IMPACT CASE STUDY

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

Interview with Heidi Randall, Program Director, Maine Boys to Men

Before Working with Men Can Stop Rape

Maine Boys to Men, founded in 1998 and organized as a nonprofit in 2004, is based in Falmouth, Maine. The organization engages communities to shift attitudes and actions to end male violence against women and girls. Matt Theodores became the Executive Director of Maine Boys to Men in September 2014 after serving the organization as a Board Member and Programming Chair. Shortly after that, the organization received a grant supporting engaging men work through the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Consolidated Youth Engaging Men (CYEM) Program. Heidi Randall was hired to help with the grant. Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) serves as the OVW CYEM Program Engaging Men Technical Assistance (TA) Provider. Before the OVW grant, Maine Boys to Men did various programming: Bootcamp for New Dads, a summer camp for boys, high school presentations, Film Screenings and yearly conferences.

How Men Can Stop Rape Supported Maine Boys to Men.

As the CYEM Engaging Men TA Provider, MCSR conducted a number of sessions about working with young men and boys at bi-annual grant program institutes during multiple years for six years, all of the sessions attended by representatives from Maine Boys to Men. Also, during this time, a MCSR staff person served as a CYEM TA point of contact (POC) for Maine Boys to Men. The organization could reach out to the MCSR POC with questions at any time.

Maine Boys to Men turned to the MCSR POC a few years ago when they felt like they needed to engage adult men differently. Apart from Bootcamp for New Dads, their adult programming was seeing a majority of female identified participants, although they felt that community men were wanting a space to convene. The POC suggested MCSR’s Healthy Masculinity Training Institute (HMTI) as an opportunity to increase their learning on engaging men, and Maine Boys to Men sent two team members. They sent a third team member to HMTI a few months later. The HMTI is a chance to learn the theories and develop the skills that have shaped MCSR’s Healthy Masculinity Action Project (HMAP), a national initiative designed to raise the visibility of healthy masculinity and build a new generation of male leaders across the country who model non-violent, emotionally healthy masculinity, serving as positive change-makers. Through three days of discussions about theory, interactive group exercises, role-
playing, and multi-media presentations, the training institute presents participants with a framework to positively construct masculinity and to motivate men’s engagement in the primary prevention of violence against girls and women.

After the training, Maine Boys to Men had a number of follow up conference calls with the MCSR POC, walking them through what it means to gather men, ways MCSR has done that, things to think about in terms of structure, form, processing, and debriefing. Ms. Randall said about the calls that the POC “offered some great historical wisdom from the work MCSR has done, and he also offered just a lot of commonsense, practical stuff that I think we just needed to be reminded of. We needed some support as we expanded our programming for the first few months.”

**How Maine Boys to Men has Used Men Can Stop Rape’s Support**

According to Ms. Randall, MCSR has primarily influenced Maine Boys to Men work with adult men, which has grown significantly. She said, “We are a primary prevention youth serving organization. When we engage adults who work with youth we do so with the goal of supporting youth to prevent violence. Maine Boys to Men still delivers the Bootcamp for New Dads Program, which they have added an hour of original content to. They also offer a two-day training institute, which involves training youth-serving professionals and can take place anywhere. Other program offerings include a six hour training for the Educators and Coaches which is for K – 12 and looks closely at how ideas and messages about masculinity influence modern society by engaging participants in topics that include interpersonal biases, empathy, upstander intervention, gender stereotypes, and consent. The workshop helps educators and coaches promote inclusive environments in their classrooms, on the field, and in the school community.

Men Connect: Conversations in Masculinity is a monthly opportunity for men to share their stories related to masculinity and develop a deeper understanding of how they relate to themselves and others. The conversations about masculinity create a shared practice of self-reflection, open dialogue, and intentional listening, expanding men’s opportunities for connection and shared leadership in ending gender-based harassment, abuse, and violence. Along with these informal conversations, Maine Boys to Men has organized a handful of Healthy Masculinity Campus Conversations modeled after Men Can Stop Rape’s Campus Conversations.

When Maine Boys to Men celebrated their 20th Anniversary, they decided to, along with a fundraising event, conduct a day-long training for males the week of the anniversary. “The vision was to celebrate our successes by engaging adult men in a meaningful way,” Ms. Randall said. In collaboration with MCSR, the Maine Boys to Men staff developed a training curriculum that was a mix of MCSR and Maine to Boys content. Some of the valuable takeaways from the HMTI that shaped the anniversary training, identified by Ms. Randall, included using the dominant and counter stories framework as well as what she called triads – people traveling through the adult training as a small group of
participants, which allows participants to build relationships with each other throughout their training experience. MCSR staff traveled to Maine for the training and co-facilitated with Maine Boys to Men. There were 40 male-identified participants, ages 17 to 70. Ms. Randall described it as “a great day.” Maine Boys to Men has repeated a similar training model in spring of 2019 and another is scheduled for January of 2020.

**Impact of Men Can Stop Rape’s Support in Maine**

According to Ms. Randall, the organization has increased programming by 1,000% since receiving their first OVW CYEM grant in 2015. Men Can Stop Rape’s support as the CYEM Engaging Men TA Provider “has helped us feel more courageous in our own work” and “has been an important part of our expansion of engaging adult men.” Quality products were created for the community, and Maine Boys to Men continued to be well positioned to reapply for the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Consolidated Youth Engaging Men (CYEM) grant. OVW funded the organization for three successive grant cycles. Ms. Randall also indicated that it has been “meaningful to have the support of MCSR, for them to travel to Maine as part of our collaboration. It’s exciting and notable to partner with such a reputable organization. It’s a unique opportunity….I think it helped recruitment, and it also helped legitimize the work.” Men Can Stop Rape’s support also increased Maine Boys to Men skills to more effectively engage larger numbers of adult men. Ms. Randall believes that without the support, “there would have been a longer learning curve.” She said that the organization and the community will feel the positive effects for a very long time.