

RAPE PREVENTION & EDUCATION PROGRAM (RPE)

A fact sheet by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Sexual violence is a serious public health problem in the United States, affecting people of every age and background. One in three girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused before the age of 17 (Briere & Elliott, 2003).

About sexual violence

The National Injury Control and Risk Survey found that 10.2% of women and 2.1% of men reported experiencing a completed rape during their lives (Basile, Chen, Black, & Saltzman, 2007). Sexual violence is correlated with a lifetime of complex health, mental health, and behavioral struggles including but not limited to obesity, smoking, substance abuse, depression, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, asthma, suicide, and other issues (Felitti, 2002; Dolezal, McCollum, & Callahan, 2009).

After homicide, sexual violence is the most costly violent crime in the U.S., costing \$151,423 per incident in 2008 (DeLisi et al., 2010). Researchers estimate that the health care costs associated with violence and abuse fall between \$333 and \$750 billion annually in the U.S., which is 17 to 37% of the total health care dollar (Dolezal et al., 2009).

Entire communities and the society at large bear the burden of sexual violence in the form

of the lost contributions of victims/survivors and high costs associated with responding to this crime. The good news is that with the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program, prevention is possible.

About the Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE)

Sexual violence does not occur in a vacuum; it is influenced by the interplay of risk and protective factors at individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. Sexual assault organizations advocated for the creation of the Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE) program, which was established by the Violence Against Women Act. The program is administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and provides one-of-a-kind funding to support the primary prevention of sexual violence in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and five U.S. territories.



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Primary prevention prepares communities to stop sexual violence before it occurs by engaging local, state, and national sexual assault and public health experts in promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors. These efforts are comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and informed by the best available data and evidence.

Primary prevention involves a continuum of activities that provide developmentally appropriate behavior change skills throughout the lifespan. Experiential evidence shows that primary prevention programs are more likely to stop sexual violence across a lifetime than any other single intervention.

Snapshot of RPE-funded programs throughout the United States

- **California**

The California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, in partnership with the California Department of Public Health, engages and motivates young men aged 14-18 to take a more active role in preventing sexual violence. Billboards, radio ads, posters, and other media reach young men with the message, "My Strength is Not for Hurting." In MyStrength Clubs, young men in high schools and other community settings complete community action projects to involve their peers in prevention.

- **Texas**

Two central Texas rape crisis centers work with religious leaders to prevent sexual violence among faith communities.

- **Iowa**

Two Iowa prevention programs work with youth in preventing sexual violence, providing them with age-appropriate skill-building sessions.

Making a difference in 27 states and one U.S. Territory

In communities throughout the U.S. and Guam, the Green Dot program engages community leaders in replacing violence with healthy social norms through bystander intervention, which is a promising primary prevention strategy (Green Dot, 2011).

For more information about the Green Dot program and its geographical reach, go to livethegreendot.com.

- **Minnesota**

The Minnesota Summit: The High Cost of Sexual Violence convened 200 of Minnesota's best minds to create a statewide plan to prevent losses caused by sexual violence.

- **New York**

Project ENVISION prevents the perpetration of sexual violence by mobilizing communities to change social norms in NYC.

- **New Jersey**

RPE programs are conducting a statewide study to measure social norms as they relate to sexual violence.

The scope of RPE-funded programs

The Rape Prevention and Education Program reaches millions with helpful information and services.

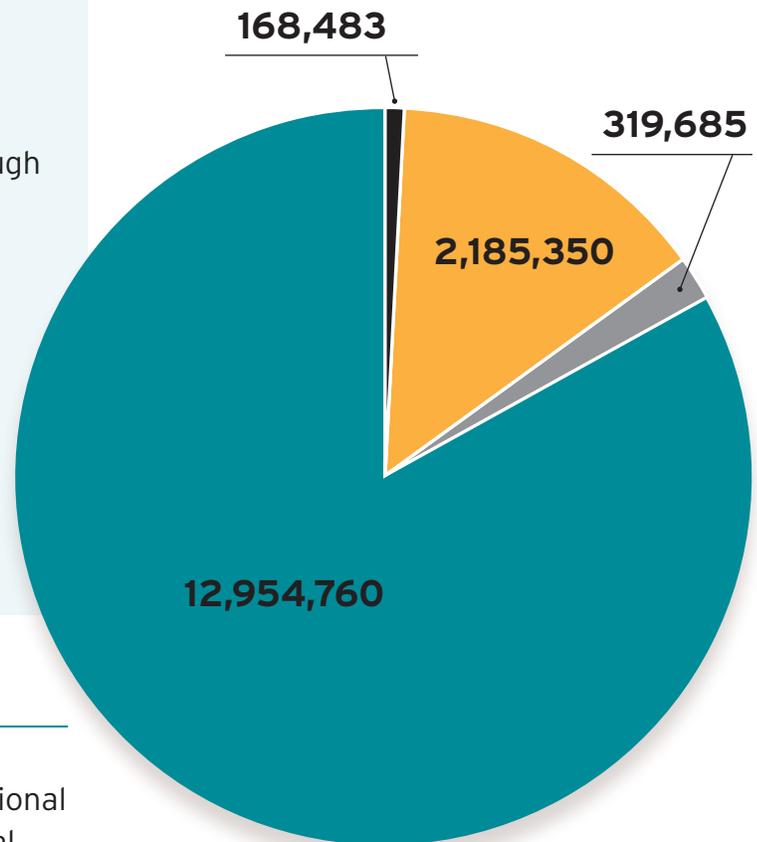
In 2008-2009, the U.S. spent approximately \$40 million on prevention through the RPE program, which enabled sexual violence prevention educators and their partners to reach nearly 16 million community members.

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Audiences reached through the RPE program in 2008-2009

The chart, at right, demonstrates the vast reach of the RPE program in 2008-2009:

- 168,483 professionals were reached
- 319,685 individuals were reached through rape crisis hotlines
- 2,185,350 individuals (mainly youth) were reached in school- and community-based educational sessions
- 12,954,760 individuals were reached through media-based information and resources



The impact of RPE-funded programs

Assessments show that the Rape Prevention Education program makes a difference. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center's 2010 National Prevention Needs Assessment (the Assessment) found that RPE funds equip prevention education staff with greater capacities and skills to design, deliver, and evaluate prevention programs (Townsend, 2010).

The Assessment also found that RPE funds make the true prevention of sexual violence more likely, with RPE-funded programs engaged in more primary prevention activities than their counterparts. Additionally, the Assessment found that funds bring stability to prevention efforts throughout the U.S., reducing fragmented and ineffective programming. The RPE program prepares everyday people to become heroes, getting involved in the fight against sexual violence and serving as role models in their communities.

RPE makes social change possible by promoting healthy, non-violent social norms, attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices throughout our larger society.

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About the authors

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) advocates on behalf of the victim/survivors and works to end sexual violence and ensure services for them. The NAESV Board of Directors consists of leaders of state sexual assault coalitions and national law, policy, and tribal experts who promote the organization's mission to advance and strengthen public policy on behalf of state coalitions, individuals, and other entities working to end sexual violence.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape in 2000, identifies, develops and disseminates resources regarding all aspects of sexual violence prevention and intervention. NSVRC activities include training and technical assistance, referrals, consultation, systems advocacy, resource library, capacity-building, integrating research findings with community-based projects and coordinating Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

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