

# Preventing Sexual Violence in Tennessee

Implementing Evidence-Based Programs to Stop Sexual Violence BEFORE it Occurs

The Tennessee Department of Health is using an innovative approach to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence across the state. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **Rape Prevention and Education (RPE)** program, Tennessee is working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders, including the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, Tennessee Department of Education, colleges/universities, local rape crisis centers, and other community organizations, to **stop sexual violence BEFORE it occurs**. These collaborations have strengthened the state's sexual violence prevention efforts by **leveraging resources and expertise** necessary to identify and implement **evidence-based interventions** that can reduce the rate of sexual violence among Tennesseans.

## WHAT IS TENNESSEE DOING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

All states, including Tennessee, use multiple programs and tools to implement and sustain prevention efforts that ultimately decrease the number of individuals who **perpetrate sexual violence** and who are **victims of sexual violence**. Tennessee is maximizing the impact of its work by implementing evidence-based interventions that provide opportunities for professionals, advocates, staff, youth, and community members to learn concepts and skills necessary to **reduce the initiation of sexual violence**. The evidence-based programs being implemented by Tennessee's RPE program include: **Safe Dates**, a 10 session school-based dating abuse prevention curriculum that is effective with male and female students in middle and high school; **Bringing in the Bystander**, an intervention program that teaches bystanders how to intervene safely and effectively in cases where sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking may occur; and **Coaching Boys into Men**, a program that engages athletic coaches as positive role models to deliver violence-prevention messages to young male athletes.

## WHY IS TENNESSEE WORKING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

According to 2014 data for Tennessee:

**5,656**

Tennesseans reported being victims of sexual assault in a one-year period

**6x**

14–17 year olds were 6x as likely to be sexually assaulted compared to 25–34 year olds

**6x**

Females were more than 6x as likely to be sexually assaulted compared to males

The CDC RPE program has been strengthening our communities and striving to reduce the burden of sexual violence since 1994. CDC provides RPE funding to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

## WHAT IMPACT IS THE RPE PROGRAM INTENDED TO HAVE IN TENNESSEE?

The Tennessee RPE program aims to prevent sexual violence by promoting **non-violent social norms, attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices**.



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### WHAT IF YOU COULD COACH BOYS TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT VIOLENCE NEVER EQUALS STRENGTH?

That's exactly what Tennessee is doing with funding it receives through CDC's RPE program. Coaching Boys into Men is one of several evidence-based interventions being used in Tennessee to prevent sexual violence. Coaching Boys into Men was founded on the recognition that athletic coaches play an extremely influential and unique role in the lives of young men. Because of these relationships, coaches are poised to positively influence how young men think and behave, both on and off the field. As such, Coaching Boys into Men trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength. The program provides coaches with a "playbook" with suggested topics for discussions between coaches and athletes that require no more than 30 minutes per week over the course of a sports season. Coaching Boys into Men is based on the following four guiding principles:

- 1. The Power of Sports:** Sports have tremendous influence in our culture and in the lives of young people. The principles of teamwork and fair play that are central to athletics make sports an ideal platform to teach healthy relationship skills.
- 2. Strong Partnerships Foster Success:** Coaching Boys into Men is most successful when coaches and staff from local domestic or sexual violence prevention agencies have strong partnerships.
- 3. Building Leadership, Transforming Norms:** Coaching Boys into Men has been proven to positively impact athletes' ability to intervene when witnessing abusive or disrespectful behavior. As leaders themselves, athletes are given the tools and techniques they need to stand up for respect and influence their school's culture.
- 4. Coach as Leader:** As influencers and role models, coaches are uniquely poised to deliver the Coaching Boys into Men program. They are central to the program's success

### HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THIS APPROACH IS WORKING?

In 2012, Coaching Boys into Men underwent a rigorous three-year CDC-funded evaluation in Sacramento, California. At the three-month follow-up, athletes who participated in Coaching Boys into Men were significantly more likely to report intentions to intervene (e.g., telling an adult, talking to the people involved, etc.) when witnessing abusive or disrespectful behaviors among their peers.<sup>1</sup> One year later, compared to athletes who did not receive the program, athletes who participated in Coaching Boys into Men were more likely to report less abuse perpetration and less negative bystander behavior (e.g., not saying anything, or laughing) when witnessing abusive or disrespectful behavior among their peers.<sup>2</sup>

What does this mean for Tennessee? Thanks to funding from the CDC RPE program, efforts are underway across the state to:



For additional information or to locate contact information for the state RPE program, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/states.html>

<sup>1</sup> Miller E, Tancredit TJ, McCauley HL, et al. (2012) Coaching Boys into Men: A Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial of a Dating Violence Prevention Program. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 51:431-438.

<sup>2</sup> Miller E, Tancredit TJ, McCauley HL, et al. (2013) One-Year Follow Up of a Coach-delivered Dating Violence Prevention Program – A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 45(1):108-112.