

Preventing Sexual Violence in Alaska

Empowering Adolescents to Stop Sexual Violence BEFORE it Occurs



The **Alaska Department of Health and Social Services** is working closely with a diverse group of partners across the state to empower adolescents to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **Rape Prevention and Education (RPE)** program, **Alaska is partnering with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA)**, the **Alaska's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**, and the **Alaska Department of Education and Early Development** to implement a comprehensive set of activities to help adolescents develop the knowledge and skills they need to **stop sexual violence BEFORE it occurs**.

WHAT IS ALASKA DOING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

All states, including Alaska, use multiple strategies to implement and sustain prevention efforts that ultimately decrease the number of individuals who **perpetrate sexual violence** and the number of individuals who are **victims of sexual violence**. Alaska is maximizing the impact of its work by focusing on adolescence as a time when individuals are beginning to take on more responsibility for themselves and developing their own social and moral ideas. To reach as many adolescents as possible and provide a set of messages aimed at helping adolescents to develop the knowledge and skills they need to understand and prevent sexual violence, Alaska has implemented a number of innovative programs and strategies, including **Lead On, Talk Now Talk Often, Stand Up Speak Up**, and **COMPASS**. These programs and strategies, along with others that are being implemented with adolescents and other populations across Alaska, are intended to help Alaskans develop the skills they need to prevent sexual violence and set the tone in Alaska as a place where the **prevention of sexual violence is prioritized**.

The CDC RPE program has been strengthening our communities and striving to reduce the burden of sexual violence since 1994. CDC provides RPE funding to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

WHY IS ALASKA WORKING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Out of every 100 adult women who reside in Alaska:

40

experienced intimate partner violence

33

experienced sexual violence

50

experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both

WHAT IMPACT IS THE RPE PROGRAM INTENDED TO HAVE IN ALASKA?

The Alaska RPE program aims to prevent sexual violence by promoting **non-violent social norms, attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices**.



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WHAT IF YOU COULD EMPOWER ADOLESCENTS TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE BEFORE IT BEGINS?

That's exactly what Alaska is doing with funding it receives through **CDC's RPE program**. Research has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations, such as adolescents, more or less vulnerable to violence. These factors are known as risk and protective factors.

Risk factors increase the likelihood that a young person will become violent.

Examples of risk factors include:^{1,2}

- Low commitment to school and school failure
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family
- Exposure to sexually explicit media
- Attitude of hostility toward women

Protective factors buffer young people from the risks of becoming violent and increasing protective factors can lower the likelihood of involvement in violence.

Examples of protective factors include:^{3,4}

- Connectedness to culture, family and/or adults outside the family
- Commitment to school
- Feeling safe in their village or neighborhood
- Ability to discuss problems with parents

To decrease risk factors and enhance protective factors, Alaska is using a number of programs and strategies, including Lead On, Talk Now Talk Often, COMPASS, and Stand Up Speak Up .

Lead On

- Engages youth from all regions of the state through events and presentations on a variety of topics, including healthy relationships, non-violence, and leadership
- Through Lead On, youth have created plans to change their own communities and planned projects with their peers about topics that are of more interest to them. (<http://standupspeakupalaska.org/lead-on>)

Talk Now Talk Often

- Statewide effort developed by ANDVSA to help increase conversations with teens about healthy relationships
- Uses conversation starter cards to begin discussions with teens around topics such as self-esteem, peer and dating relationships, texting, and social networking (<http://www.tntoak.org/>)

COMPASS

- Resource for adult male mentors who work with young Alaskan men aged 12 to 18
- Presents mentors with opportunities and activities designed to support young men as they explore values, goals, and identities
- Activities and discussion create a safe atmosphere for boys to learn about and practice healthy lifestyles (<http://www.alaskamenchooserespect.org/compass>)

Stand Up Speak Up

- Campaign and movement of Alaska youth that are working to end violence and create communities of respect
- Website provides information on building respectful and healthy relationships
- Links to webinars and videos (<http://www.standupspeakupalaska.org/>)

What does this mean for Alaska? Thanks to funding from the CDC RPE program, efforts are underway across the state to:



For additional information or to locate contact information for the state RPE program , please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/states.html>

¹ Lipsey MW, Derzon JH. Predictors of violent and serious delinquency in adolescence and early adulthood: a synthesis of longitudinal research. In: Loeber R, Farrington DP, editors. *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: risk factors and successful interventions*. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications; 1998. p. 86–105.

² Resnick MD, Ireland M, Borowsky I. Youth violence perpetration: what protects? What predicts? Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 2004;35:424.e1–e10.

³ Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). *Youth violence: a report of the Surgeon General* [online]; 2001. Available at: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/toc.html>

⁴ Lösel F, Farrington D P. Direct protective and buffering protective factors in the development of youth violence. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2012; 43(2), S8-S23.