



REVOLUTION

TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

TAASA Newsletter | Spring 2016

rev•o•lu•tion (rev'loō sh n) n. a sweeping and momentous change

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SHIFTING THE FOCUS

ALESHA ISTVAN & TIM LOVE

Movements to end all forms of interpersonal violence have long struggled to combat norms and attitudes that either blatantly or subtly, blame victims for experiencing violence. These attitudes are as pervasive in our communities as they are harmful to survivors of violence and our society as a whole. Two examples of these harmful attitudes include:

1. "If she didn't provoke her partner all the time, they wouldn't get so angry."
2. "Young respectable women need to think about what they wear and how they carry themselves so that they are not targets of harassment or assault."

When conversations focus on the behavior of survivors rather than the perpetrators of violence and the norms and inequities that contribute to that violence, our efforts to end interpersonal violence remain at a standstill. Here are some reasons these conversations are destructive.

1. They focus attention on the wrong issue. By focusing the conversation on survivors of or potential targets for violence, communities lose sight of efforts that could create the positive changes in attitudes and social norms needed to end interpersonal violence.

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Spring is often a time to appreciate growth and change but today I was reflecting on changes that were a long time coming. About 17 years ago I was attending a strategic planning retreat with my four TAASA colleagues. We were a very small staff of five led by our Executive Director, Carol Townsend. I remember she encouraged us to “think big,” what would TAASA need to look like to meet the needs of our state? As we carefully deliberated the question, still somewhat constrained by our tendency to live in reality, we began naming the work ahead of us and what staffing patterns would need to look like to adequately do this work. After hours of brainstorming, we determined that we could not accomplish these goals without a designated staff of twelve. When you are five strong, it feels like you can change the world with twelve.

We far exceeded twelve staff years ago, but interestingly enough the work is far from done. This can be explained by a variety of factors, not the least of which was operating under a typical non-profit scarcity model that made the number twelve wholly unrealistic. What I have learned in these 17 years is change is inevitable, priorities and circumstances shift, and growth must be planned and managed.

I can be overly cautious about growth, both because of my personality and from my desire to grow slowly, so TAASA doesn't implode from the weight of our financial obligations and grossly impact the lives (and livelihoods) of my staff. But did I mention the work isn't done?? The current increase in VOCA funds and the long, hard-fought battle for Adult Entertainment Fee monies means TAASA will again be experiencing significant growth. What feels glorious about this is our member programs are benefiting from these funds at the same time!

With the unprecedented public attention currently given to the issues of sexual violence and human trafficking, we are using this momentum to deliberately position TAASA to help the movement step forward. Clearly the needs of our members are significantly different than they were years ago, but they have only shifted, not diminished. And I have no illusions that funding will always remain adequate, or that sexual assault won't lose some attention to the next flavor of month social cause, but I am confident in my staff, my board, and the hundreds of advocates, preventioners, and allies to meet every challenge.

Whenever I hear government economists talking about “banks too big to fail” I always think Rape Crisis Centers are too important to fail. Just think about the impact on our collective communities if sexual assault advocates, SANEs, sex crime investigators, and countless other essential cogs in our wheel just went away? So yes, TAASA will continue to grow until we've transformed our communities to the point we are irrelevant and never will uselessness feel so good as on that day. Until then, tell us how we can better serve you so you can better serve survivors. We are in this together!



abClay

UPSAT Registration is Now Open!

Registration is now open for the 4th Annual University Police Sexual Assault Training Conference at the Magnolia Hotel Dallas – Downtown on June 6 and 7. University Police Chiefs, Security Directors, & Campus Police Officers are invited to attend.

TAASA will cover travel expenses associated with this conference including: mileage, flights to and from Dallas, shuttle to and from the airport, parking, and daily per diem. There is room for more than one officer from each college or university to attend. TCOLE Credits will be available for this conference.

Experts from across the country will present on sexual assault issues related to response, investigations, forensic exams, and experiencing burnout in the field. For registration questions or concerns, please contact Rick Gipprich, Jr. at rgipprich@taasa.org, or at 210-310-8502.

For expense reimbursement questions or questions regarding per diem & travel, please contact Elizabeth Morris at emorris@taasa.org or 512-474-7190 X26.

TAASA will make ALL HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS for each registered participant. There is no need for you to reserve on your own. Please indicate which nights you need a reservation by clicking the appropriate buttons when prompted during the registration process. For most, Hotel Check-In will be on Sunday the 5th. For hotel reservation questions or concerns, please contact Cecilia Perkins at cperkins@taasa.org or 512-474-7190 X24.

TAASA Primary Prevention Institute 2016

TAASA is excited to announce the dates for their 2016 Primary Prevention Institute. The institute will be held on June 27 – 29, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott Downtown Austin. The institute provides sexual violence prevention training focused on successful implementation of *Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary*

Prevention Approach (Plan) Amendment, the state prevention plan that guides prevention programming in Texas. (You can download the plan amendment, along with other supporting documents, on TAASA’s prevention page at <http://taasa.org/about/primary-prevention/rpe-grant/>.) Workshops are interactive and incorporate opportunities for attendees to share their knowledge and experience, learn new strategies and approaches to prevention work, and brainstorm ways to incorporate what they’ve learned into their programming. Additional information regarding the institute agenda and registration, as well as hotel information, will be available in early May.

2016 Visionary Voice Award

TAASA is proud to announce that Crystal Garcia-Ward, from the Concho Valley Rape Crisis Center in San Angelo, is the 2016 recipient of the Visionary Voice Award – a national honor given each April by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC).

Crystal Garcia-Ward is the Director of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Concho Valley Rape Crisis Center in San Angelo, TX. She is positive, dedicated, and unwavering in her quest to create a more just world, free of sexual violence. Crystal, through a “yes, and…” mindset and approach, consistently finds creative and impactful ways to engage and inspire her community in prevention and social justice work to create an environment where sexual violence is less likely to occur. She is a staunch advocate for social justice and the rights of survivors, giving herself tirelessly to the work. Her dedication is as contagious as her optimism.

A wonderful example of Crystal’s innovative work is that she organized a week-long “camp” for youth in her community called “Break the Box Week,” which took place in November 2015. Crystal developed a series of community-based events designed to engage San Angelo youth in the difficult work of challenging gender stereotypes that limit people and create problematic and harmful social dynamics. She had the vision to take the project from just an idea to a very successful event with loads of community support. Youth and their parents turned out every single night for the camp to explore the ways in which narrow gender roles create an environment where sexual violence is more likely to happen and to identify strategies to create change.

Perhaps the greatest testament to Crystal’s work is that she achieves success in a part of Texas that is very traditional and socially conservative — where it might seem to others that prevention is not possible. Luckily, “not possible” is not in Crystal’s vocabulary.

In addition to being the Director of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Concho Valley Rape Crisis Center, Crystal helps co-chair the Diversity Task Force for the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault. She also serves on the steering committee for Concho Valley Cares Coalition and the Board of Directors for the Concho Valley Health and Social Resources Coalition, as well as being active in many groups in town. She is the current President of the Tom Green County Coalition Against Violence. She received a Bachelor of Science in Health from Texas Tech University.





THANK YOU ATTENDEES AND PRESENTERS

TAASA's 2016 Annual Conference "Mind the Gap: Who's Missing from the Movement?" was a huge success. Law enforcement, advocates, counselors, military, and the various agencies in between convened in beautiful Corpus Christi, TX to discuss the realities of our work and its connection to disparities, gaps in services, and strategies. Workshops included presenters from across the state and country to discuss promising practices, law and policy, primary prevention, effective service delivery, and both victim and offender typology. At times, the discussions were difficult and challenging, but in the end, turned productive and provided a deeper understanding of the problems and solutions vital to minding the gap.

In addition to the variety of workshops by content experts, we celebrated contributions from across the state at the awards luncheon, screened and discussed the film "The Hunting Ground", and most importantly, acknowledged the hard work and courageous

conversations occurring at the local level by those minding the gap every day.

The TAASA Annual Conference planning begins with two things in mind:

1. A responsibility to sexual assault survivors in Texas
2. A duty to provide learning opportunities by content experts to increase capacity, awareness, primary prevention, and services to survivors of sexual assault

We received constructive and positive evaluations that will inform future conference planning. All in all, our goal is to support local efforts and to advocate on behalf of TAASA members and all service providers at the state and national level. We are deeply grateful for your trust and attendance at the 2016 Annual Conference.



SPRING TIME R&R: RESOLUTIONS AND RENEWAL

ROSE
LUNA

The beauty of springtime encourages all to stop and smell the roses and is the surest sign that warmer days are ahead. Our senses are heightened to appreciate the miracle that occurs in the process of growth. Organizations are not exempt from this process and regularly experience a metamorphosis. TAASA members' unanimous vote at the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting, to adopt all proposed resolutions, is an example of that change. Proposed resolutions represent the pulse of anti-sexual violence work in Texas, and are indicative of the issues most pressing in the state. When accepted, they guide the work and inform the direction of the movement. TAASA's newly accepted resolutions address the importance of inclusion, collaboration, and culture change. The process of renewal and growth, whether in a flower bed or an organization, reveals beauty in its diverse blossoms and serves as a reminder to continue to plant seeds.

How to Submit a Resolution | All TAASA resolutions are in effect for four years. TAASA resolutions must be resubmitted, reviewed, and voted on by the membership every four years from implementation. To propose a resolution, active members can submit a resolution request form for approval. Members review and then vote on proposed resolutions during the Annual Membership meeting at TAASA's Annual Conference.

Blooming Buds of Change: Accepted 2016 Resolutions

Supporting Undocumented Immigrants | This resolution expresses the importance of growth in outreach and services to all survivors regardless of documentation and/or immigration status. The resolution identifies the significance of trust, inclusion, and confidence required to encourage positive contact and interaction with all survivors without fear of immigration consequences.

Engaging Youth to End Sexual Violence | The resolution to engage youth in ending sexual violence addresses the elements of culture change necessary to initiating a substantial shift in

attitudes and behaviors. More importantly, this resolution elevates the role and respects the capacity of youth in creating that change in Texas.

The Detention of Immigrant Men, Women, and Children

Immigrant men, women, and children fleeing violence are highly vulnerable targets in their journey to safety. This resolution expands our work as advocates to include those in immigration detention facilities. It recognizes the importance of trauma informed care and the importance of survivor-centered strategies necessary to address survivors of sexual assault.

Including Transgender/Gender Non -Conforming Clients

Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming clients are a highly marginalized community. This resolution lays out the foundation for the inclusion, learning, and standards of care when providing sexual assault services to transgender/gender non-conforming clients. The importance of counting, valuing, and incorporating the uniqueness of transgender/gender non-conforming community to our work is essential to the movement.

Addressing Sexual Violence in Institutions of Higher Learning

Addressing sexual violence in institutions of higher learning is multifaceted. This resolution clearly states the importance of addressing the needs of survivors beyond the incident and disclosure. It incorporates the uniqueness of students, the complexity of institutional response, and the role of sexual assault service providers.

In conclusion, the 2016 TAASA membership approved resolutions signify an evolution and expansion of the anti-sexual violence movement and the importance of minding the gap in service provision, strategy, and prevention. The importance of collaboration in this framework is vastly important and will incorporate the diversity of thought and action necessary to creating and sustaining positive change in Texas. 'Tis' the season of renewal and change. Happy Spring!

To view the each resolution in its entirety, please visit <http://taasa.org/get-involved/resolutions/>.



HOUSE BILL 1446

Your Questions Answered

There are some big changes to the way forensic medical examinations are paid for in Texas. In September 2015, HB 1446 authorized the Office of the Attorney General's Crime Victims' Compensation ("CVC") program to pay for medical expenses incurred during a forensic medical exam, even when survivors have not reported to police. This exception to CVC's "report and cooperate" requirement makes the law the first of its kind in the nation.

TAASA's membership voted in 2014 to place this expansion of CVC eligibility on our legislative agenda for 84th Legislative Session. We're grateful for the leadership of the bill's authors, Representative Tony Dale (Cedar Park) and Senator Jose Rodriguez (El Paso), and OAG staff, with whom TAASA continues to work on the implementation of the new policy.

CHRIS
KAISER

During the last few months, we've received increasing inquiries about what the new law says and how it affects survivors, rape crisis centers, and hospitals. I will answer the most common questions here.

Which crime victims does the new law cover?

The change in law affects two categories of sexual assault survivors following a forensic medical exam: (1) those who obtain exams without reporting to police and (2) those who report but subsequently decide not to participate in the criminal case.

For sexual assault survivors who report and participate throughout the investigation and prosecution, medical expenses were already covered by CVC prior to this change in law. The new law has no effect on any crime victim who does not obtain a sexual assault forensic medical exam.

What expenses does the new law cover?

Article 56.54(k), Code of Criminal Procedure, now provides that the OAG may use CVC funds “for the reasonable costs incurred for medical care provided under . . . Article 56.065 [the non-report forensic medical exam statute].”

We can conclude two important things from this statutory language. First, any medical care administered during an exam that has historically been covered by CVC will now also be covered without a police report or cooperation with law enforcement.

Second, the OAG has authority to approve payments for costs that it deems “reasonable” on a case-by-case basis. We anticipate that the likelihood of an expense being covered will diminish as the connection to the initial exam becomes more attenuated. For example, we believe it’s likely that medications prescribed during the exam but billed separately from the exam may be deemed eligible “medical care provided under Article 56.065.” On the other end of the spectrum, long-term medical or mental health care necessitated by the sexual assault seems less likely to be covered without a police report.

How can survivors take advantage of the new law?

Survivors who have not reported to police or who are not participating in the criminal case can apply for CVC coverage by completing the OAG’s “Application for Emergency Medical Care for Victims of Sexual Assault.” The application is available at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/crime-victims-compensation-how-to-apply. Note that this is a new application, different from the ordinary “Texas Crime Victims’ Compensation Program Application.” The change in law does not affect the application process for applicants who have reported to police—all other applicants should continue to use the old application. The new form is dated “10/15” at the lower left corner of each page.

The Application for Emergency Care is largely the same as the ordinary CVC application, but there is a crucial new section on page 4. In Section 2a, titled “CRIME INFORMATION: FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAM,” applicants are asked whether they seek reimbursement “ONLY for expenses incurred in connection with emergency medical treatment received at the time of the sexual assault forensic medical exam.” Answering “yes” to that question does two things: (1) indicates that no police report or cooperation is required for this application’s approval and (2) limits the application to only those costs covered by the new policy under HB 1446 (e.g., no relocation costs, no long-term medical or mental health care, etc.).

Note also that the new law will help survivors who initially report to police and apply for CVC, but later decide not to participate in the criminal case. Under the old law, that decision would terminate that survivor’s eligibility for all CVC payments. Under the new law, that survivor could maintain eligibility for medical costs associated with the forensic medical exam by submitting the new Application for Emergency Care as an addendum to the original CVC application.

How can advocates help?

With any new law, there can be some confusion. That may be compounded in this case, given that our new policy is unprecedented among victim compensation programs across the country.

We are confident this is a significant step forward, but survivors, medical professionals, and law enforcement will benefit from sexual assault program advocates’ assistance. We recommend advocates familiarize themselves with the new application form and have copies on hand at their centers and during hospital accompaniments. In addition, proactive discussions with local medical providers, their billing departments, and law enforcement will likely be useful to avoid confusion as the first applications are submitted.

How can medical facilities help?

The law now authorizes the OAG to make payments “to or on behalf of an individual” for the medical portions of a forensic medical exam. That means hospitals can now bill CVC directly, regardless of law enforcement involvement. Submitting invoices directly from the medical facility to the CVC office will streamline the billing and payment process for all parties. It will also circumvent the need for survivors in crisis to juggle complicated bureaucratic processes. Proactive communication with the CVC office, local sexual assault program advocates, and any other stakeholders will likely be beneficial in developing simplified billing protocols.

TAASA is monitoring implementation of HB 1446 every step of the way. As awareness of the new law grows, more questions will undoubtedly arise. We are committed to working with any and all partners to ensure the greatest possible benefit to survivors. To that end, we encourage you to share with us any questions, feedback, or recommendations concerning experiences in your area.

CHAPTERS IN THE SAME NOVEL: HOW TO FORM COALITIONS AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

WENDE
HILSENROD

Coalitions are a vital component of comprehensive anti-sexual violence work. At the same time, coalitions can be difficult to get off the ground and even more challenging to maintain. It is necessary to understand why coalitions are important and how to build them for maximum effectiveness and sustainability. Every service provider is a little different, and there are many things to consider as you engage in the coalition-building process.

Let's start with the why: NO AGENCY CAN DO THE WORK ALONE. This notion is so vital to our work that it bears repeating – no agency can do the work alone. If you love to read books, no single chapter makes the novel. If you love to cook, no single ingredient makes the final dish on the plate. It is all the elements together that make a whole product. In the case of sexual violence services provision, many agencies and entities have a role to play in supporting and empowering survivors.

Agency's Focus

What is your agency's mission? Does your agency focus on several types of victimization or only one? Are programs available to the general public or just to specific populations? If the agency provides more than one resource, how is coordination between intra-agency and inter-agency departments handled? If your agency focuses on a certain type of advocacy, does the agency make referrals? Is there a "warm hand-off" and how do the agencies involved update each other on the survivor?

The 3C's of Coalition Building: Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration

Cooperation

How is information exchanged, and with whom? Information exchange is an area where collaborations can thoughtfully come together to prevent the survivor from repeating the same traumatizing event to each service provider. This is also an area where communication breakdowns between agencies will happen. Here are some questions to ask:

- Will information be exchanged on a need to know basis only?

While law enforcement and criminal justice need the results of a SANE exam, do advocates need this information?

If your agency offers transitional housing and due to a medical condition stemming from the assault, how is that information exchanged?

- Are resources and organizations kept separate, or, where possible combined?
- If the survivor is also a substance abuser and your agency does allow addicted survivors to live on the premise or is the survivor referred to an in-patient or out-patient facility where there is at least one opening/bed reserved for your agency?

Can both agencies offer counseling specific to their mission and the survivor's needs? How is information exchanged between counselors and agencies?

Information exchange requires pro-active communication, planning and problem-solving between agencies.

Coordination

Coordination between agencies requires in-depth and long-term relationships. This relationship ensures that specific resources are appropriately allocated and not duplicated. The long-term relationship usually exists between individual agency advocates who are responsible for the planning and effectiveness of the survivor's recovery.

Collaboration

Outreach to agencies that are integral to a survivor's recovery means "breaking the box" with unlikely allies. Resources should be avidly shared and jointly sought. This can create open communications with divergent organizations and new and flexible approaches to problem solving, especially if responsibilities and roles are clear, with shared leadership from several organizations.

Community-based and Systems-based Organizations

Both types of organizations need to be included in any coalition, for they complement and depend on each other to provide appropriate services for survivors. It is important to note that each organization operates in different ways, especially around confidentiality:

Community -based Organizations provide varying levels of confidentiality, except privilege, to advocates. To increase the likelihood of confidentiality, an advocate can maintain appropriate documentation that reflects services provided as well as some general demographic information, rather than detailed accounts of conversations.

Systems-based Organizations are bureaucracies. Within governmental bureaucracies, employees DO NOT qualify for confidentiality or privilege. Anything the advocate observes or learns about the victim or the case while performing their job duties is considered a product of employment and available to anyone who asks for that information.

Coalitions are about knowing your agency's standards, knowledge of other professional standards, and the practice of professional competencies: boundaries, effectiveness, and continuing education. Mostly, coalitions are a never ending process based on adaptability and principals to empower survivors, not on the individual personalities involved in the coalition.

For more in-depth and focused information about coalition-building, please contact Wende Hilsenrod at whilsenrod@taasa.org.

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2. They insinuate that women are responsible for preventing their assault. The effect of this is that survivors are shamed and given the message that they are at fault if they fall victim to violence. This shaming contributes to a culture of silence around interpersonal violence. Who would want to come forward when their community believes they contributed to their victimhood? If we stop suggesting that people bring violence upon themselves and rather work to prevent people from committing violence, we can begin to remove the shame and shatter the culture of silence.

3. They limit women's freedom. Grounding the conversation on what women should do to avoid interpersonal violence sends the message that, "If you act and dress right, you won't be targeted for violence." This has the effect of restricting what women wear or say, or places they can go within their community. This message also provides a false sense of security that if you follow certain rules, you will be safe. If we are to end violence, we must instead promote the rights and freedoms of all members of our communities, hold people accountable for their acts of violence, and work to prevent perpetration of violence in the first place.

4. They simultaneously excuse men's violent behavior and strip them of their humanity. A focus on what survivors of and people potentially targeted for violence should have done or should do to limit their risk for being targeted lets perpetrators of violence, often men, off the hook. It presupposes that their violent behavior is somehow a natural response to someone else's behavior. If we look at the examples of victim-blaming behavior given in the opening paragraph, this would mean that men can't help but use physical violence in response to having their "authority" challenged in a relationship or can't help but sexually assault someone if what they are wearing is "too provocative." At its core,

this attitude suggests that men are mindless creatures responding to the people around them with violence that they are helpless to control. Instead, we can encourage men to take responsibility for their actions and to question the messages they've received that tell them that violence is okay, and that domination is their birth-right. We can support men as they embrace, instead, their full humanity and the humanity of those around them so that they can become a part of the effort to end interpersonal violence.

5. They imply that violence is here to stay. In the movement to end interpersonal violence, we understand that violence happens because there are attitudes, norms, and behaviors that contribute to it. While these attitudes, norms, and behaviors are deeply rooted, they are nevertheless changeable. Violence is preventable! Centering the conversation on how potential victims can prevent the violence perpetrated against them suggests that violence is here to stay, and all we can hope for is to avoid it on an individual basis. We must reject this cynical view if we are to make lasting change.

As a movement to end interpersonal violence, our approach to combat victim-blaming is to refocus the conversation from victim blaming to the true causes of interpersonal violence. We simultaneously address risk factors for violence such as unhealthy ideas about power and control, gender inequity, male entitlement, objectification of women, and harmful attitudes about sex and sexuality and promote protective factors such as connection, empathy, and gender equity. This is our work to create healthy, whole individuals, relationships, and communities.

Onwards!



Looking Back, Looking Ahead

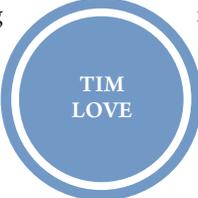
The past few months have been a time of transition for sexual violence prevention work in Texas. This time of transition has been like many others – full of excitement, sadness, anxiety, and opportunity all at once. It is a time of new ideas and new challenges. It is a time for reflecting and appreciating all we’ve accomplished, and it is a time for looking ahead.

Transition

In 2007, the Texas Primary Prevention Planning Committee (PPPC) was pulled together to develop a plan to guide sexual violence prevention efforts in Texas. PPPC membership consists of a steering committee [including representatives from the Office of the Attorney General of Texas (OAG), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Texas Association Against Sexual Violence (TAASA)], representatives from Rape Prevention and Education (RPE)-funded sexual assault programs, community stakeholders, and other strategic organizational partners. The plan the PPPC developed provided guidance for implementing prevention programming, particularly for those doing prevention work with RPE-funding - the major funding source for sexual violence prevention work in Texas.

As requirements and expectations for RPE grantees increased over time, funding amounts for Texas decreased, and the PPPC learned

more about what constitutes effective prevention programming from the field, the need for an amendment to the original plan became clear. The PPPC completed Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Approach (Plan) Amendment* (plan amendment) in 2015, and the plan amendment has been guiding prevention work in Texas since February 1st, 2016. In addition to providing focused, well-researched, and practice-informed guidance regarding implementing effective sexual violence prevention programming, the plan amendment also includes recommendations to increase funding to centers so that they can meet increased expectations. This increase in funding to individual centers meant that fewer centers could be funded.



Looking Back

Sexual violence primary prevention work in Texas first started to resemble the work that is being done today back in 2007. Since that time, the level of progress made in prevention programming has been nothing short of awe-inspiring. In the sexual violence prevention field across the country and around the world, there are no tried and true programs that centers can implement that have been proven to prevent sexual violence. There are only promising practices and strong theoretical foundations. The centers who took on the challenge to end sexual violence in their communities back in 2007 did so with very little in the way of programmatic

guidance, and prevention workers and agency leadership have been innovating ever since. Their creativity, patience, courage, passion, tenacity, and, above all, their great and tireless work made the programmatic guidance that was recently developed and distributed to the field through the plan amendment possible.

One result of the change in funding formulas for RPE programming in Texas has been that some of the programs which have been doing amazing work for years are no longer receiving funding. In some cases, that has meant that centers have found a way to continue with their prevention programming through other funding streams. In other cases, this has meant that centers have stopped implementing prevention programming and have had to let prevention staff go. While TAASA believes in the necessity of increasing funding so that centers can develop robust and effective prevention programming that meets RPE requirements, we are none-the-less saddened by the loss of strong prevention programs and tremendously talented prevention workers. We'd like to thank them for all they've contributed to the field, to our prevention work at TAASA, and to the effort to end sexual violence across this country. Without their work,

talent, and passion, prevention programming in Texas wouldn't have made such incredible impact in the past, and wouldn't be poised to make such incredible impact moving forward.

Looking Ahead

As was mentioned in the opening paragraph of this article, this time of transition has been one of sadness and loss. However, it is also a time of hope and excitement. Since February 1st, TAASA's prevention team has seen a tremendous burst of energy and creativity. As centers continue to create programming that incorporates new programmatic guidance and add new prevention workers, exciting innovations await us.

TAASA is excited to be a part of this new opportunity and will continue to support the work being done to end sexual violence in Texas. We can't wait to see what the field develops next!!

*Please find the full text of Preventing Sexual Violence in Texas: A Primary Prevention Approach (Plan) Amendment on TAASA's website at <http://taasa.org/about/primary-prevention/rpe-grant/>.



Words of Wisdom

A few months ago in January TAASA hosted a gathering for prevention workers across the state. Our goal in bringing everyone together was to celebrate the culmination of over eight years of work. We knew that changes in grant funding would greatly change the landscape of our work. It was with this in mind that one of our closing exercises involved asking folks to write a letter to new prevention workers sharing words of wisdom and lessons learned. Our hope was to capture the years of learning, innovation, struggle, and success that is prevention in the state

of Texas using the words of the prevention workers who have been cultivating change in our communities. What we received in return went well beyond our expectations. The letter that follows is a combination of the different thoughts and sentiments folks shared through their writing pulled together and arranged by similar themes and experiences. We felt it was important to use the prevention workers words to highlight the wisdom they possess. We hope you are as inspired as we are by what they've shared.

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My Fellow Preventioners,

You are now part of a new family. I want to take this time to say “Welcome” and “Thank You” for being part of my TAASA family. Regardless of where you’re at in this social justice movement or if you even knew what you were getting into or not, you are exactly where you need to be in this moment. This journey gets overwhelming at times. It is emotional, trying, exhausting, defeating, amazing, brilliant, inspirational, and so much more. Know that no matter what the challenge, you are making a difference. The work you are beginning will transform your community, and most importantly, you. This job will challenge you and some of the things you think you know. It will provide a new way of looking at the world. Don’t expect to understand it all right away. It may be hard at first to see all the injustice you may not have been aware of before. It is ok to take it in but don’t let it consume you. There are a lot of questions and ever developing answers. Please be open to the change; it is an opportunity to step into your power.

Remember that you are not in the business of saving people. People can save themselves. You are not here to change anyone; it is not your job to change them. Your job is to listen, guide, and support them in the process as all of them learn and grow. You are offering information to educate and inspire them to change on their own. We must approach students with compassion for who they are if we are to inspire them to have compassion for others. Call them youth or young people, not kids or children. Society labels and stigmatizes children as being unable to enact change. You are there to see the light and spark in them that no one has ever reflected back to them. Tell them about every beautiful thing you see in them, and lift them up whenever possible.

Do not be afraid to challenge people because you are asking the people you interact with to do the same. It’s ok to be afraid, but don’t let them silence you. Society does that enough. Remember this is the reason why you do what you do. Yes, you can change the world – you have always had something inside you that said you were born to be a superhero. You dreamed about your super power, and it was to make the world a better place. However, just like superheroes, you will be misunderstood and even misrepresented. You might be seen as the enemy, and yes, you will have a target. That’s okay. Breathe because after all you are a preventioner!

You do not have to have it all together. Mistakes mean you are taking risks, you’re trying and learning what works and what doesn’t. That session you memorized and practiced? You probably won’t get through all of it. No matter how poorly you think one session may have been, it went better than you think. Some people won’t get it and are hard to reach. Some

people won’t get it but are easier to reach. Don’t shut either of them out. At times, there will be a student that makes you question whether you’re really doing your job. Trust me, you are. We are all work in progress. Remind yourself of that when you are working with that one youth who is giving you the hardest time. You are making a positive impact each and every day even when it doesn’t feel like it. You are planting new ideas, seeds, in these youth, and you may not see the tree blossom, but the seed is there.

Sometimes students are going to say things that will make you sad. It’s okay to be sad with them. This is hard for us all. Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know. Let’s figure it out together.” Be open to listen and learn from your students. Validate everyone’s feelings, including your own, and speak only for yourself. Never give up; you will have a break through. And if the day comes where you feel you know it all and know more than our communities, then know you’re on the wrong path. Remember we’re all a product of an oppressive society and power dynamics are a part of that too. It’s okay to make mistakes! All failures are lessons.

Self-care is very important. Always take care of yourself and always have fun! Remember to take your lunch and breaks! Know that you can’t pour from an empty cup, so pace yourself and be patient. Change takes time and grace. You will come across information that you would have never thought imaginable, and it will stick with you forever. It will be easy to launch all your new knowledge and realizations of the world at your family/spouse/significant other. Take it easy on them. They are part of your support group, not your punching bag. Sometimes you need to ask for help, and that’s okay. Depend on the people around you and don’t overload yourself. Find something to help with the stress of it. You are making a difference, and you won’t hear that enough, so today I want you to hear that from me. I also want to let you know that you are not alone! There are incredible prevention workers from across that state with a wealth of knowledge eager to support you. And I’m here. Always know I’m here.

You are a social justice warrior. Never be afraid to speak up and stand out; trust your instincts. Thank you for choosing this task and mission and for doing this work with me, teaching me, and inspiring me. My work cannot exist without you. We will be here when you need a compass; you have a family to come home to if you need anything. Now go, blaze your trail, and change the world.

With the utmost respect and admiration,

Your Prevention Family

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE: BECOMING A TAASA MEMBER!

APRIL
BUENTELLO-
SROCK

Membership Updates is a new addition to our newsletter where we will provide information that is specific to our members. We hope that you will find it useful.

First, thank you to everyone who became a member leading up to or at the 2016 TAAS Conference. Our membership is our foundation. It is our family, and we are grateful that our family is growing! Along those lines, we'd like to offer special thanks to our members that renewed for another year. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Next, we wanted to share with you a couple of things happening with membership. The Cultural Awareness Certification (CAC) program relaunched as a member-only benefit at the TAASA Annual Conference. Several people stopped by the membership table to pick up their conference-specific starter CAC packet. During the conference, members had the opportunity to earn up to seven of the ten required core courses and all four required elective courses to complete the CAC program. Members needing to complete the CAC packet can find it at taasa.memberlodge.org under the Member-Only page. If you missed the conference, but would still like to participate in the Cultural Awareness Certification, the CAC welcome packet is available on the same page. For assistance regarding what trainings and webinars meet CAC requirements, you can contact me at aprilbuentello-srock@taasa.org.

We had a great turnout at the 2016 Membership Meeting where we learned about TAASA's upcoming legislative agenda and voted on TAASA's resolutions. Sixty-three percent of attending Organizational Members and sixty-one percent of attending Individual Members participated in the voting process. Many other not-yet-eligible members attended the meeting and were able to see the process in action. We look forward to those folks voting next year! We challenge you to help us get to 100% participation at the 2017 Annual Conference. A summary of the 2016 resolutions can be found on our website, along with information on how members can submit resolutions for consideration.

Lastly, we have a challenge for you. We think Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is a perfect time to recruit new TAASA members to inform and support our work. As an existing member, you clearly care about what we do and are invested in ending sexual violence in Texas. However, we need many more passionate voices propelling us forward. So, we challenge you to recruit five new members in your area and invite them the next regional membership meeting. We have a modest goal of 50 new TAASA members by the end of April. If just ten of you are successful, we will reach our goal.

Are you up to the challenge?

For more information on TAASA membership, visit <http://taasa.org/get-involved/become-a-member/>

TAASA'S LIFETIME MEMBERS

Phil Adams
Jana Barker
Duana Boswell – Loechel
Annette Burrhus-Clay
Charles Butt
Torrie Camp
Christina Coultas

Christine Cramer
Craig Dudley
Rebecca Fears
Morris & Amanda Foster
Cliff & Nita Johnson
Maria Johnson
Nancy & Robert Lewis

Ron & Tessa Lewis
J. McCart
Red & Charline McCombs
Ross and Billie McKnight
Tahira Merritt
Denise Miller
Amy Mok

Toby & Melissa Neugebauer
Anita Perry
Dana & Gene Powell
Edward Safady
Mike Schulte
Stephanie Schulte
Terri Ward

TURN TEXAS TEAL



April, as you likely already know, is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). Every year since 2001 advocates, educators, service providers, elected officials, and concerned citizens unite to raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of sexual violence. We know here in Texas that more than six million adult Texans have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Over SIX MILLION PEOPLE!!! That further breaks down to 2 in 5 women and 1 in 5 men in Texas are survivors and more than 65% of them report multiple victimizations.¹

As staggering as these numbers are, we also know there are many, many more Texans that never make a report to law enforcement and never seek services at a rape crisis center or hospital. Their experiences are

not present and accounted for in these numbers. The reality is that the picture is even bleaker than the data shows.

So, we unite – every April like clockwork. We join forces with national, state, and local partners to support survivors and raise awareness of this issue by promoting the SAAM Toolkit from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, which is available at <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam>. The theme this year is “Prevention is Possible.” The campaign materials focus on the building blocks of prevention by communicating how individuals, communities, and the private sector can take action to promote safety, respect, and equality.

The toolkit has lots of free resources and ideas for engaging your community and sphere of influence. A great example is their collection of suggested social media posts around the theme:

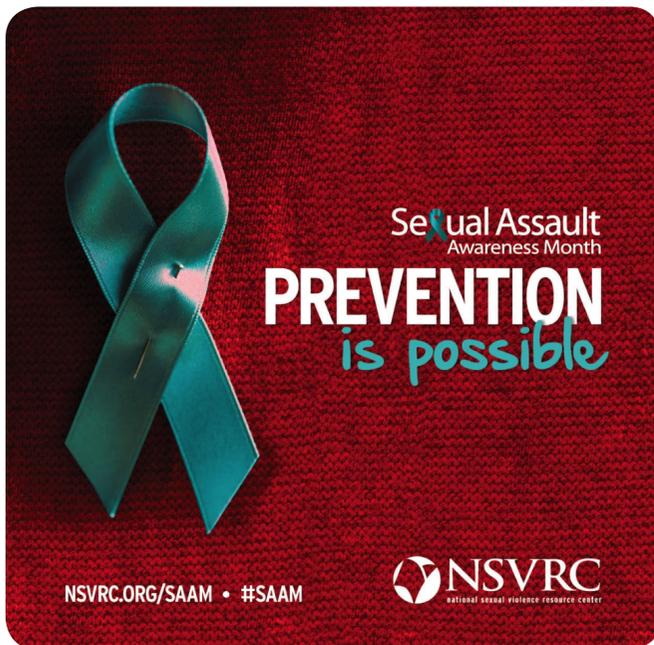
Prevention is possible when consent is understood and respected #SAAM

Prevention is possible when everyone is involved #SAAM

When individuals support change, prevention is possible #SAAM

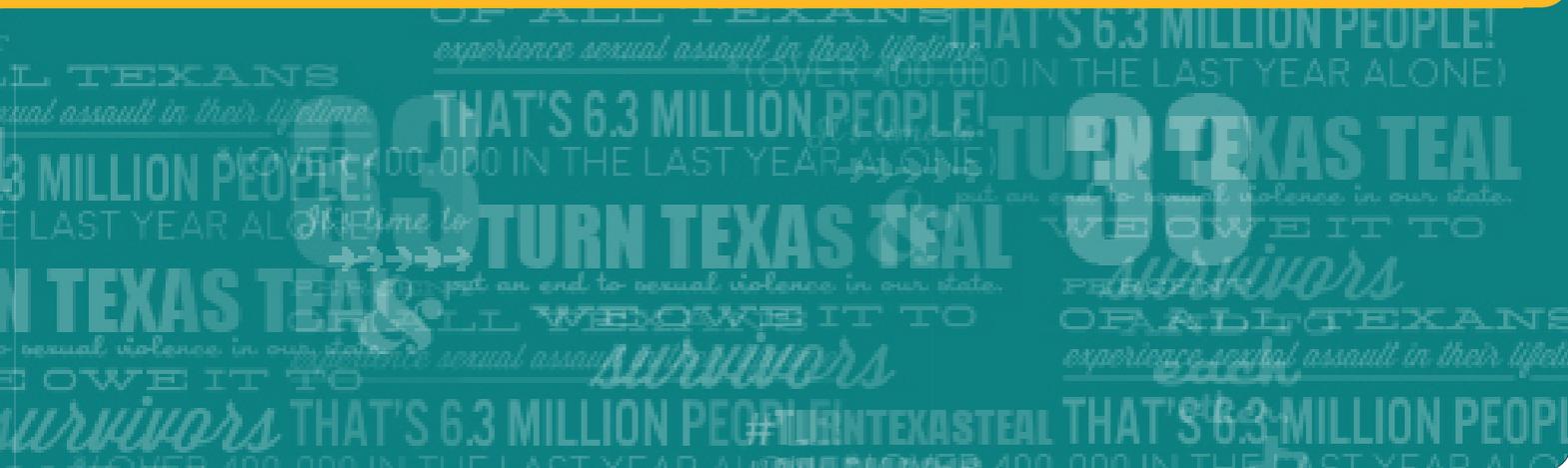
Prevention is possible when misconceptions are eliminated #SAAM

Prevention is possible, and it starts with you #SAAM



At TAASA, we are big fans of both prevention and social media. Prevention is the sort of messaging we want to add more of to the mix, and social media is just the right vehicle to help spread the word. To compliment the NSVRC toolkit, and to specifically engage Texans, we developed our social media campaign called #TurnTexasTeal. Our goal is to utilize social media platforms to engage Texans in the movement to end sexual violence by not only raising awareness of the issue, but sparking conversations about what can be done to prevent sexual violence before it starts.

¹Busch-Armendariz, N.B., Olaya, D., Kerwick, M., Wachter, K. & Sulley, C. (2015). Health and well-being: Texas statewide sexual assault prevalence. The University of Texas at Austin, Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault: Austin, Texas



The main component of our campaign is a free social media tool called Twibbon which helps increase exposure, likes, and support. A Twibbon campaign is a dedicated microsite where users can support a cause, brand or organization on Facebook and Twitter in a variety of ways:

- 1) Add a Twibbon to their Facebook or Twitter profile picture
- 2) Publish a message of support on their Facebook or Twitter account
- 3) Add Covers to their Facebook Timeline
- 4) Change their Twitter background and Much More!

TAASA's Twibbon campaign, #TurnTexasTeal, can be found at <http://twibbon.com/support/communications-director-3>.

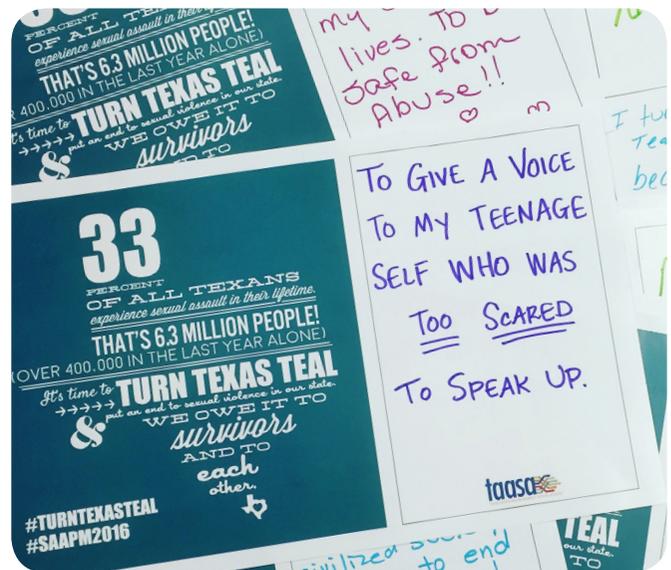
Supporters are also encouraged to create short (30 seconds or less) videos through Vine, Facebook, and Youtube to share statistics about sexual violence in Texas and to call on their peers to help #TurnTexasTeal. Here are some sample scripts for videos:

Hi there! My name is [YOURNAME], and I want you to know that 2 in 5 Texas women experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Help me #TurnTexasTeal to support survivors and to end sexual violence in Texas!

Hello, friends! Did you know that 65% of sexual assault survivors in Texas report experiencing multiple victimizations? Join me in speaking out against sexual violence. Help #TurnTexasTeal!

In addition to Twibbon, TAASA is asking our friends on social media to share why it is important to #TurnTexasTeal. We have developed a

downloadable graphic where supporters can write in their reason and share it via social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) using the hashtag #TurnTexasTeal.



We all have a role to play in preventing sexual violence in Texas. Prevention is possible when everyone is involved. Help me #TurnTexasTeal!

For #TurnTexasTeal to be a success, we need our supporters to sign up on Twibbon, invite friends to do the same, and generate content that sparks conversations about ways we can all work together to prevent sexual violence in Texas. Take a moment right now to sign up and help us out. Remember...prevention is possible, but it doesn't happen all by itself. We need people like you to join the cause!



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Mission Statement: The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault is committed to ending sexual violence in Texas through education, prevention and advocacy. In the meantime, we desire to support survivors on their paths to hope, healing and justice. TAASA is the voice of the sexual assault movement in Texas. We are a unifying force bringing together parties involved in and affected by sexual assault as a catalyst for change.

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