



# Finding Your Role in Responding to and Preventing Violence and Abuse

*Sexual violence is preventable and we all have a role and responsibility in preventing it. We are invested in prevention, because sexual violence affects everybody in our state. We also know that certain populations experience higher rates of sexual violence due to systemic oppression and inequity. For these reasons, effective prevention efforts focus on addressing the root causes of violence and promoting healthy norms. Knowing that we all play a role in preventing violence, it is important to identify what those roles are and can be, and how they may change over time. Here are some ideas for what each person, community, institution, and organization can do to address violence.*

## At the Individual Level

- **Community members** can advocate for equity-based policy and protocol changes in their community, their place of business, their places of worship, and in community centers. This can be for changes in policies and protocols that exclude people or support violence against some people. This could also be for enacting policies that require training, or setting a standard of zero-tolerance for oppression and sexual violence and for policies to support people when violence happens. Community members can also participate in efforts to prevent violence by showing up, volunteering, writing letters of support, raising awareness about violence and prevention, and speaking out against and interrupting violence when they see it and it is safe to do so. Community members are some of the greatest motivators for change and can be champions at challenging the accepted level of tolerance for violence in their communities.
- **Youth** can advocate for programming in schools and in community centers that works to dismantle racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression, as well as programming and policies that promote healthy norms, like healthy sexuality, consent, respect, and communication. They can also serve as leaders and peer educators within their schools and community-centers, as well as on community advisory groups to inform and advocate for youth rights. Youth can also investigate and learn about what their rights are within schools and the broader community, and raise awareness about those rights among their peers, school staff, and community members. They can also serve as leaders in setting norms among their peers that don't tolerate oppression, violence, or biases by: being a voice for health and equity; getting and providing training on bystander intervention and modeling these skills for peers; and by talking about healthy relationships, consent, handling rejection, and healthy break ups.
- **Parents** can also advocate for this programming, and exercise their voices, including serving on community coalitions and in community groups. They can make sure that they are making decisions with youth and modeling skills that promote respect and equity for ALL people. Parents can access resources to support them in conversations about sex and sexuality, healthy relationships, sexual violence, and violence prevention, with their kids as well as with adults. Talking about these things in ways that promote health, safety, respect, and equity takes practice. The more we practice, the better we'll get. Parents can write letters or emails of support to schools and community groups/programs who are doing a good job of promoting health and equity. Parents can also do what parents, caregivers, and guardians do regularly, which is care for and support kids.
- **People who have offended** can hold themselves accountable for the harm that they have caused, intentional or unintentional, and actively work to change their behaviors, attitudes, and actions that reinforce and support violence.

## At the Community Level

- **Community based programs** can be leaders in implementing primary prevention programming in and with the communities they serve, in and with institutions like schools or detention centers, and in and with businesses and corporations within their local areas. They can be leaders in coordinating and participating in community groups that advocate for the health and safety of all people in their local areas. They can provide trauma-informed, community reflective services to support people who have experienced violence; services that incorporate violence prevention, understanding of the root causes of violence, as well as health promotion. They can seek out training on working with and learning from specific populations and community groups, as well as supporting community conversations about alternative forms of justice.
- **Local government** representatives can identify and prioritize sexual violence as a serious statewide problem where everyone is affected, whether as a victim or survivor, or as a family member, friend, partner, neighbor, employer, or co-worker, or a person charged with promoting safety in communities. They can do this by: supporting awareness-raising proclamations; participating in local coalitions to promote health and safety; conducting listening sessions in various spaces and places in the communities they represent; believing in the experiences people share and advocating for the work that they are doing; investing financially in community based prevention efforts and resources for first responders; writing letters of support or showing support in person; and getting training on anti-oppression, the impacts of sexual violence, and prevention.
- **Families** can play a big role in promoting violence prevention by promoting healthy, equitable norms and modeling anti-violence and bystander intervention activities within their family and within their communities. Families can practice their cultural and familial traditions and honor the cultural and familial traditions of other families.
- **Churches and Community Centers** can establish policies and protocols that promote safety for ALL people, as well as create spaces within their church or center that are inclusive and welcoming to all people. These places can partner with community based programming to implement violence prevention and health promotion programming, or invest in training and resources, like the Our Whole Lives Curriculum, in order to implement these programs on their own.
- **Law Enforcement** play an important role in promoting health and safety in their communities. Not only are law enforcement tasked with preserving safety, they can also actively participate in promoting healthier and safer communities for all people. This includes: accessing and providing training on sexual violence and prevention, anti-oppression and the root causes of violence, and best practices in policing and community relations; conducting some form of listening sessions with community groups throughout the local area; adopting trauma-informed protocols and zero-tolerance policies for sexual violence in the work place that include supporting law enforcement when they experience trauma; participating in local events that promote health and safety for all people; serving on local collaborations and cohorts that are working to build healthier and safer communities for all; and promoting and modeling accountability.

## At the Institutional Level

- **Institutions** like schools, companies, hospitals and medical centers, prison systems, and others can develop and implement policies and protocols that take a stand against sexual violence and outline strategies to support those who experience violence. These institutions can implement comprehensive prevention programs that work to address the root causes of violence and promote healthy norms and behaviors or contract with another group who is doing this work. Institutions can invest in training for their employees and populations that they

serve to address implicit biases, and problems within the institution that reinforce violence and institutional trauma. Institutions can participate in statewide organizing to learn from other institutions around the state and model prevention efforts.

- **Medical Providers** can ensure that their staff is extensively trained in sexual assault forensic examination protocol. This includes ensuring that they are using accurate pronouns and respecting the identities of all patients they interact with. They can partner with local organizations and groups to receive training on working with and within various populations. As health promotion is an active part of the medical profession, medical providers can receive and provide training on how to do this in trauma informed ways with all people and all survivors of sexual violence. Medical providers can also partner with local schools and groups to provide medically accurate, comprehensive sexual education and information to all people.
- **Colleges and Universities** can support not only healthier and safer campuses, but healthier and safer communities and individuals by: adopting affirmative consent conduct policies; investing in sexual health promotion programs and comprehensive sexual health services on campus and/or in partnership with community based programs; providing and accessing trauma-informed, best-practice training around sexual violence response and prevention; dedicating substantial staff capacity specifically to prevention programming outside of sexual violence response and advocacy; auditing their campuses to evaluate ways they may reinforce the root causes of violence throughout their systems including in recruitment, admissions, hiring, scholarships, student-life, and others; supporting opportunities for research and community collaboration around violence prevention and health promotion; and incorporating response protocols that include confidential advocates and providing resources for students, faculty, and staff who have experienced sexual violence.
- **K-12 Schools including Districts and Boards** can partner with local groups to provide comprehensive sexual health and violence prevention education that meets the 2016 updated Oregon Health Education Standards (K-12), which include requirements of the 2009 Comprehensive Sexuality Education law, the 2013 Healthy Teens Relationships Act, and the 2015 Child Sex Abuse Prevention Law (Erin's Law). These partnerships across the state have supported schools in meeting all of these requirements in a manageable way. Schools can also partner with local sexual assault and domestic violence agencies to meet trauma-informed, best practice, and support students' rights, under Title IX, to request confidential services. Schools can adopt policies, and incorporate programming that raises awareness about sexual violence and spends time discussing the root causes of violence. These can be incorporated school-wide, or in specific classes, like history, health, English, or even math and science.
- **Prison and Juvenile Justice Systems** can support guards and staff in accessing training about violence prevention, consent, anti-oppression, and all forms of justice. They can partner with community programs to offer healthy masculinities, healthy sexuality, and violence prevention programming, as well as with offender management professionals that advocate for restorative and transformative justice practices. They can incorporate policies and protocols that align with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and support all survivors and victims of sexual violence in trauma-informed and survivor-centered ways. This includes policies and protocols that work to create safe environments for all people, including staff.
- **Businesses and Corporations** can support prevention efforts by: donating to community programs; developing sexual harassment policies and protocols; making statements against hate and violence within and outside of their places of business; and participating in local events, councils, and programming, to support sexual violence prevention and anti-oppression.

## At the State Level

- **Legislators** can set the highest standards in assuring freedom from harassment and violence at home, in places of business and leisure, in schools, and on the street and in public spaces. Legislators have the ability to prioritize policies that will ensure the safety of survivors across the state.
- **State agencies** like the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division; and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) can support communities, including tribal nations, across the state in implementing and organizing primary prevention efforts. This includes: prioritizing funding for prevention; developing guidance documents and resources; dedicating capacity (including FTE) to support community reflective sexual violence prevention in Oregon; providing training and access to training throughout the state; and making sure community voices are a part of these processes.
- The **Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF)** provides training, technical assistance, and resources to people, communities, and institutions across the state to support their community reflective response and prevention efforts. SATF also coordinates and supports statewide efforts by convening eight committees to elevate sexual violence response and prevention. These include: Prevention and Education, Campus, Medical-Forensic, Legislative and Public Policy, Men's Engagement, Victim Response, Offender Management, and Criminal Justice Committees.
- **Other Statewide Organizations** can support the communities they work with in their efforts to build a healthier and safer state for all people. They can do this through funding, technical assistance, training, and resources.

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