

HELP! WE ARE STUCK IN AWARENESS MODE.

Stuck in a rut? Raising awareness about sexual and domestic violence lays the groundwork for preventing sexual and domestic violence, but we cannot stop there. Here are a few ideas to help you break past "awareness mode" and begin implementing prevention-focused efforts in your community.

OUR PREVENTIONIST OR COMMUNITY EDUCATOR ALREADY RACES FROM ONE PRESENTATION TO THE NEXT AND IS JUST TOO BUSY TO WORK WITH GROUPS ON AN ONGOING BASIS.

Most advocates have the knowledge to provide basic training on sexual and domestic violence. Could these advocates help provide basic training and/or staff booths during busy awareness months or throughout the year? This would allow the Preventionist more time to focus on prevention-focused strategies. If other staff is uncomfortable providing basic training, think about staff training on public speaking. Look for these skills when hiring future staff.

WE SIMPLY RECEIVE TOO MANY REQUESTS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION TO TAKE OUR EFFORTS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

Sometimes it is okay to say "no." It is natural to want to educate everyone in your community about sexual and domestic violence, but is it realistic and does it match your goals? If your goal is to educate your entire community, is there a way to do so without devoting a massive amount of time and energy on an ongoing basis? Could you focus on educating community members who can then educate others? If your goal is to prevent sexual and domestic violence, then perhaps you can scale back on your community-wide educational efforts and focus on key community partners or groups that are at higher risk for sexual and domestic violence.

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WE CANNOT DEVOTE THE TIME AND ENERGY THAT PREVENTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES REQUIRE ON AN ONGOING BASIS.

Love or hate general awareness building, there will always be a need for some level of these efforts in at least one of the communities you are working with at any given time. However, you do not want to be stuck in awareness building mode at the cost of more progressive change. Not only will that leave you frustrated by the never-ending barrage of informational booths and flyers, but it may also make your community feel disempowered and leave them asking “so what?” Help your community members recognize sexual and domestic violence as a problem in their community and empower them to step up and take action to prevent it.

NOBODY CALLS OUR PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION OR TRAINING.

Taking a more prevention-focused approach to your work is a shift. It will initially require more time, effort, and resources, not only from your organization but from other community partners as well. Sexual and domestic violence is a community issue that requires community action. Everyone at the table will be working with you to end violence within your community. Share the resources and responsibility equally. If the community is mobilized to end sexual and domestic violence, then in time you will be able to bow out of the day-to-day work and let the community own the process. In the meantime, use some of the ideas above to free up staff resources and time to commit to more prevention-focused strategies.

I WILL SCREAM IF I HAVE TO STAFF ONE MORE INFORMATIONAL BOOTH, DRAFT ONE MORE PROCLAMATION, OR HANG ONE MORE FLYER.

Most likely, the community is aware of your program and the crisis services it provides, but do they know that your program also provides education and training? Are these services included in your outreach material and on your website? Are you posting about them on social media? Some programs have had success by sending letters to schools and organizations, introducing themselves and their educational services. Advertise, advertise, advertise!

