Primary Prevention in the First State to Secede from the Union

Obstacles, Successes and Lessons Learned by the SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
When Abraham Lincoln, a known opponent of slavery, was elected president, the South Carolina legislature perceived a threat. Calling a state convention, the delegates voted to remove the state of South Carolina from the union known as the United States of America.

The secession of South Carolina was followed by the secession of six more states -- Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas -- and the threat of secession by four more -- Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

These eleven states eventually formed the Confederate States of America.

January 1861
The South Secedes
What is Primary Prevention?
Core Assumptions of Primary Prevention

- Commitment to **END** sexual and intimate partner violence
- Sexual and intimate partner violence are societal **NOT** an individual victim’s problem
- Sexual and intimate partner violence are **complex**, thus requiring **comprehensive** solutions.
Prevention is Not

• A one-time program or event
• One skill-building session
• One protocol

Prevention is

• An on-going process, requiring leadership and commitment
• Integrated into community infrastructure
Not your Grandmother’s prevention...

- Previously we called things prevention that are actually risk reduction
  - Self-defense
  - Safety tips
- Primary prevention will require true social change
  - Process of changing the attitudes and beliefs that lead to specific behaviors
  - An acknowledgement that we can’t just accept the world the way it is and expect that the problems will go away
What does primary prevention of ipv and sv promote?

• Promotes development of social norms and social environments that create, support, and sustain positive behaviors and healthy relationships

• Promotes comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches to preventing violence against women and girls before it occurs by impeding the development of perpetrators.
Principles for Primary Prevention of IPV and SV

- focus on changing norms to change behavior
- foster comprehensive and integrated systems for prevention
- engage community leadership / be responsive to community needs and strengths
- promote and model positive behaviors
- invites men as stakeholders
- emphasize role of bystander intervention
- focus on risk factors and assets
- build on existing assets and efforts

**Continuum of Prevention**

**Primary**
- Interventions that take place before intimate partner violence or sexual violence has occurred
- To prevent initial perpetration or victimization

**Example**
A multiple session program with 8th graders focusing on bystander intervention and exploring healthy relationships

**Secondary**
- Immediate responses after the intimate partner violence or sexual violence has occurred
- Deals with the short-term consequences of the experienced type(s) of violence

**Example**
The immediate response to a victim on a hotline call, helping them to leave a violent situation and determine safety plans and next steps

**Tertiary**
- Long-term response after intimate partner violence or sexual violence has occurred
- Deals with the lasting consequences of violence
- Includes prevention of recidivism

**Example**
The ongoing support that may be provided to a victim of sexual or intimate partner violence by participating in group or individual therapy sessions
What is Oppression?
What is Oppression?

The **systematic institutionalized** mistreatment of one group over another for whatever reason

- **Systematic**- not an accident or happenstance, but planned, deliberate and intentional, designed to keep everyone undesirable on the outside and the entitled and privileged on the inside

- **Institutionalized**- it is in the very fabric and foundation of every structure, process and program that is developed to support our way of life.

“The oppressors do not favor promoting the community as a whole, but rather selected leaders.”
— Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed
What is Privilege?

- An unearned right, benefit, or favor others do not enjoy
- An unearned advantage given to someone on a basis of a biological trait
- An applied level of status
- Privilege creates real advantages about which those who have them may not be aware

Think about these things for a minute...

Who exists in the center of our society, and who exists in the margins? What kind of power do you have?
Privilege can lead to **Prejudice**

- A pre-judgment, an attitude, opinion or feeling - usually, but not always, negative (either way denies the individuality of a person) and is usually formed without personal experiences

**BUT...**

**We have a choice**
What does this look like?

- In-group/Out-group relationships
- Oppressive structures that are historically entrenched
- Legacy of violence against POC (manifest destiny, genocide, etc.)
- Women as property
- Children as property
- Oppressive systems define themselves as natural or preferable
- Violent culture-socially acceptable continuum of sexual assault and intimate partner violence
- Privileged people cooperate with this system.....i.e. can disavow things like rape or murder, but would assume other privileges such as access to healthy food, housing, education are “human rights”
- Few will question a system that affords them their so-called “basic human rights”, if so, risk exclusion or even other forms of violence themselves
Tree of Violence:

Are we pruning the branches or uprooting the tree?
The Connection Between Primary Prevention of Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence AND Oppression
FACT

Sexual and intimate partner violence would not exist without sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of societal oppression
Power defined:

• the ability to act or produce an effect
• legal or official authority and capacity
• the possession of control, authority, or influence over others
• political control or influence
You must have power to actually be oppressive...
…and that continued power results from:

• Individual - internalized beliefs and attitudes
• Interpersonal relationships - how we treat each other
• Institutional - schools, laws, employment
• Systematic - cultural norms that pervade all levels
And in SC...
Societal Attitudes and Norms in SC

• Thomas Jefferson planned to denounce slavery in the Declaration of Independence, but removed those references to make sure SC joined the Union.

• Slavery was such a part of SC in the late 1600s, that in less than 50 years, the people of SC exported almost fifty-thousand captured Native Americans and sold them as slaves, using that money to buy more African slaves, who they deemed more knowledgeable and skilled.

• SC disenfranchised the majority of its black and poor voters long after the Civil War, with Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws, and other forms of discrimination.

  • Except for Tennessee, the former Confederate states, where black men were already enfranchised under the Reconstruction Acts, ratified the Fifteenth Amendment within a year of its congressional passage.

  • SC Senate—Minority Reports
Societal Attitudes and Norms in SC

• General Segregation—Colleton County included in Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954
  • 15 of SCs 85 school districts remain under court jurisdiction as of the most recent Commission on Civil Rights Report in 2008
  • Corridor of Shame

• SC was the second-to-last state to ratify the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution, giving women the right to vote
  • 49 years after the amendment became law

• History of not recognizing same-sex couples, but also of not protecting rights to work and live without discrimination threats
Societal Attitudes and Norms in SC

• In SC, CDV laws and Orders of Protection do not apply in cases of same sex partnerships, dating couples, be they teen or otherwise, unless they live together or have a child in common

• South Carolina currently ranks 36th out of 50 states in the status of women, based on:
  • employment and earnings
  • social and economic autonomy
  • reproductive rights
  • health and well-being
  • political participation.
The Fence and the Tree
How do we work around them, and use them to our advantage?
Prevention Task Force

• DELTA PREP State
• Primary Prevention Task Force Participants
  • Teen Pregnancy Prevention
  • Suicide Prevention
  • Reproductive Healthcare Access
  • SROs
  • AOD Prevention
  • HIV/AIDS Prevention/Education
  • SCEC and TransAction
• Primary Prevention Capacity Assessment
• Molding the goals and objectives over time
Current Interest Trends

• Teen Pregnancy Prevention
• Bullying Prevention
• Federal Requirements for Reproductive Healthcare Providers
• Teen Dating Violence - Prevalence
• Safe Schools Climate Initiative
Other...

- Take the paternal view of women in stride, and work with it
- Shared Initiatives-Publicity, Common Ground
Lessons Learned
The Movement Has Its Issues

• The amount of privilege, power and oppression that exists within the movement to end interpersonal violence
• Slow to change and accept new ideas
• Changing the ways in which we provide direct service—rooted in understanding trauma-informed service provision and historical trauma
• Slow to truly recognize how historical trauma has affected the people we serve and the systems in which they are forced to operate
Be Creative

• Strange political allies—using this time to educate
• JAG Program--drop-out prevention
• Barbershop initiative—local community initiatives
• Community is KEY!
Youth Leadership is Key

• Began with grant from Verizon Foundation with the directive to focus on youth
  • Background research and work showed a need for a stronger base
• Youth Leadership Advisory Council
• Youth Leadership Summit—September 20-21st
  • Workshops and education opportunities
Conclusions

• Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence are crimes of Power and Control
• Privilege + Power can lead to Oppression, but we can choose
• Understanding the history of an area in which you are doing primary prevention work is key to knowing where to start.
• Primary prevention work is essential to ending sexual and domestic violence everywhere