

# Sexual Violence Prevention in Missoula, Montana

## Community Needs Assessment

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*Prepared by:*



**STRATEGIC**  
PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

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# Executive Summary

In 2019, the rate of rape in Montana was 58.4 per 100,000 residents, higher than the U.S. rate of 42.6 per 100,000; approximately 24% of all Montana adults have been raped at some point in their lifetime. Nationally, American Indian women are 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to all other races/ethnicities. In 2019, 6% of middle school and 7% of high school students in Missoula reported being forced to have sex when they did not want to. Taken together, these findings demonstrate a clear need for continued sexual violence prevention efforts in Missoula and across Montana.

Missoula is unique in its approach to sexual violence prevention as city and county dollars support the Make Your Move! Council, a group comprised of 5 community-based organizations working together to prevent sexual violence. Make Your Move! was established in 2012. Over the past 8 years, the Council has conducted activities such as bystander intervention trainings, public awareness campaigns about affirmative sexual consent, and hosted community-based education. In early 2020, Make Your Move! enlisted the support of Strategic Prevention Solutions (SPS), a small research firm with expertise in sexual violence prevention, research, and evaluation, to conduct a Needs Assessment to identify the current needs and priorities related to sexual violence prevention in Missoula.

The needs assessment consisted of a web-based survey which was completed by 44 stakeholders from across Missoula and Montana; an additional 10 stakeholders participated in a semi-structured interview to ascertain qualitative information to supplement and contextualize the survey findings. The full Needs Assessment, representing the perspectives of 54 stakeholders, identified 5 high-priority needs related to sexual violence prevention in Missoula and across Montana. The priorities include the following: racial, gender, and economic equity; sexual liberation; transformative and restorative justice; early childhood education with a focus on social-emotional learning, bodily autonomy, and consent; and men as leaders in sexual violence prevention.

In the following report, we present a summary of findings from both the survey and the interviews, as well as other Montana-specific data and information. Together, this information provides a holistic view of needs and priorities as well as an array of promising strategies to prevent and reduce sexual violence in Missoula and throughout Montana.

# Sexual Violence Prevention Priorities

1. **Racial, gender, and economic equity** – Sexual violence is a result of systemic inequalities, with the highest burden shouldered among those who live at the intersection of oppression based on race, economics, gender, or sexual orientation. Prevention efforts should explicitly promote equity across these dimensions.
2. **Sexual liberation** - A world free from sexual violence uplifts the inherent sexuality of all individuals across the lifespan. This includes recognizing sex, masturbation, non-monogamy, and asexuality as normal and healthy aspects of the human experience. Sexual liberation can be achieved if change is made across all levels (individuals, partners, policy, legal, and societal/cultural) to ensure that partnered sex is enacted within the context of enthusiastic affirmative consent that can be withdrawn at any time, for any reason.
3. **Transformative and restorative justice** – As frameworks for responding to harm or violence outside of the criminal justice system, transformative and restorative justice approaches are required to better meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence. These approaches utilize social-emotional skill-building and center accountability practices as essential components for healing, recovery, and prevention of future harm - among both survivors and perpetrators. One aim of these secondary prevention efforts is to reduce compounding harm which is frequently caused by interference from authoritarian and oppressive systems.
4. **Early childhood education: Social-emotional learning, bodily autonomy, and consent** – Sexual violence prevention efforts must start earlier to truly effect widespread and meaningful reductions in sexual violence. Social-emotional learning in empathy, communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution should be incorporated throughout K-12 and be implemented alongside age-appropriate and evidence-based education about healthy peer relationships, sexuality, bodily autonomy, and consent.
5. **Men as leaders in sexual violence prevention** – Men must lead efforts to dismantle the patriarchal societal norms that reinforce toxic behaviors and beliefs that lead



to sexual violence. Men are wanted and needed as partners in sexual violence prevention efforts across Montana's diverse communities.

# Sexual Violence in Montana

In 2019, there were 624 reported rapes in Montana, resulting in a state rate of 58.4 per 100,000 residents [1], higher than the U.S. rate of 42.6 per 100,000 [2]. Findings from the 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) report that 9% of Montana adults self-reported that they had been raped in the past year [3], and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2010-2012) reports that 24% of all Montanans have been raped at some point in their life [4]. A recent study indicates that, for 1 in 16 U.S. women (6%), their first sexual experience was rape [5]. Nationally, American Indian women are 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to all other races/ethnicities [6].

Public opinion of sexual violence varies widely among Montana adults. Results from the 2019 BRFSS illustrate that 33% of Montanans believe that women making false reports of sexual assault or harassment is a major problem [7]. This demonstrates that one-third of Montana's adult population adhere to the myth that women make false accusations. This belief further perpetuates a system in which survivors of sexual violence are not believed or trusted. Current research has demonstrated that between 2% and 10% of all rape allegations are categorized as false, many because the victim decides not to pursue charges [8]. In contrast, the majority (67%) of Montanans disagree with the statement that violence between dating partners is a personal matter and that people should not interfere. Still, 10% of adults in Montana somewhat or strongly agreed with this assertion, indicating that they would not step in to help someone they suspected to be experiencing domestic violence [7]. For more information on the 2019 MT BRFSS findings, please see Appendix A on pages 24 and 25.

## Sexual Violence in Missoula

The issue of sexual violence in Missoula was in the national spotlight in the mid-2000's. In 2012, the federal Department of Justice (DOJ) investigated the Missoula County Attorney's Office to determine if they were appropriately prosecuting cases of sexual violence within the local judicial system [9]. This issue was flagged at the federal level as many police reports failed to be prosecuted, and often included cases involving high profile University of Montana (UM) athletes. Further, these issues garnered more national attention when, in 2015, author Jon Krakauer published reports of these crimes and an overview of the DOJ investigation in his book, *Missoula: Rape and the Justice*

*System in a College Town* [10]. Although some action resulted after these issues came to light, sexual violence prevention efforts are still needed in Missoula. In 2019, 6% of middle school students in 7th and 8th grade, and 7% of all high school students in Missoula reported being forced to have sex when they did not want to (for a total of 13% of students between grades 7 to 12), according to Montana's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) [11].

## Prevention Efforts in Missoula

Missoula County is served by several organizations that provide specific outreach and educational efforts to prevent sexual violence. Currently, most efforts focus on students and young adults. The key agencies providing these services include YWCA Missoula, Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services, UM's Student Advocacy Resource Center, and the Make Your Move! Council.

Sexual violence in Missoula is further influenced, though indirectly, through the work of many public health, social service, and social justice organizations whose efforts seek to prevent violence by reducing risk factors (e.g., excessive alcohol use or harmful gender norms) and improving protective factors (e.g., academic achievement or access to mental healthcare) known to be associated with rates of sexual violence. Community activists are also playing an important role in centering the voices of those who have historically been silenced; their work is shifting the cultural narrative about what issues should be prioritized to move Missoula towards a future with less violence. Finally, the Missoula community benefits from state level prevention efforts led by the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, their partner programs and shelters, and the work of the Rape Prevention Education Program housed within the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

The impetus for this Needs Assessment was to obtain information from Missoula-based stakeholders about the needs and priorities for sexual violence prevention in the community. Additionally, stakeholders working on social justice, public health, and racial and gender equality from across Montana were included to represent a more diverse set of perspectives statewide.

The following report provides a summary of findings from 54 Montana-based stakeholders. The findings do not necessarily represent the views or strategies of the Make Your Move! Missoula Council. However, the Council will consider these results as

they plan their strategic activities to prevent sexual violence in Missoula in the coming years.



# 2020 Needs Assessment for Sexual Violence Prevention

Over the span of three months, the research team at Strategic Prevention Solutions worked closely with the Make Your Move! Council to develop data collection tools to identify the needs and priorities related to sexual violence prevention in Missoula and in Montana more broadly. Together, we developed a list of 65 stakeholders representing myriad organizations and sectors. Of those included in the list, 55 are based in Missoula and 10 are organizations that work across the state of Montana.

Stakeholders who participated in the Needs Assessment represent the following sectors:

- Community advocacy and activism
- Criminal & legal justice
- Entertainment industry including comedians, musicians, bars, and breweries
- Faith communities
- Higher education, including staff and students
- Indigenous health and rights
- LGBT2QAI+ health and rights
- Parenting support
- Parks and recreation
- Public health
- Racial justice and equity
- Sexual violence prevention
- Social justice
- Reproductive and sexual health
- Voter engagement
- Youth development and leadership

## Data Collection Methods

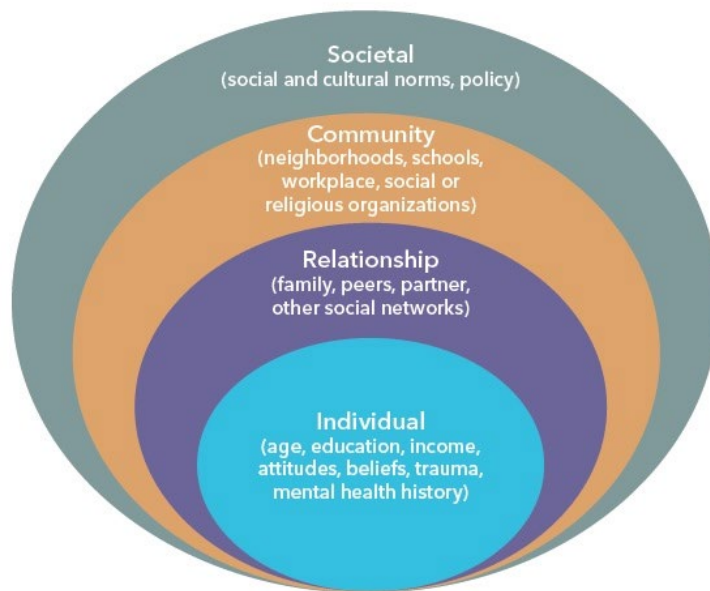
The Needs Assessment data collection process consisted of a web-based survey which took approximately 20 minutes to complete and a semi-structured qualitative interview which was conducted over Zoom; interviews lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. Fifty-six

(56) stakeholders were sent an email invitation to complete the web-based survey which launched on September 2, 2020. Non-responders were sent up to three reminder emails; survey data collection concluded on September 30, 2020. Forty-four (44) participants completed at least some of the questionnaire for an overall response rate of 79%. Ten stakeholders were identified as key informants and participated in the qualitative interview. Interviews took place between September 16 and September 25, 2020. No incentives or compensation were provided to most participants, except for eight stakeholders who participated in the Needs Assessment outside of their professional role and were therefore provided with a cash incentive of \$20 to compensate them for their time.

## Stakeholder Characteristics

The stakeholders who participated in the Needs Assessment represented individuals from 38 established groups or organizations and 2 community activists with no formal affiliation. The position or title of these individuals ranged from executive director, president, or founder to board member, volunteer, or student. The length of time in that role ranged from 2 months to 33 years, with an average of approximately 7 years in their position.

Stakeholders were asked to describe at which level(s) of the social-ecological model they focus their work; 78% work at the community level (e.g., safe housing, social service provision), 75% at the individual level (e.g., changing beliefs and attitudes, promoting coping and problem-solving skills), 70% at the societal level (e.g., laws, policies, physical environment, gender norms), and 63% at the relational level (e.g., healthy dating, peer connectedness, parenting skills).



Due to the limited number of stakeholders invited to participate in this Needs Assessment, no other identifiable information such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, or income, were collected from the participants. This was an intentional decision made to promote transparency and honesty in responses, and to protect the confidentiality of participants.

## Definitions

To ensure that all survey participants had the same understanding of the terms "sexual violence" and "sexual violence prevention" the following definitions were included in the survey instrument and interview guide before questions were asked.

- Make Your Move! defines sexual violence as a large umbrella term that includes behaviors like rape, assault, stalking, and harassment. Sexual violence can also include stereotypes, biases, stigma, and other behaviors and expressions that can cause harm.
- Make Your Move! defines sexual violence prevention as strategies that aim to change biases and stereotypes to reduce harm and to promote safety. Additionally, prevention can include strategies that aim to stop people from harming others through rape, assault, stalking, and harassment.

## Survey Findings

Next, we present an overview of the survey findings. Most items were completed by 40 stakeholders, with a range of 38 to 44 respondents completing each item.

### Relative importance of sexual violence as a community concern

When presented in a list of 12 issues affecting the Missoula community in January 2020 (before the COVID-19 pandemic), sexual harassment and assault tied as the 4<sup>th</sup> highest issue of concern with 25% of respondents indicating it was among their top 3 concerns. Sexual violence came in behind affordable housing (88%); access to mental healthcare services (58%); alcohol and/or substance use (35%); and tied with racial inequality (25%).

Stakeholders shifted their priorities when asked the same question, only to identify their top 3 concerns facing the Missoula community today (October 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic). Sexual harassment and assault fell to the 8<sup>th</sup> spot among the social issues presented, with the following being identified as issues of top concern: affordable housing (73%); access to mental healthcare services (43%); COVID-19 pandemic (40%); racial inequality (35%); alcohol and/or substance use (28%); access to healthcare (22%); affordable childcare (18%); and sexual harassment and assault (13%).

### Knowledge of sexual violence prevention efforts in Missoula

When asked how much effort the community is putting towards preventing sexual violence in Missoula, the most frequent response among stakeholders was that they *did not know*, signaling that more information may be needed to educate community area organizations and the public about the efforts that are currently underway to address sexual violence in Missoula. In Table 1. below, we provide the most frequent responses and the percentage who answered “Don’t Know” to the following items.

Table 1. Level of effort that Missoula is putting towards preventing sexual violence

Item	Most frequent response	Don’t Know
Increasing awareness of the issue of sexual violence in Missoula	Strong effort (53%)	5%
Shifting cultural norms and language around sexual violence	Strong effort (42%)	8%

Coordinating strategies through coalition-building	Strong effort (40%)	13%
Using data and evidence to inform activities related to sexual violence prevention	Strong effort (37%)	21%
Identifying ways to share resources through communication and partnership-building	Strong effort (34%)	18%
Training community members to become experts in sexual violence prevention	Strong effort (32%)	16%
Working with the groups most at-risk of perpetrating sexual violence	Strong effort (21%)	45%
Writing grant proposals to obtain funding to prevent sexual violence	Strong effort (19%)	54%
Implementing strategies that are showing meaningful reductions in sexual violence victimization	Moderate effort (40%)	40%
Recruiting experts to lead sexual violence prevention efforts	Moderate effort (34%)	45%
Seeking volunteers for current or future efforts to prevent sexual violence	Moderate effort (29%)	34%
Soliciting donations from businesses or other organizations to fund current or expanded community efforts	Minimal effort (26%)	45%

Scale = No effort (1); Minimal effort (2); Moderate effort (3); Strong effort (4); Very Strong Effort (5)

## Future stakeholder engagement

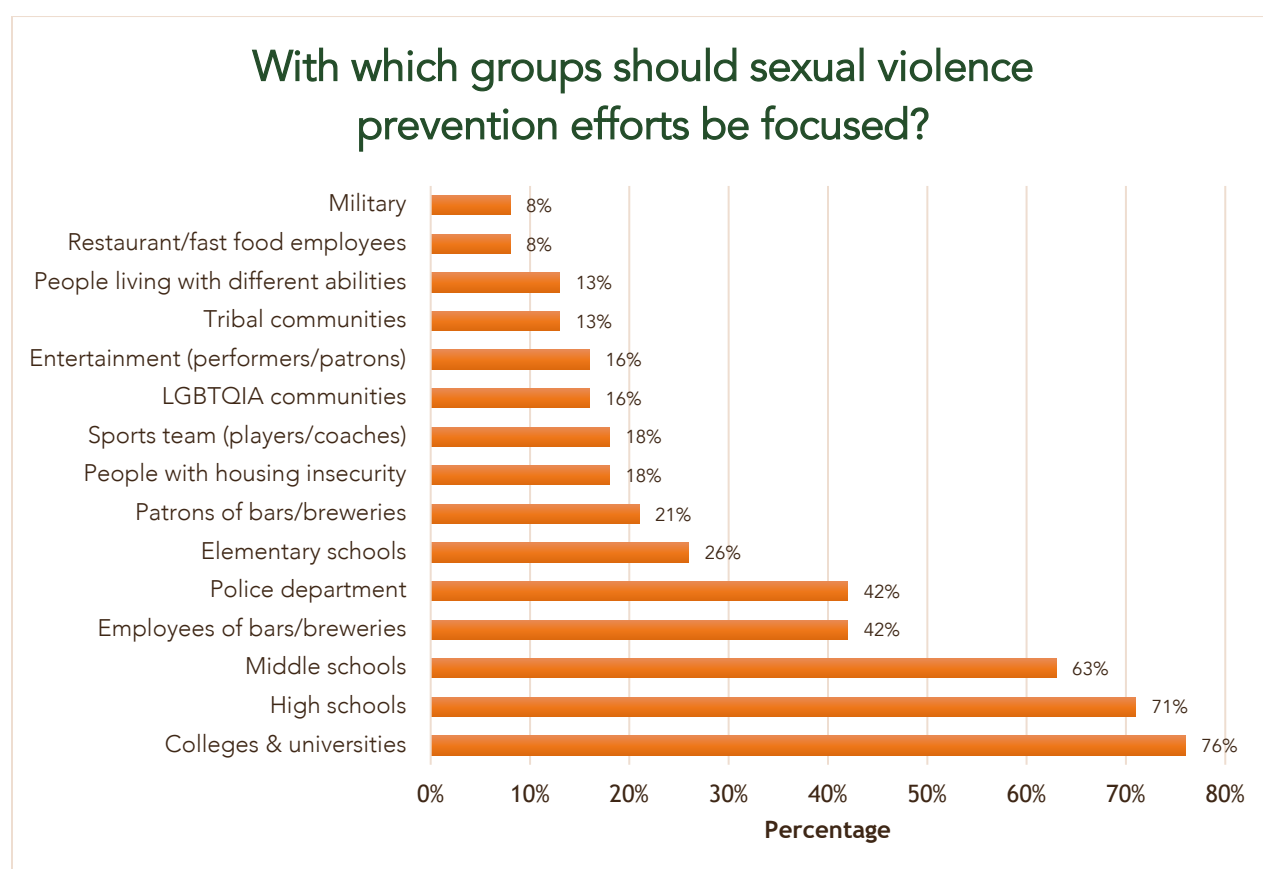
A follow-up question to the item above asked stakeholders to identify which of these areas, if any, they would be interested in participating. The following four activities were indicated by over half (50% or more) of respondents as areas in which they would be interested in collaborating: Identifying ways to share resources through communication and partnership-building (76%); Coordinating strategies through coalition-building (67%); Working with the groups most at-risk of perpetrating sexual violence (56%); and Using data and evidence to inform activities related to sexual violence prevention (51%). These responses indicate a strong willingness on behalf of Missoula-based and Montana-wide stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate efforts, build partnerships, and to use data to implement strategies to prevent sexual violence.

## Where should sexual violence prevention efforts be focused?

Stakeholders were presented with a list of 18 places or subpopulations with which prevention efforts could be focused. Respondents were asked to select their top 5 priorities; the following received the most votes: Colleges, community colleges, and

universities (76%); High schools (71%); Middle schools (63%); Police department (42%); employees of bars, breweries, and distilleries (42%); and Elementary schools (26%). Other places or subpopulations of note included: Patrons of bars, breweries, and distilleries (21%); Sports teams (with players and coaches) (18%); Communities of people with housing insecurity (18%); LGBTQIA communities (16%); Live entertainment/nightlife communities (promoters, sound engineers, performers, and patrons) (16%); Tribal communities (13%); and Communities of people living with different abilities related to mobility, hearing, vision, or communicating (13%).

**Figure 1. Percentage of stakeholder responses about which groups to focus prevention efforts**



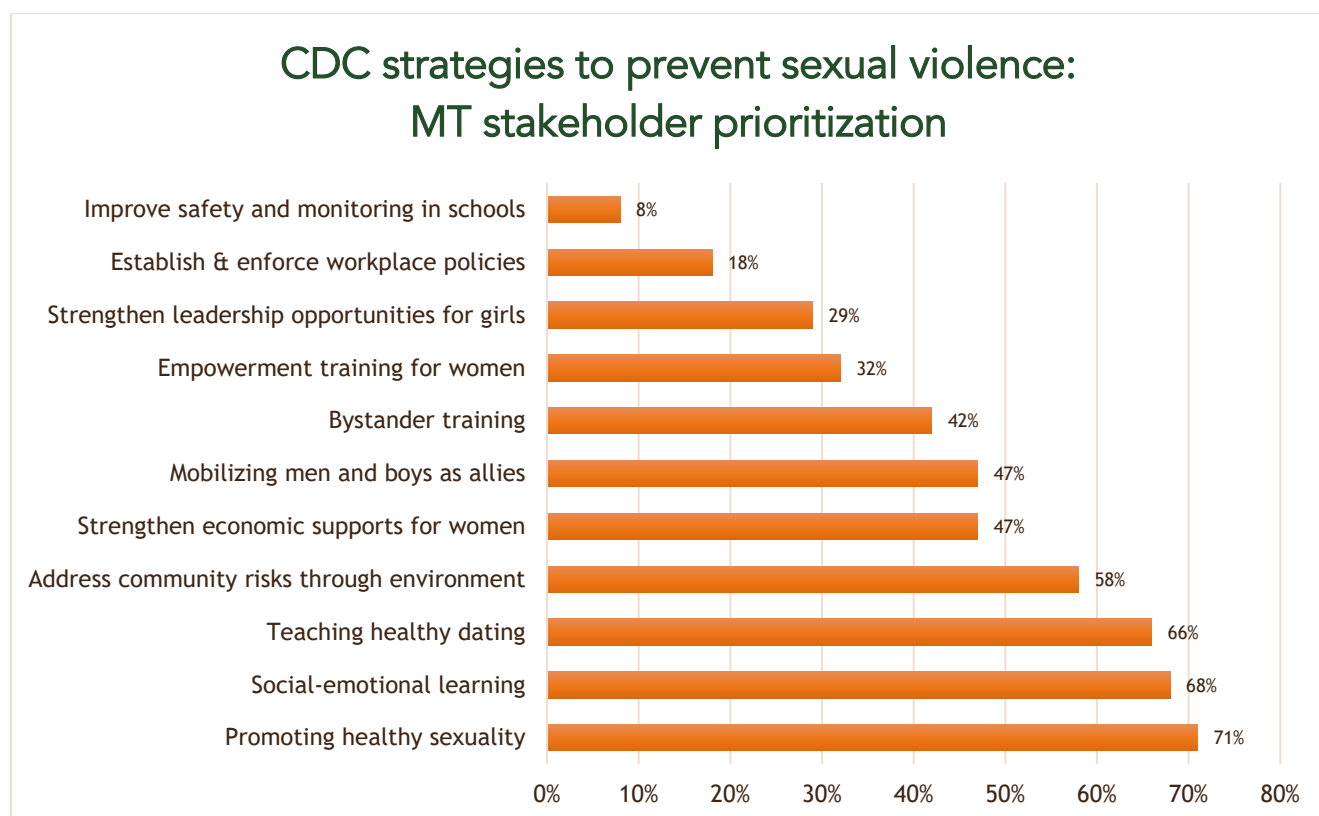


## Prioritizing CDC Evidence-based and Evidence-informed Strategies

The evidence base on effective sexual violence prevention programming and strategies continues to evolve. Based on existing data and information, the CDC has identified 11 strategies that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. For a more in-depth review of each strategy, please see Appendix B on page 26.

Stakeholders were asked to review the list of strategies and select the 5 that they believe would have the most meaningful impact in preventing sexual violence in Missoula. The top 5 strategies identified included: Promoting healthy sexuality (71%); Social-emotional learning (68%); Teaching healthy dating and positive intimate relationship skills to adolescents (66%); Addressing community-level risks through environmental approaches (58%). Strengthen economic supports for women and families and Mobilizing men and boys as allies tied for 5<sup>th</sup> at 47%.

Figure 2. Percentage of stakeholder responses about which CDC strategies to prioritize



# High-Priority Needs for Sexual Violence Prevention

In the following section, we present the top 5 issues that were identified as the highest priority needs related to sexual violence prevention in Montana. Under each priority, we include supporting data, statements, and recommendations from stakeholders which further illustrate how the need may be addressed.

***Me Too Movement: Survivors' Agenda.*** In early 2020, the Me Too organization crowd-sourced needs and priorities from 1,100 survivors of sexual violence, from 21 partner organization, and from over 60 community stakeholders. The resulting priorities are documented in a publication called the *Survivors' Agenda* which was published in Summer 2020 [12]. Throughout the next section, we reference, when applicable, programmatic and policy recommendations described in the *Survivors' Agenda* that align with the priorities identified by Montana stakeholders.

## Racial, Gender, and Economic Equity

Sexual violence is a result of systemic inequalities and societal-level oppression [13]. The burden of these oppressions is shouldered most strongly by those who do not benefit from the systems of white supremacy and patriarchy, including individuals of color, women, gender expansive individuals, and LGBTQIA individuals [14, 15]. Throughout the Needs Assessment, stakeholders uplifted the need to center issues of inequity and injustice as key factors related to the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence in our communities. In the following 3 sections, we highlight key findings with data and stakeholder perspectives that illustrate how and why future sexual violence prevention efforts should focus on racial, gender, and economic equity.

These strategies align with those described under the Culture & Narrative Shift, Education, Health Care, and Housing & Transportation sections in the *Survivors' Agenda* [12].

### Racial Equity

"Sexual violence is a product of colonization & desire for power" stated one respondent.

Racial inequality was cited by 35% of stakeholders as a top 3 issue facing the Missoula community today. Across the U.S., women of color are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual assault or harassment [15], and American Indian women report rates of rape and sexual assault that are 2 times higher than their white counterparts [6]. Several stakeholders raised the issue of

sexual violence in Native American communities across Montana and suggested that future efforts seek to identify ways to work with leaders in Indian Country to prevent sexual violence.

## Sexual violence prevention in partnership with American Indian communities in Montana

Indigenous women are 2.5 times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime and are 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to all other races/ethnicities [6]. The American Indian communities in Montana live with the history of forced relocation, efforts of forced integration, and coercive policies which forcibly sterilized thousands of Native women, a crime of sexual and reproductive violence [16, 17]. A 2019 case study conducted with women living on the Crow reservation revealed that the history of reproductive coercion and forced sterilization continues to create a sense of general mistrust of white-led medical and authoritarian organizations [18], likely resulting in reluctance to seek help through the criminal justice or non-Tribal healthcare systems after experiencing sexual violence. Despite these atrocities, Indigenous peoples embody profound resilience and empowerment as they celebrate and live the values and traditions inherent to their culture and heritage.

The Tribal communities in Montana, alongside Indigenous communities across the U.S., are experiencing a crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). In 2019, 5,590 Indigenous women were reported as missing to the FBI, and this is likely an undercount as there are yet to be well-established processes for reporting or investigating these crimes [19]. Although American Indians comprise 7% of the Montana population, they accounted for 26% of all cases of missing people in Montana between 2016 to 2018. Montana's Big Horn County, home to Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations, reports the highest rate of MMIW in the state with 28 women now listed as missing or murdered in the past few years [20]. The Missoula community has experienced several cases of Native American women going missing, including a case as recent as October 2020.

A major area of concern related to sexual violence among American Indian women in Montana is the apparent racial bias in the state's criminal justice system, where Indigenous women are overrepresented by 600% and account for one-third of the total number of women who were re-incarcerated for a technical parole violation, according a 2018 report published by ACLU of Montana [21]. Further complicating the role of the criminal justice system in Indian Country is the complex jurisdictional system that has resulted from federal laws such as the Major Crimes Act and the Violence Against Women Act. The impact of these laws means that, for violent crimes committed on reservation land, different legal systems (tribal, state, or federal) become involved depending on the race/ethnicity of the victim and perpetrator. Tribal sovereignty is an important component to sexual violence prevention in Indian Country. More information is

needed to understand the needs, priorities, and solutions identified by the American Indian community in Montana.

## Gender Equity

This issue of gender equity is at the center of sexual violence prevention and is explicitly addressed in 3 of the 11 evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies identified by the CDC, including: Empowerment-based training for women; Strengthen economic supports for women and families; and Strengthen leadership and opportunities for adolescent girls. One stakeholder holds that, “A major factor in sexual violence is masculine entitlement” as another dreams of a day when, “Women could go about their business and pursue their dreams without fear.”

Further, many stakeholders discussed the need to dismantle the gender binary through education to shift the paradigm away from man/woman dichotomy and to embrace the full spectrum of gender expansive identities, including the two-spirit identity among American Indians.

***Menstrual health.*** When asked what specific strategies might result in more gender equity across Montana, several stakeholders raised the topic of menstrual health. Existing shame and stigma around menstruation create opportunities for bullying and misunderstanding between people who do and do not menstruate. Gender inequalities are further exacerbated by policy-level issues such as the tampon tax, inaccessible and unaffordable menstrual products, particularly in schools, and the addition of toxic chemicals in menstrual hygiene products. Activism around menstrual health is becoming more prevalent with groups such as “Period: A global non-profit organization fighting to end period poverty and stigma through service, education, and advocacy” [22] which recently established a local chapter in Bozeman. Missoula is also home to Women’s Voices for the Earth [23], an organization that advocates for the removal of toxic chemicals in products primarily used by women, including tampons and make-up. Future sexual violence prevention efforts promoting menstrual health advocacy may move the needle in broader gender equality.

***Access to reproductive and sexual healthcare.*** Several stakeholders highlighted the importance of access to sexual assault nurse examiners and the need to process rape kits in a timely and systematic fashion. Others highlighted the need for widespread, affordable access to emergency contraception and abortion as forms of tertiary prevention to minimize harms experienced by survivors of rape and sexual assault.

## Economic Equity

Economic equity was a salient and highly prioritized issue related to sexual violence prevention. Issues such as affordable housing and pay equity were frequently discussed by stakeholders, with one participant stating that, "Women should earn an equal wage for equal work and their opinions should be weighed equally." Another stakeholder described the intersectionality of issues: "The ability to earn a living wage, especially for people with marginalized identities, with an emphasis on BIPOC and LGBTIQ--especially trans [gender individuals]" were highlighted as important issues related to sexual violence. Several stakeholders recommended an anti-capitalist approach, stressing the importance of equal access to community goods and resources such as housing, food and water, and quality healthcare and childcare.

## Sexual Liberation

As noted above, "Promoting healthy sexuality" was the most frequently selected strategy needed to prevent sexual violence in Missoula, with 71% of all stakeholders prioritizing this strategy. One stakeholder stated that, "We should be raised with a shame-free approach to sex education - where sexuality is seen as normal and healthy." Another stakeholder highlights that, "We should all have the information we need to explore our own gender identity, sexual orientation, and what gives us and others pleasure."

Stakeholders frequently mentioned sexual consent education, with one individual stating, "It should be normal to ask for verbal consent for any kind of sexual activity" while another describes, "Sex should be seen less as conquest or entrapment and more, through healthy and honest education, serious and joyful actions that two or more consenting adults can engage in." Finally, one stakeholder highlights the need for consent education to discuss the unique needs of certain communities: "We should have information about LGBTQ identities and how disabilities impact our ability to obtain or give consent."

The term "sexual liberation" was commonly used across many stakeholders. One stakeholder describes how our communities need to evolve to address issues across multiple societal layers: "Our community should be anti-racist, environmentally sustainable (because respect for earth is respect for each other) & pro-sexual liberation."

Based on these comments, sexual liberation, as described by the stakeholders, would be composed of the following values:

- Being free from constraints, inhibitions, shame, or stigma that limit sexual behavior, agency, or autonomy.
- Partnered sex is engaged in with enthusiasm and with full, ongoing, and reversible affirmative consent that can be withdrawn or renegotiated at any time, for any reason.

- No shame or stigma attached to the full range of consensual sexual behavior including masturbation, partnered sex, group sex, and sex involving toys or props.
- All individuals have the right to engage in consensual sex regardless of marital status, gender or genitalia of themselves or their partners, or their (dis)ability status. Young adults are entitled to engaging in partnered sex once they are developmentally able to understand and enact consensual sex.
- Freedom to engage in consensual transactional sex without the fear of criminalization.

These strategies align with those described under the Culture and Narrative Shift, Education, and Workplace Safety & Workers Rights sections in the *Survivors' Agenda* [12].

## Transformative and Restorative Justice

Transformative justice is a framework for responding to harm or violence outside of the criminal justice system [24]. Restorative justice is an approach to justice in which one of the responses to a crime is to organize a meeting between the victim and the offender, sometimes with representatives from the wider community. The goal is for all involved to share their experience of what happened, to discuss who was harmed by the crime and how, and to come to consensus for what the offender can do to repair the harm [25]. These approaches center the notion of accountability as a key tenet to the healing process. For more information about how Make Your Move! Missoula conceptualizes accountability in their sexual violence prevention trainings, see Appendix C on page 27.

Many stakeholders identified the need for transformative and restorative justice models to be employed in the community. They believe that these approaches are required to better meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence. Both transformative and restorative justice approaches are secondary and tertiary prevention efforts aimed at promoting healing among both victims and perpetrators as they seek to reduce additional harm often caused by interference from police or child protective services. One stakeholder stated that we must, "Acknowledge the systemic harm caused to community members by colonial systems of policing and dehumanization." While another declared that a community free from sexual violence would be a "community without police or prisons."

When asked which organization in Missoula was doing the least to prevent sexual violence, the top response was the Missoula City Police Department, with 18% of stakeholders selecting this option, followed by Missoula bars, breweries, and distilleries at 16%, and the University of Montana at 13%; although no one organization was identified by a majority of respondents.



One stakeholder suggested, "Instances of harm could be addressed through a transformative justice-based model, placing the focus of accountability processes on the wants of those who have experienced harm and preventing harm by addressing the social inequities and environmental factors that perpetrate and encourage violence."

While another proclaimed, "I would divert resources from nonviolent criminal enforcement, prosecution, and incarceration to the investigation and prosecution of violent crime, invest in mental health treatment and restorative justice models for both perpetrators and survivors, and start intensive healthy sexuality training in schools."

These strategies align with those described under the Community Safety and Alternatives to the Criminal Legal System and Healing Justice sections in the *Survivors' Agenda* [12].

## Early Childhood Education: Social-Emotional Learning, Autonomy, & Consent

Stakeholders expressed that sexual violence prevention efforts must start earlier to truly effect widespread and meaningful change to reduce sexual violence. They stated that early childhood education should include skill-building in empathy, communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution; alongside age-appropriate and evidence-based education about sexuality, bodily autonomy, and consent.

"Kids should learn about consent at a much younger age" was a sentiment expressed by many stakeholders as they prioritized the need for "High quality social emotional learning for youth"; "Teaching communication skills and mutual respect"; and "Strong community emphasis on teaching all people from a young age about their autonomy and personhood."

Further, stakeholders stressed that gender-based violence prevention should be incorporated in anti-bullying curriculums which are becoming more common throughout K-12 education. Also, some stakeholders mentioned that they have not seen anti-bullying curriculums explicitly address sexual harassment as a form of bullying and that this is strongly needed.

These strategies align with those described under the Culture & Narrative Shift and Education sections in the *Survivors' Agenda* [12].

## Men as Leaders in Sexual Violence Prevention

A predominant theme described by stakeholders is that men must lead efforts to dismantle the patriarchal norms that reinforce toxic behaviors and beliefs that lead to sexual violence. Men are

wanted and needed as partners in sexual violence prevention efforts across Montana's diverse communities. As noted above, 47% of stakeholders selected "Mobilizing men and boys as allies" as a top 5 most-needed strategy for sexual violence prevention efforts in Missoula. Stakeholders discussed how men are underrepresented in early childhood education and across many social work and social service sectors where their perspectives and mentorship may prove crucial in erasing harmful gender norms. Men are needed to model pro-social behaviors to children.

Stakeholders described the need for men to shape messaging around sexual violence prevention, specifically for men speaking to other men about behavior change, disrupting notions of toxic and fragile masculinity, and promoting gender equality. When asked what is needed for the community to be free from sexual violence, one stakeholder said, "For men to feel that they have more outlets and permission to be their full selves. Busting open the boxes that constrain beliefs and behaviors around gendered expectations may reduce sexual violence."

Finally, several stakeholders discussed the gap in services for young fathers. Limited funding has resulted in the closure of several Missoula-based support programs for fathers. The disappearance of these support services creates a need for more efforts to address the needs of young men, including sexual violence prevention programming.

These strategies align with those described under the Culture & Narrative Shift, Education, and Workplace Safety & Workers Rights sections in the *Survivors' Agenda* [12].

# Envisioning a World Free from Sexual Violence

As a vision-setting exercise, stakeholders were asked:

*"If you were to wave a magic wand to create a Missoula community free from sexual violence, what would that entail?*

*What would be the defining features of this new community?"*

An assortment of their responses is presented below. Please note, some statements have been split for brevity and presentation sake.

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**A community full of empathy, understanding, love and support.**

**Neighbors helping neighbors.**

**More resources that promote and teach resilience.**

**All forms of violence, including actions resulting from discrimination, racism, sexism, and homophobia are not condoned by members of our community.**

**Celebrate, rather than punish, the expression of feelings and emotions.**

**Prevention efforts are prioritized.**

**Mental health services are accessible to everyone so we could prevent any type of violence in a more impactful way.**

**Unheard of to violate a person's boundaries.**

**People will love and care for one another and themselves in a way that respects others' agency and physical space.**

Depend on one another to take care of each other. **Learn as much as Science, Art, Math, and History,**

**Education, starting early, encourages youth to interact in a collaborative way, developing their own life skills and building self-confidence.**

**Know how to talk about boundaries and consent in relationships.**

**Build a greater sense of intimacy, confidence, community, and belonging.**

**Relationships are supposed to be fun and free from power or control tactics.**

**Deeply connecting with ourselves and others.** **Consent would be fluid throughout our lives.**

**Learn more about the people around us.**  
**Higher levels of resilience and energy.**

**People would not only use consent in sexual adventures but will integrate consent into their daily lives.**

**Eliminate toxic masculinity.**

**Thriving in school, work, and at home.** **Empower bystanders.**

**Accessible resources.** **Sexual violence survivors are believed.**

Confidence and comfort in your identity.

Parents raising strong kids.

Children will be taught that they are autonomous beings, that they are people.

Structures in place to support folks emotionally and materially (housing, food, money).

New structures that do not replicate oppressive constructs of colonialism.

No police or prisons.

Skills for talking about the ways you have been hurt or have hurt other people.

A community that is deeply committed to transformation.

Learning how to be better to each other.

A place where people's basic needs are guaranteed.

Gender, racial, and economic equity across the city.

People of all genders are treated the same.

A police force, sheriff's department, and university administration that proactively set norms and regulations to shape healthy interpersonal relationships.

Dismantling the notion that male-identified people are owed sex and that they can take what they are owed.

Positive masculine and feminine traits are embraced by everyone.

Trust one another more.

Sense of equal respect and trust for everyone. is safe to fail, learn, and improve.

Less worry, stress, or fear.

Free therapy for everyone.



# Conclusion

This report summarized the findings from a community-level Needs Assessment conducted in Missoula, Montana during the Fall/Winter 2020 to identify the top needs and priorities related to sexual violence prevention. The findings reflect the perspectives, concerns, and potential solutions suggested by 54 stakeholders who represent myriad professional and personal expertise and lived experience from across Missoula and Montana. What resulted is a picture of profound optimism that a community free from sexual violence is possible. This community is possible by teaching our children about their inherent personhood and their right to set boundaries for themselves but also the need to respect the boundaries of others. A community without sexual violence is possible in a more just and equitable society. Although more work must be done to achieve this vision, several potential strategies have been identified to move us closer to that goal. Enlisting men, not only as allies but as leaders, is an essential component to achieving this vision. Further, we must disrupt and then reimagine the role of sexuality in our culture. We must offer alternative strategies to heal after harm is caused, approaches which center accountability and learning rather than fear and punishment. A community free from sexual violence will be built through partnership, coordination, and collaboration. It will be built by listening to each other, learning from one another, and celebrating the many ways that make us unique while connecting on the myriad aspects that are common between us.

We hope this report is a helpful resource as it highlights Montana-specific data and priorities. This document is meant to be used by community leaders, activists, organizers, policymakers, and funders as they set in motion plans to prevent violence and improve community health and resilience across Montana.

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# Appendix A

## Public Opinion on Sexual Violence Indicators

### Results from the 2019 MT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance

Here, we present the state-level probability estimates on sexual violence opinion questions that were included in the 2019 MT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

As seen in Table 2. below, the adult population in Montana is similar in their opinions and understanding of sexual consent, with 38.7% endorsing a “Yes means Yes” or affirmative consent standard, while 35% of all adults endorse the more passive “No means No” standard of consent, and 16% indicated their belief that there is not much difference in practice.

However, we see a striking, and somewhat surprising difference in opinion by gender. It appears that more adult men in Montana are endorsing an affirmative consent standard with 49.8% supporting a “Yes means Yes” standard compared to only 36.7% of women; the difference by gender is statistically significant. A similar trend holds true for the endorsement of the “No means No” standard with 33.4% of men and 44.4% of women endorsing this more passive model of sexual consent, a statistically significant difference.

Approximately one-third (33.1%) of Montana adults believe that women making false reports of sexual assault or harassment is a major problem, 40.9% believe this is a minor problem and 14.4% stated that this is not a problem. When looking at responses by gender, we see that 35% of men and almost 40% of women believe that women making false reports is a major problem, this difference between men and women is statistically significant.

Finally, we see that the majority (66.7%) of Montanans disagree with the statement that violence between dating partners is a personal matter and that people should not interfere. Only 9.9% of adults in Montana somewhat or strongly agreed with this assertion. Sixty-eight percent of men and 72.7% of women strongly disagree with the assertion people should not interfere in situations of violence between dating partners, and this difference by gender is statistically significant.

These findings represent the first time that Montana has collected public opinion information on these sexual violence indicators. See Table 2. below for weighted percentages and 95% Confidence Intervals, reported by overall population totals and with breakouts by gender.

Table 1. Public Opinion on Sexual Consent, Reporting, & Violence Intervention in Montana: Findings from 2019 MT BRFSS						
	Total		Men		Women	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
<b>Which of the following do you think is the better standard to use when determining whether sexual activity is consensual or not?</b>						
"Yes means Yes" standard where both parties must clearly agree before engaging in sexual activity	38.70%	37.2%-40.2%	49.80%	47.4%-52.1%	36.70%	34.4%-39.0%
"No means No" standard where sexuality activity must stop if one person objects	35.00%	33.4%-36.5%	33.40%	31.2%-35.7%	44.40%	42.0%-46.8%
In practice there is not much difference	16.00%	14.8%-17.2%	16.70%	15.0%-18.5%	18.90%	17.0-20.8%
Don't know/not sure	6.30%	5.6%-7.1%				
<b>Do you believe that women falsely claiming sexual harassment/assault is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem</b>						
A major problem	33.10%	31.6%-34.6%	35.00%	32.7%-37.2%	39.90%	37.5%-42.2%
A minor problem	40.90%	39.3%-42.4%	49.30%	46.9%-51.7%	43.30%	40.9%-45.7%
Not a problem	14.40%	13.3%-15.5%	15.70%	14.0%-17.4%	16.80%	15.1%-18.3%
<b>Do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement, "Violence between dating partners is a personal matter and people should not interfere"?</b>						
Strongly disagree	66.70%	65.2%-68.1%	68.00%	65.9%-70.2%	72.70%	70.6%-74.9%
Somewhat disagree	13.70%	12.6%-14.8%	14.40%	12.8%-16.0%	14.50%	12.8%-16.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	4.40%	3.7%-5.1%	5.20%	4.2%-6.2%	4.10%	3.2%-5.0%
Somewhat agree	6.00%	5.2%-6.7%	7.60%	6.4%-8.8%	5.00%	3.9%-6.2%
Strongly agree	3.90%	3.4%-4.5%	4.80%	3.8%-5.7%	3.60%	2.8%-4.4%

# Appendix B

## CDC Strategies

The CDC has identified 11 evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies to prevent sexual violence, those strategies are listed below.

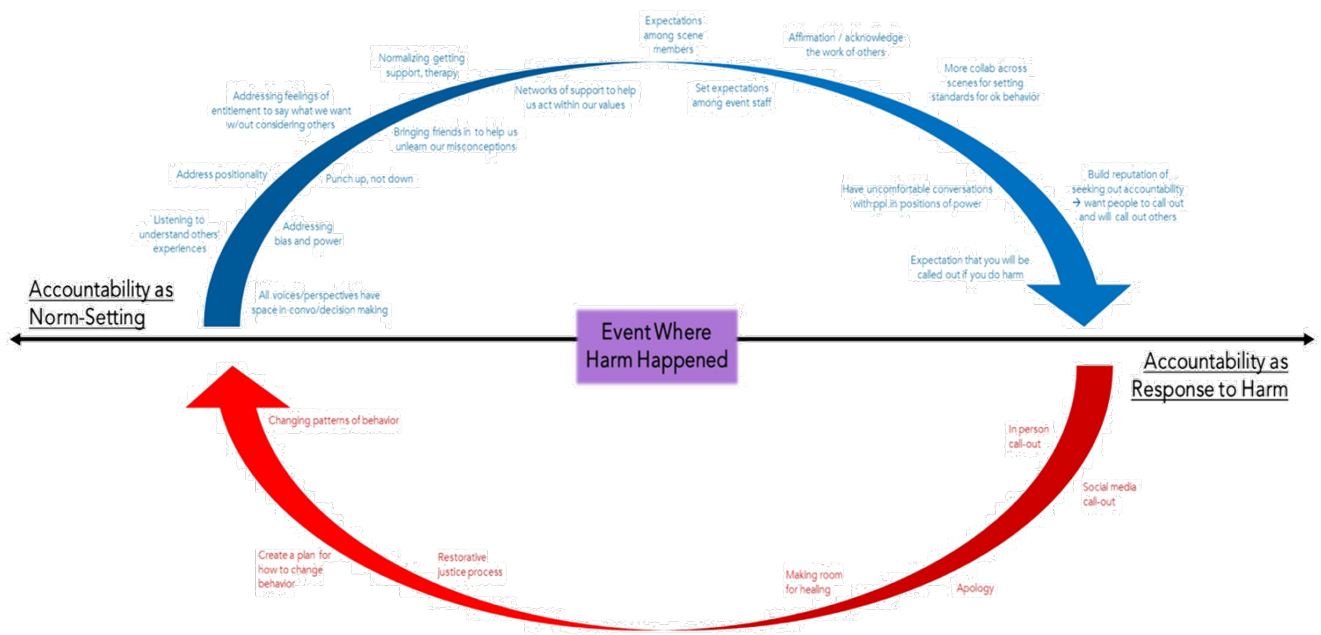
- **Bystander training:** engaging individuals to take action when they see behavior that is associated with sexual violence (sexual harassment, sexual violence, engaging in sexual behavior while intoxicated, etc.)
- **Mobilizing men and boys as allies:** teaching skills and reinforcing norms that demonstrate when men stop sexual violence and that promote healthy gender norms
- **Social/emotional learning:** skills taught during childhood and adolescence to enhance communication, empathy, emotional regulation, and conflict management
- **Teaching healthy dating and positive intimate relationship skills to adolescents:** build strong communication skills, mutual respect, and healthy boundaries in dating and sexual relationships
- **Promoting healthy sexuality:** comprehensive sex education that includes bodily autonomy, teaches about reproduction including pregnancy, STI, and HIV prevention, emphasizes sexual pleasure and strong communication skills.
- **Empowerment-based training for women:** strengthens skills to identify potential for violence in relationships and empowers them to act, increases self-efficacy, and reduces exposure to potentially violent situations.
- **Strengthen economic supports for women and families:** addresses poverty, economic and housing security, reduces the gender wage gap, and addresses power imbalances between men and women
- **Strengthen leadership and opportunities for adolescent girls:** builds confidence and leadership skills in young women, focuses on achievements in education, employment, and community engagement
- **Improving safety and monitoring in schools:** increase safe spaces for staff and students, modify physical and social characteristics of the school environment
- **Establishing and enforcing workplace policies:** establish standard for workplace behavior which prevent bullying and in which sexual harassment is not tolerated



- **Addressing community-level risks through environmental approaches:** changing physical, social, or economic conditions to promote healthy behaviors, enforce laws and policies which protect against sexual violence

# Appendix C

## Circle of Accountability



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