IMPACT CASE STUDY

Men Can Stop Rape’s Impact as a Technical Assistance Provider

Interview with Dr. Tamara Berg, Director of WSU's Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies program, Winona State University

Before Working with Men Can Stop Rape

Winona State University (WSU) is a medium-sized public institution in Minnesota, and engaging men to change their campus culture has been one of their priorities during the past six years, starting in 2013. This engaging men work was supported by Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Campus Program grants and Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) as the OVW Campus Program Engaging Men Technical Assistance (TA) Provider. Before 2013, WSU had no organized effort to engage men in the effort to prevent gender-based violence.

How Men Can Stop Rape Supported WSU

WSU worked closely with Men Can Stop Rape to develop programming focused on educating and engaging men as active bystanders to prevent gender-based violence on campus. When WSU first received an OVW grant in 2013, there was a commitment from WSU Athletics to participate in the work of the grant. This commitment deepened when in 2015, WSU was selected to participate in the OVW Healthy Masculinity Campus Athletics Project (HMCAP), developed and implemented by MCSR, in collaboration with the Positive Coaching Alliance. The project was designed to engage athletes as leaders on campus in the prevention of gender-based violence and to engage coaches, athletics administrators, and athletics staff as positive role models. Eric Schoh, WSU’s Athletic Director, was a leader in this regard. He and other WSU athletics and prevention staff attended the three-day MCSR/Positive Coaching Alliance training kicking off the project, received supporting documents, participated in follow up webinars, and joined quarterly HMCAP conference calls.

WSU also worked with MCSR to craft a healthy masculinity educational poster campaign for their campus. MCSR has created public education prevention campaigns specifically for men and boys since 2001. Through phone calls and email MCSR consulted with WSU about best practices for developing a prevention campaign for campus male students. MCSR was able to offer what Dr. Berg described as “a model for a healthy masculinity poster series.”
WSU faculty involved with the campus effort to engage men in GBV prevention efforts attended a day-long Engaging Men Prevention Training conducted by Men Can Stop Rape for OVW grantees in October 2018. This training familiarized select faculty members with MCSR’s healthy masculinity approach and offered training in MCSR healthy masculinity exercises both through practice and a training manual.

**How WSU Used Men Can Stop Rape’s Support**

In connection with HMCAP, WSU in 2015 conducted training for all coaches and staff regarding Title IX and Clery requirements; they conducted bystander intervention training for all coaches and athletes; and they launched an It’s On Us campaign that engaged athletes and the Athletics Department. The It’s On Us campaign included It’s On Us logos in the center of the football stadium and baseball field.

In the following year, WSU implemented programming with the support of MCSR. They held focused programming for all athletes, coaches and staff with a focus on the Real Man/Strong Man training and the Continuum of Harm – MCSR exercises. MCSR came to campus to support this programming and offered open sessions for all students, faculty and staff focused on “Healthy Masculinity and the 21st Century University: A Campus Conversation.”

Dr. Berg claimed that with “inspiration and guidance from MCSR,” WSU worked with peer educators and advocates as well as student leaders to develop a series of posters (“Reacting to Sexual Assault” and “Redefining Masculinity”) focused on prevention education. The “Redefining Masculinity” poster also served to recruit men to become peer educators and advocates.

According to Dr. Berg, “impressed with the materials shared and the support received from MCSR,” WSU was inspired most recently to develop a peer education and advocacy program with education modules specifically focused on dialogues around the subject of “cultural constructions of masculinity” and the ways in which unhealthy masculinity can be addressed on campus through healthy masculinity.

**Impact of MCSR’s Support at WSU**

The support, Dr. Berg claimed, that WSU “received from MCSR over the past six years has had a significant impact on our campus, allowing us to more effectively engage larger numbers of campus men as allies in prevention efforts.” MCSR provided an approach that “legitimized men engaging in this topic, especially campus male leadership.” And, importantly, MSCR offered opportunities for collaboration across constituencies, which has resulted in partnerships between Student Life, Athletics, Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and Inclusion and Diversity that will continue beyond the cycle of WSU’s grants from OVW.