Transforming Communities to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

A Primary Prevention Approach

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2010 National Sexual Assault Conference
September 2, 2010
Scope of the Problem

- One in four girls and one in seven boys is the victim of some type of sexual abuse/assault before age 18.

- 71% of assaults are committed by someone that knows the child and family, with 10% of perpetrators being in the family itself.

- Many perpetrators were once abused themselves…
The Current Perception of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Office of the Attorney General • Megan’s Law
State of California • Department of Justice

◆ To Catch a Predator

“Dateline's ongoing hidden camera investigation into computer sex predators--grown men, trolling the Web for sex with minors. This time, police are making arrests.”

(http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11152602/)
The Current Perception of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

- Gender Perspective
- Human rights Perspective
- Criminal Justice Perspective
- Public Health Perspective
What can be done to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place?
Transforming Communities to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse,

- Diverse group of local and national experts

- Developed and prioritized primary prevention strategies, analyzed environmental factors and norms, and outlined policies and practices for transforming communities
“There must be an increased awareness that child sexual abuse and exploitation does not occur in isolation, but instead, stems from deeply rooted social inequities and environmental influences.”

- Convening participant
Domains of the Child

- Community
- Peers & Service Providers
- Family & Caregivers
- Society & Media
- Child
The Environment: Childhood in the New Millennium

- Increase amount and more sophisticated marketing towards children
- Pervasive access to and inclusion of technology
- Sexualized children, submissive women and dominant males
- Lack of resources and support for abused and abusers
- Increased concentrations of poverty
Social Cohesion

- Nearly half of men would be too scared to help a child in need because they feared being branded a pedophile.

- 44% would be wary of coming to the aid of youngsters in case they were suspected of attempting to abduct them.

Clarck, L. 8/3/2010, *The Star*
“Sexting” Leads to Child Porn Charges for Teens
June 5, 2010

◆ HARRISBURG, PENNSLYVANIA—Eight high school students ages 13-17 years were accused last fall of using their cell phones to take, send, or receive nude photos of each other and in one case a short video of oral sex.

◆ Result: a felony pornography charge for each minor.

http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/06/05/eveningnews/main6552438.shtml
The Omnipresence of Media
HEALTH DISPARITIES:

The same injuries and illnesses only more so
a *systematic* process that promotes healthy environments and behaviors and reduces the likelihood or frequency of an injury or traumatization.

taking action *before* violence occurs.
The Prevention Continuum

**PRIMARY**
Approaches that take place **BEFORE** violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization

**SECONDARY**
*Immediate* responses **AFTER** violence has occurred to deal with the consequences in the short-term

**TERTIARY**
*Long-term* responses **AFTER** violence to deal with the lasting consequences and treatment interventions
“The ideas of one generation become the instincts of the next.”

- D.H. Lawrence
Trajectory of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

- Root factors
- Compromised social & physical environments

EXPOSURES & BEHAVIORS → MEDICAL CARE → INJURIES, ILLNESS & DISPARITIES
Trajectory of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

- Poverty
- Weak Community Sanctions
- Traditional gender norms and social norms supportive of violence

ENVIRONMENT ➔ EXPOSURES & BEHAVIORS ➔ MEDICAL CARE ➔ INJURIES, ILLNESS & DISPARITIES

Medical care care care care

Environment

Injuries, illness & disparities
Norms Are Behavior Shapers

A focus on norms can help prevent abuse and exploitation.
NORMS

more than a habit

based in culture & tradition

taken for granted

behavior shapers

sanction behavior

attitudes, beliefs, ways of being

communicate regularity in behavior
5 Key Norms

- Limited Roles for Women
- Power
- Narrow Definition of Manhood
- Privacy and Silence
- Violence
Violence
Narrow Definition of Manhood

Ideologies of male sexual entitlement
Limited Roles for Women
Sexualized Childhood
Power

Men have decision making power in the household.
“It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change.”

Institute of Medicine
Weak legal sanctions

Privacy
Domains of the Child

- Community
- Peers & Service Providers
- Family & Caregivers
- Society & Media
- Child
Potential Goals

Change social and cultural gender norms through:

- Use of social norms theory
- Media awareness campaigns
- Working with men and boys
The Spectrum of Prevention

- Influencing Policy & Legislation
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Fostering Coalitions & Networks
- Educating Providers
- Promoting Community Education
- Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
Influencing Policy and Legislation
Changing Organizational Practices
Fostering Coalitions and Networks
Educating Providers
Promoting Community Education
Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
Jean Kilbourne decodes an array of print and television advertisements to reveal a pattern of disturbing and destructive gender stereotypes.
Mentor and model appropriate online behavior for both young people and adults
The Spectrum of Prevention

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Community Education

Source: www.mencanstoprape.org
**Convening: Prioritized Strategies**

“Community engagement is key to any successful movement”

- **Build on community assets**
  - Prevention messages rooted in community needs and priorities

- **Increase resilience**
  - Support healthy norms and counter fear-based messages
The Spectrum of Prevention

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Convening: Prioritized Strategies
Influencing Policy & Legislation
Changing Organizational Practices
**Fostering Coalitions & Networks**
Educating Providers
Promoting Community Education
Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills

The Spectrum of Prevention
Community Level Coalitions and Networks

- Family support services
- Health care providers
- Families
- Government
- Businesses
- Housing authorities
- Media
- Planners
- Parks and recreation
- Social services
- Advocates
- Faith institutions
- Mental health
- Community members
- Law enforcement
- Child care providers
- Family resource centers
- Family members
- Law enforcement
- Government
Convening: Prioritized Strategies

- Community/State Level
  - Organize child abuse prevention coalitions that include representatives from multiple disciplines

- National Level
  - Develop a rapid response media network to spread prevention messages
The Spectrum of Prevention

- Influencing Policy & Legislation
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Fostering Coalitions & Networks
- Educating Providers
- Promoting Community Education
- Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
Organizational Practices
Convening: Prioritized Strategies

- **All Organizations**
  - Enact workplace policies that support the family unit

- **Youth Serving Organizations**
  - Implement organization-wide youth development curricula that is comprehensive and positive
The Spectrum of Prevention

Influencing Policy & Legislation

Changing Organizational Practices

Fostering Coalitions & Networks

Educating Providers

Promoting Community Education

Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
Convening: Prioritized Strategies

- Incorporate Quality Prevention Strategies in Current Policy
- Hold Industry Accountable
- Adopt Mandates for Prevention Efforts
DOJ releases national strategy for child exploitation prevention August 2010.

H.R. 4925 Healthy Media for Youth Act

“Authorizes grants to promote media literacy & youth empowerment programs, to authorize research on the role & impact of depictions of girls and women in the media and other purposes” March 2010
The Synergy of The Levels on the Spectrum of Prevention
Additional Tools
Transforming Communities to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Primary Prevention Approach
CHAPTER 10: 
Before It Occurs: 
Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse

http://www.preventioninstitute.org/physiciansguide.html
Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention

Towards a Community Solution
www.PreventConnect.org

- Online Community
- Web Conferences, Reading Clubs
- Wiki, Podcasts, eLearning
- Twitter @preventconnect
- Blog http://calcasa.org
- Facebook
- Prevent-Connect Email Group (listserv)

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Activity: The Spectrum of Prevention

- Influencing Policy & Legislation
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Fostering Coalitions & Networks
- Educating Providers
- Promoting Community Education
- Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
Population/Environments

(This is to be recorded on the worksheet under STEP 1)

- **Media:** Decrease media portrayals of violence and power over others, especially violence or power over children

- **Early Childcare:** Promote healthy and responsible family behavior as an integral component of childcare-based organizations

- **Schools:** Foster educational environments free from harassment and exploitation in which youth can learn healthy and responsible behavior

- **Workplace:** Work with workplace environments to challenge norms about traditional masculinity and promote gender equity, responsible behavior, and proactive bystander behavior as the norm