

Informational Brief

2014 Engaging Men on Campus Assessment

Office on Violence Against Women Campus Program

Sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence on college campuses have made engaging campus men in prevention a national priority. But there is little information indicating *how* colleges are engaging men. This informational brief highlights the results of the 2014 Engaging Men on Campus Assessment, giving some insight into what colleges are doing to foster men as allies in the prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. The assessment was conducted with the more than 100 campuses that received funding through the Office on Violence Against Women Campus Program.

OBSERVATIONS

The institutions participating in the assessment were a mix of rural, urban, public, private, religious-affiliated, historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges. The overwhelming majority were public, four-year institutions. Below is a brief summary of observations made as a result of the assessment.

1. *The Majority of Campuses are Engaging Men*

Although their strategies for engaging men varied, as did the degree, more than three-fourths of the colleges participating in the assessment were taking some steps to involve men in prevention efforts. This represents a fundamental shift from the days when preventing sexual assault and dating violence was largely perceived as the responsibility of women and girls and was typically limited to risk-reduction: taking a self-defense course, walking in a group at night, and so on. Characterizing prevention as risk-reduction fails to create opportunities for men's participation.

2. *Women Assume Most of the Responsibility for Engaging Men*

It was the women on the campuses who were initially most invested in men becoming allies in prevention. Often women administrators, for example, were the ones who instituted efforts to build men as allies. In this structural sense, women have not escaped the prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking as a woman's responsibility. Often these women were operating with very limited resources, which was identified as a challenge.

3. *Awareness-Raising Events are the Popular Form of Engaging Men*

The most widely used strategy by colleges to engage men was holding awareness-raising events that are specifically for men or are for both men and women. Many campuses identified holding awareness-raising events as their greatest success in efforts to engage men. The lack of resources and funding mentioned in number two above could explain the reason for this. Most campuses already hold events during awareness months, and so it is easy and cost effective to make either extra effort to include men, or if there are the resources, to add on an event specifically for men.

4. *Challenges are More Prevalent than Successes*

More than 15% of the campuses participating in the assessment felt they had had no successes engaging men in prevention. Many of the assessment participants, wanted more from the men on their campus than just attending an awareness event, as was apparent in what the majority identified as their greatest challenge: "Getting more male-identified students, faculty, administration, and staff involved." Sustainability was the next most frequently cited example of a challenge.

5. The Majority of Campuses do not Address Issues of Masculinity

Less than 25% of the campuses participating in the assessment address masculinity's role in prevention. The colleges who do address it typically consider the negative impact of stereotypical masculine social norms and sometimes also work to create a positive impact by infusing pro-social, healthier norms into male socialization and masculinity. The goal of addressing masculinity is to build safer campus cultures by intentionally replacing risk factors connected to unhealthy, violent masculinities with healthier, nonviolent masculinities. To achieve this, some of the campuses are using healthy masculinity within a public health approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to more effectively engage men, campuses need to build on the work they have begun. Recommendations consist of steps to institute comprehensive, coordinated strategies for engaging men in prevention. The steps are intended to build capacity and sustainability by increasing shared responsibility for engaging men throughout the campus in order to change the campus culture, especially as it relates to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and masculinity.

Brief descriptions of the steps are:

- 1.) Build a healthy masculinity gender lens
- 2.) Create a comprehensive, positive strategy to engage men
- 3.) Build a large team of engaging men allies starting with the coordinated community response team and in areas such campus communities as athletics, fraternities, and LGBTQ.
- 4.) Develop culturally-informed engaging men programming based on a healthy masculinity gender lens
- 5.) Train educators and invite non-traditional allies to participate
- 6.) Implement and sustain comprehensive and varied engaging men programming
- 7.) Continue training educators and building allies
- 8.) Evaluate and repeat

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