

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

2020 TOOLKIT | #BOLDMOVES

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a great time to host events and fundraisers, recruit volunteers, nurture relationships and most importantly, shine a light on the work you do and impact you have on your community. This toolkit is designed to provide you with tools to assist you in communicating about the services your organization provides, and how your organization contributes to making effective change for your community. This toolkit contains a guide describing the key components of an effective message and how to elicit action from your audience.

This toolkit is based on and informed by #BoldMoves (a campaign by CALCASA), RALIANCE and Berkeley Media Studies Group 2018 Guide Where we're going and where we've been: Making the case for preventing sexual violence.

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month Toolkit: #BoldMoves provides the framework to create effective messages that highlight the important and innovative work you, Rape Crisis Center programs, are doing and share this information to your audience with plain language.

Each part of the framework is a "tip" to create messages that are appropriate for your audience, whether it's a community member, a parent, a leader in the community, or a legislative representative that you are trying to reach.

Tell your community what you are up to, highlight champions in your community, what events you'll be doing and how people can take an active role in preventing sexual violence. The goal isn't just raising awareness, but modeling healthy behaviors and inviting members of the community into channeling awareness into action.

Use this toolkit to tweet, post on Facebook, talk to the media, tell everyone about your events, and create your talking points during meetings with public officials. Inform your community about the way your community members can respond to the needs of sexual assault survivors, advocate for prevention, and share the success of your work!

"There are many factors that have contributed to shaping an environment in which sexual assault has become an epidemic in our country. The prevalence leads to a perception that sexual assault is inevitable. But, we know that it is not, we know that violence is preventable and we know that each and every person has a role to play in creating a society which is free from sexual violence. Bold Moves provides a roadmap by which everyday people from all walks of life can take actions toward ending sexual violence in their relationships, their communities and, ultimately, society as a whole."

**SANDRA HENRIQUEZ, CEO
CALCASA**

**#SAAM2020
#BOLDMOVES**

TOOLS TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE

These are the areas that will help create your message.

SPEAK TO COMMON VALUES

People often use their values as cues to make decisions or motivate their actions. Values move our messages and motivate our audience to take action. They allow our audience to focus more on the outcome we are working towards.

When we do not lead our messages with values, our audience may react from a place of fear and shut down from everything we are trying to say.

ACKNOWLEDGE BARRIERS

Audiences who receive messages that acknowledge their discomfort and barriers about sexual violence stay connected and remain open to hearing more. What's key here is to help audiences manage barriers rather than interpreting them as a reason to avoid the subject.

We also need to create a path to solutions and action. It's important to help the audience think beyond those barriers. We can focus on what to do to prevent sexual violence and model a path forward.

DESCRIBE A JOURNEY TOWARD CHANGE

Our audience needs to be able to relate to our story and journey towards change. Giving real life journeys can help turn their own fears into actions. It often helps to tell these stories through multiple steps describing the change process.

STATE THE PROBLEM

There are many circumstances that create opportunities for sexual assault to continue to happen; it is important to state the problem of focus so we can create a clear path to a solution. Deciding what you want to focus on depends on the strategy.

MAKE BOLD MOVES

People are more likely to believe we can end sexual violence when they are shown real solutions. Ending sexual violence is realistic and achievable. Narrow the focus to real life examples in line with your overall strategy. Avoid using vague language like "changing culture" or "training and education."

POINT TO SUCCESS

Our audience should be aware about sexual assault, but they should also be able to see that prevention and intervention works. Success can be demonstrated through data, stories, and examples. Remember, success does not have to be dramatic.

THE PLAN FOR MESSAGING

Before creating a message or campaign we first need to determine **what** we are trying to say, **how** we want to say it, and **why**. We should also identify **who** we are trying to reach. Keep in mind that the roadmap is flexible, circumstances and factors may change. Planning will allow for efficiency and proper allocation of time, funds, and resources.

Before beginning, be mindful about inclusivity, equity, and justice. Consider these questions:

- Whose perspectives need to be part of the strategy from the beginning?
- How can we center the voices of people most affected, including those most often left out?
- Are there any allies we can bring to the table?
- What is the change you want to see?

Remember that the solution does not have to only focus on raising awareness, making real change channels awareness into action. Think about how to mobilize the audience around a solution(s).

- Who has the power to make change?
- Who is, or should be, responsible for making the change we want to see?
- Is the target audience a person or a group of people?
- Who has the power to influence your target audience?
- What is your relationship with the audience?
- How do you have influence with them?
- What tactics might be most effective?
- What motivates the audience to take action?
- Who can you mobilize to exert pressure and communicate for your cause?
- What roles could different groups play?
- What spaces do these groups want to occupy?
- Who can help deliver the message?
- What values or experiences will your audience share with the messenger?

EVOKE SHARED VALUES

People often use their values as cues to make decisions or motivate their actions. Values move our messages and motivate our audience to take action. They allow our audience to focus more on the outcome we are working towards.

When we do not lead our messages with values, our audience may react from a place of fear and shut down from everything we are trying to say. What are some values that are shared in your community? Try writing them out like these examples.

What actions do you want to encourage?

Encourage	Evoke values such as	Example
COMMUNITY	Happiness, working together, resilience, diversity, collective power	Our city/neighborhood is better when we can come together to overcome challenges, and contribute to our shared spaces.
SAFETY	Health and prosperity for everyone, free from fear	All people should feel safe and be safe at home, at school, in recreation and in other parts of their daily life.
RESPECT	Asserting the dignity of all people, honoring diverse perspectives, autonomy of people and the value they bring	All people should feel valued, feel heard, feel safe and have control over their bodily autonomy.
A BETTER FUTURE	Innovation, change, growth, aspiration, transformative	Our commitment to education, creativity, and our children helps our community grow.

ACKNOWLEDGE BARRIERS

Audiences, who receive messages that acknowledge their discomfort and negative, complicated feelings about sexual violence stay connected and remain open to hearing more. What's key here is to help audiences manage negative feelings rather than interpreting them as a reason to avoid the subject.

We also need to create a path to solutions and action. It's important to help the audience think beyond those feelings. We can focus on what to do to prevent sexual violence and model a path forward.

Talking to Legislators: "It's overwhelming to think of how many Californians are sexual assault survivors. It makes it hard to think any one solution can really help. If you look at your community and the district you represent, they already have solutions that do help. Rape crisis center program (name) located in (name of county/city) offers counseling, a 24/7 hotline, and provides community education." #BoldMoves

Talking to Parents: "Sexual assault is a difficult subject to talk about, especially when it comes to our children. What helps in having this difficult conversation, is talking about the opportunities we have in our schools and our community to make children safe and stop sexual violence. These conversations can lead to positive actions to protect our kids." #BoldMoves

Talking to Youth: "Talking about sexual violence is a heavy and taboo subject, especially when talking about it with friends. It's horrible to think about a friend or a classmate being assaulted or being harmed. What's helpful is to have someone that knows how to respond if a friend shares that they have been harassed, abused, or sexually assaulted. It would be even better if our school talked about sexual assault more openly, we would know how to treat others so they feel safe and protected." #BoldMoves

How do you acknowledge barriers?

DESCRIBE A JOURNEY TOWARDS CHANGE

Our audience needs to be able to relate to our story and journey towards change. Giving real life journeys can help turn their own fears into actions. It often helps to tell these stories through, multiple steps, describing the change process.

“How would people walking around in heels do anything to stop sexual violence in our community? Most people think that ‘Walk a Mile in Her Shoes’ is just a fun event to have men wear heels. Some of our volunteers thought this once too. In fact, some were introduced to our organization through this event. Through their involvement, they came to realize the impact the event has on raising awareness. By supporting our center and work, we can grow the impact we have to make create change in our community.”

“Our organization has a strong partnership with our local schools, but it wasn’t always like this. When we first approached the school, administrators and parents worried that the community would think there was a problem. We addressed their concerns by explaining what we discuss with youth and how our curriculum can create a campus where everyone feels safe and respected. We were able to develop trust, and create a relationship with the school that really makes an impact for both the students and the community they are in.”

What’s your journey?

- Starting point

- Acknowledging complacency

- Turning Point

STATE THE PROBLEM PRECISELY

There are many circumstances that create opportunities for sexual assault to continue to happen, it is important to state what problem is the focus so we can create a clear path to a solution. Deciding what you want to focus on depends on the strategy. Here are some examples of problems that may relate to your strategy.

“Our school district offers a sex education course to all students, but what’s missing from the program are conversations around consent. These conversations would cover topics of respect and healthy relationships.”

“When talking friends and neighbors, they do not realize that our center offers different services. They are surprised when I mention our education programs. We can share more of our services with the community by attending local events and advertising in public spaces.”

What is a problem you experience?

MAKE BOLD MOVES

People are more likely to believe we can end sexual violence when they are shown real solutions. Ending sexual violence is realistic and achievable, narrow the focus to real life examples in line with your overall strategy. Avoid using vague language like “changing culture” or “training and education.”

“Our school district offers a sex education course to all students, but what’s missing from the program are conversations around consent. These conversations would cover topics of respect and healthy relationships. We can make #BoldMoves by bringing this concern to the school board and propose a new curriculum where consent is covered. We can also start a petition, with student and parent signatures we will have more concrete support for our ask.”

“When talking to my friends and neighbors, they do not realize that our center offers different services. They are surprised when I mention our education programs. We can share more of our services with the community by attending local events and advertising in public spaces. We can make #BoldMoves by bringing by educating our volunteers to know more about these services and resources, we can also edit our existing fliers and posters to include these services.”

What is the solution?

ILLUSTRATE SUCCESS

Our audience should be aware about sexual assault, but they should also be able to see that prevention and intervention works. Success can be demonstrated through data, stories, and examples. Remember, success does not have to be dramatic.

[Download Files](#)

We hosted a training with our local law enforcement on how to appropriately support and understand victims of sexual violence.

Last year we worked with parents to facilitate a sexual assault awareness and prevention workshop at their local elementary school.

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I think part of working with youth in detention is creating space for them to be honest and to acknowledge that they are at the cross sections of having done harm and having been harmed.

Sarah Diamond
Lead Prevention & Community Engagement Specialist at the Center for Community Solutions



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I believed that if I could start educating my peers on healthy relationships, then, maybe when I'm an adult, there won't be any shelters.

Nadia Charles
President of Jenesse Center's Generation J



“

We want classmates to stand up for one another and educate others. We want teachers to be aware. Sometimes the best we can do is give information—but we are giving resources that most teens will never have otherwise, and that can change lives.

Avery Weber
Member of HARRT Downey High School



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We are preventing sexual violence by keeping our classmates in check; by calling each other out when we are making people uncomfortable; by establishing the idea of that no means no.

Margelis Hernandez
Member of HARRT Downey High School



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They wanted to have conversations before the violence occurred, to be saved from the pain they experienced, to learn how to carry themselves and enter into certain situations and relationships with more understanding.

Janae Stewart
Prevention Educator YWCA-Silicon Valley



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Prevention is more than just handing out flyers and doing a series of 1 hour presentations. It's finding new, innovative ways to engage our community to have a conversation on issues we are having, then empowering them to 'be the change'.

Rubi Gutierrez
Prevention Educator YWCA-Silicon Valley



TOOLS TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE

■ SPEAK TO COMMON VALUES

Values allow others to remain open about our ideas.

■ ACKNOWLEDGE BARRIERS

Acknowledging the negative feeling allows us to manage them and refocus on shared values and action.

DESCRIBE A JOURNEY TOWARD CHANGE

Describing a journey allows the audience to relate to our goal.

STATE THE PROBLEM

Focus on just one aspect of the problem at a time.

■ MAKE BOLD MOVES

Name realistic and achievable solutions.

■ POINT TO SUCCESS

Identify examples of what success can look like.



Access Via RCC Hub

Here's an example, keep in mind you don't have to address all of the points above.

Let's go through a message that amplifies:

It's important for every member of our community to feel safe and supported; facing sexual assault can be scary, and overwhelming.

At (Rape Crisis Center Name) we help sexual assault survivors.

We provide counseling, host a 24/7 hotline, provide support when speaking with law enforcement, we accompany medical exams, and we also provide community education.

We are here for sexual assault survivors; we are here for our community.

With our training and years of expertise of addressing sexual assault in this county we can support survivors in ways that meet their unique experience and their needs.

In 2017 we helped (amount) survivors.

THINGS TO REMEMBER: DITCH THE JARGON

Conversation is often the best way to reach people. Whether at an event, training, or in everyday life, it is important to use language that your audience can understand and connect to. A lot of times we use “insider” language and terms that people not familiar with our work do not relate to, this disconnect makes it difficult to communicate our message effectively. Below are some examples and options for using plain language.

Source: Where We’re Going and Where We’ve Been: Making the Case for Preventing Sexual Violence. pp. 36–37, Where We’re Going and Where We’ve Been: Making the Case for Preventing Sexual Violence, www.raliance.org/report_posts/where-were-going-and-where-weve-been-making-the-case-for-preventing-sexual-violence/.

	Insider language	Plain Language
RAPE CULTURE	The only way to really prevent sexual violence is to change rape culture , which normalizes and excuses sexual violence and abuse.	Our culture often sends messages that encourage, excuse, or minimize sexual violence or abuse. This includes increasingly sexualized media and expectations about how men and women or boys and girls should behave. We can’t stop sexual violence unless we address the broader cultural context in which it occurs.
BYSTANDER INTERVENTION	Bystander intervention and bystander education trainings teach potential witnesses to prevent or intervene when there is a risk for sexual violence or abuse.	All of us have the ability to look out for each other’s safety. Helping people plan ahead and practice different ways to interrupt or redirect an uncomfortable situation can prevent sexual violence and abuse. Choosing to step in can affect how others around us think about and respond to sexual violence and abuse.
TOXIC MASCULINITY	Preventing sexual violence and abuse requires us to challenge and dismantle toxic masculinity. This contributes to a culture where rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and sexual aggression are directly or indirectly permitted, encouraged, and even rewarded.	Some of what we’ve been taught about what it means to be a man or a woman is unhealthy. In our culture, men are often taught to always be in control, win at all costs, show no emotion, be the ones to initiate sex, and pursue sex even when someone is “playing hard to get.” These rigid ideas suggest masculinity is aggressive or abusive, and that’s wrong. These myths hurt women and men, contributing to beliefs that explicitly or subtly encourage, excuse, or minimize sexual violence and abuse – even among those of us who want to stop it.
OPPRESSION	To prevent sexual violence and abuse, we have to dismantle oppression in all forms. Oppression condones violence, uses power over others, excuses unfair treatment and harm, and helps silence or dismiss victims.	People who commit sexual violence or abuse often look for victims who have less power in society. That means that women, people of color, poor people, disabled people, and LGBTQ people can be more likely to experience sexual violence in their lives than other groups. We have to also address the ways that power and prejudice contribute to a culture where it occurs.