Stopping Power Based Violence Before It Occurs:  
Creating Safer, Healthier Communities

Fact Sheet: 
The Impact of Integrated Data Collection in the Prevention of Power Based Personal Violence

- Violence is a public health issue. It should be dealt with through the tools of science, and aim for measurable results. Based on data, research and experience, we know we can prevent sexual violence, by early intervention where high risk exists, and by addressing its social causes.

- We can prevent sexual violence by changing our individual and institutional behaviors: where we now look away from it, we must acknowledge it, identify the trends and demand accountability.

- New Jersey residents deserve to be free of the fear of power based personal violence. More efficient use of data can lead us to better ways to ensuring their safety at home, at school and in the community.

With support from
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention & Control
and
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ Division on Women
Prepared by the Prevention & Public Education Committee of the NJ Governor’s Advisory Council Against Sexual Violence
The Call for an Integrated Data Collection System in New Jersey

The 2010 – 2020 New Jersey’s State Prevention Plan for Sexual Violence focuses on the causes of violence as identified by public health research. Violence is caused and fostered by exposure to violent behavior and by social expectations. It is sustained by societal and individual neglect. To prevent its occurrence we must change those expectations, build positive, healthy relationships for children and young people, and hold ourselves and each other accountable for maintaining safe families, playgrounds, classrooms and communities.

The Situation

- The data we currently have on sexual violence perpetration and victimization is scattered among many state and private institutions and systems. There is no one place where we can connect the dots and identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention. The state is duplicating efforts and missing information that is critical for focused prevention efforts.

- Our current data systems use a variety of definitions and terms that make it impossible to clearly tell the story about the magnitude of the problem or answer the who, what, when, where and how questions that can lead us directly to high risk situations and populations.

- Existing efforts to combat sexual violence, bullying, child abuse, substance abuse, gang violence and dating violence operate in separate silos, even though virtually all practitioners understand that these behaviors all share the same risk factors and will be reduced by related preventions that promote shared protective factors. Sharing data across the spectrum of issues related to power based violence provides new opportunities for collaboration in prevention efforts.

- Current data sets clearly underestimate the prevalence of the problem of sexual violence in our community. We have a responsibility to more accurately track trends in perpetration as well as victimization and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention efforts.

Actions Needed

- Create a core set of common definitions based on New Jersey Statutes - Title 2C (The New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice - 2C:14-2 Sexual Assault) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention standards for sexual violence surveillance.

- Identify departmental and organizational liaisons that are empowered to work collaboratively to share data, improve data collection and pool resources between departments.

- Create a coordinated system for data collection and analysis in New Jersey which is accessible to all interested parties and can be used to identify opportunities for prevention and evaluate prevention strategies in the field.
The Key Players

- State level leadership participation from the Department of Law and Public Safety, New Jersey Hospital Association, Department of Corrections, New Jersey State Police, Department of Criminal Justice, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Children and Families, Department of Human Services and the Department of Education

- Leadership support from the Department of Community Affairs/Division on Women, the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA), Department of Health and Senior Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Violence Prevention.

- The Data and Collaboration Workgroup of the New Jersey Governor’s Advisory Council Against Sexual Violence

The Desired Outcomes

- Elimination of sexual violence and ultimately power based personal violence in all its forms in NJ

- Improved efficiency and reduced duplication of efforts in data collection and analysis

- An integrated data system that provides:
  - demographic data on perpetrators and victims/survivors
  - data that tracks cases over time, including relevant past history
  - sufficient state level, county level and major urban area data
  - data that identifies shared characteristics of perpetrators
  - optimal use of existing data collection systems (i.e., adding a sexual violence module to BRFSS, YRBS and other student health surveys) to track changes in attitudes and behaviors in the community
  - data that demonstrates the effectiveness of strategies in changing attitudes and behaviors of individuals, communities and institutions

Your Role – Become A Partner in Prevention

- Join us to start the discussion of how we can better integrate our work on primary prevention of power based personal violence.

- Share your perspectives. We can achieve our shared goals, by intentional and open collaboration across many kinds of organizations in several diverse systems. By combining our assets we can increase resources and ability to make substantial and measurable progress in preventing violence.