



Preventing Sexual Violence Among Adolescents in Middle Schools



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hot topics
in practice

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Question for the Viewers

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How would you describe your familiarity with your state's efforts to address sexual violence in schools?

- A. Very familiar
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Not familiar
- D. Other (please type in chat)

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Background	Youth-Centered Environmental Shift (YES!) Program	Needs & Attitudes: Data from Staff & Students	Perspectives of School District Leaders
			

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Project Team & Funding

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Northwest Center
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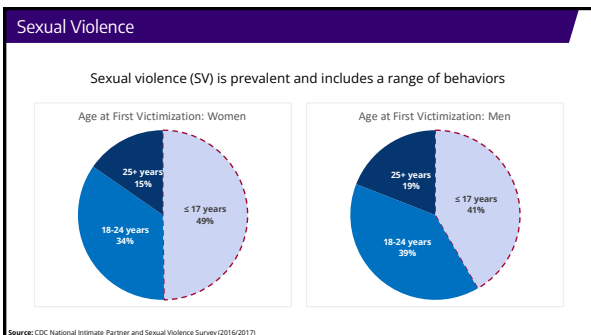
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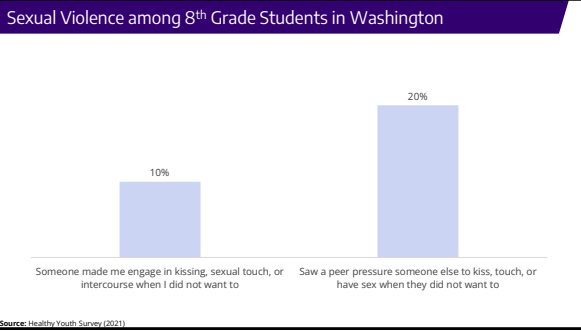
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Funding:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

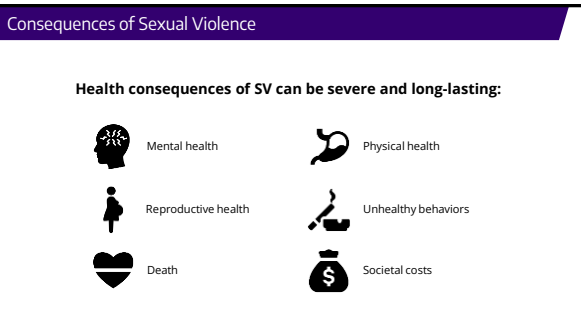
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Sexual Violence & Schools



- School environments offer an influential context to prevent SV
- System-level interventions (e.g., focused on school policies and procedures) for primary prevention of SV are critically needed in schools
- Starting interventions earlier (e.g., middle school) may be beneficial for primary prevention

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Youth-Centered Environmental Shift (YES!) Program



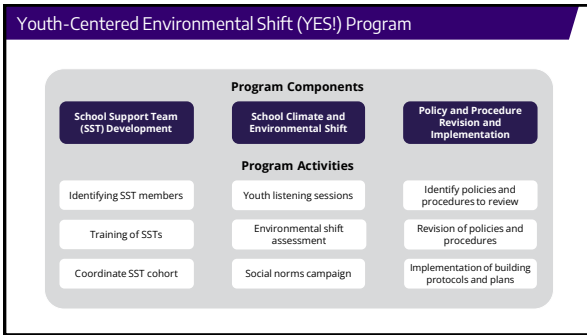
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YES! Program

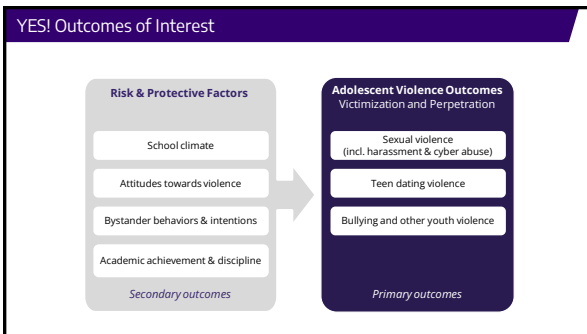
Mission: To create a school culture where students are emotionally and physically safe, supported, and free of abuse, specifically Sexual Violence.



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Protective School Environments

Address community-level risk through environmental approaches

- Adult monitoring and presence in hotspot areas
- Designate certain areas for a particular class grade (e.g., "6th grade only hall")
- Implement awareness weeks, social challenges, and trusted adult appreciation days
- Post easy-to-read infographics reminding student of their rights in "hot" locations
- Display student art/posters promoting healthy relationships, mental health, anti-bullying
- Create "trusted adult"/"safe space" signs or pins to put up in your classroom and office

Source: Using Environmental Design to Prevent School Violence (EDC), Vagi et al. (2018); Stein et al. (2013)

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Youth-centered Strategies: Being a Trusted Adult Ally



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Question for the Viewers

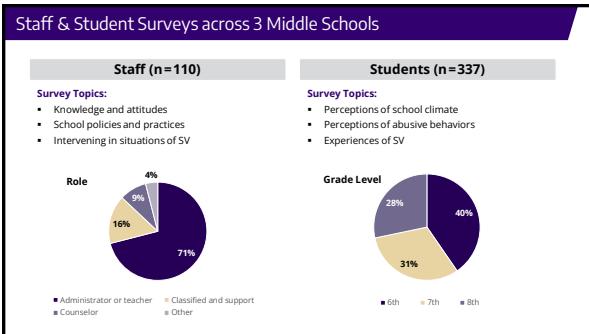
How would you describe the level of engagement that your organization has with your local school communities?

- A. High level
- B. Moderate level
- C. Low level
- D. Other (please type in chat)

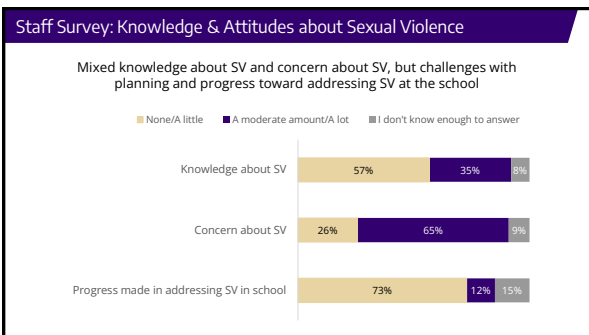
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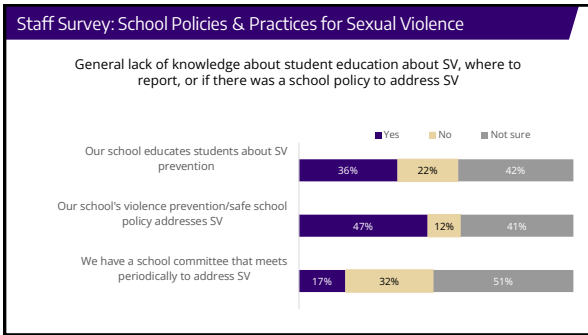
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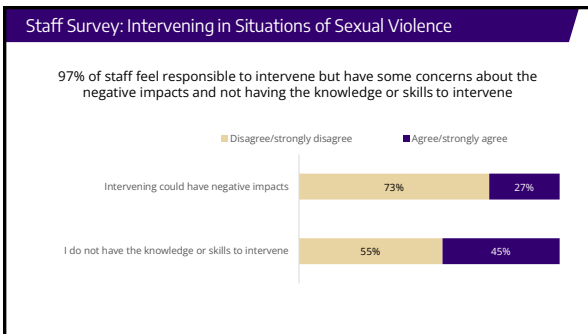
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Student Survey: Perceptions of Abusive Behavior



Behaviors rated abusive or extremely abusive...

- Pressuring them not to break up with them (72%)
- Telling them which friends they can and can't see or talk to (68%)
- Telling them what to do all the time (53%)
- Telling them they're ugly or stupid (46%)
- Name calling or insulting them (32%)

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Student Survey: Sexual Violence Victimization



Report being touched in an unwelcome or unwanted sexual way



Report seeing someone their age pressure someone else to kiss, touch, or have sex when they didn't want to



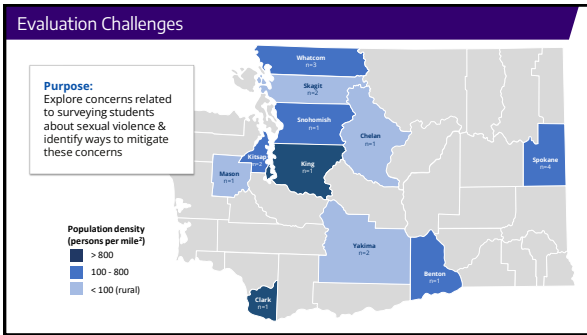
Report having someone make unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks towards them

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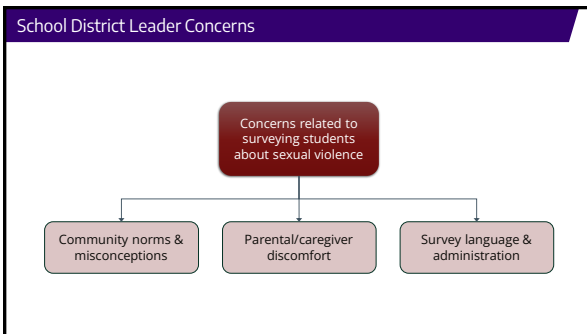
Perspectives of School District Leaders



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Parental/Caregiver Discomfort

I think parents start to become defensive and upset when they feel like their ability to lead this important conversation got pulled out from under them

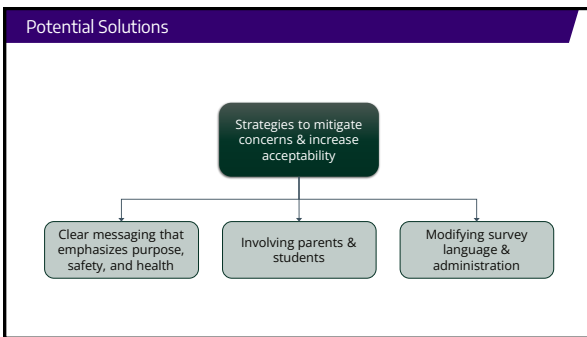
...In our community, I think they see 11-15 year olds...as being very vulnerable and very young. And that talking about these kinds of issues, we are scaring them. We're talking to them about things that they don't need to know about yet

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Survey Language & Administration

...if we put questions like this in front of a child who has been abused sexually and is already dealing with that personally and in their family and maybe beyond what we might know about as a school, that's a very uncomfortable and inappropriate position to put that student in

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Clear Messaging

... I would encourage reflecting:
"Here's what we are hearing from students. Here's what we understand from the surveys we do. Here's what we know from our own population and this is important to us because your kids being safe is important to us. And one of the ways that we can help them be more safe is having a real picture of what they're experiencing. And that's what this survey is going to help us understand"



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Involving Parents & Students

What would really value [students']time is for them to have the opportunity to see what a difference taking the survey meant, what you did with the results and whether you used it to advocate for certain things ... to see what the results were and then what next steps you are taking



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Modifying Survey Language and Administration

Definitely don't ask these in the fall...of any grade because the kids have all been home with their parents over summer. Maybe the spring of seventh grade especially...if these topics have already been talked about [in sex education]... then asking these questions I think really is valuable to us because, did we get through to the kids or not?



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Implementation Challenges



- School/staff capacity
- Competing priorities
- Participatory research was not desired by all schools
- Turnover
- Decision-making structure

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Key Takeaways

- ✓ Sexual violence is common and starts early
- ✓ Schools can play an important role in preventing and responding to SV
- ✓ Current tensions and political climate have led to more pushback around addressing sexual violence in schools
- ✓ Important to engage school community, build trust, and align with existing school efforts to ensure acceptability

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A Chat with Avanti Adhia and Nikki Van Wagner



Sue Grinnell

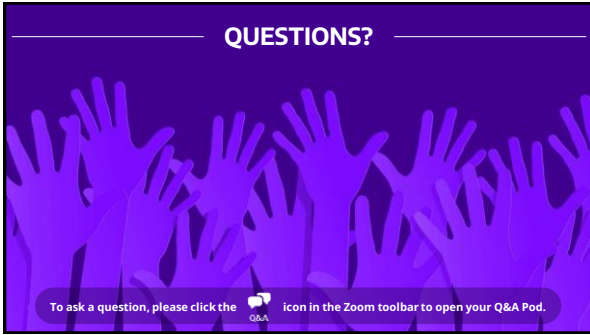


Avanti Adhia



Nikki Van Wagner

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Resources

Sexual Violence Prevention Resource for Action - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV-Prevention-Resource_508.pdf

Sexual Violence (Overview) - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>

About Sexual Assault (FAQ Included) - Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
<https://www.wcsap.org/help/about-sexual-assault>

Sexual Violence Prevention - Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
<https://ospi.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/sexual-violence-prevention>

National Sexual Assault Hotline - Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
<https://rainn.org/about-national-sexual-assault-telephone-hotline>

National Sexual Violence Prevention Center - Prevention (Resources)
<https://www.nsvpc.org/prevention>

love is respect - A project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline
<https://lovesrespect.org>

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