

OUR GENDER REVOLUTION



Social Change to End Gender Violence

Comprehensive strategies to end gender violence – adolescent relationship abuse, dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and other forms of gender violence

www.OurGenderRevolution.org

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Our Gender Revolution is a guide for youth, schools, and communities working together to develop and activate comprehensive social change strategies to end gender violence - adolescent relationship abuse, teen dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape and other forms of gender violence that disproportionately impact girls and women, and people who are gender non-conforming.

This document was developed by the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence with youth activists and many experts working towards social change to end gender violence.

This guide features video links to the youth voices.

Social Change – Quick Start!

Three simple steps for youth, schools, and communities to create social change to end gender violence!

STEP 1

Get Together. Youth from historically marginalized communities need to be at the center of an intergenerational collaborative.

STEP 2

Strengthen Efforts. Build the capacity of intergenerational collaborative. Start with a strong foundation and the best tools available. Strategies are more likely to have impact when your collaborative has a bold vision that they are working towards.

Smart Strategies: Learn about the social change work and how racism, classism, and other structural oppressions are connected to violence.

STEP 3

Try It Out! Design and activate comprehensive social change strategies to end gender violence.

1. **Societal-Level** - Create a youth-led gender and social equity campaign to generate conversations and build a movement to end gender violence.
2. **Community/Institutional Level** - Promote policies to support safe environments and positive culture.
3. **Relational Level** - Support communication between parents/caregivers and adolescents on expanding gender roles.
4. **Individual Level** - Engage youth from historically marginalized communities to strengthen leadership and organizing skills!

To make a revolution, people must not only struggle against existing institutions. They must make a philosophical/ spiritual leap and become more 'human' human beings. In order to change/ transform the world, they must change/ transform themselves.

— Grace Lee Boggs

Introduction

We envision beloved communities with social equity and collective liberation for all human beings, where we see our own and each other's full humanity and everyone has the ability to thrive and reach their potential. We are working towards a world rooted in interdependence, resilience, and regeneration.

In this vision, we will work together to make our communities stronger, and in turn, create powerful future generations where gender violence fueled by multiple, systemic oppressions is no longer a common occurrence, and domination, extraction, and violence in any form is no longer accepted. In this vision, we come together to end domination and violence in all forms. In this vision, we understand that all violence is inextricably linked and we must come together in order to end all forms of domination and violence.

We need to reach beyond what we think is feasible or culturally possible at this moment so that we can lead boldly and cultivate an appetite for risk taking in addressing root causes of domination, extraction, and violence, until it is felt deeply and widely enough to inspire social change.

We need to challenge the narrative and the reinforcement of gender norms, values, and assumptions of power and powerlessness, and organize for the evolution of gender norms, values, and shared power. We need to transform the way we think, the way our society and communities are structured, the way we live, and even who we are.

We need to speak to, engage, and activate youth from historically marginalized communities and leverage their leadership and innovation in every community. Youth are active and vibrant leaders, and are the vital experts to their peers and adult allies needed to create a sustainable movement to end gender violence. Youth working alongside adults to develop and implement social change approaches creates a sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and empowerment within themselves. Sustained involvement in planning and implementation of social change approaches provides a new opportunity for young people to improve decision-making and leadership skills that will amplify their potential for years to come. Young people are the present and their attitudes and behaviors will shape future generations.

Scope and Impact of Gender Violence Among Youth

Gender violence is expressed through physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse that results in harm, injury, and even death. Legal definitions of sexual assault, domestic violence, abusive relationships and other manifestations of domination and violence are under the umbrella of gender violence.

Among the root causes of gender violence are reinforcement of norms that preassign rigid gender roles as well as values, and assumptions of power and powerlessness associated with the gender binary (the incorrect assumption that there are two genders male/masculine and female/feminine).

Gender violence perpetuates a climate of fear for cis and trans girls and women and all people who challenge the norm of heterosexual male dominance through



For youth's perspective on social norms, click here to watch this video.
4:55

their actions or because of who they are. Gender violence is an extreme expression of oppressive practices, as a part of the continuum of gender oppression. The roots of gender violence and gender oppression are in patriarchy – a hierarchical system of male, heterosexual dominance, supported by and interconnected to the ways we devalue others based on identities and characteristics such as gender identity, race, sexual orientation, ability, religion, immigrant or refugee status.

Youth experience gender violence - abuse and sexual assault - at unacceptable rates. Nearly 1 in 10 youth in the United States report physical violence from a dating partner and 1 in 12 are forced to have sex against their will.¹ A 2011 report from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control found that 1 in 5 women and nearly 1 in 7 men, who experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, *first experienced* some form of violence between 11 and 17 years of age.² Additionally, almost half of all female victims who have been raped experienced their first rape before age 18 (30% between ages 11 and 17).³ These reports do not include sexual experiences due to coercion.

Youth from historically marginalized communities experience abuse and sexual assault at disproportionately higher rates. For example, a 2013 study demonstrated rates of dating violence victimization among Latino adolescents were 19.5%.⁴ The CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported 19% to 29% of LGBTQ high school students experienced dating violence in the prior year; 14% to 31% of gay and lesbian students and 17% to 32% of bisexual students were forced to have sexual intercourse. These rates are three times higher than the cumulative reports of all high school students reporting having experienced abuse or rape.

Finally, advances in modern technology allow youth to be constantly connected and digital technological abuse is now pervasive. Forty-one percent of youth in a recent survey reported they experienced some form of hurtful or controlling behavior online or through cell phones and/or text messages.⁵ One in five teen girls reports they sent or posted nude or partially nude photos via digital technology (12% of these girls felt pressured to do so)⁶. And eighty-four percent of teens who report cyber abuse say they were also psychologically abused by their partner, either physically (52%), sexually coerced (33%), or both.⁷

The consequences of victimization can be serious and long term. Young people who experience adolescent relationship abuse and sexual assault are at increased risk for substance abuse, depression, inadequate school performance, suicidal ideation, risky sexual behavior, and future victimization.^{8,9,10} Youth who have experienced sexual violence are more likely to engage in intercourse before age 15, use alcohol or drugs before sex, contract sexually transmitted infections, report

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2012). Youth risk behavior surveillance – United States, 2011. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 61(4), 1- 168. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6104.pdf>.

2 Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

3 see 8

4 Bell, K, Sabina C., Cuevas, C (2013) Dating Violence Among Latino Adolescents

5 Associated Press and MTV. (2011). AP-MTV digital abuse study. Retrieved from <http://www.athinline.org>.

6 Nat'l Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com, 2008

7 Zweig et al, 2013

8 Exner-Cortens D, Eckenrode J, & Rothman, E. (2013). Longitudinal associations between dating violence victimization and adverse childhood experiences. *Pediatrics*. 131(1), 71-78.

9 Banyard, V.L., & Cross, C. (2008). Consequences of teen dating violence: Understanding intervening variables in ecological context. *Violence Against Women*, 14(9), 998-1013.

10 Silverman, J. G., Raj, A., Mucci, L. A., & Hathaway, J. E. (2001). Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and suicidality. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286(5), 572-579.

inconsistent or complete lack of condom use, and have a partner with known HIV risk factors.¹¹

And an analysis of ten years of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey data indicates that adolescent female victims of physical dating violence were significantly and consistently more likely to consider suicide, have feelings of sadness or hopelessness, engage in physical fighting, and have unprotected sexual intercourse.¹²

Impact of Social Change

When I dare to be powerful – to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

— Audre Lorde

Social change seeks to transform the underlying conditions that result in domination, extraction and violence and towards the vision of the world rooted in interdependence, resilience, and sustainability. We are all deeply interconnected as human beings and any social change benefits all of us. Strong leaders and spiritual guides across many cultures have described our *interconnectedness* as a reason for doing the right thing and working for social change. It is through understanding this interconnectedness that we can all be liberated, both the oppressed and the privileged.

Gender violence is not an individual anomaly, but the result of systemic and societal conditions that perpetuate violence against cis and trans girls and women and people who are gender nonconforming. As a result, our prevention strategies need to expand beyond the individual and relational levels, and focus on community and societal levels to reflect this deeper understanding. We need to address the root causes that contribute to a culture of domination, extraction, and violence. This broader approach addresses not just the individual behaviors, but also the broader social problems that contribute to violence in all forms at an individual level, relational level, within our communities and institutions, and throughout our society. Through our influence in our relationship to these systems, we can advocate for real social change.

The social change approach is about creating communities that work for all people, not just those with dominant culture *privileges*. That means creating communities that also work for historically *marginalized* people like cis and trans girls and women and people who are gender nonconforming, people of color, indigenous people, LGBTQ+ people, people who are undocumented, refugees and many other groups that are pushed out of society.

Intersectionality is a framework that takes into account that multiple systemic oppressions, such as racism, sexism, able-ism, classism, heterosexism, and many other forms of oppression, are connected to one another. One cannot examine one form of oppression without looking at the others—they cannot be separated. Understanding that we are all born whole is another framework that takes into account that identities and characteristics are used in our culture of domination, extraction, and violence to erode wholeness or humanity.

To really engage in this work, there needs to be both individual and collective change and an understanding of the dominant forces of our culture. Members of the dominant culture or institution should be engaging in this work *for other people* as well as themselves. Conversations around oppression and inclusivity are about *everyone's* freedom. We need to increase our consciousness to reveal

11 Kim-Goodwin et al, 2009; Wu et al, 2003; Silverman et al 2001

12 see 6



For youth's perspective on intersectionality, click here to watch this video.
5:04

our own “unconscious” biases and unrecognized privileges of identities from the dominant culture – white male, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class – for everyone’s benefit. It is both about our interconnectedness as human beings and the lived realities of domination, extraction, and violence based on social identities and cultural conditions. It’s about deeply understanding what we value as human beings. It’s about making the invisible visible. And it’s going to be uncomfortable and messy, because change is uncomfortable.

Now is the time to design comprehensive social change approaches that address the root causes of gender violence fueled by multiple, systemic oppressions. We need to expand beyond one-time events or single or multi-unit workshops focused on individual behaviors, such as healthy relationships, conflict negotiation, and bystander engagement. Outside the context of these oppressions, these individual-focused approaches will not generate solutions that address the root causes of gender violence. We must also design new, innovative prevention strategies and approaches beyond what we have historically engaged in. However, we can learn much from our previous efforts while creating bold strategies with new possibilities. It takes many different strategies working in tandem to turn the tide. It is our goal to move beyond surface level approaches and move towards deeper and true social change.

Public Health Work is Social Change Work

Since the 1970’s, educational and developmental psychologists have used the socio-ecological model to explain the ways individuals are embedded within a series of broader contexts such as within relationships with friends and family, schools and communities, and larger societal institutions and norms.¹³ The socio-ecological model is foundational to public health primary prevention approaches and explains the interconnectedness of the individual to their friends and family, school and community, and larger societal institutions and social norms.¹⁴ The socio-ecological model also explains how we as individuals do not exist in isolation and are influenced by the contexts and social structures in which we live. For example, though schools are often the location for implementation of comprehensive prevention strategies, they are still impacted by systemic oppressions that are inherent. The socio-ecological model considers the synergy between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors.¹⁵

In order to create social change, it is essential to address the multiple systemic oppressions, or the lived experience that youth from historically marginalized communities experience, and it must be understood and accepted as a necessary approach when working to prevent and end gender violence.

A well-known public health researcher, Dr. Richard Hofrichter,¹⁶ describes social change as:

“A concept, with roots that date at least from the earliest days of the industrial revolution, concerned with both meeting human need and with fundamental aspects of equality—social and economic as well as political,

13 Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

14 Dahlberg LL, Krug EG. Violence—a global public health problem. In: Krug E, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R, eds. *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2002: 1–56. See also Larry Cohen’s Spectrum of Prevention – six levels 1) strengthening individual knowledge and skills; 2) promoting community education; 3) educating providers; 4) fostering coalitions and networks; 5) changing organizational practices and 6) influencing policies and legislation. (see 16)

15 Dahlberg LL, Krug EG. Violence—a global public health problem. In: Krug E, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R, eds. *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2002:1–56.

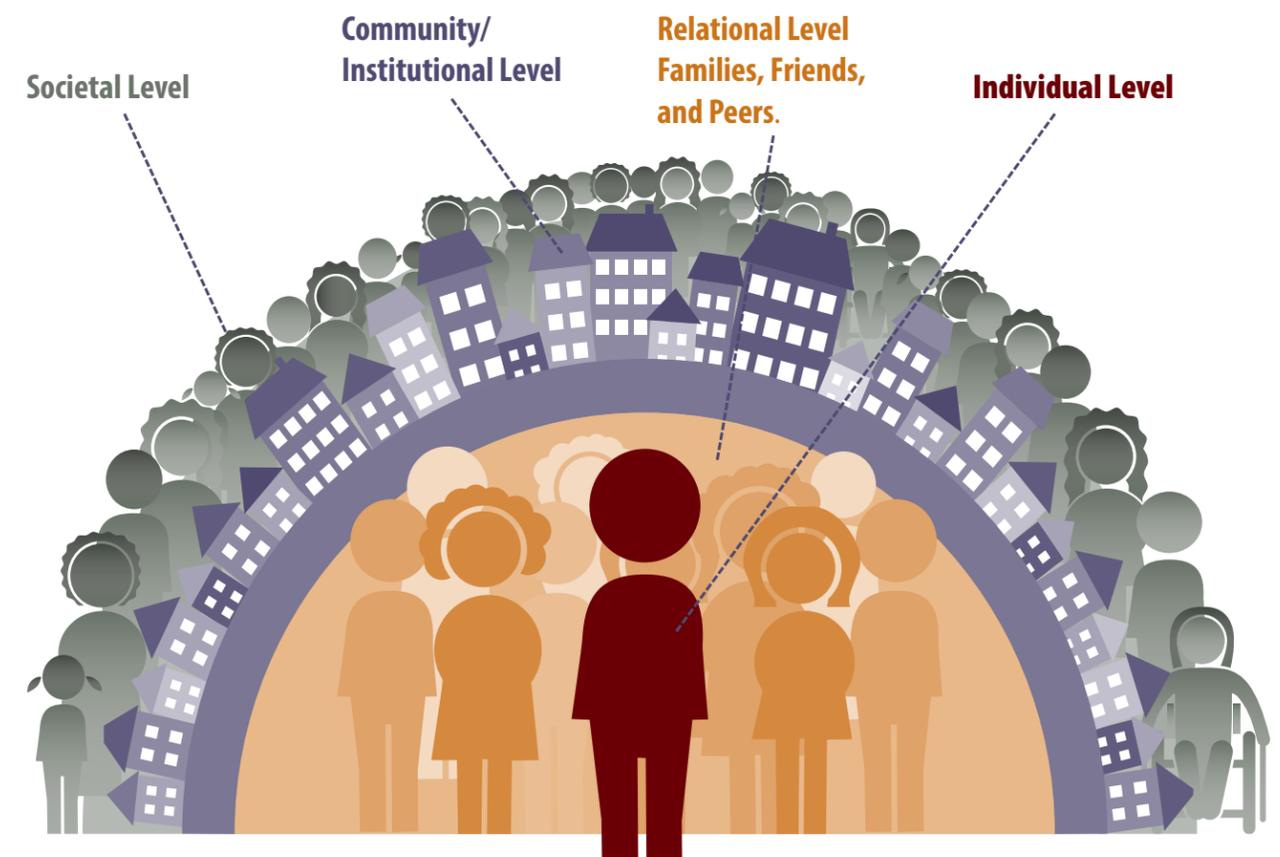
16 Co-editor *Tackling Health Inequities through Public Health Practice* (2010).

the latter referring to democracy. Such a perspective explicitly analyzes who benefits from—and who is harmed by—economic exploitation, oppression, discrimination, inequality, and degradation of natural resources.”

Youth’s gender intersects with various other identities or communities—race and ethnic diversity, sexual orientation, gender identification, ability, poverty levels, and so much more. To address and prevent gender violence, we cannot take a one-dimensional approach because it is not a one-dimensional problem.

Public health also embodies an intersectional approach by looking at how multiple oppressions can impact the social determinants of health in our communities, including economic stability, neighborhood/physical environment, education, food, social context, and access to health care. In other words, we must consider the entirety of the lived experience of individuals to fully understand, why gender violence is occurring, what factors are contributing to the conditions that allow violence, and the root causes of these conditions. This is the only way we can truly get to the root of the problem and create real change, versus merely treating the symptoms that the root problems are creating in our communities.

Socio-ecological Model Considers the Synergy of Our Lives



Step One – Get Together! Build an Intergenerational Collaborative

Youth Leadership at the Center of the Collaborative

Young people from historically marginalized communities have always been at the forefront of social change movements – including recent movements like *Black Lives Matter* and *Standing Rock*. Youth are experts on their environment and culture, and are essential to developing relevant, engaging, and effective strategies. Young people are the most creative, misunderstood, and vital voices and leaders in social change work.

To access the power of youth leaders, you should start by engaging youth from historically marginalized communities to be part of an intergenerational collaborative which may include racially and ethnically diverse youth, Native American youth, LGBTQ youth, youth with disabilities, youth from marginalized religions, youth who are undocumented, and youth who are refugees.

Recruit youth that are passionate about impacting their peer groups in a positive way and who are opinion leaders within their school or community. Engaging with young leaders and building these partnerships requires active listening and meaningful relationship building. These relationships need to move beyond transactional partnerships and “projects,” and into connected ways of working together.

- Build relationships among youth leaders across your school and community that celebrate the diversity, identities, and histories of our youth movement.
- Exchange skills and knowledge to increase the leadership of youth to lead local change efforts in their communities.
- Provide opportunities for youth to lead bold conversations to build youth power.
- Deepen young people’s knowledge around advocacy as a strategy for systemic change and strengthen their skills when engaging systems’ leaders and decision makers.
- Shift the narrative of historically marginalized youth to view them as positive assets and community leaders.

In an intergenerational collaborative, adult allies need to create an environment that is conducive to helping youth find their voice, passion, and leadership style.

Selecting Adult Role Models as Mentors

- Identify young adult staff as mentors who can culturally identify with the young people from historically marginalized communities.
- Identify young adults who can connect with the young people on shared experiences.

Building Rapport with Youth Leaders

- Be transparent.
- Learn the names of the youth leaders, preferred gender pronouns, and any preferred nicknames and use them as often as possible.
- Connect and demonstrate that you are not perfect or different from the youth

leaders.

- Encourage critical thinking and emotional intelligence.
- Earn respect through consistency.
- Support youth leaders in all their passions.
- Explore and set group agreements or norms a group. Talk about ways you agree to be with one another while in a shared space. Revisit consistently and modify as necessary.

Positive reinforcement

- Wait for something positive ... then JUMP all over it.
- Avoid the broken record: No ... No ... Don’t.... Youth can make decisions for themselves.
- Use positive reinforce when appropriate and be direct about what the youth leaders are doing well. Build on their strengths.

Opportunities to define choice and how to access it

- Provide space for youth to independently form and develop their ideas, priorities, and messages.
- Allow youth leaders to make choices in as many ways as possible.
- Give youth leaders more than one choice and be comfortable with each choice you provide.
- Stay true and honest with the choice the youth choose.
- Make sure that each choice has outcomes that are desirable.
- Strengthen critical thinking skills. Model consent and autonomy.
- Seek out mutually beneficial opportunities.
- Organizations need to pay youth for their actual time - an hourly salary, not a “stipend” or a gift card that can minimize their contribution.
- Provide equitable support and resources based on the specific needs of the youth working with you; for example, offsetting transportation costs for youth from low-income households, providing childcare for teen parents.
- For many young people this may be their first exposure to increased consciousness of concepts like systemic and historical oppression and intersectionality. While many teens have experienced systemic oppression, the naming of and understanding the systems of oppression can be a powerful shift in their worldview. For many, this is a difficult journey and offering support is critical. Be there for the teens in whatever way they need during this process.

Youth Engagement Continuum

Youth engagement is a strategy that provides young people opportunities to better understand themselves, their relationships, and the community around them.

Authentic youth engagement incorporates young people’s voices, needs, and lived experiences in all aspects of planning and decision-making. They are critical thinkers, researchers, and partners in identifying innovative solutions. Young people are valuable in prevention initiatives and should be actively and meaningfully involved in all aspects of your collaborative; their participation is essential to organizing their peers at school and in the community.

Over the last ten years, the Idaho Coalition has evolved from having youth interns who received a stipend to youth activists who are part-time, hourly employees. We realized that if we were truly valuing the voices and leadership of young people, our actions need to reflect our values.

The Youth Engagement Continuum provides a framework to help your collaborative ensure that a balanced set of programs and opportunities are available for all youth; specifically, those from marginalized or underserved groups.¹⁷

Youth Engagement Continuum¹⁸

- **Youth Organizing** combines youth development and youth leadership with community organizing to train young people to lead grassroots organizing efforts and advocacy campaigns. In youth organizing, young people actively employ leadership skills to create meaningful, systemic change in their communities.
- **Youth Civic Engagement** supports young people in developing the skills and habits needed to create compassionate communities. This approach places unique emphasis on engaging young people in a democratic process, both within organizations and within the broader community. While civic engagement may seem unusual when talking about preventing gender violence and organizing, it is necessary. Continue reading to find out why.
- **Youth Leadership** is an extension of youth development and helps young people look beyond their personal needs and interests to see their relationship and responsibility to a collective group, organization, and community.
- **Youth Development** encompasses and extends beyond young people's basic needs for stable homes, services, and schooling. This approach focuses on additional supports in the form of relationships and networks that provide nurturing standards, and guidance, as well as opportunities for trying new roles and contributing to family and community.
- **Youth Services** provide rehabilitation, treatment and support needed to address traumatic childhood experiences young people encounter (including abusive relationships and sexual assault) or to effectively manage a developmental or health issue. Youth services may be needed for acute short-term situations, or to foster long-term resilience and well-being. Youth services need not be siloed and are most effective when they promote youth development and leadership, and ultimately, civic engagement and organizing.

While anti-violence prevention efforts have primarily focused on youth services, adding focus to development and leadership, youth civic engagement and organizing to end domination, extraction, and violence can deepen youths' understanding and response to structural inequalities.

Structural inequities are those social, economic, and other systemic conditions that create environments where violence occurs and disproportionately affects youth from marginalized communities, especially young people of color, transgender, gender non-conforming, and youth from low-income families. It also allows youth to begin to shape their political lens and realize the power that they hold over democracy and the ability to create and truly impact change in society.

Young people from all social circles, especially underserved communities, need to be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of their efforts. They should also be engaged as both participants and leaders in activities such as political education and analysis, community research, campaign development,

¹⁷ Edwards, D., Johnson, N. A., & McGillicuddy, K. (2003). An emerging model for working with youth: Community organizing + youth development = youth organizing. *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing: Occasional Papers Series on Youth Organizing* (1).

¹⁸ See 26

direct action, and membership recruitment. In addition to organizing for immediate social and community improvements, youth organizing groups help young people develop the skills to become community leaders throughout their lives, and thus help to create a sustainable base of social justice leaders for the broader movement.

Create a Leadership Pathway for Youth

Often, when there is a focus on youth engagement, there is only an emphasis on the very near future. There is not enough work done or emphasis placed on creating a pathway for youth to continue to be engaged as young adults (18-21). In a recent report issued by the *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing*, four major recommendations were made that those focusing on Youth Organizing should implement.¹⁹ One of these recommendations was to formalize a leadership pathway for 21st century organizers and related professions—a longstanding gap in the sector—and develop methods to track youth alumni.

Though many of the youth who are engaged in high school often stay engaged, especially if they continue to a post-secondary school, it is once they have completed their course of study that there is no easy way to stay involved in the social justice movement. In addition to not knowing what opportunities are available, there is also a lack of funding for movements to close this gap.

One of the focuses of the collaborative should be to consider building a network for youth organizing alumni to stay engaged, receive support, and connect them with opportunities to work for other non-profits in the future.

Culturally Responsive Approaches for Reaching Historically Marginalized Youth

Culturally responsive practices have implications for each level of the socioecological model. For youth engagement programs to effectively support the holistic development of historically marginalized youth, such as LGBTQ teens, youth of color, indigenous youth, young people with disabilities and/or young people from low-income families, it is essential for organizations to embed culturally responsive practices in program models and larger organizational systems so that all youth and communities are reached.

Youth engagement workers who are connected to and skilled in culturally responsive practices are critical to the success of youth engagement strategies at all levels. The degree to which adults partner with youth to draw on their ways of being, doing, and sense-making determines the degree to which youth of various ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and other backgrounds feel further marginalized or welcomed.

Young people from historically marginalized communities often need a space where they can explore all aspects of their identity in an integrated and safe(r) way. This means that collaborations will be most effective by encompassing the social context that youth live in every day, and their passions that extend beyond gender violence – abuse or rape. Any young person labeled as different or receiving differential and inequitable treatment based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, economics, religion, culture, or other reason should be empowered to thrive and create social change. Developing leadership skills among young people from marginalized communities should address stigmas and provide opportunities for youth to integrate their voices in building compassionate communities that value non-discrimination, equity, participation, and humanity.

¹⁹ *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing "Now or Never: The Fight for the Millennial Generation"* February 2015.



Intergenerational networking with older role models can be a strong source of support. Create opportunities for flexible participatory programs that offer inclusive spaces for youth. Safe(r) and welcoming environments, such as flexible hours, snacks, and a designated space, allow for youth to feel comfortable participating in activities such as reflecting on the realities of their lives. It is crucial to ensure that the physical meeting space is welcoming to teens of all genders and sexualities as well as accessible for teens with disabilities.

Finally, it is critical to hire young adults that can connect with youth. While the youth interact, and collaborate with many adults, they typically work closely with one or two primary adults. These adults should be able to relate to the youth on many levels and be people the youth can deeply connect with. Trying to implement social change that addresses the root causes of systemic oppression is challenging work and it can be especially difficult if you are an individual who experiences multiple forms of oppression as a marginalized individual. Because of this, it is important to have close connections to people who can relate with this experience and understand it on a level that a privileged person cannot. To create the most effective intergenerational collaboration teens should work closest with adults who have social identities and lived experiences connected to historically marginalized communities.

Support Youth Exposed to Oppression and Violence

Be mindful and sensitive; many, if not all, youth have encountered oppression, violence, and/or assault. Be prepared for disclosures from the youth you work with by being unfailingly compassionate in your responses while understanding mandated reporting laws, how to address these requirements with young people, and how to link young people to services when needed. When working with youth, engage in an open conversation about mandated reporting early on so they understand up front what may happen to their information if they seek support from you.

Peer support groups at school, church, and through community organizations are an essential component of a comprehensive adolescent relationship abuse and sexual assault prevention initiative. They provide a unique intervention for youth who, because of exposure to abuse, are at an increased risk for further victimization, perpetration, and other risk behaviors. Youth exposed to abuse have special needs for safety, confidentiality, and social support. The support group setting

provides a safe place to build trusting relationships and to learn and practice healthy relationship skills.²⁰ The therapeutic value of support groups cannot be underestimated. Many youth gain insight around abuse through support groups, and realize they are not to blame for the abuse they experienced and that they are not alone.

Recruit Adult Champions of Anti-Violence and Anti-Oppression Work

Recruit and bring together a diverse group of adult champions – diverse in age, race, across the gender spectrum, socio-economic status, ability, and professional expertise.

Schools have adult champions in many sectors – administrators, teachers, school counselors, school resource officers, in-school organization advisors, and coaches. Seek out community champions like youth-serving organizations, after school programs, youth diversity organizations, arts and theatre programs, culturally specific organizations or organizations representing marginalized communities, juvenile justice systems, community and tribal domestic violence and sexual assault programs, arts-based groups, public health organizations, and other groups that are concerned about young people and want to create compassionate, non-violent communities.

It is important to acknowledge that when collaborating with youth, they may want to focus on work that you did not initially consider. In these moments, encourage their voices and try to understand the change in direction. Youth understand the complexity of their environments and it is important to trust them and understand how this change ultimately connects into the overarching strategy. All too often, people who think they know what path must be taken shut down innovative strategies. Use these moments to build mutual intergenerational relationships and embrace the innovation youth bring to collaboration.

Small numbers can make big things happen. There is no magic number of youth and adults needed to develop a successful collaboration. But it is essential that youth voices and leadership be at the center of any social change approaches.

Adulthood and Power Dynamics

In the same way that gender violence is built upon power over a group of people based on gender, there also exists a power dynamic in adult/youth relationships that can easily get in the way of our ability to work effectively with young people. We may see young people as change agents or view their role as leaders with a very small or limited lens due to their age and/or experience. We strongly recommend doing personal and organizational work to be mindful of our adult privilege and the way that this manifests itself when working with young people. It is imperative when recruiting youth to be a part of the collaborative, that all adults are aware of adulthood, and that they work together to check one another if adulthood shows up in the collaborative.

Adulthood, as described by Paul Kivel, is the “restricting, putting down, controlling, humiliating, or hurting another” that young people experience at the hands of adults. In working with youth, we need to understand that the educational process they are going through is teeming with adulthood. Kivel states:

Perhaps the most pervasive form of this abuse is our education process itself, carried on in schools, families, religious and cultural institutions, and the

20 Ball, B., Tharp, A. T., Noonan, R. K., Valle, L. A., Hamburger, M. E. & Rosenbluth, B. (2012). Expect Respect Support Groups: Preliminary evaluation of a dating violence prevention program for at-risk youth. *Violence Against Women*, 18(7), 746-762.

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault developed a generational profile exercise that has been useful in cross-generational learning as well as a 2016 Young Advocates Institute Advisory Council’s Bill of Rights.



For youth’s perspective on adulthood and power dynamics, click here to watch this video. 7:49

public media. The process, despite its best intentions, continually invalidates or trivializes young people's intelligence, denies them access to important information (for example, about birth control), and then faults them for not having it. The process arbitrarily subjects them to either control or dependence and denies them life resources—money, transportation, and a chance to speak for and represent themselves.

Adultism is often considered the training ground for all oppressions. The best way to address this is to identify ourselves, the adults, as allies. We must ensure we support, guide, and mentor, while at the same time promote strengths, confidence, and power in the young people we work with. Being honest about power dynamics is crucial to building a relationship founded in trust. We must support healing, celebrate successes, and not be afraid to identify and stop adultism as it is happening. We must be okay with acknowledging when adults make a mistake—we are setting an example as mentors. Kivel highlights several charges that adults should take into consideration. Here are some examples below:

- “You’re too young to understand.”
- “We’ll talk about it later.”
- “Because I said so.”
- “You don’t know what you are talking about.”
- “Do as I say not as I do.”
- “That’s now how you do...”
- “Supposed to...”

Finally, actively listen to youth and support and celebrate their voices. Make sure to avoid being condescending and patronizing, for that is a common practice when talking to young people. Youth are critical in developing lasting and impactful strategies for change; therefore, adults must be intentional about giving them the opportunity to collaborate and for their leadership to thrive.

Step Two – Build Capacity of the Intergenerational Collaborative

How to Move Together Toward Impact

Once you have identified and recruited youth and adult champions, create the conditions and invest in the relationships in your intergenerational collaborative to move towards a collective and sustainable impact. Collective impact is possible when you create the following conditions and build relationships over time:²¹

Shared Purpose or Vision/Common Understanding/Strategy – Create a shared purpose or vision for social change or transformation – know what are you working towards. It is essential that you develop outer-layer prevention or social change strategies with a clear purpose or vision of the collaborative or what you are working towards at an organizational level. Develop a common understanding of gender violence, and a strategy based on the best research on the primary prevention of adolescent relationship abuse and sexual assault. When strategies are based on what we know to be true from research or practice-based evidence, the developed strategies are more likely to succeed! Over time, the collaborative should build their capacity to align prevention approaches with emerging research, theories, and practices to include social and emotional learning initiatives.²²

Make Time for Building Mutual Relationships – Prioritize time for your collaborative to connect and get to know each other personally in their whole selves – especially at the beginning of your journey together. It can be easy to focus only on action and strategy without creating open space. Mutuality and synergy among the group can be your most valuable asset and we can only move at the speed of trust.

Coordinating Organization/Person Most Responsible – Coordination takes time and dedication. Identify a core organization that will designate the person most responsible to plan, oversee, and provide support for meetings, technology, data collection, and other important tasks. Make sure you are meeting on dates/times where youth can meaningfully participate.

Effective Communication/Meeting Facilitation – Develop trust among partners through regular meetings to increase familiarity, recognition, and appreciation of common goals. Create leadership roles for young people to develop their skills and support for the collaborative. Ensure that all members have a chance to communicate and be understood. Be aware of dynamics of power at play within the group. Utilize exercises and conversations about privilege to help your group reflect on how often individuals are speaking and contributing.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities – Power comes not from the number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of different social change approaches, strategies, and activities that together comprise a sustainable plan of action.

²¹ Adapted from Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 1(9), 36–41.

²² See www.casel.org

Timeline & Goals – Remember, creating social change is HARD WORK and will take time. Often, one of the roadblocks we face is our self because we expect results immediately. This work will take many months, or years, to see net results from the effort we put in today. Do not lose hope or patience and remember,, it is imperative you create short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goals will show where you are generally in relation to your long-term goals, and they allow you to see that the gains you make; while they may feel small, those gains are real, and create a more equitable community.

Impact – Develop an evaluation approach to assess your impact. Consider starting with a strength and needs assessment, which can be conducted at school or in the wider community. By learning about the strengths and needs of the school or community, the collaborative can create solutions that are specific to the community and not duplicative. Conduct your activities and evaluation in a smaller setting before scaling up or expanding to a larger audience. Get feedback from all levels of the school or community and make changes or adaptations to your program as needed so it reaches the target audience and inspires action. The evaluation data should inform the collaborative not only of the progress and success of your initiative, but also of areas that need further attention. See the section on evaluation for more information.

What Does Your Collaborative Already Know?

Start by finding out what the members of the collaborative already know, and then find local organizations who are invested in youth engagement – youth-serving programs or youth-led programs, youth organizers, community and tribal domestic and sexual assault advocates, psychologists, health teachers, social workers, or public health practitioners – to provide additional training and support to fill in your collective gaps in knowledge. Consider inviting college or university professors or graduate students to serve as advisors to your collaborative, but be mindful of unintentionally professionalizing the space by language, professional dress, or conversations about credentials. Finally, explore the [Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing](#) to access their *Occasional Paper Series on Youth Organizing*. These tools provide an array of insight around success, challenges, and strategies used to empower communities and support sustainable change.

Other ideas for areas to expand knowledge include but are not limited to:

- Social construction of gender and impact of rigid gender values and roles.
- Types of gender violence – unhealthy or abusive relationships, sexual harassment, reproductive coercion, sexual assault, or rape.
- Adolescent development and the implications for relationships and risk behaviors.
- Characteristics of, and skills needed for, healthy relationships and healthy adolescent sexual development or sex positivity.
- The connection between unhealthy relationships and risk behaviors.
- Anti-oppression and intersectionality of forms of systemic oppression.
- Social ecological model and/or Spectrum of Prevention.²³
- Public health protective factors –risk factors and damaging oppressive social norms.

²³ Cohen, L., & Swift, S. (1999). The spectrum of prevention: developing a comprehensive approach to injury prevention. *Injury prevention*, 5(3), 203-207.

- Theories and research to guide the initiative.²⁴
- Youth organizing and peer-to-peer learning as a key strategy to effective social change.
- Media literacy – including intentional conversations about the impact of social media.

Diverse Learning Styles in Action

Remember, youth (and adults) learn with more than one learning style. The following are some learning styles to consider when engaging with youth and adult community members, for:

- Visual (spatial) learners, use images, Smartboards, large newsprint, and various colors
- Aural (auditory or musical) learners, use organic sounds, rhymes, and music recordings
- Verbal (linguistic) learners, use speech, writing, and languages
- Physical (kinesthetic) learners, use sensations, role playing, interactive games, and image theater such as tableau
- Logistical (mathematical) learners, use reasoning and strategy building activities, lists, and systems
- Social (interpersonal) learners, use group activities and personal interactions
- Solitary (intrapersonal) learners, use working alone, self-reflection, and visualizations

Youth frequently learn, socialize, and interact through social media; inquire with the youth you work with to find out (and incorporate) the sites they use most, as these can serve as effective organizing platforms. Access Vine, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media tools to tap into the ways youth are presently engaging.

Learn About the Prevalence of Gender Violence and Social Change Initiatives in Your Community

The collaborative may benefit from accessing local information on the prevalence of gender violence to complement what we already know from state and national studies. Many schools participate in the Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, which provides statewide information about the rates of abuse in dating relationships and forced sexual intercourse and is available on-line.²⁵ Contact your local school or school district to obtain any existing additional school climate or other applicable data.

The collaborative could also consider conducting its own strengths and needs assessment. By learning about the strengths and needs of the school or community, the collaborative can create solutions that are specific to the community and not duplicative.

²⁴ There are many areas of research and theory that can be beneficial to understand, such as positive youth development, positive psychology, social and emotional learning, trans-theoretical model of behavior change, theory of planned behavior/reasoned action, attachment theory, social change theory, social diffusion of innovation, role of gender, neuro-marketing, impact of media, and other applicable theories and research. Find a psychologist, sociologist, or other resource in your community to help your collaborative understand the various disciplines and their respective research and theories.

²⁵ For more information about the Youth Risk Behavior Survey see <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>

Step Three – Design and Activate Social Change Strategies

Overview of Social Change Strategies

Social change strategies require an understanding of the socio-political landscape, or in other words, the real world in which we live and a clear purpose or vision that your organization or your collaborative is working towards. To bring about social change to end gender violence, organizations need to be working at multiple levels to address not only the individual and relational levels, but the more challenging work at the community and societal levels.

By implementing a comprehensive social change strategy that operates on all levels, with an emphasis on community and societal levels, we can create real impact to end gender violence. Through this comprehensive strategy organizations can work to promote a change in social values that will result in healthy social constructs of gender, social norms change, and gender equity. Comprehensive work like this will move society in the direction of ending gender violence and interrupting a social system built on domination and oppression.

Examples of Levels to Integrate into Comprehensive Strategies

- **Societal Level** – Engage in social change efforts on a broader societal spectrum such as promoting youth civic engagement and youth organizing for gender and social equity and other values to promote wholeness, and anti-oppression work.²⁶
- **Community Level** – Strengthen community settings such as schools and neighborhoods by improving the social climate, and developing processes and policies that promote healthy constructs of gender and an anti-oppression framework. Support youth-driven marketing campaigns to promote gender and social equity in the school-setting.
- **Relational Level** – Strengthen parents'/caregivers', peers', and other adult influencers' knowledge, attitudes, and skills for promoting healthy social constructs of gender and healthy relationships including positive bystander skills and behaviors among adolescents.
- **Individual Level** – Strengthen middle school and high school youth engagement (development, leadership, civic engagement, and youth organizing) to interrupt gender violence by valuing cis and trans girls and women and people who are gender nonconforming, increasing knowledge, attitudes, and skills for healthy social constructs of whole gender (as compared to the binary²⁷), social and emotional learning skills with a gender analysis, bystander skills as well anti-oppression knowledge and skills to interrupt our culture of systemic oppression, domination, extraction, and violence.

It is essential that prevention efforts move beyond the individual and relational level, and invest significantly in community and societal-level change – social change. Individual behavior is learned behavior that is often derived from the surrounding environment. For example, shifting the cultural norm at a school to a more gender equitable atmosphere will also shift behavior at the relational level

²⁶ See 23

²⁷ Gender Spectrum is excellent resource. www.genderspectrum.org

and individual level. This equity can be achieved through numerous approaches such as reducing gender saliency in classrooms, making sure both girls and boys sports teams are equally represented in news stories, or holding a school-wide conversation to talk about the healthy construction of gender roles. While these strategies target the overall atmosphere of the school, it will also shift the individual and relational levels. So, be sure to invest time and energy into strategies targeting change on the community and societal level because that will produce the most impactful social change.

Leading With Bold Vision Towards Social Change

A bold vision is essential to developing any social change strategies. To develop and implement effective strategies that operate on all levels, the collaborative organization should first determine the vision or purpose of the collaborative or the organization. Without a clear vision, the collaborative will lack direction and strategies will not be connected to the world that you envision. The collaborative needs to invest in the time and resources to imagine the world they want to create and discover the pathway or strategies that the work of the collaborative will move society closer in that direction. Be sure to ask questions like:

- What kind of world do we envision?
- What is our purpose or distinct role in services of the vision as a collaborative?
- What are the underlying forces/barrier in our society that is preventing us from achieving this equitable vision?
- Does our vision include social equity for *all* people?
- What shifts in practice, organizational structure, relationship, and ways of thinking needs to occur in our collaborative for this social change to happen?
- What values do we need to move away from as a society (i.e. domination, extraction, and control) and what values do we need to move towards (i.e. respect, equity, and compassion)?

Societal-Level Strategies

Societal-level strategies seek to change conditions or broad societal norms, values, and assumptions of power and powerlessness that create a culture of domination, extraction, and violence. Strategies on the outer societal-level are critical to social change work and, in many prevention efforts, the least familiar and accessed by the anti-violence movement. Primary prevention of gender violence must move beyond educating youth through single or even multi-session workshops in schools and turn towards the outer-layers of the socio-ecological model to create social change.

Strategies at the societal-level can include youth organizing to alter power relations and create meaningful change, promote campaigns to change social norms or the way people think about gender roles, or valued-based campaigns that promote equity, liberation, and other values towards a world that is interdependent, resilient, and sustainable, or legislation to create social change.

It is a paradigm shift for an organization to move away from educating youth on healthy relationships skills to building the capacity of youth to engage in community organizing to alter power relationships or societal norms or values. Bringing in this new lens into your organization will only strengthen its impact for social change through this understanding that individual acts of gender violence occur because we will in a world that values domination and oppression.

Community organizing is both individual and collective actions designed to identify and address social inequity and injustice. It requires strategy

developments that address the underlying social forces that result in gender violence and to bring about social change that shifts the value systems in a society. This approach can and should also be implemented when developing strategy for individuals, relationships, and communities.

Through practices of leading with vision, intergenerational connections, and bold strategies the collaborative can bring about social change on the societal-level and move towards a world without domination and extraction. The following sections expand on these practices and outline how to bring in youth organizing to implement societal-level strategies.

Youth Organizing as a Strategy for Society-Level Change

The most effective way to engage in societal-level social change is through youth organizing, it is your most powerful resource. Youth organizing is a youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful social change in their communities.²⁸ Youth have been leaders across the history of social change - from the civil rights movement to environmental justice movements. Organizing is the process of identifying how we can create the conditions for people who have less power to change what people who have power do. Creating an intergenerational model that fosters youth organizing will create conditions of social change by engaging community members at all levels of society and intentionally reaching out to member of society that are often overlooked in prevention initiatives. Youth from poor and working-class communities of color are horrendously treated as society's lowest priority.²⁹ Bringing these youths into an intergenerational model and allowing their leadership to be harnessed and implemented into societal-level strategy development will create powerful social change. These youths are passionate and understand the barriers set up against social equity in our society better than anyone else, using their voices is a necessity in social change work. Youth organizing relies on the power and leadership of youth acting on issues defined by and affecting young people and their communities, and involves them in the design, implementation, and evaluation of these efforts. Youth organizing employs activities such as political education and analysis, community research, campaign development, direct action, and membership recruitment.

The positive impact of youth organizing is undeniable. Youth organizing has the potential to:

Societal-level Impact

- Challenge serious problems facing communities nationwide, especially low-income and of color communities, and work to ensure that systems and policies are accountable, equitable, and fair to the communities they serve.
- Confront racism and discrimination and its role in creating and perpetuating social inequities that disproportionately impact people of color.
- Connect youth issues to broader community issues.
- Alter the perception of youth in the community by adults and policymakers, and bring young people and their perspectives into important networks and decision-making bodies.

²⁸ Pintado-Vertner, 2004.

²⁹ Larry Cohen, Vivian Chavez, & Sana Chehimi, *Prevention is Primary: Strategies for Community Well-Being (2nd Ed.)*, Jossey-Bass, USA, 2010, p. 97

- Through youth organizing, young people:
- Build and exercise their individual and collective leadership and decision-making capacity
- Strengthen their self-confidence and develop tangible skills, such as the ability to speak in public, think critically and analytically, conduct research, write materials/publications, and develop political analysis
- Develop an understanding of and ability to navigate political processes and systems through community organizing and advocacy training and firsthand experience
- Increase their sense of self-efficacy, see themselves as part of their community and as agents of change, and become actively involved in civic life
- Strengthen healthy relationships with adults, i.e. parents, community members, teachers, public officials, etc.
- Increase the capacity to build relationships with peers and adults across differences.

Community-Level Impact:

- Building beloved community centered around a youth/adult shared vision.
- Youth from historically marginalized communities building collective power to confront oppression and domination
- Shifting community norms and harnessing shared power as a pathway to broad societal change

Relational-Level Impact

- Build collaboration and cohesion among youth and adults
- Build collective purpose among youth and adults
- Creates an intergenerational community centered around a common vision of social change

Individual-level Impact

- Build the individual skills of young people, especially in critical and analytic problem-solving, and teamwork and collaboration.
- Develop principled, accountable leadership among young people in the context of collective and community well-being, history, and culture.
- Instill awareness in young people about the root causes of issues, and the social and political forces that shape their surrounding as well as their own identities
- Develop young people's sense of self-agency and belief in the potential for positive systemic change



Youth as Leaders

Youth are essential leaders in the movement to end gender violence. The evolving nature of our society and youth organizing requires flexibility and innovation to keep the movement current, relevant, and effective. Incorporation of the following collaborative strategies and providing numerous and diverse opportunities to support young people will facilitate the activation of their innate and acquired skills. Youth's capacity for creating social change cannot be emphasized enough; however, this capacity for change is dependent on organizations/groups creating conditions for cultivation of this leadership.

Young people need opportunities to exercise their community engagement abilities so they may acknowledge and practice the skills they already possess, while developing a toolbox of new ones. Often, youth are under-accessed as activists for change. Advocates for youth must seize opportunities to create relationships and nurture young people in becoming activists in this movement so they may continue to build self-efficacy and cultivate a lifetime of transformative leadership and sustainable social justice.

During the communication and outreach phase of engagement with youth, aim to become a genuine ally of your group by integrating diverse learning and communication styles; this will amplify awareness of gender violence and structural oppressions to engage a shared vision. Keep in mind the pervasiveness of adultism in our culture and actively work to be an ally to the youth you are trying to bring into the movement. Create a questionnaire and conduct a conversation to learn which learning and communication styles work best for your members.

Practical Procedures for Youth Organizing

When preparing to collaborate with youth, consider the following questions:

- Which group agreements will you incorporate to reflect respect and support an effective and collaborative learning environment?
- How might respect be expressed by youth with various cultural values and how will you support agreements around it? What underlying social structures affect pattern of youth/adult interactions?
- What is your mindset around forming genuine partnerships and sharing leadership responsibilities with youth in diverse or unfamiliar communities?
- What may come up for you as you collaborate with youth about sustainable transformation around gender violence and social justice issues?
- What unintended consequences and additional pressures might arise when creating blueprints to activate change within a community?
- What tools will you engage during high stress times during this collaboration and how you will remain mindful of these experiences?
- How will you support productive and equitable conversations around challenging issues and possible group conflict?

It is vital that all participants feel included and can participate to their fullest desire in this movement. Remember, youth may have personal barriers to participation and follow-through in your community. Create opportunities to connect with each team member to offer equitable support to their individual needs. Collaborate to support peer to peer check-ins between youth to define work and acknowledge short and long-term reachable goals to advance sustainable personal, and group efficacy; remember the learning styles and how individuals work at varying paces. Consider community calendar timelines for each goal – discover what other organizations are doing in the community and develop a plan to partner with

them to support the movement to end gender violence.

Relationship and trust building will feed this vision. Actively listen and engage ideas and skills of youth partners to create icebreakers, inception and summary activities. These activities will support comfort, debrief clarity, and will add to the sustainability of your collaborative and this movement.

Use Multiple Strategies to Build On One Another

As your collaborative selects different strategies to engage middle and/or high school students, strive to have strategies complement and build on one another, rather than implementing a strategy in isolation. By doing this and having all the strategies build on a collective vision, the organization will have better efficacy in shifting societal values and social norms.

Consider a range of strategies to engage middle and high school students, such as brief interventions, multi-session lesson plans, supplemental lesson plans related to popular culture, gender specific spaces, and targeting youth organizations for underserved communities. Using arts, media and creative self-expression can help young people develop a stronger sense of self and give them the tools to act against violence. Consider programs that address healthy social constructs of gender, violence prevention, healthy relationship promotion, media literacy, youth leadership and youth organizing. Join and support other individual or collective organizing efforts that promote gender and social equity to increase collective impact, and help others make the connection between different social movements. An incredible ripple effect can be created when young people are equipped with confidence, knowledge, and mentors.

In addition to health classrooms, the classrooms of core subject areas, such as English, science, and/or social studies provide an ideal setting to teach a multi-session, evidence-based curriculum. Diversifying settings can ensure that all students are participating in a program that has demonstrated effectiveness. However, access to class time, particularly for a multi-session program, may be difficult to obtain. If that scenario is familiar, you are not alone. Look for other options to integrate prevention education while continuing to advocate for dedicated class time as part of a comprehensive strategy. Otherwise, you may miss important opportunities to reach youth, build allies, and support existing school initiatives with similar goals such as social and emotional learning, positive behavior interventions and support, anti-bias campaigns, or character education.

It is important to understand that no workshop or campaign should stand on its own, but rather it needs to be incorporated into the overarching social change vision of the collaborative. Social change is an ongoing process and all work the collaborative does should feed into the social change movement. For societal-level change to occur strategies created by the collaborative need to be integrated with one another and be rooted in strong values and a bold vision.

Social Norm and Social Activism Campaigns

Positive social norms campaigns are a strategy to increase knowledge and create new social norms to interrupt the root causes of gender violence. These campaigns specifically target to change the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence and oppression is normalized and encouraged. Social norm campaigns are an effective strategy to engage in social change and shift the values of a society in order to foster environments that promote a world without violence.

How does a social norm change? It is a continual and slow process, but it can be achieved and these changes are impactful. Creating persuasive, relevant approaches that target the most socially influential people at the precise time



For youth's perspective on challenging social norms, click here to watch this video. 7:49

to change their beliefs or behaviors are key to creating change. By engaging and recruiting socially influential individuals who have credibility and are well connected within their community, you can increase the likelihood of effectively influencing other populations.

Effective persuasion requires strategic planning of the message and method of delivery, identifying the most influential messengers, and determining the right people to get the message to. Key components of successful campaigns include:

- Empowering young people in the development of the campaign
- Youth initiated and developed messaging
- Targeting the most socially influential people from a wide variety of social circles
- Integrating interesting and relevant ideas that connect the audience to the issue
- An appropriate environment or context for the ideas

Campaigns that aim to engage young people need to be youth-led. Research can inform your campaigns, but youth led messaging and development can provide avenues for new research. Knowing your audience and communicating your message in a manner that will have a lasting impact can change your target audience's beliefs and behaviors. Actively involving young people in the development of your campaign is essential to success because they know what other teens care about and how to communicate in a manner that resonates with their peers. At the same time, utilizing research to inform the content and layout of the campaign enhances effectiveness. However, keep in mind that innovation is key for campaigns and allow new strategies to learn from past models and research but not be tied to them.

Social norm campaigns should resonate with members of both the school and community. Collaborating with organizations that already have established ties to the community can be an efficient way to share leadership and effectively target the community.

School-based strategies should also target the community because increased exposure and consistency of the overall message has shown to be an important facet of a comprehensive approach.³⁰ This approach means the messages offered at school should be reinforced throughout the community in centers, youth clubs, movie theaters, sporting events, and other places where young people congregate and spend their time.

³⁰ Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357-385.

Community/Institutional-Level Strategies

Community/Institutional-Level Strategies are closely linked to Societal-Level Strategies but are more focused on specific institutions or communities within a society. More specifically, these strategies work to change the practices of the institutions and communities. By changing its own regulations and practices, an organization can have a broad effect on community norms. It can set expectations for, incentives, and model behavior; serve as an example for other organizations; inform related policy; build awareness and buy-in; and affect norms. For example, a school may instigate a policy change that makes sure their school newspaper covers women's sports teams as much as men's teams. These strategies work to create social change by altering the environment and community. These community/institutional-level strategies should connect back to the overall vision and values of the collaborative.

Community should include the settings where social relationships occur, such as schools, workplace, neighborhoods. Prevention strategies on this level impact the climate, characteristics, processes, and policies in a setting or system. Look to community settings and societal influences for ways to impact the overall climate of violence. Strengthen community settings such as schools and neighborhoods by impacting the school climate, or local policies addressing adolescent dating abuse and sexual assault. Include youth driven initiatives into the strategy development process to cultivate communities of compassion.

For this level of strategy development, organizations should strive to work with schools or school district policies to create these social changes in the community. A social change policy should outline the three steps in the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies for prevention: 1) create a collaborative; 2) build the capacity of the collaborative; and 3) design, activate, and evaluate comprehensive prevention strategies.

An effective way to bring about community-level change is through civic engagement. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Groups involved in civic engagement typically target specific environmental and institutional factors that keep injustice and oppression in place, and then mobilize to create this social change. Civic engagement is an opportunity for community members to join in the organization's vision and help restructure the institutions they live in to mirror the values they want to see in their community. An example of this would be providing a school clubs the framework to advocate for changes in their school to promote gender equity (i.e. make sure schools provide equal funding for women's and men's sports teams).

Organizations or schools should identify and engage students and school personnel, and if possible, community-based organizations (community and tribal domestic violence and sexual assault programs, youth organizations and allies, and governmental organizations) in the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies. The collaborative should meet regularly to build its capacity, and to develop comprehensive strategies for preventing relationship abuse and sexual assault among students and creating social change.

Additionally, schools and community partners should work together to build their capacity to provide culturally relevant prevention activities, integrate prevention efforts with emerging social emotional learning initiatives, and to reduce the risk of relationship abuse and sexual assault by promoting a safe, supportive, and positive school environment.



Schools should design and implement comprehensive prevention strategies that engage students, parent/caregivers, and school personnel. By engaging each of these populations, schools can reduce and prevent abusive behaviors and sexual assault from occurring, and create a climate that promotes positive peer relationships.

Community/Relational-Level Strategies are important to implement in order to progress social change and bring an organization closer to its vision for society. It is important to remember that these strategies should not act independently, but rather build strategies being implemented on the other levels. Incorporating civic engagement into these strategies can help movements grow towards a united vision of social change by letting community members actively change the environment and institutions they live in.

Relational-Level Strategies

Relation-level strategies focus on how interpersonal relationships can contribute to social change. These strategies can be effective in changing social environments through one-on-one interactions. Again, it is important to implement relational-level strategies that are rooted in the societal-level changes the collaborative envisions. For example, creating a workshop for teachers to help them reduce gender salience and gender roles in their conversations with students. While this strategy is rooted in the overall vision of the collaborative, it is implemented on the relational-level by shifting the interaction between the teachers and students.

Parents/caregivers, mentors, teachers, coaches, and older peers can be influential when they have effective messages and skills for social change. Middle and high school-aged students look to trusted adults and influential peers as role models for guidance. Strategies on this level understand that the ways in which people interact with one another in a society is both cultivated by and contributes to the social forces that shape our world. By shifting the ways in which people interact with one another organizations can work to disrupt harmful social norms that contribute to gender violence. For relational-level strategies to be effective, organizations must work to educate individuals about how their interactions can contribute to a violent culture and provide them alternatives to shift the value system of a society. Youth are in a place in which they often look up to peers, teachers, coach, and other important adults in their lives. For this reason, shifting these interactions so they reflect a gender equitable dynamic can have lasting impacts.

Relationships to Focus on in Strategy Development

Teenagers have many interactions and relationships that can greatly impact their life, ranging from peer-peer relationships to teacher-student relationships to parents/caregivers-child relationships. Relational-level strategies should work to positively change these relationships. Again, the best way to create effective strategies is to understand that these critical relationships are built in a culture that perpetuates gender violence and so interactions in these relationships can unintentionally contribute to this culture. Therefore, organizations should work to educate people on how to make sure that their relationships are rooted in a value system based in equity and compassion.

While peer social networks are an important influence for adolescents, research findings point to parental/caregiver supervision, involvement, and connectedness as significant factors influencing behavior and healthy development for young people.³¹ Often, parents/caregivers may not fully understand the critical role they

31 Phelps, E., Zommerman, S., Warren, A. A., Jelicic, H., von Eye, A., & Lerner, R. M. (2009). The structure and developmental course of positive youth development (PYD) in early adolescence: Implications

play in the lives of young people and the influence they have on gender norms and relationships. Through this education organizations can provide alternative strategies for parents and caregivers that can positively impacts the relationships they foster with their children.

Many parents/caregivers have barriers to participation in programs or strategies. These barriers should be considered and addressed. For example, parents/caregivers may have cultural beliefs and norms about dating that would pose a barrier to a discussion of dating relationships. An effective strategy can be to work directly with existing cultural groups to understand and respond to any sensitivities or differences from the mainstream culture. Other barriers may be language and/or literacy, transportation, child care, family violence, and work constraints. We must be careful not to assume that parents and caregivers who seem disengaged or are hard to reach do not care. When we struggle with engaging parents and caregivers, it is best to consider possible barriers, including whether our approach is not inclusive, accessible, or appropriate for those we struggle to engage.

Active and on-going engagement of parents/caregivers and other adult influencers play a significant role in a comprehensive social change initiative. Providing flexible scheduling that meets the needs of parents/caregivers, and includes other helpful factors such as meals, translation services, multicultural and multilingual staff, child-care, and incentives such as parent educational materials are important strategies for engaging parents. Other promising approaches include scheduling workshops at schools to coincide with other events that draw parents, (for example athletic meetings, parent teacher association meetings, theater performances, or art shows) and in settings or in collaboration with agencies where parents/caregivers are already connected and engaged.

Additionally, look for opportunities to engage and educate school-based personnel, health care professionals, coaches, youth leaders and outreach workers, and other community-based youth serving staff. The most effective strategy to engage and educate most adult influencers is to offer short or regularly scheduled multi-session workshops during staff or professional development meetings. Consider targeting socially influential teachers and coaches who can educate their peers and provide them with resources for educating their colleagues. Adult influencer education sessions should:

- Create a personal connection to the issue of adolescent relationship abuse and sexual assault. Invite young people to present to adult influencers on the realities of adolescence relationship abuse and sexual assault.
- Make it relevant. Give concise, applicable information for the audience. If the audience consists of educators, provide a toolkit with ways in which projects on healthy social constructs of gender, relationships and relationship abuse can be integrated into the classroom. If the audience consists of coaches, give examples on how becoming a successful student athlete is directly related to becoming a respectful young adult.
- Be sensitive to the influencer's limited time. Plan a single session or a series of shorter sessions that build on each other and address topics such as structural oppressions, bullying, sexual harassment, healthy relationships, and adolescent relationship abuse.
- Provide flexible, brief interventions with contact information for additional follow-up questions.

Value professional education and experience with adolescents.

for theory and practice. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(5), 571-584.



To hear the power of youth voices in the movement, click here to watch this video. 6:32

Relational-level strategies should work to create conditions in which adolescents engage in meaningful relationships with others, be that peers, teachers, or parents/caregivers, that are rooted in a vision of gender equity and liberation from oppression. This approach should feed into the overall vision and help cultivate relationships that reflect this vision.

Individual-Level Strategies

Individual-level strategies involve strengthening individual knowledge and skills of youth. This is centered around developing youth's capacity for creating social change. These strategies go beyond educating youth about healthy relationships by focusing on expanding their knowledge about the underlying social forces contributing to gender violence. These strategies should also focus on educating youth about the interconnectedness of this form of oppression in connection to others. When youth gain a great understanding of the social forces that influence them, they can begin to address these influences and ultimately lead to social change.

This comprehensive approach can take many forms, ranging from practice-based, evidence-informed approaches to culturally relevant approaches. However, all of these approaches should be centered around education.

This education needs to go deep, beyond the surface level issues of gender violence, and focus on how society is shaped in such a way that perpetuates gender violence and devaluation in our world. Additionally, individual-level approaches should align with your purpose and vision to achieve social change.

Building Youth Leadership

Building youth leadership is the most important part of individual-level strategies because it will allow your organization to build a better intergenerational model for social change. Middle school is an optimal developmental time for developing youth leadership as a primary prevention strategy and for creating social change. Utilizing collective efficacy towards positive youth engagement and development can be crucial for middle school and high

school youth and has impacts that can last throughout their lives.

Collective efficacy "is defined as the degree to which a group of individuals feel connected and are confident in the willingness and ability of the group to act on behalf of its members."³² New studies are beginning to look at collective efficacy and how it can be used to work with youth on development and intervention. Collective efficacy can often have a negative association, i.e. peer pressure. However, by building a strong coalition between the schools (teachers), after-school programs, community organizations, parents, and neighborhoods, youth will receive positive development from the positive partnership that they are not only observing, but are also equally partaking in as they have the agency to positively influence one another (Smith et al. 2013, P. 3).

Research conducted by the *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing* also shows that working with youth to develop leadership skills, self-agency, and positive overall development reaps many rewards well into adulthood. Working with youth in middle school leads to:

- Greater engagement in school, community, and political organizations.
- More likely to participate in decision-making.
- Be twice as likely to work on a social issue affecting them or their community.
- More likely to register to vote.

Schools, communities, families, and organizations need to work together to build developmentally appropriate skills for understanding and talking about social justice & systemic oppressions, understanding intersectionality, responsible decision-making, positive bystander behavior, youth leadership, and social activism (including civic engagement). Building these skills requires multiple interactions focused on messaging, creating empathy and compassion, and opportunities for young people to practice what they have learned.

When thinking about program approaches, it is important to consider your target audience, where they are in terms of readiness, and who the messengers will be. Choose approaches that are culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate for the young people you want to reach. Examples may include a multi-session, evidence-based curriculum in the classroom, an arts-based program such as a creative writing challenge, visual arts, or image theatre approach, a youth leadership program in a school or community-based club, an initiative that engages athletes as positive school role models, or a support group program for youth impacted by relationship abuse and/or sexual assault.³³ When thinking about who to recruit as messengers, one should be hyper-vigilant and recruit from under-represented and marginalized communities.

Additionally, when delving into the work of youth organizing and youth leadership development, it is crucial to consider how this is going to be addressed and accomplished. The *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing* highlighted two methods of organizing with youth, and they are listed here:

1. Intergenerational: Where youth and adults share leadership in the design, implementation, and evaluation of organizing campaigns, as well as the management of an organization.

³² Smith, Emilie Phillips, Osgood, D. Wayne, Caldwell, Linda, Hynes, Kathryn, Perkins, Daniel F. (September 2013). Measuring Collective Efficacy Among Children in Community-based Afterschool Programs: Exploring Pathways toward Prevention and Positive Youth Development. *National Institute of Health*.

³³ For a review of evidence-based and practice-informed prevention approaches for adolescent relationship abuse and sexual assault, go to www.engagingvoices.org. (PROVIDE DIRECT CITE TO LOCATION ON ENGAGINGVOICES.ORG – I am not sure what you want to show up here, but this document is located at www.idsva.org/downloads/)



2. Cross-Generational: Where youth-led organizations/projects and adult-led organizations come together in networks or coalitions to do joint work. Youth in these settings have power and leadership in the direction of the coalition's efforts, but not within the decision-making structures of the other coalition member organizations.

Traditionally, many coalitions adopted the cross-generational method of youth organizing. However, Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing found that many are now moving towards the intergenerational model, as it is more successful for youth to working equally with the adults, and is successful at facilitating cohesion between different communities. Though, as always, adultism still comes into play and is something that the adults should always be conscious of.

Social and Emotional Learning to Shift Values

One area your organization can also focus on is developing social and emotional learning. We live in a society that undervalues these aspects of learning. Helping teens adopt practices to develop social and emotional learning skills can help expand people's capacity for compassion and growth. This approach moves beyond just teaching what healthy relationships and focuses on how individuals can build social skills that are crucial components of healthy relationships. Beyond that, these approaches tackle toxic masculinity and validate emotional learning as a strength in all individuals. When engaging in classroom education, focusing on social and emotional learning is the most effect strategy for social change.

At the individual and relational level approach, extensive research has shown that competencies in skills related to social and emotional learning can significantly improve cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes in young adults.³⁴ Social and emotional learning curricula are promising approaches for promoting positive social norms around normalizing emotions. Beginning as early as elementary school, social and emotional learning curricula offer developmentally appropriate approaches that educate young people about important components of healthy relationships such as conflict management, social awareness, and responsible decision making.³⁵ A literature review of evidence-based curricula is available on the Idaho Coalition website www.engagingvoices.org.

Within middle schools and high schools, there are multiple ways for adults to address these topics.

- Teach youth leadership, social and emotional learning, healthy relationships, anti-oppression curricula, interactive conversation guides, and/or mindfulness curricula in the classroom.
- Encourage students to intervene by providing training on positive bystander intervention skills including getting help when they witness abuse or sexual assault.
- Promote positive relationships as a leadership trait among marginalized and underrepresented groups of young people, student athletes, band members, student organizations, and with other socially influential youth.

Any prevention approaches must center the needs of historically marginalized

³⁴ Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child development, 82*(1), 405-432.

³⁵ Learn more about social and emotional learning at www.casel.org.

youth by increasing their access to opportunities that are relevant to their identity. When beginning to work with youth, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are the workshops culturally sensitive?
- Am I providing snacks/food for students?
- Am I providing a way for them to get home? (Bus fare, etc.)
- Am I offering child care support for their younger children or perhaps their own children?
- Am I offering compensation if they are using time that would typically be needed to earn money for basic needs

Am I making the workshop available to students at different times, to accommodate different familial schedules?

When engaging in social and emotional learning it is important to bring it back to educating youth about the underlying societal forces that cause gender violence. It is important for adolescents to understand that acts of gender violence are not stand alone occurrence but are instead supported by these social forces that perpetuate the devaluation of women and girls and gender non-conforming. It is through this understanding that individuals will reach a level of awareness in which that can engage in the kind of social change our world needs.

Evaluation! Know You Are Making an Impact

Imagine you invite a small group of friends over to your home for dinner. Who are you inviting and why? What food will you serve? What will be different for you after having friends over for dinner? How do you think your friends will be different after coming over? These are common questions we ask in our everyday lives to gain an understanding of whether we achieve the things we set out to do. In other words, we do evaluations every day. The truth is that every program and every activity deserves at least a simple understanding of how it was done and its impact; if you don't know your impact, how will you know how to improve your efforts and how your valuable resources are being spent? What do you evaluate? How do you know when you are making an impact?

Part of good planning is also good evaluation of the impact of your chosen strategies. Knowing your impact will help you improve your future programming. When planning comprehensive prevention strategies, think about who is impacted by each strategy and how they are impacted. Be as specific as possible and try to determine at what level of the social ecology the change is occurring. For example, do you expect individuals to improve their knowledge about something? Are you hoping youth will start behaving differently? What specific behaviors do you want to change? Are you implementing a policy? If so, what will change because of implementing that policy?

Remember that changes may occur at a different level than the strategy - originally implemented. For example, a social norms campaign usually results in individual-level knowledge and attitude change, even though it is implemented in a broader community-level setting, like school hallways and common spaces. Comprehensive prevention happens when you have multiple changes happening across multiple settings and populations – in other words – across levels of the social ecology.

Timelines will also at times be longer than we want. Social change and social justice will take time. We need to prepare for this by setting short term goals as we continue to advance towards our long term and ultimate goals. When setting short-term goals, we must take time to include all that benefit when you are successful. Additionally, thinking about the potential roadblocks help people prepare for ways to get around them if they come up. These short-term goals not only provide us with the motivation to continue forward with the work, but is also allows us to re-evaluate where we are, as needed, to ensure that the work is still progressing in the direction that is needed. This continuing self-evaluation will allow us to implement a course correction, if the collaborative determines that it is needed.

What Does It Look Like When the Evaluation is Also Part of the Program?

It is possible to save resources and incorporate evaluation activities into programming that are engaging. For example:

Digital Storytelling uses video, pictures, voice, and song to tell a 3-5-minute short story of a person's life or event or community assets and barriers. Participants write their own script, scan pictures, use video, record sound, and combine them into a short film using low cost and/or free software such as GarageBand or MovieMaker. The process of telling one's story is a moving and healing experience, and can be combined with evaluation activities when

participants are asked to comment on the changes they have experienced because of a program or initiative.

Photovoice is a method that combines photography with grassroots social action. Participants are asked to represent their community or point of view by taking photographs, discussing them together, developing narratives to go with their photos, and conducting outreach or other action. It is often used among underrepresented people, and is intended to give insight into how they conceptualize their circumstances and their hopes for the future. As a form of community consultation, Photovoice attempts to bring the perspectives of those "who lead lives that are different from those traditionally in control of the means for imaging the world" into the policy-making process.

Inclusivity in Evaluation

In recent years, program evaluation has become confused with university-based research studies, and funders sometimes require advanced levels of evaluation in their reporting. This has resulted in evaluation feeling burdensome and/or simply a reporting requirement. In the national race to add rigor to evaluation, communities have been disenfranchised in the name of "progress." In fact, evaluation is a program-planning tool – it provides you with the essential information you need to understand your impact and ways to improve your programming for improved impact.

Think about who has been involved in various steps in your evaluation efforts. How can you be more inclusive? Evaluation offers many options for including the communities with whom you work.

- Know your community: Just because someone does not show up to a meeting does not mean they do not have a personal stake.
- Reach out to diverse groups: Follow up in person if someone does not participate.
- Make your meetings accessible: Budget and make room for interpreters, use a webcam to include people who are not able to attend in person, and meet at a time of day that is available for most people (for example, youth can more easily attend meetings in the late afternoon).

Stakeholder Group	Possible Involvement in Evaluation
Program director/agency staff	Design first drafts of data collection tools, design data collection activities, and coordinate the evaluation
Program participants	Help with design of data collection tools, and collect data, provide data, and review initial evaluation findings
Community partners	Review initial evaluation findings and help decide how findings can be shared with others in the community

Words...Words...Words: A Social Change Glossary

One of the biggest barriers to evaluation is language. Let's break down some common terms:

Process Evaluation – Tracks whether a program was implemented as it was intended. Findings are used to improve future implementation of the program. Every program you implement should have a simple process evaluation activity associated with it. Process evaluations are key in program improvement.

Outcome Evaluation – Determines whether a program has achieved its intended changes (goals). An outcome evaluation is also referred to as impact evaluation. Try to measure at least one change that has resulted from your program. If you have resources to measure more changes, do it!

Qualitative – Data collection techniques that focus on describing the meaning of something and have the goal of understanding an issue comprehensively and often from multiple perspectives. Data may consist of words and phrases, observations, narratives and more!

Quantitative – Data collection techniques used to gather information that consists of numbers, percentages, and drawing statistical relationships.

Informed Consent – Telling individuals about the purpose and scope of your evaluation activities and asking whether they are willing to participate in these activities.

Instead of saying...	Say...
Data	Information
Outcome	Impact
Evaluate the program	Tell the story of the program
Results	Findings
Interview	Conversation

If your organization does not have the staff and resources to conduct full scale evaluations; an effective grassroots alternative is Participatory Action Research. Participatory Action Research is an education method that uses grassroots community organizing to conduct and evaluate research. It allows community members to imagine, design and conduct research that the community collectively identifies as a problem. A community council then researches the problem and then presents the results to the larger community. Once the research is collected, the community then decides what strategies and actions to implement to bring about social change. This evaluation process is extremely effective in grassroots organizing and is also a civic engagement strategy.

Conclusion

Over the last ten years, the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence has been actively engaged in primary prevention and social change work to end gender violence. We have come to understand that the focus cannot be on ending gender violence alone. Gender violence intersects with so many other systemic oppressions, and we must take an integrated and intersectional perspective when it comes to social change.

We have much to learn from youth. To build relationships that are built on trust, to build a sense of self-agency, and allow youth to become strong leaders, we must deeply listen to them, to their opinions, to their experience, and their knowledge. This not only contributed to the short and mid-term goals of preventing gender violence, but it allows for an entire generation to be educated on the root causes of the multiple systemic oppressions that we face, and that work must be done to uplift those problems from their roots, to prevent them from ever growing again.

National Hotlines

National Dating Abuse Helpline
1-866-331-9474 or www.loveisrespect.org to chat online

National Suicide Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-833-656-HOPE (4673)

Trevor Project (LGBTQ Youth)
1-866-488-7386

Glossary

Adolescent Relationship Abuse – Refers to behaviors in an adolescent relationship that are physically, sexually, and/or psychologically/emotionally/verbally abusive.

Collective Liberation - Means recognizing that all our struggles are intimately connected, and that each person's liberation is tied up in the liberation of all people. It is the belief that every person is worthy of dignity and respect, and that within systems of oppression everyone suffers.

Feminine – Socially constructed attributes, traits, characteristics, or ways of behaving that our culture usually associates with being a girl or a woman, such as caring, nurturing, sensitive, dependent, emotionally passive, quiet, graceful, innocent, weak, flirtatious, self-critical, soft, submissive, supporting, delicate, or pretty.

Intersectionality - holds that the systemic models of oppression within society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, or disability do not act independent of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

Gender – Socially constructed attributes and opportunities typically associated with being male and female, and the relationships between women and men, as well as the relationships between women and those between men and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender is not a binary, but instead is on a spectrum with an infinite variety of expressions, representing a more nuanced, and ultimately truly authentic model of gender that is self-identified.

Gender Equity – Involves trying to understand and make sure that all people have what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Specific measures must be designed to eliminate inequalities and discrimination against anyone across the gender spectrum and to ensure equal opportunities. Gender equity takes measures to correct past inequalities and root out structural privilege. Gender equity leads to a truer and more impactful equality. Equality in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same places and needs the same things. Not everyone needs the same things to thrive—so, equity tends to be the most appropriate lens.

Gender Inequity – An imbalance of access to power exists by girls, women, transgender and people who are gender nonconforming in all aspects of life. This includes, but is not limited to health care, education, legal protection, the ability to earn a living, and the ability to make decisions in their households and communities.

Gender Role – This is the set of roles, activities, expectations, and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: Masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Some cultures have three or more gender roles.

Gender Stereotypes – Generalized and/or assembled conceptualizations about people based on gender. Stereotypes depict simplified and rigid view of others and are centered on a limited number of characteristics. Stereotypes create an impression that everyone in the group has the same characteristics. Stereotypes create expectations of how males and females should look, think, feel, and act.

Gender Violence – Gender violence is expressed through physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse that results in harm, injury, and even death. Legal definitions of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking are included in the term gender violence as an inclusive way to encompass these forms of violence. Gender violence occurs because of the normative role expectations associated with the gender binary (male/masculine and female/feminine) and unequal access to power associated with female/feminine.

Marginalized Communities - Are groups that are confined to the lower or peripheral edge of the society. Such a group is denied involvement in mainstream economic, political, cultural, and social activities. Marginalization or social exclusion deprives a group of its rightful share of reach to productive resources and ways to utilize its maximum potential for prosperity. It's directed at groups who are seen to differ from perceived norms.

Masculine – Attributes, traits, characteristics, or ways of behaving that our culture usually associates with being a boy or man, such as independent, non-emotional, aggressive, strong, overly competitive, experienced, active, self-confident, hard, sexually aggressive, and rebellious. Masculinity is socially constructed

Privilege - Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to all members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Sexual Assault – Each state has a different criminal definition that details the circumstances surrounding this concept. Sexual assault is when any person forces someone to participate in a sexual act when they either did not want to or did not have the capacity to give consent.

Social Equity - Refers to a social environment in which all people within that society have the same status in certain respects, often including civil rights, freedom of speech, property rights, and equal access to social goods and services. In addition, social equity also means that gender, age, race, sexual orientation, origin, class, income, language, religion, convictions, opinions, health, or disability do not result in unequal treatment under the law and will not reduce opportunities based on any of those criteria.

Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment is a broader construct of sexual assault in that primarily involves unwanted sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct.

Social Norms - Behaviors and cues within a society or group, this sociological term has been defined as “the rules that a group uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.” These rules may be explicit or implicit.

Systemic Oppression - Illegitimate institutionalized power, built and perpetuated throughout the course of history. Allows certain 'groups' to confer illegitimate dominance over other 'groups', and this dominance is maintained and perpetuated at an institutional level.