



# Moving Upstream

Virginia's Newsletter for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence

## Men in the Movement: Think about it!

*Kristi VanAudenhove*, Co-Director  
Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Preparing to write this introduction, I hopped into the net and did a search for quotes on men and women working together. Goodness - there isn't a lot of hopeful advice out there in the quotes that make it onto our most popular web sites. A few representative samples: "Men and women. Women and men. It will never work," words of encouragement from Erica Jong. "Between men and women there is no friendship possible," words of optimism by Oscar Wilde. "Man is not the enemy here, but the fellow victim," brave words from Betty Friedan.

It is important to write about the work that men and women are doing together to prevent sexual violence because:

- It is challenging for men and women to work side by side on issues of gender, sexuality, violence and oppression, and to do it in a positive, healthy and respectful way;
- The history of the movement to end sexual violence is uniquely women's history and we have a responsibility to honor that history and ensure that it is not erased (as so much of women's history has been) as the movement includes more and more men; and
- We need a better selection of quotes about men and women working together up on those web sites if we are ever going to prevent sexual violence!

Enjoy reading this issue...but don't stop there. Write about this issue yourselves - on your web-sites, in your newsletters, in professional journals and in great works of fiction. Expose the challenges, share what it feels like to work side by side and transcend gender norms, even if it is fleeting, and offer hope for those positive, healthy and respectful relationships we're all working for. Include the perspectives of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, including those who are intersexed. Make sure that the voices of people of all races and ethnicities are heard. Expand the discussion to include the stories that youth have to tell, and link them in a meaningful way with the elderly who are also invisible in many of our communities. Men in the movement...it's something to think and write about!

## Male Allies: Men as Partners in Primary Sexual Violence Prevention

*Brad Perry, MA*, Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator  
Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance

*Editor's Note: Feel free to contact Brad (contact information on Page 6) for the full reference of any citation.*

Male involvement in sexual violence prevention has increased sharply over the past decade. Organizations such as Men Can Stop Rape, The Oakland Men's Project, One In Four, and the White Ribbon Campaign have received tremendous interest from both within, and outside of, the established anti-rape movement. The past ten years have also seen some sexual assault crisis centers (SACCs) renewing the social change "roots" of their work by developing or strengthening primary prevention projects - projects intended to prevent the initial perpetration of sexual violence. Many of these SACCs, sometimes in conjunction with campus-based sexual violence programs, have recognized the need for prevention programming that connects with young men. The rationale for this heightened interest in male-focused programming comes from the fact that males commit the vast majority of sexual violence, and

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## Funder's Forum

### *The 'Hoods to the Woods: Beyond myths & stereotypes to creating an inclusive movement involving men in the prevention of sexual violence.*

*Robert Franklin, MS, Male Outreach Coordinator  
Division for Injury and Violence Prevention, VDH*

We know most rapists are men but most men are not rapists. We also know most men are not directly involved in the primary prevention of men's violence against women. There are many men who adhere to "traditional" masculine ideas and are not gay-affirmative or pro-feminist, yet they think rape is wrong. So just how do we take the movement of ending sexual violence to men without losing our ideologies? Is it even possible? I think such a strategy is possible, as well as necessary, to end men's violence against women.

Many of the questions we need to explore include:

- Are we trying to bring men to the movement, or the movement to men?
- Which men do we count as allies, and how do we identify them?
- Do we trust men to "get it right?"
- What language do we use in discussing this issue – that is, does it make sense to use the vernacular of academic feminism when trying to introduce men (or women for that matter) to the issue of sexual violence prevention?
- Are we meeting men where they "are" on this issue, or where we want them to be?
- How do we even connect to men on this issue?

Each of these questions would be a nice article by itself, so I will only address each of these concepts briefly.

#### **Bringing the movement to men.**

Brad Perry and I are a kind of tag team in Virginia when it comes to getting men involved in sexual violence prevention. We have conceptualized this in the following manner: Brad works with agencies that focus on sexual violence to help them bring male allies "into" the movement. I work to bring prevention messages to those who work with men in all sorts of settings. These are two very different ideas. One keeps the ownership and direct control of the movement with those who have been working on this issue for years: women. The other approach is often seen as a loss of control and ownership to those not trusted in the first place: men. This new approach to collaboration entails risk, but by encouraging diverse groups of men to value and become actively engaged in the primary prevention work, I believe we can have some lasting change and impact in ending men's violence against women.

Collaboration requires risk. It requires change as new communities begin addressing this issue. As new voices are added, we may hear new stories we do not like, or do not understand. It also requires us to examine our own beliefs and biases. Staffs at sexual/intimate partner violence agencies have a wealth of experience, expertise, and knowledge on this issue. While faith-based communities, athletic and sports systems, fatherhood agencies, law enforcement, and fraternities have experience, expertise, and knowledge regarding the norms and dynamics of men in our communities. They are our gateways into making this a much more inclusive movement.

#### **Meeting men where they are, not where we wish them to be.**

Many of us have been doing this work for years. We have a deep understanding of the issue. We understand the continuum of violence, and see root causes and systems in place that most people do not recognize, let alone think is part of a foundation of sexual violence. We have our own words and language for discussing the topic: benevolent sexism, intersection of oppressions, men's violence against women, survivor, perpetrator, sexual violence, patriarchy, pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, gender roles . . . We often talk about this issue like it is a graduate-level class on gender, and then we wonder why sometimes men look at us like we have three heads. Most of the public, especially men, have never even had Gender & Violence 101.

I was invited to do a presentation to the Richmond Midnight Basketball league. Their motto is "no hoop shots before workshops". This is an inner-city program and a population of African-American men never really valued in terms of being part of the solution. So I walk in and see everyone must first pass two police officers and go through a metal detector. I also quickly learn that I am the only white person in the building. I was ready to do my standard men's workshop and talk about gender and violence, and how they can help. But I decided to have a conversation rather than give a lecture. We had a great discussion and this was a beginning.

Most of these men in the group had been in prison, and I had recently heard the following. Between 1930 and 1976, 455 men were executed for rape, (of which 405 - 90 percent - were black.) A higher percentage of the black men who were executed were juveniles; and the rate of execution without having one's conviction reviewed by any higher court was greater for Blacks. (<http://www.aclu.org/capital/general/10441pub19971231.html>) This is something to keep in mind when addressing this issue in the African-American community. We must understand the intersection of oppressions – in the midnight basketball workshop I had to see how the history of racism in our judicial system for rape was just another form of institutional lynching to many in the room. By stepping outside of my comfort zone and going to this neighborhood I would never normally visit, I gain much in my personal understanding of reaching out to men.

## 'Hoods to the Woods (continued from Page 2)

Another example of meeting men where they “are” comes from an agency in southwest Virginia that was looking for a way to get men to stop by their domestic violence table at the county fair. The agency knew that NASCAR was very popular with men in that community. So, they asked men to stop by, take a simple survey, and wear a white ribbon to pledge that they will not commit, condone, or remain silent about men’s violence against women. If they did that, they could enter to win FOUR NASCAR tickets. They went from just a few to over 100 men stopping by the booth. Wow!! Yes, it was one shot, and some of the men probably didn’t take it seriously, but once again it was a beginning.

### Conclusion.

These are very simple solutions that required people to be intentional with outreach and have a little imagination. The real challenge is figuring out who is NOT at the table with us in doing this work. With whom are we not trying to collaborate because of our assumptions? In terms of trust, one way to look at male involvement is to understand that for the most part, men (myself included) will get it wrong in the beginning. They will not get it wrong because they do not care, they will get it wrong because they do not know our language and this is all new to them. How do we refrain from closing the door on these men - who could be great allies - because we hear the slightest hint of traditional masculinity?.

Most people, including most men, will agree that rape is bad and should be stopped. That is the easy sell. The tough part will be finding means of involving men across diverse communities: "from the hoods to the woods." What vital communities are missing from our prevention efforts? Go forth and listen, hear new stories, meet people where they are at in understanding this violence, and find new solutions.



*“We often talk about this issue like it is a graduate-level class on gender, and then we wonder why sometimes men look at us like we have three heads. Most of the public, especially men, have never even had ‘Gender & Violence 101.’”*

## Promising Practices

### One agency’s perspective on men doing this work.

*Gianna Garigletti*, Executive Director & *Hanna Foster*, Associate Director  
Citizens Against Sexual Assault in Harrisonburg, VA

Theoretically, we’ve always seen the need for men to do Sexual Violence Prevention. It just makes sense to have male as well as female presenters delivering primary prevention messages. It demonstrates the characteristics of caring and responsibility that we want to encourage in males, shows that the issue matters to men, and gives us the opportunity to model the healthy relationship dynamics of respect and equality. However, for the first few years that I worked at CASA I experienced such a positive and supportive work environment consisting of all female co-workers that I found it difficult to imagine how the dynamic would change if we brought a man on board. When I thought of men doing this work in our service area, I thought of them in terms of volunteers, someone who would go home when the presentation was over and leave our comfortable work environment undisturbed. Every time we advertised for a position, 95% of our applicants and the most experienced applicants were always female, so for a long time we didn’t think much about what it would be like to have a man on staff. I should also mention that several years ago we had a part-time male staff doing some of our youth programming. While none of us believed that the disappointing experience we had with that staff member was due to his gender, it certainly didn’t make us want to run right out and hire another man.

The situation was dramatically different when we hired someone to fill the Education Coordinator position. The most experienced applicant by far happened to be a man who had been working as a Youth Outreach Coordinator in another Sexual Assault/ Domestic Violence Agency. The person leaving our agency had worked with him on some projects and was impressed with his knowledge and professionalism, so it wasn’t a huge surprise that he was our top candidate throughout the interviewing process. That is, until the last interview when we met another man who impressed us with his experience, knowledge and sensitivity. We couldn’t believe that our top two candidates were two men! We happened to know that we were going to have another opening in the agency for an outreach position within a couple of months so we discussed possibly hiring both candidates, which is what we decided to do in the end.

*“[Having] male as well as female presenters delivering primary prevention messages...demonstrates the characteristics of caring and responsibility that we want to encourage in males, shows that the issue matters to men, and gives us the opportunity to model the healthy relationship dynamics of respect and equality.”*



**Male Allies (continued from Page 1)**

*“Programs often seek participation from male allies in order to gain greater insight into what types of messages and methods might resonate with men in the larger community, offer healthy, non-violent alternatives to traditional masculinity, and/or model positive cross-gender collaboration.”*



*“By working with men/boys on this issue we powerfully demonstrate that males are not innately “savage” – that like women/girls, they can learn to see our society’s glorification of violence and dominance for what it is, and in partnerships across gender, transform it.”*

are thus in a powerful position to generate change. To this end, these programs often seek participation from male allies in order to gain greater insight into what types of messages and methods might resonate with men in their larger community, offer positive, non-violent alternatives to traditional masculinity, and/or model constructive cross-gender collaboration.

**What is a male ally?**

For this article, the term “male ally” will be used to represent men and boys who work in partnership with established sexual violence agencies on primary prevention initiatives. A male ally could be a participant in an on-going community partnership helping to plan and implement a prevention project, or he could be a teenager developing his skills as a peer educator in that prevention project. The question of how to determine which men/boys should “be allowed” to be allies under this definition is a slightly different issue, and will be partially addressed later in the article. In reality though, each individual primary sexual violence prevention project must answer that question for itself.

**Why are male allies important to primary prevention work?**

For most SACCs, the desire to involve men as active participants in primary sexual violence prevention was initially intuitive: The rationale was a product of their experiences doing community education and organizing. However, there is also a body of research literature that supports the effectiveness of involving men in sexual violence prevention initiatives.

On a general conceptual level, well-established theories of attitude change, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1998), describe the numerous variables influencing the extent to which people receive, internalize, and act on information. When applied to the issue at hand, this theory can explain how a man’s motivation to hear and meaningfully process an idea like, “I should be involved in ending sexual violence” is affected by such factors as the similarity of the message source to the message recipient, the perceived credibility of the source, the perceived relevance and the framing of the message itself, and the reinforcement of peers. Each of these variables can be manipulated to our advantage by work-

ing with, and obtaining input from, a diverse array of male allies.

For example, a diverse group of young men developing and implementing a peer education program might be able to more effectively reach other male students in their high school because of:

- Their shared environment/backgrounds to the other male students (similarity),
- Their ability to “speak the language” of other young men, getting messages across in a manner that reflects their common experiences of growing up male in a given culture (framing and relevance),
- Their ability to model the behavior they are endorsing by respecting others, outwardly refraining from sexist/homophobic/violent behaviors, and proactively sparking discussions about healthy relationships (peer reinforcement), and
- The simple fact that they are male, and thus are not as likely to be perceived by other male students as having a “vested personal interest” in men behaving respectfully toward women (perceived credibility - it goes against the “battle of the sexes” expectation many of us learn around the time we pass into puberty)

The growing body of applied research literature in the areas of public health and violence prevention also reinforces the value of male allies. Two independent reviews of multiple sexual violence prevention education programs indicated that “single-gender” formats (i.e., female facilitator with female participants and male facilitator with male participants) were more effective than mixed-gender formats in producing positive attitude change (Brecklin & Forde, 2001; Berkowitz, 2002). It should be noted that most of the programs reviewed in these articles would be considered “introductory” educational projects (i.e., they were mostly “one-shot” programs designed to positively impact a basic set of attitudes about sexual violence and gender), and were typically not designed to build healthy relationship skills or engage participants as agents of change on an on-going basis. Thus, the advantage of the single-gender format might disappear when men are engaged in a more intensive, sustained manner.

Likewise, the wealth of public health literature demonstrating the efficacy of peer-to-peer and

## Male Allies (continued from Page 4)

community development approaches (see for example, Ender & Newton, 2001; World Health Organization R.O.E., 2002) shows the importance of engaging key stakeholders to sustaining effective prevention projects. Applied to male allies in sexual violence prevention, these principles suggest that men become more invested when they are empowered to help articulate the issue and develop “solutions” in a manner relevant to their experiences. A group of male allies engaged in such a process (perhaps by an established sexual violence organization) have the potential to produce highly-nuanced strategies that may not otherwise be conceived. For example, several violence prevention projects in Virginia have indicated that it was the authentic involvement of male allies that first prompted them to approach men as potential allies (rather than potential perpetrators), illuminate the “everyday” links between masculinity and violence, and focus on building positive skills and behaviors (in addition to avoiding negative behaviors).

### How can SACCs engage male allies in primary sexual violence prevention?

A major factor associated with male involvement on the local level is the public image – fair and accurate, or not – of a given SACC. Does the public understand that the SACC undertakes community education and/or primary prevention work in addition to providing crisis intervention and hospital/court accompaniment? Does the SACC have a history of working in collaboration with various other community institutions, or are they perceived to be “closed off” or open only to working with certain types of people? SACCs should ask themselves these questions before engaging any community allies in male-focused primary prevention efforts. They may find that the first step is building capacity for this kind of work, both within the SACC as an organization, and in the community as a whole. Doing so means sitting down with staff, volunteers, and key community members, and discussing the causes of sexual violence, the meaning of primary prevention, goals for the involvement of male allies, and how male-focused primary prevention strategies might “look” and “feel.”

A related factor to the public image of SACCs is the fact that most men simply do not understand why sexual violence is an issue in which they should become involved – it is thought of singularly as a “woman’s issue.” Much of the

important work being accomplished everyday at SACCs fits squarely into the American stereotype of “women’s work”: social work, counseling, teaching, etc. The reasons for why this work is stereotyped – and usually devalued – are beyond the scope of this article, but it is important to recognize this phenomenon as an obstacle to male involvement. A man might be a survivor of sexual violence or be the loved one of a survivor, but in order to be moved to any sustained action (such as volunteering with a SACC, organizing a White Ribbon Campaign in his neighborhood, seeking to educate himself further on the matter, etc.) he will have to first learn how to critically examine, and at least partially reject, the powerful societal pressures telling him, “this is not your problem”, “real men are unaffected and just get over it”, and “helping people is women’s work.” SACCs can address this obstacle by putting primary prevention concepts “out in front” along side victim services during community awareness events, emphasizing men’s stake in this issue and listing some of the specific prevention activities in which men/boys could become involved.

If there is an impression in the community that the only role for volunteers is to work the hotline and accompany victims to the hospital – a daunting prospect to many men and women – then highlighting activities such as, “talking with young men about what it means to be a ‘real man’”, “participating in planning a healthy relationships campaign”, or “helping to organize a group of teen peer educators” might pique a wider range of interests. Expanding public awareness in this matter can build a base of male allies, which will in turn make the work more “viable” to other men. Additionally, SACCs can expand their base of male allies by connecting with high-profile male community members whose identities are linked to sexual violence prevention or positive models of masculinity.

Regardless of how potential male allies come to the attention of SACCs, the ability to identify who will be a capable and reliable partner is essential. It is perhaps most beneficial to consider potential male partners in primary prevention initiatives in the same manner as any other prevention partner. That is, SACCs should strive to find the right combination of mind-set (both in terms of openness and *basic* outlook on gender, violence, oppression, etc.), motivation, commitment, access, and person-



### Selected Male Ally Resources on the Web:

Men Can Stop Rape:  
[www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)

Family Violence Prevention Fund's "Toolkit for Men & Boys":  
<http://toolkit.endabuse.org/Home>

National White Ribbon Campaign:  
[www.whiteribbon.ca](http://www.whiteribbon.ca)

Virginia Department of Health's "Men Ending Violence":  
[www.menendingviolence.com](http://www.menendingviolence.com)

PA Coalition Against Rape's "Men Against Sexual Violence":  
[www.menagainstsexualviolence.org](http://www.menagainstsexualviolence.org)

Jane Doe, Inc.'s Men' Initiative:  
[www.mijd.org](http://www.mijd.org)

One In Four (National site):  
[www.nomorerape.org](http://www.nomorerape.org)

A Call To Men (Tony Porter):  
[www.acalltomen.org](http://www.acalltomen.org)

Paul Kivel (author, *Young Men's Work*, and *Boys Will Be Men*):  
[www.paulkivel.com](http://www.paulkivel.com)

Jackson Katz (Creator, *MVP & Tough Guise*; author, *Macho Paradox*):  
[www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)





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### One agency's perspective (continued from Page 3)

After they both accepted the jobs, we immediately panicked! A third of our staff would now be male. Was that weird? How would our clients feel? Were we betraying our own sex by hiring men in one of the only fields that was created “by women for women”? Would they truly, deep down feel comfortable with female supervisors? Could they handle our office banter? We went over these questions (and many more) and eventually reminded ourselves to trust our instincts, which told us everything was going to be great.

I can honestly say it has been great. Cory and Trent have done wonderful things with our prevention programming, just as we were hoping. They have made the impression in our community that preventing sexual violence is important to men, women and children alike. Trent has motivated our Student Connections club to move in new and exciting directions, including the development of a student acting troupe. Cory has done wonderful work with teen girls, co-leading a psycho-educational group with a local CSB prevention worker.

In addition, they have been able to do some really great work with clients. One of Cory's first hospital accompaniments was with a teenage boy who felt extremely validated to have a man say to him, “This wasn't your fault.” Our female clients have benefited from knowing that there are men who place value in this issue and want their voices to be heard. In addition, their involvement in our local SART team along with the addition of a few female investigators has helped to break up the female-advocate vs. male law-enforcement dynamic that we've had here for so long.

Their personalities and perspectives add to the diversity of our office, and the environment is as supportive and fun as it ever was. However, I must add that I don't think it is because they are men that they have added so much to our staff. What makes these men so important to our staff is who they are as people. They bring us humor, intelligence, drive, strength, compassion, vision and hope---all the things we would hope to have in a colleague. The fact that they are men is secondary to the type of people that they are.

### Male Allies (continued from Page 5)

ality in any prevention partner, regardless of gender. Of course, the fact that men do not live on the “receiving end” of sexism should be taken into account, but most of the basic “ingredients” of an effective ally are the same. It is both unwise and unrealistic to only seek men who “get it” (i.e., outwardly self-identify as “feminist,” accept that sexual violence exists on a continuum of sexism, use terminology held in high-esteem by sexual violence professionals, such as “survivor” and “LGBT-persons,” etc.). There are plenty of men (and women) who live lives defined by fairness, empathy, honesty, and cooperation – people who could be effective allies – who do not overtly subscribe to these concepts. Also, male allies, like female allies, are certainly capable of updating their world view, and often do so once they are exposed to further education. Furthermore, men who *are* deemed to “get it” are sometimes seen as “out of touch” by men in the general public, and/or might only be “talking the talk” and not living by those same principles.

The key to retaining male allies is also the same as that for any other type of community partner: Create a space for meaningful collaboration signified by mutual respect, honest dialogue, and a valuing of everyone's contributions. Just as male allies should take care to avoid giving in to the gender pressures that encourage them to think their own opinions matter the most, SACCs might want to consider the value of having men challenge conventional wisdom about what types of male-focused prevention strategies hold the most promise.

### Conclusion

Women created the movement to end sexual violence, have continued to effectively lead the movement through periods of tremendous growth, and understandably take great pride in the fact that these accomplishments were achieved with almost no male involvement. However, as the movement becomes more diverse on numerous fronts, it is vital that we include men in the “big tent” of allies. Over the past 35 years, we have empowered women/girls to look at themselves and society in a manner that is both revolutionary and affirming to their experiences. By working with men/boys on this issue we powerfully demonstrate that males are not innately “savage” – that like women/girls, they can learn to see our society's glorification of violence and dominance for what it is, and in partnerships across gender, transform it.