

Preventing Sexual Violence in Rhode Island

Empowering Teens to Stop Sexual Violence BEFORE it Occurs



The Rhode Island 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, the Rhode Island Department of Health has forged a unique partnership with Rhode Island's Sexual Assault and Trauma Resource Center (a.k.a., Day One), Brown University, and Rhode Island Hospital to **stop sexual violence BEFORE it occurs**. This collaborative partnership has strengthened the state's sexual violence prevention efforts by **leveraging expertise, maximizing resources,** and **enhancing opportunities** to identify and implement effective statewide sexual violence prevention programs.

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 IS RHODE ISLAND DOING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

All states, including Rhode Island, use multiple programs and tools to implement and sustain prevention efforts that ultimately decrease the number of individuals who **perpetrate sexual violence** and the number of individuals who are **victims of sexual violence**. Rhode Island is maximizing the impact of its efforts by working with **Day One, Brown University,** and **Rhode Island Hospital** to implement and evaluate a sexual violence prevention program for high school teens called **Your Voice, Your View**. The core program consists of four 50-minute workshops. The workshops are designed to **correct misperceptions** teens have about their peers' attitudes regarding sexual violence, **dispel myths,** and **build teens' confidence and skills** to intervene in situations to prevent sexual violence. Day One oversees the implementation of the program and the evaluation of the program is led by researchers from Brown University and Rhode Island Hospital.

WHY IS RHODE ISLAND WORKING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Among Rhode Island high school students:

8%

of all students report ever being forced to have sexual intercourse

9%

of students who dated in the past 12 months report being physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating

10%

of students who dated in the past 12 months report being forced by someone they were dating to engage in sexual actions against their will

WHAT IMPACT IS THE RPE PROGRAM INTENDED TO HAVE IN RHODE ISLAND?

The Rhode Island 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 EMPOWER TEENS TO EDUCATE THEIR PEERS ABOUT PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

That's exactly what Rhode Island is doing with funding it receives through CDC's RPE program. Rhode Island's *Your Voice, Your View* is a program centered on a series of workshops and a **social norms approach to prevention**. A research study currently being conducted on *Your Voice, Your View* has added a successful poster component to the core program that will be used with all future programs as a community-level approach to prevention. This environmental component uses a social norms approach to **foster environments that increase positive bystander behavior, change social norms, and reduce the perpetration of sexual violence**.



Although typically only one grade per high school participates in *Your Voice, Your View* workshops, data from a school-wide survey is used to create poster messages that can impact the entire school body. The posters are displayed in common areas of the high school so students have the opportunity to see at least four positive messages about the prevention of sexual violence several times a day over the course of four weeks. Additionally, teachers and school staff are encouraged to discuss the poster data with students to reinforce positive norms and maximize the success of the poster activity. The evaluation of *Your Voice, Your View* workshops and posters will be completed in 2018.

The long-term collaboration between the Rhode Island Department of Health and Day One, with funding from CDC's RPE program, has enabled Day One to provide education on sexual assault prevention to Rhode Island middle schools and high schools for more than 10 years.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THIS APPROACH IS WORKING?

The *Your Voice, Your View* program is being evaluated by an independent evaluator. Preliminary findings indicate program success. The results from pre-tests to post-tests indicate that the program is increasing students' knowledge about sexual violence and helping shape positive attitudes towards the prevention of sexual assault. Positive changes on knowledge and attitudes do not vary by the socioeconomic status of a school's student population, suggesting that *Your Voice, Your View* is as effective in high schools serving higher-income students as in high schools serving lower-income students. Additional information about the impact of *Your Voice, Your View* will be available upon completion of the ongoing evaluation in 2018.

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



DECREASE RISK FACTORS
that make it more likely
that people will experience
sexual violence



INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS
that make it less
likely that people will
experience sexual violence



CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES
by preventing sexual
violence from occurring in
the first place

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