PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE

Sexual violence is a widespread problem, but the good news is it is preventable. Prevention requires many voices and roles. There are many ways individuals, communities, and the private sector can take action to promote safety, respect, and equality.

What is prevention?

Prevention aims to stop sexual violence before it has a chance to happen. It is possible to create communities where everyone is treated with respect and equality. This can be done by promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships.

Prevention strategies that address the root causes and social norms that allow sexual violence to exist in the first place are the most effective. This means making the connection between all forms of oppression (including racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, adultism, ageism, and others). Oppression creates a culture in which inequality thrives and violence is seen as normal.

Many communities are already reducing the risk of sexual violence through efforts that promote safety, respect, equality, and accountability.

Understanding the role of oppression

All forms of oppression contribute to sexual violence. Oppression condones violence, uses power over others, and excuses unfair treatment and harm. Consider how sexism, racism, and transphobia are used to silence violence and abuse. What are other examples?

Prevention is everyone's responsibility.

What you can do

As individuals, all of us have a role to play in creating safe environments. We can all:

- Intervene to stop problematic and disrespectful behavior
- Promote and model healthy attitudes, behaviors, and relationships
- Believe survivors and assist them in finding resources

What communities can do

Communities and organizations also have a role to play in serving as leaders on this issue by:

- Creating and strengthening policies to promote safety, equality, and respect
- Assessing the risks in their environment
- Promoting respectful behaviors
- Providing support for survivors
- Holding those who harm others accountable and ensuring that appropriate treatment options are available

What businesses can do

- Promote prevention and support for survivors through policies and education

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Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- Model healthy attitudes and relationships with clients and consumers
- Promote positive messages and behaviors through marketing campaigns and advertising content
- Invest funding to make sexual violence prevention a social responsibility priority

Examples of prevention in action

Employers, schools, and community settings can create proactive policies to promote a safer environment. For example:

- Conduct trainings on how staff can contribute to positive workplace norms through bystander intervention
- Display prevention messages and promote community resources at your school or business
- Find resources to learn more about prevention efforts and get involved

Be a part of the solution

The time for prevention is now. Join us in promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships. Your efforts are important and necessary. Together, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect.

Where can I learn more?

Local sexual assault centers can provide help. In crisis situations, contact 1-800-656-4673. For more information, visit www.nsvrc.org.

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