of "stranger-danger" with which children are bombarded from a very young age and unfortunately this is not the most common form of child sexual abuse.

Parents have a unique position in their teenagers' lives. They have daily access to the dating relationships and associated emotions that young people live through. This provides parents with a front row seat to be aware of issues in relationships and potential warning signs of violence. Nevertheless, without a strong conversational relationship—one that includes topics of sex, sexuality, and violence—parents are likely to miss important signs that would allow them to support their teenager.

It is never too late to start conversations about sexual (and relationship-based) violence. Opening up a new area of conversation between two people is often awkward, regardless of what the relationship is. However, these initially awkward topics can evolve into the most important and relationship strengthening lines of communication

Because many parents find it overwhelming to start the conversation, it is particularly important to provide them with support at this beginning stage. To this end, identify concrete tools to start and continue conversations about sexual violence prevention. This gives parents access to conversations with their children that they might not



otherwise feel is available to them. On page 2 you will find a list of ten things parents can do to open up the conversation with their teenagers about sex, sexuality, and sexual violence. These are great, quick tips parents can take with them!

These suggestions will continue to support parents in their sexual violence educator roles long past the initial stages of communication. Ideally parents will see how these steps can provide them guidance in communicating with their children across many areas of sexuality, relationships, and violence, both initially and long-term. Parents are often on the front lines when it comes to sexual and relationship violence. As providers, we must offer parents the support that will allow them to pick up that role with as much grace, love, and skill as possible.

For more information, contact Karen Rayne at [karen@karenrayne.com](mailto:karen@karenrayne.com).

*Karen provides advice and support to parents on how to educate their children and teenagers about sex and sexuality. Karen's knowledge about family dynamics, adolescent development, sexuality, and education provides her with a unique perspective for guiding parents through these tricky conversations. She also moonlights as a sex educator for children, teenagers, and college students.* ♦



# BUILDING

## an Effective Parent Education Program

### to Prevent Intimate Partner Sexual Violence in Teen Relationships

**Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck and Kat Monusky**  
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

**S**exual assault programs often identify teens as an important and accessible audience for their prevention efforts, frequently delivering their messages in the context of a school-based program. While the direct messages to teens are important, programs should also consider involving parents, who have regular access to and influence over their own children. The social ecological model explains how programming can become more effective when it addresses prevention not only at the individual level, but also at the relationship level, which includes both peers and parents. Designing a program to engage parents creates an effective complement to school-based programming, surrounding the teen with positive messages about healthy and safe relationships and sexuality.

Parents are often eager for guidance on how to take an active role in promoting their children's safety without being overbearing. Prevention specialists may welcome information and support as they begin to reach out to parents within their communities. We offer step-by-step tips and curriculum suggestions for designing a parent education program.

# Common Sense Tips

## and Research-Informed Principles for Developing Your Program

As you begin, review the “Nine Principles of Effective Prevention.” As you know, these guidelines help ensure the effectiveness of prevention programming.

Our tips for developing your program rely on these common sense and research-informed principles.

### 1 *Define your audience.*

Do you want to restrict your target group to a particular audience, such as a faith-based group, or keep it open to a larger community? You may wish to focus on the parents of young people with whom you are already working with in order to maximize the effects of your prevention program, or you may cast a wider net to create an informed community network.

### 2 *Build community partnerships.*

These partnerships build a sense of “ownership” and involvement that will ensure greater success and sustainability for your program. Who needs to be at the table to plan your program? The following considerations will help you get started: Who has the power and influence to help implement plans? What youth-serving agencies and parent-serving agencies exist locally? How can you include both parents and youth in the planning process? How can you find community partners who are representative of the target group to be served? How can you reach out to fathers as well as mothers, and to adults serving as caregivers?

### 3 *Assess the needs of your community.*

Is there any information available about sexual violence in teen relationships in your locality? What do community members have to say about this topic? What is the level of knowledge and awareness about teen intimate partner sexual violence in your community? What preliminary work needs to be done to increase awareness and identify parents who would benefit from an educational program? Is it feasible to conduct focus groups or surveys of parents and/or teens?

### 4 *Identify ways to measure success from the beginning.*

Be sure to think about your goals and how to measure the effectiveness of your parent program. Ask yourself, “What are we trying to accomplish? How will we know whether we have succeeded?” Select evaluation tools and resources that meet your needs and your capacity, and remember that simple measures can provide valuable information. Perhaps students or faculty from a local college or university would assist with your evaluation efforts.

### 5 *Respect adult learning styles and community values.*

Adults learn best in an interactive, supportive environment, with well-planned activities that encourage them to apply information to their own lives. Check out WCSAP’s new online course on Adult Learning Styles, available under Ongoing Advocacy Training at [learn.wcsap.org](http://learn.wcsap.org). Consider whether there are specific cultural factors or community values that should help to shape the way you present material. Your community planning partners can be of great assistance in addressing these issues.



## 7 *Customize the curriculum for your audience.*

Consider the parents who will be attending the program. What is their educational level? What specific stressors might they face (for example, is this an economically depressed community)? Are they single parents, couples, or a combination? Are they foster parents or grandparents raising their grandchildren? What is the age range of their children? Keeping the program interactive and incorporating “lessons learned” from ongoing evaluation will ensure that you have feedback from participants to help you tailor your materials to their needs.

## 6 *Decide on the “who, why, how, what, where, and when.”*

A well-planned curriculum is a must.

- **Who** will facilitate this program? If co-facilitators are involved, it is crucial to allow time to work together on the planning process. Consider having other parents or teens present certain segments of the curriculum. (For example, consider having teens give a presentation on social media and show parents some sample Facebook pages!) If you have a variety of presenters, it becomes even more important to establish a consistent framework for each segment of the program.
- **Why** are you selecting the particular information you are offering? Once you are clear about the need for this program, practice a two-minute “elevator speech” to explain the value of educating parents.
- Determine the logistics, such as **how** you will fund and **where** you will house the program. Consider possible barriers (such as transportation, disability access, language access, and childcare) and brainstorm strategies for addressing these barriers with your community partners.
- As you consider **when** the group will meet, you may wish to identify potential participants, and then establish a meeting time that is convenient for as many as possible. You will also need to determine an effective and realistic number of sessions.

## 8 *Have the group set ground rules.*

Parents need to feel safe and welcome in order to fully participate in the group. Use a portion of the first session to facilitate a discussion of ground rules that will help to create a positive and respectful atmosphere. Developing this type of collaborative process offers a model of supportive communication that parents can bring home with them. Parents of teenagers can certainly benefit from practice in handling conflict and negotiating a variety of viewpoints!

## 9 *Choose appropriate activities and prepare for them ahead of time.*

Activities are a great way to encourage participation of a diverse group of individuals, but they cannot be “thrown together.” Each activity should be carefully chosen to fulfill a specific learning objective and all facilitators involved in the activity must be well prepared. It is helpful to test the directions you will give the group on a few colleagues in advance of the lesson, so that you can modify your instructions when you see puzzled faces!

## 10 *Make it fun!*

Parenting is stressful work, and parenting teens is not for the faint-hearted. Help parents understand the role of humor both in dealing with teens and in maintaining their own sanity! The lessons need to be structured enough to provide the desired information and skill building, but flexible enough that the group can “bond” and enjoy their time together. A few snacks always enhance enjoyment, if your budget will allow or participants are willing to pitch in.



# for Parenting

## to Keep Teens Safer from Sexual Violence in Relationships

Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck and Kat Monusky  
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

**T**hese curriculum suggestions provide some ideas for developing a program for parents (and other caregivers in a parental role) who wish to learn how to protect teens from sexual coercion and violence in dating relationships. Trainers can use and adapt any of these ideas in a way that suits the needs of their communities. They may wish to have a

different number of sessions, or different topics for some of the sessions. This is a summary of the curriculum; for a more detailed curriculum framework (including activity descriptions and resources that will help you customize your program), as well as additional information on Intimate Partner Sexual Violence, visit [www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org).

### Lesson One

#### *The Challenges of Parenting Teens*

**Objective:**

Create a safe space for learning about parenting.

**INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW**

**Facilitated discussion:**

Ground rules (respectful language, confidentiality, attendance, etc.)

**WARM-UP ACTIVITY**

**Presentation:**

Relationship dangers faced by teens and how secure and loving parent-teen relationships protect youngsters

**Activity:**

How Positive Parent-Teen Relationships Set the Foundation for Healthy Dating Relationships

### Lesson Two

#### *Respectful and Effective Communication*

**Objective:**

Help parents understand that good communication is the only way they can help teens to learn essential safety information and obtain sufficient information to keep their teen safe.

**Activity:**

Barriers to Communication

**Presentation:**

Principles of assertive communication (vs. passive or aggressive communication) as applied to parenting teens; overcoming communication barriers; nonjudgmental approaches

**Activity:**

Scenarios and role-plays



## Lesson Three

### *Your Teen's World*

**Objective:**

Help parents understand how teens think and how technology affects their relationship safety.

**Activity:**

What Were You Like at Age 15?

**Presentation:**

Teen brain development; technology in today's teen world; pornography. (Teen guest speakers may be invited).

## Lesson Four

### *Risky Relationships*

**Objective:**

Dispel myths about adolescent relationship abuse and provide parents with tools for prevention.

**Activity:**

In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence (interactive game developed by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, available at [www.wscadv.org](http://www.wscadv.org))

**Presentation:**

Red flags and con games, parent strategies

## Lesson Five

### *Setting Limits*

**Objective:**

Help parents to understand the value of good limits and safety practices.

**Presentation:**

The necessary changes in limit-setting and rules as teens progress from age 13 to independence

**Activity:**

Development of Reasonable Guidelines Based on Age (small groups)

## Lesson Six

### *Adults Who Have an Impact – Positive or Negative*

**Objective:**

Help parents to understand that having appropriate, supportive relationships with other adults gives teens a safety net.

**Activity:**

Diagram of Adults in Your Teen's Life

**Presentation:**

Consistent adult messages to teens and distinguishing helpful vs. dangerous teen-adult relationships.

**Activity:**

Identify Messages in Pop Culture

## Lesson Seven

### *Taking Care of Yourself*

**Objective:**

Encourage parent self-care and resilience.

**Presentation:**

How stress and guilt interfere with effective parenting

**Facilitated Discussion:** Favorite self-care activities, barriers to self-care, and solutions

**Activity:**

Building a Self-Care Kit

## Lesson Eight

### *Getting Support, Making a Difference*

**Objective:**

Help parents develop a plan to sustain their efforts and encourage community action to support parents generally.

**Activity:**

Words of Wisdom – harvesting what parents have learned.

**Facilitated Discussion:**

What do parents need to enhance relationship safety for their teens?

**Activity:**

Identifying Current and Needed Community Resources



## *Essential Skills Parents Must Have to Promote Safe and Healthy Teen Relationships*

In order to assist teens in developing safe and healthy relationships, parents must be able to:

- Establish warm, loving, and humorous parent-teen relationships
- Communicate both positive and negative messages in a respectful and effective manner
- Understand the world in which their teens live, and how teen culture differs from adult culture, particularly with respect to the use of technology
- Learn about the risks teens face in intimate relationships and convey that information to their children in an appropriate manner
- Establish reasonable, flexible, age-appropriate limits and boundaries designed to keep teens as safe as possible while not impeding their growing independence
- Resolve conflicts with partners in caregiving so as to give kids consistent messages
- Participate in self-care to strengthen their own resilience
- Identify or develop support systems and resources to enhance their confidence in parenting. Parents should also have the option to become activists in their communities.

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*Kat Monusky is the Prevention Specialist with the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, where she provides training, technical assistance, and resource development on primary prevention to support the work of programs around the state. In previous roles, she has worked as an advocate for victims of violence in community and University settings. She received her Master's degree in Sociology as well as a certificate in Gender Violence Intervention from Virginia Commonwealth University.*







# Engaging the Responsible Fatherhood Community

**Craig Norberg-Bohm**  
Men's Engagement Coordinator, Jane Doe Inc., JDI

**J**ane Doe Inc., (JDI) the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, has a strong foundation in anti-violence and social justice work. In the past thirty-plus years, we have recognized the important connections between responding to and preventing sexual and domestic violence. When the Men's Initiative for JDI began in 2002, JDI adopted a pro-active stance regarding the important role of men as allies in ending male violence against women. This work has expanded in the past several years as we utilize various strategies to engage specific audiences of men and consider the implications for primary prevention.

One of our initiatives has been to develop collaborative relationships with programs working with fathers. Through our partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, we have been working on a responsible fatherhood project to increase protective factors to prevent first time perpetration of sexual assault. The rationale for this project is that fathers can play a unique and influential role in prevention as role models for their children. This project has enabled JDI to focus on building the capacity of staff in responsible fatherhood programs. We are working to increase their knowledge about primary prevention of sexual violence as well as to promote messages of healthy masculinity and respectful

consensual social norms. This article describes our work to engage with responsible fatherhood programs and identifies some of the issues this work raises as well as lessons learned to date.

Our prevention efforts are grounded in JDI's overall social change philosophy. We started with the big picture questions: What social norms contribute to the perpetration of sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence? Who needs to be engaged to change these social norms? How does one actually change a social norm?

Our analysis states that sexual and domestic violence are tools for maintaining power and control on individual, community, institutional, and societal levels. As long as our cultural norms uphold male supremacy and dominance by enforcing rigid gender roles and all that goes with it, we will continue to experience male violence against women. Men – knowingly, intentionally, or not – play a significant role in maintaining male social norms. Men therefore must be part of changing these social norms, redefining masculinity, and promoting equality, respect, and healthy sexuality.

### Why work with fathers?

Males who commit sexual violence do so, statistically, for the first time in adolescence. The behaviors, values, and expectations for boys that lead to this violence are influenced by social norms; these actions and beliefs then become normative as well. These norms are reinforced by community standards, in media messages, and in peer culture. Parents, specifically fathers, play a primary and direct role in promoting or counteracting these norms.

Once we identified fathers as a target group, we asked ourselves: How might we influence the fathers of boys to promote healthy masculinity as a strategy for the primary prevention of first time perpetration of sexual violence? Where can we find groups of fathers with whom to have this conversation and enlist their engagement?

A community scan helped us identify the network of responsible fatherhood programs in Massachusetts as a gateway to connect with fathers of young boys. This significant and growing community of providers is engaging men as fathers through programs with multi-week curriculum. Referrals originate from a range of mandatory channels, such as through child protection systems, to voluntary resources, such as Head Start and school counselors.

Programs work from one of two program models; structured or thematic curricula. The most commonly used structured program provided by social service agencies is Nurturing Fathers, written by Mark Perlman (<http://nurturingfathers.com/>). There are several locally developed thematic curricula. Numerous probation departments use "Five Principles of Fatherhood" and rotate speakers and content to support the themes on a session-by-session basis. Thematic programs are usually drop-in sessions and the structured programs are generally fixed groups that run a set number of weeks. In addition, we have a statewide network called "The Fathers and Family Network" operated by the Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (<http://www.mctf.org/programs/fstc/Pages/fatherhood.aspx>).



### Aspects of Responsible Fatherhood Programs

Responsible fatherhood programs are designed to encourage and teach dads to be involved and skilled parents. These programs prioritize emotional literacy, non-violent parenting skills, and positive relationships with the mothers of their children.

It is critical to distinguish these responsible fatherhood groups from other fatherhood projects and "fathers' rights" efforts that have a fundamentally different orientation. These other groups primarily support "fathers' rights" in courts, custody, and child support; often at the expense of safety for the mothers and children. Still others are explicitly at the expense and safety of battered mothers. To state the obvious, this will be a deal breaker for any collaborative relationship with sexual assault or domestic violence programs.



## Massachusetts Responsible Fatherhood Project

Our work in Massachusetts has focused on providing leaders of fatherhood education groups with an approach and tools to support their efforts to address fathering in a positive context that emphasizes healthy masculinity. As a component of the Massachusetts State Prevention Plan, we are also guided by the premise of that plan whose vision states, "To move beyond sexual violence, we must hold a clear vision for what is healthy in the lives of our families and communities. This is our commitment to healthy sexuality, healthy relationships, and equality." In our work with fatherhood programs, we promote the concept of wholeness within the male experience, a perspective that reflects an examination of the gender role paradigm and fosters a health promotion approach to prevention.

In our original approach, we framed a workshop design on healthy masculinity that dads' groups could use. The central lesson would be to increase awareness around what we call the "Man Box". There is strong, rigid, cultural pressure to "be a man" for boys. An important route to maintain status in the "Man Box" (risk factor for becoming a sexual assault perpetrator) is for men to commit aggression, including sexual assault. A father's understanding of this and supporting his son to be whole and outside this box is a protection against his son committing sexual assault (a protective factor).

In looking for an area where we could make a unique and valuable contribution, we discovered a lack of attention on the problem of sexual violence and the promotion of sexual respect and consent. We began by conducting several focus groups with both dads and dads' program leaders to ask questions about where men learned their values about sexuality and to assess the starting places to address the subject of healthy sexuality. We learned several important things. First, that the subject was not addressed in their programs. Second, that because the subject was not discussed, they were at a rather elementary place in the conversation, a place we call the humor stage where questions are initially met with jokes and embarrassment. Third, once through this initial conversation, we found that there was great interest with both leaders and program members to talk about the subject. Fathers do want to learn about healthy sexuality for the benefit of their children and program leaders want to be more comfortable raising the subject of sexual health and sexual assault.



We are now examining resources in the subject of healthy sexuality and engaging the leadership in Massachusetts' responsible fatherhood work. We have drafted and revised a document that will become a reference guideline for fathers' program leaders on the subject of healthy sexuality. In final form, the guidelines will contain a list of relevant trainings that could be beneficial to people working with fathers, a bibliography of helpful resources, recommendations for counseling referrals, and recommendations for meeting the support needs for program leaders.

Additionally, we are testing several education units about healthy sexuality that leaders can utilize when they run groups. The first unit centers on a values clarification exercise from the "Let's be Honest" curriculum called the "Personal Shield" (<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/ma/lets-be-honest-workshops-11989.htm>) This leads an educational conversation on what a parent would like to teach their children about sex and sexuality.

## Sensitive Topics

The responsible fatherhood community promotes their programs to dads by showing evidence that kids do better when their dads are involved. While there is some evidence to this claim, we are aware that fathers' rights groups use similar language in their arguments for policies and practices that are not in the best interest of the child. We also urge responsibility in using this message as it presumes a binary model of male/father and female/mother family structures. These programs need to be mindful of families of various compositions.

It is crucial that fatherhood programs take a strong stance in supporting safety for victims and survivors and for battered mothers with their children. Equally important is that these programs are mindful to both anticipate and to avoid unintended consequences that may undermine the liberty and dignity of sexual and domestic violence victims and survivors. Specifically, sexual and domestic violence programs and fatherhood programs must be able to distinguish and articulate for men in such programs that support for fathers may not be used as a leveraging point against victims or to harm the victim-child relationship. And it is important for victim groups to be informed of the curriculum purpose and content in order that victims have the same level of information afforded fathers.

Fatherhood program providers also work hard to counter presumptions that their members are offenders or potential offenders of sexual or domestic violence and/or child abuse. From their perspective, success is in running a strength-based program. Approaching them as partners who have a contribution to promoting healthy masculinity will be met with more openness. These partnerships are critical for fatherhood programs to build protective factors against perpetration and victimization.

*Craig Norberg-Bohm, the Coordinator for the Men's Initiative for Jane Doe Inc. (MIJD) since 2002, is also the founder and director of Massachusetts White Ribbon Day. As a project of Jane Doe Inc., The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, the MIJD operates an information clearinghouse, electronic newsletter, and statewide network for the purpose of enabling male bystanders and allies to work on ending men's violence. Craig consults generally on organizational methods, community engagement strategy, primary prevention and education*

## Conclusion

We have learned and continue to learn about the importance of relationship building. Responsible fatherhood program providers are true partners in the big tent approach to the primary prevention of men's violence against women. Fathers' parenting programs are engaging men in growing numbers using a positive, strength based, and health promotional invitation. This particular prevention strategy includes directly engaging men and boys on healthy masculinity. Because the responsible fatherhood community is already engaged in this purpose, we have an opportunity to partner with this community. We can share our priority for domestic and sexual violence prevention, and we can learn from their success in working with men.

For more information about Jane Doe Inc. and this work, please visit [janedoe.org](http://janedoe.org) or contact Craig Norberg-Bohm at [mensinitiative@janedoe.org](mailto:mensinitiative@janedoe.org).

*models for engaging men and boys. He is Past-President of the Board of Directors for Emerge, a program for offenders of domestic violence. He is also Past-President of Community Works, a fundraising federation made up of cooperating nonprofit organizations across the commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1978, Craig was one of the founders of RAVEN (Rape and Violence End Now) in St. Louis, Mo., one of the earliest men's centers in the U.S. established to engage men to end men's violence.*





## "The 101" on 100 Conversations



**King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC)**  
**Mo Lewis, Prevention Services Manager**

*100 Conversations* is a comprehensive, free online toolkit that contains conversation prompts and questions to help talk about sex, relationships, and safety. It was created in partnership with young people to help parents, service providers, and supportive adults have "the talk". *100 Conversations* is for anyone who wants to have important conversations with the young people in their lives - we like to say, "You'll be having one hundred conversations anyway, so you might as well make them count!" *100 Conversations* is unique because it's all about young people telling us what they want to talk about and how we can best bring up these conversations.

*100 Conversations* was developed directly from the work that was being done through P.O.P! (the Power of Prevention), a group of young folks working on community-specific prevention efforts at KCSARC. One of our larger project goals was to create a curriculum with P.O.P! based on the things they were focusing on in their prevention efforts. When it was time to start planning the curriculum, P.O.P! members told me that they wanted to make a curriculum aimed at adults instead of young people – that they see a lack of education and comfort in talking about sex as a main root cause of sexual violence and thought this curriculum could help increase the possibility for open, respectful conversations.





## 10 Different Topics within 100 Conversations

Boundaries  
+  
Values

Friends  
+  
Family

Relationships

Sex

Consent  
+  
Law

LGBTQ

Bullying  
+  
Violence

Bystanders  
+  
Resources

Media

Technology

### 100 Conversations in Action

*100 Conversations* can be used as a set of stand-alone conversations or can be a supplement to already-existing curriculum. P.O.P! members arranged the conversation topics in the order they recommend, but any of the conversations can be pulled out and used individually. For example, if someone is working in a classroom setting and interested in having conversations about bullying they might choose three or four conversations from the Bullying & Violence section for their class to explore; a parent could print out conversations in the Media section to have on-hand when watching TV in the evenings with their teen. Additionally, each conversation starts with "Think About This First" which provides suggestions, conversation overviews, or specific tips for how to engage around that particular conversation.

One of the things that we wanted to include with the conversations was information about how to best initiate these conversations, particularly since many of us never got "the talk" either! Knowing that this knowledge is not innate, P.O.P! members helped create a "Before You Talk" section on the site that encourages people to think about how to lay the groundwork for future conversations. Some of the questions from this section are below:

Think about:

### Sharing Your Intentions

- What do you want them to know about talking to you?
- What are the things you hope they can learn from you?
- What are ways you can say this (and re-say it)?

Think about:

### Practice

- What are ways you can start having open conversations right away?
- How will they know that you are listening to what they are saying? How can you express that through your words and actions?
- What are opportunities when you can re-state your intentions, values, and hopes for communication?
- How will you know if they have heard you? What cues will you see that let you know that what you've said has sunk in?

For more information about *100 Conversations*, P.O.P!, and the prevention projects at KCSARC you can contact Mo Lewis at [MLewis@kcsarc.org](mailto:MLewis@kcsarc.org). And don't forget to visit [www.100conversations.org](http://www.100conversations.org)



# QUESTION OPPRESSION



## Exploring the Connections Between Sexual Violence & Oppression

Use these questions to explore the connections between sexual violence and oppression with staff, volunteers, or board members. Try discussing one or more at a staff meeting, in-service, volunteer training, or board retreat.

How can you discuss with parents the real impact of racism, sexism, able-bodism, classism, and other forms of oppression on their teens' lives?

How can parents' identities and experiences with oppression shape the ways in which they discuss relationships and sexuality with their teens?

How can parents begin to have conversations about healthy sexuality and gender expression with their teens?

## PREVENTION RESOURCES



Throughout this issue of PISC we have examined how to engage parents. The following resources provide support on engaging parents for programs as well as resources directly for parents. One of the common barriers for parents talking to teens about healthy sexuality is uncertainty around explaining and discussing sex, therefore several of these resources are information hubs on this topic.

**Type:** Recorded Webinar

### **Involving Families in Teen Dating Abuse Prevention**

<http://preventconnect.org/2012/09/involving-families-in-teen-dating-abuse-prevention/>

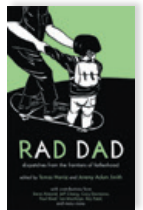
This webinar reviews a model program and evaluation research on engaging families to prevent dating abuse and rape for teens. Great resource for programs looking to design a parent engagement program.



**Type:** Books

### **Rad Dad: Dispatches from the Frontiers of Fatherhood**

This compilation features topics such as the brutalities, beauties, and politics of the birth experience; the challenges of parenting on an equal basis with mothers; the tests faced by transgendered and gay fathers; and parental confrontations with war, violence, racism, and incarceration.



**Type:** Websites

### **Advocates for Youth: Parents' Sex Ed Center**

[www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents-sex-ed-center-home](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents-sex-ed-center-home)

### **Scarleteen: Sex Ed for the Real World**

[www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com)

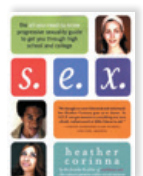
### **Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children & Teenagers Safe (and Parents Sane)**

Gavin de Becker offers parents tools and practical steps to enhance children's safety at every age level.



### **S.E.X. The all-you-need-to-know progressive sexuality guide to get you through high school and college**

While youth are the audience of this guide, parents may find it very useful as it provides answers to questions about sex and sexuality that real youth have asked.





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