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Toward a Multi-level, Ecological Approach to the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault:

Prevention in Peer and Community Contexts

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Abstract

Although sexual assault prevention programs have been increasingly successful at improving knowledge about sexual violence and decreasing rape-supportive attitudes and beliefs among participants, reducing sexually assaultive conduct itself remains an elusive outcome. This review considers efforts to support change for individuals by creating prevention strategies that target peer network and community-level factors that support sexual violence. To this end, we examine successful ecological prevention models from other prevention fields, identify the components of multi-level prevention that appear critical to efficacy, and discuss their application to existing and emerging sexual violence prevention strategies.

Key words: Sexual violence, rape, prevention, ecological frameworks

Toward a Multi-level, Ecological Approach to the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence:

Prevention in Peer and Community Contexts

The sexual assault of adolescent and adult women in the U.S. persists as a prevalent and devastating public health problem. According to the National Violence against Women Study, at least 17% of US women are raped during their lifetimes; 32% of whom are raped between the ages of 12 and 17, and 46% of whom are assaulted in adulthood (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Over 95% of these crimes are committed by men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Although sexual violence prevention programs have proliferated and become increasingly sophisticated in addressing rape-supportive attitudes and beliefs among participants (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Brecklin & Forde, 2001), only two (Foshee et al., 2004; Foubert, Newberry & Tatum, 2007), have shown promise in terms of impacting rates of sexual violence perpetration. While some sources such as the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey suggest a downturn in the incidence of rapes of adults, concurrent with the decrease in other violent crimes during the1990's (Rennison & Rand, 2003), evidence exists that the lifetime prevalence of sexual victimization among women has remained unchanged over the past 30 years (Basile, Chen, Black & Salzman, 2007; Casey & Nurius, 2006; Russell & Bolen, 2000). These realities suggest the need for continual reflection on and re-tooling of primary sexual violence prevention endeavors.

Accordingly, numerous voices, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004), the Prevention Institute (Davis, Parks & Cohen, 2006) and researchers and practitioners (e.g. Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003) have argued that enhancing prevention efforts requires attention to peer and community-level factors in addition to components focused on individual-level change. We join this call and suggest that a disjuncture exists between how we typically conceptualize the causes of sexual violence (as multi-level with identified risk factors at individual, family, peer, community and societal levels; see Heise (1998) for a review), and the majority of evaluated sexual violence

prevention programs, which focus almost exclusively on changing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of individuals. In particular, we argue that developing peer and community-level intervention strategies that are offered in conjunction with approaches that address individual rape-related risk factors offers new opportunities for decreasing rates of sexual assault. In this article we concentrate on "primary" prevention approaches that may reduce the incidence of peer-to-peer adolescent and adult sexual assaults rather than ameliorate their impact (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2004).

It is important to recognize that enhancing sexual violence prevention necessitates attention to each level of an ecological model. To date, much more knowledge is available about individual-level risk factors such as early childhood experiences or distorted cognitions on the hypothetical likelihood of rape. Work on theory development related to the mechanisms associated with men's perpetration of sexual assault (i.e. Blake & Gannon, 2008; Stinson, Sales & Becker, 2008), as well as preventative interventions to address them (see for review, Gidycz et al., 2002; Schewe, 2002) have also been developed. Less available are comprehensive reviews of peer and community-level contributors to sexual violence, or of accompanying promising primary prevention strategies. While work on our understanding of individual-level etiological and interventive considerations must continue, this paper specifically attends to the current gaps in the peer and community layers of an ecological prevention approach.

Multi-level or 'ecological' theories recognize that human behavior is reciprocally shaped by factors at multiple levels, including peer and community environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Successful prevention efforts in other areas often include these broader contexts for change (Sallis & Owen, 2002). For example, multi-level primary prevention approaches have been effectively applied to health and safety issues such as HIV transmission (Hays, Rebchook, & Kegeles, 2003), bullying (Whitaker, Rosenbluth, Valle, & Sanchez, 2004), drunk driving (Wanenaar, Murray & Toomey, 2000), adolescent tobacco use (Biglan, Ary, Smolkowski, Duncan & Black, 2000), and community violence (Bowen, Gwiasda, & Brown, 2004). Sexual

violence researchers and prevention interventionists can capitalize on the successes in these fields by applying ecological prevention principles and strategies to the existing multi-level theoretical conceptualizations of sexual violence etiology.

Rigorous evaluations of sexual assault-specific prevention efforts at peer and community-level are limited. Given this, there is much to be learned from other fields' use of peer network and community – level prevention strategies, and to consider how evidence from these areas of research could be applied to sexual violence prevention. In this review we set the stage for considering multi-level interventions by first providing a brief summary of current knowledge on the etiology of sexual assault perpetration and note the evidence for attention to peer and community levels. Next, we identify core components of multi-level prevention based on literature from an array of prevention fields and discuss their application to the problem of sexual violence. Finally, we describe two examples of emerging sexual violence prevention approaches that operate at peer and/or community-levels to illustrate the application of a multi-level approach to sexual violence prevention.

Summary of research on the etiology of sexual assault perpetration

A considerable literature has developed regarding the antecedents and correlates of sexual assault, with a strong focus on individual experiences, motivation, cognition, and emotional dysregulation as predictors of perpetration. Comprehensive reviews and models of these factors are widely available elsewhere (i.e. Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Blake & Gannon, 2008; Houston, 2002; Stinson et al., 2008; Ward, Polaschek & Beech, 2006), and will therefore be summarized very briefly here. Some findings suggest overlap between sexual offending against children and committing sexual assaults against adolescent or adult women in terms of both behavior and risk factors (see for review, Bard et al., 1987; Eldridge, 2000). However, significant evidence indicates substantial differences between child molesters and males who commit rape against adolescent or adult women, including dissimilarities in "implicit theories," or cognitive distortions that rationalize these crimes (Ward, 2000), sexual schema

(see for review, Blake & Gannon, 2008), and behavior (Prentky & Knight, 1991). Explanatory

models and theories relative to perpetration, therefore, have tended to focus on either child

molestation (i.e. Finkelhor, 1984; Ward et al., 2006) or on rape of adolescent and adult women

(i.e.Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes & Acker, 1995). In this review, we focus on peer assault of

adolescent and adult women.

Several individual-level predictors and correlates of sexually aggressive behavior have

been identified.   For instance, abuse experiences in childhood are strongly correlated with later

sexual violence, especially histories of childhood sexual victimization (Loh & Gidycz, 2006;

Nagayama Hall, Teten, Dagarmo, Sue, & Stephens, 2005), and physical abuse (Simons,

Wurtele, & Heil, 2002; White & Smith, 2004). Cognitive factors such as endorsing "hostile

masculinity" (Murnen, Wright & Kaluzny, 2002), or a simultaneously negative, hostile and

dominating attitude towards women (Malamuth et al., 1995) have been among the strongest

attitudinal associates of self-reported perpetration. Similarly, "hypermasculinity," or strong

endorsement of traditional male gender roles (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984), has shown a moderate

effect size in relation to sexually aggressive behavior (Murnen et al., 2002). Rape–supportive

attitudes, and endorsement of "rape myths" (widely held, but false beliefs, such as the

perception that women "deserve" rape if they wear provocative clothing) are also consistently

related to perpetration (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001; Maxwell, Robinson &

Post, 2003). Men who are more tolerant of interpersonal violence (Carr & Vandeusen, 2004),

and who have a promiscuous and "impersonal" or non-intimacy-based approach to sexual

interactions (Malamuth et al., 1995) also have a higher risk of sexual assault perpetration.

Researchers have further examined the role of distorted thinking patterns, or "implicit

theories" about gender and sex in sexual violence perpetration, positing that these patterns can

serve to both excuse assaultive behavior, and to color the way aggressors take in information.

Polaschek & Gannon (2004) found that convicted rapists endorse implicit theories such as male

entitlement, and beliefs that women are dangerous, "unknowable" and exist as sexual objects.

Linked to this research is evidence that sexually aggressive men may have deficits in social perception, misperceiving hesitance or rejection from women as encouragement (McDonel & McFall, 1991), and/or perceiving resistance to sexual advances as "token," and insincere (e.g. Loh, Gidycz, Lobo & Luthra, 2005).

Several other behavioral and emotional individual-level risk factors are also correlates or predictors of sexually aggressive behavior. Among these is the presence of "deviant" sexual arousal, or a conditioned sexual response to non-consensual or violent sexual situations (see for review, Stinson et al., 2008). Perhaps related to the development of deviant arousal patterns, men's self-reported likelihood of raping is associated with consumption of violent pornography (Davis, Norris, George, Martell & Heiman, 2006), and men at high risk for sexual assault are more likely to report offending behavior if they also report use of violent pornography (Malamuth, Addison & Koss, 2000).   Pornography may therefore serve as a disinhibitor of sexually aggressive impulses rather than a unique causal factor (Vega & Malamuth, 2007). Alcohol is also both a tool of coercion by potential perpetrators (Carr & VanDuesen, 2004), and a risk factor, as heavy or problem drinking, particularly when paired with sexual encounters, is associated with higher levels of self-reported sexual aggression among men (Abbey, Parkhill, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrod & Zawacki, 2006; Ullman, Karabastos, & Koss, 1999; Zawacki et al., 2003). Finally, deficits in empathy are also implicated in sexual assault (see for review Blake & Gannon, 2008; Wheeler, George & Dahl, 2002). Men who have limited capacity to imagine the feelings of others are more likely to engage in sexually assaultive behavior.

Although individual experiential, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional factors are clearly critical to understanding the etiology of sexual violence perpetration, these factors are not sufficient to completely differentiate sexually aggressive males from their non-aggressive peers. For example, although experiencing childhood abuse and particularly sexual abuse is a consistent predictor of subsequent sexual assault perpetration, a recent study with a general population sample found that less than half of self-identified perpetrators report adverse

childhood experiences (Casey, Beadnell & Lindhorst, 2008). Similarly, Merrill and colleagues (2001) note that although childhood physical and sexual abuse increased the odds of subsequent perpetration in their sample of enlisted men, a significant subset of non-abused men (7%) also reported committing rape. Attitudinal variables also do not always reliably discriminate perpetrators from non-aggressive men. For example, Calhoun and colleagues (1997) found that hostility toward women did not differentiate perpetrators vs. non-perpetrators of sexual coercion in a rural sample of men. Similarly, in a review of research regarding attitudinal correlates of rape, Dreischner and Lange (1999) conclude that there is often little difference in the rape-related attitudes of incarcerated rapists, non-sexual offenders and non-offenders, although they note that social desirability pressures must be considered.

Given the multitude of identified risk factors, researchers suggest that there are likely multiple and heterogeneous trajectories towards perpetration (e.g. Malamuth et al.,1995; Prentky & Knight, 1991), indicating the need for concomitant diversity in interventive and preventive approaches. Some perpetrators may be characterized by extreme experiences of individual adversity and psychopathology, and require interventive strategies based largely on individual treatment or containment. On the other hand, as Abbey points out in her 2005 retrospective on the state of the knowledge base related to sexual violence, the finding that over one third of college-enrolled men would consider sexual assault if assured of a lack of consequences (Malamuth, 1989) suggests that a fairly broad range of "normal" men may also be vulnerable to engaging in coercive behavior. This implies that support for or conditions fostering sexual violence likely exist within broader peer and social environments, rendering both etiological and preventative attention to these levels critical.

Peer and community – level contributors to sexually assaultive behavior

Because individual level correlates have proven insufficient to fully explain patterns of sexual violence perpetration among men, researchers have turned to investigations of both peer social networks, and larger community norms as additional locations which may offer

explanatory and interventive avenues. For example, a growing literature suggests that

membership in social networks characterized by rape-supportive norms is associated with

increased risk for perpetration among men. Peer approval of forcing sex on women and/or

using coercive tactics to gain sex is a strong predictor of both an individual man's approval of

the use of verbal coercion in intimate situations and his own likelihood of sexual assault

perpetration (Abbey et al., 2001; Humphrey & Kahn, 2000; Schwartz & Nogrady, 1996).

Similarly, associating with peers who have gotten a woman drunk in order to gain sex, or who

support the use of alcohol or drugs to undermine a woman's resistance to sex is predictive of

self-reports of perpetration (Schwartz & Nogrady, 1996). Association with "delinquent" peers in

adolescence, or with peers who reinforce each others' hostile talk about women is also

predictive of sexual aggression (Malamuth et al., 1995) and mistreatment of female partners

(Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001). Indeed, sexually assaultive men are more

likely to talk about their sexual behavior with peers (Craig, Kalichnan, & Follingstad, 1989; Lisak

& Roth, 1988), suggesting that sexually coercive behavior may be over-represented in

discourse about sexuality among men. Membership in fraternities (Lackie & deMan, 1997) and

aggressive all-male sports teams (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006) have also

been implicated in increased risk for sexually aggressive behavior among college students,

although this association may be more attributable to the unique climates of particular

fraternities or teams as opposed to membership in these types of organizations more generally

(Humphrey & Kahn, 2000). Conversely, perceiving that friends are willing to intervene to

prevent rape is associated with men's own reported willingness to take action to intervene in

potential sexual assaults (Stein, 2007). Taken together, this work suggests that peer contexts

are critical arenas in which support for or disapproval of sexually assaultive behavior is

communicated. Peer social network intervention would, therefore, be an important prevention

approach in lessening sexual violence.

At community and societal levels, evidence supports the longstanding feminist analysis (e.g. Brownmiller, 1975) that social conditions serve to support rape. In a cross-cultural survey of anthropological data, Sanday (1981) determined that communities evidencing "rape-prone" levels of sexual violence were characterized by more extreme patriarchal social structures, a higher tolerance of violence, and a greater separation of the sexes in labor and in political institutions than cultures with little or no evidence of rape. In a cross-national study of college students, Hines (2007) found that locations with greater levels of hostility towards women were characterized by higher rates of sexual assault of women (although the status of women across sites approached but did not achieve a statistically significant relationship to rates of rape in this study). These findings are echoed in tests of the "Cultural Spillover" Theory, which posits that cultures or environments in which some types of aggression and violence are legitimized may see a "spillover" of violence into unsanctioned arenas, such as interpersonal relationships.   For example, endorsing legitimized aggression (such as violence in sports and other media, gun ownership and use, and the application of the death penalty) is associated with engaging in assaultive sexual behavior among individual men (Hogben, Byrne, Hamburger & Osland, 2001). Rates of reported rape and levels of legitimized aggression within geographic locations in the US are also linked (Baron, Straus & Jaffe, 1987).   In a comprehensive report on global violence and health, researchers from the World Health Organization (2002) synthesized extensive cross-national research to identify sexual violence risk factors at multiple levels, including community and societal strata. Risks at these levels include poverty, societal tolerance for violence, lack of accountability for perpetrators, and patriarchal and rape-supportive social norms. These international studies mirror U.S. research which has found that sexual harassment and coercion in U.S. workplaces are more likely to occur in environments in which women hold subordinate status, are in a traditionally "men's" field, or represent a threat to the status quo of men's power in a professional arena (see for review, Bond, 1995).

Given the mounting evidence that risks for sexual violence exist at individual *and* peer and community levels, theorists have developed multi-level, ecological models of sexual violence (e.g. Banyard et al., 2004; Heise, 1998). Men at risk for sexual violence perpetration may see their beliefs about sex and women reflected in their peer groups' social norms and in their community's treatment of sexual violence. Further, some men without apparent childhood or cognitive risks for aggression may be supported in acting coercively in contexts characterized by rape-supportive norms, attitudes or peer-pressure. Adding prevention strategies that target broader peer and community contexts may, therefore, enhance the impact of existing prevention activities that focus on changing individuals' knowledge, attitudes or behavior.

Indeed, other fields, including those involving similarly "private" individual sexual behaviors have moved toward multi-level interventions, including the arenas of HIV prevention (Kelly, 2005) and adolescent pregnancy prevention (Shoveller, Johnson, Savoy & Pietersma, 2006). For example, in a reflection on the history of HIV prevention, Kelly (2005) suggests that early HIV prevention efforts targeting gay men's behavior were largely ineffectual and limited until local community-based groups began to use social networks and structures within gay communities to disseminate information, change social norms and empower men to use safer sex practices. Latkin & Knowlton (2005) note that HIV interventions oriented solely towards individual-level change tend to produce behavioral outcomes that rapidly deteriorate, a finding mirrored in some individual-level sexual violence prevention programs where rape supportive attitudes return rapidly to pre-intervention levels (Schewe, 2002). The HIV field now has peer and community-level prevention approaches with documented success in creating lasting change in safer sex practices among individual gay men (Hays et al., 2003), and female residents of inner cities (Sikkema et al., 2000). Like sexual aggression, HIV-avoidance behaviors such as monogamy and condom use generally occur in private, away from the eyes of peers or community members. However, these interactions happen in "settings and in relationships that exist in [people's] day to day lives in the community," (Kelly, 2005 p. 91) and

are therefore influenced by the perceived norms and expectations communicated by and within peer social networks and communities. These findings from the HIV prevention field suggest that supporting individual behavioral change may fundamentally rely upon creating support for these changes and normalizing respectful sexual behavior within people's peer and community contexts. Kelly (2005) further suggests that prevention interventions that occur within the context of naturally occurring social networks or community settings may carry the added benefit of exposing higher-risk people (who might otherwise opt out of individually-oriented interventions) to positive prevention messaging.

Components of ecological prevention in peer networks and communities

Evidence from prevention efforts in other fields demonstrates the efficacy of multi-level approaches that simultaneously initiate shifts among both individuals and their peer or community contexts (Nation, Crusto, Wandersman, Kumpfer, Seybolt & Morrisey-Kane, 2003; Wandersman & Florin, 2003).   Programs addressing both individual and social-network level risks have had a demonstrated effect on risky HIV-related sexual behavior (Hays et al., 2003), adolescent problem behavior (Dishion & Kavanagh, 2000) and alcohol misuse (Stigler, Perry, Komro, Cudeck, & Williams, 2006). While effective programs target individual attitudes, behavior, skills or knowledge for change (e.g. Hays et. al., 2003), these objectives are embedded in efforts to shift norms in communities and social networks to sustain and support lasting behavioral change. These types of efforts at peer and community change have yet to be widely adopted in rigorously evaluated sexual assault prevention efforts.

To capitalize on the gains made in neighboring prevention fields, we review evidence from multi-level prevention interventions in fields including but not limited to HIV, substance abuse, youth violence, adolescent pregnancy and school achievement. For the purposes of the search, multi-level was defined as prevention approaches which incorporated interventive strategies at more than one level, (i.e. individual and community or individual and peer networks). Literature was identified via searches of Psychinfo, Pubmed and Sociological

Abstracts databases for the past decade. To be included, the articles or book chapters had to

meet one of the following criteria: review multi-level prevention intervention – related literature,

reflect a meta-analysis of prevention studies that included multi-level strategies, or describe an

unduplicated empirical evaluation of a particular multi-level program. Articles which described

but did not evaluate a particular prevention program, or that framed a social issue in ecological

terms, but did not provide multi-level prevention data were excluded from consideration.

Articles published prior to the ten-year window which described empirical evaluations of

ecological interventions were presumed to be captured in included review articles. Thirty

articles met inclusion criteria and were examined for common themes regarding effective

prevention that transcend specific disciplines or social issues (included articles are marked with

an asterisk in the reference section). Because of diverse terminology associated with

prevention, these articles likely do not exhaust all possible published resources on ecological

prevention, but do represent current trends and programs in this area.   From these reports, we

identified six critical components of multi-level prevention which are summarized in Table 1.

Next we describe each component and provide examples of its application in other prevention

arenas, and discuss its application in the sexual violence field.

Component one: Comprehensiveness

Not surprisingly, the vast majority (90%) of articles reviewed for this paper explicitly

identified comprehensive programming as a critical element of program effectiveness. In their

review of characteristics of effective prevention interventions, Nation and colleagues (2003)

identified comprehensiveness as the most commonly present component in successful

programs. Ecological prevention frameworks inherently target factors at multiple levels,

including strategies designed to reach individuals, peer groups and communities.

Comprehensiveness, therefore, can be conceptualized as implementing change strategies

(such as educational presentations, media campaigns, small-group psycho-educational

programming, etc.) at two or more levels simultaneously (Jason et al., 2002; McKinlay &

Marceau, 2000; Trickett, 2002; Wandersman & Florin, 2003). Change in knowledge, attitudes

or behavior at the individual level is thereby supported by shifts in peer or community norms and

practices (Sallis & Owen, 2002). Analyses of effective prevention also recommend that

interventive programs incorporate a "package" of strategies across multiple levels and multiple

outcomes (Felner, Felner & Silverman, 2000; Hays et al., 2003; Nation et al., 2003; Prothrow-

Smith, 2002). Thus, comprehensiveness entails not only work at multiple levels, but also the

inclusion of multiple strategies targeting the same outcome (such as individual attitudes), and

attention to multiple factors on the same level, (such as addressing both individual attitudes and

behavior (Dishion & Kavanagh, 2000; Felner et al., 2000; Nation et al., 2003)).

An example of successful comprehensive programming is found in HIV prevention. The

Mpowerment project, designated by the Centers for Disease Control as a "model" HIV

prevention program, includes multiple community-level and peer network strategies. At the

community level, the project engaged members of local gay communities and developed

advisory boards of community members and health system representatives to plan prevention

activities. At the peer level, small discussion and psycho-educational groups were formed that

supported men in learning about safer sexual behaviors. In a study comparing intervention to

non-intervention communities, the Mpowerment project (Hays et. al., 2003) demonstrated an

ability to reduce rates of unsafe sexual behavior and HIV transmission among young gay men

(Hays et al., 2003; Kegeles, Hays & Coates, 1996). Individual changes in attitudes or behavior

were supported in peer networks, and were reflected within gay communities more generally.

Recent reports on sexual violence prevention by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (2004) and the Prevention Institute (Davis et al., 2006) have called for a multi-level

approach with simultaneous strategies at individual, community and societal levels. In sexual

violence prevention, comprehensiveness translates to implementing interventions with multiple,

simultaneous strategies. Examples of these types of multi-strategy programming already exist.

Forinstance, Foshee and colleagues (2004) demonstrated that a multi-session school-based

sexual violence prevention curriculum consisting of a classroom curriculum, theatre production and poster contest successfully reduced rates of dating and sexual aggression among middle school students at a 4-year follow-up. Other possibilities for comprehensiveness relative to sexual assault prevention might mirror the previously described Mpowerment project's simultaneous organizing of community coalitions and peer-based discussion groups. Or, sexual assault prevention practitioners might incorporate Kelly's (2004) popular opinion leader approach to HIV prevention (see below), in which psycho-educational programming is coupled with engaging leaders within peer networks to initiate prevention-oriented conversations within their social networks. Common to all of these approaches is the simultaneous selection of two or more prevention strategies that address different levels of outcomes for change.

Component two: Community engagement

Like comprehensiveness, community engagement is a common element in effective multi-level prevention programs. Discussed in 63% of reviewed articles, community engagement is centered on the premise that sustainable change is contingent upon the participation and commitment of community members in the design and implementation of intervention strategies (Merzel & D'Affitti, 2003; Tseng et al., 2002). Involving community members as partners in determining priorities for change and identifying strategies to address those priorities assures the relevance of the prevention program to the needs and realities of the community. Beyond mere involvement in meetings, community engagement requires partnering with existing community-based groups; eliciting needs, priorities and goals from community members; and supporting community members in occupying leadership roles in prevention teams, participating in advisory boards, delivering interventions and charting the course of a program's future (Hays et al., 2003; Trickett, 2002). While challenging, community engagement increases the sustainability of prevention efforts following the end of formal support (Bowen et al., 2004; Fernandez et al., 2003).

An instructive example for the sexual violence field comes from a community engagement effort to reduce violence (as defined by each community, such as child maltreatment, youth violence, and gang violence). In a non-experimental evaluation of the community-based violence prevention program, Bowen and colleagues (2004) showed that creating partnerships between different sectors within neighborhoods resulted in measurable reductions in homicide rates. The process of community engagement included coalition-building between residents and representatives of multiple community systems, conducting a collaborative needs assessment, and jointly developing an implementation plan informed by residents and the findings of community assessments. Community successes included reductions in local homicide rates, improvements in physical environments, creation of new resources, and active engagement of large numbers of residents. Formal coalition structures persisted in seven of the eight sites after the cessation of formal funding.   While this particular organizing approach was not tested in a randomized trial, its effectiveness in generating new community structures signals its potential utility in other settings and with social problems such as sexual violence.

A sexual violence–specific example of community engagement comes from the State of Washington, which has adopted a "community development" approach to primary sexual assault prevention (Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, 2003). Sexual assault services programs within the state that receive federal Rape Prevention and Education funds are required to incorporate community engagement activities as part of their on-going primary prevention efforts. Eligible activities include partnering with members of specific communities, developing community stakeholder groups, jointly identifying the specific problems related to sexual violence that communities are interested in addressing, and jointly implementing prevention strategies that best fit the local realities and manifestations of sexual violence (Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, 2003). Non-experimental evaluation results from a community engagement effort initiated by a local sexual assault services program with a residential substance abuse

treatment community suggest that this collaboration resulted in self-reported increases in

knowledge about sexual violence, more willingness to address issues of sexual violence and

decreases in sexual violence-supportive attitudes among residents, staff and other treatment

community members (Organizational Research Services, 2006). To reach these goals, multi-

level prevention strategies were jointly identified and implemented by sexual assault program

staff and treatment community members. These strategies included facility policy changes, staff

education and sexual violence educational programming for agency clients and staff.

Component three: Contextualized programming

Connected to the principle of community engagement is the idea that issues of concern

for communities exist within a context of both larger social-structural constraints (such as

poverty and discrimination) and localized beliefs and norms related to those issues. Prevention

strategies need to account for and emerge from a holistic analysis of the array of community

factors contributing to a particular problem (Felner et al., 2000; Lai, 2005; Trickett, 2002). Fifty

percent of reviewed articles highlighted attention to context as a critical component of multi-level

prevention. Authors emphasized the need to understand a community's historical relationship

to a problem as well as to the interventionists, researchers and "helpers" who have sought to

address the problem in the past (Tseng et al., 2002). Included in this understanding is attention

to a community's framing of the issue, language used to talk about the problem and beliefs

about appropriate solutions (Marin, 2003; Nation et al., 2003). Contextualized prevention

cannot occur without engaging community members to identify their beliefs about the

contributors to and likely solutions for sexual violence. As a result, multi-level models often call

for intervention in highly bounded, specified communities (a neighborhood or ethnic group)

rather than in large, vaguely defined communities (i.e., a city) to increase the likelihood of

relevance (Marin, 2003; Rogers, 2000; Trickett, 2002; Wingood & DiClemente, 2002). For

example, prevention activities might focus on a particular community, such as the Hmong

immigrant community in a particular geographic region rather than attempting to develop

approaches for Southeast Asian immigrant or Asian-American communities more generally. Tailoring preventions for smaller communities may allow for greater adaptation and relevance to the particular concerns and structural issues surrounding the central "problem;" and facilitate engaging trusted, credible community members as deliverers of the intervention (Rogers, 2000).

Two examples of contextualized prevention are available in the HIV prevention literature. Marin (2003) reviews an HIV prevention program for "high risk" Latina women in a specific geographic community. The intervention was based on extensive interviews with community members and subsequently incorporated language and idioms used in the community, content on the external and structural barriers to safe sex behavior perceived by participants, and attention to the context of discrimination or stigma. Although the resulting intervention was designed for small-group delivery and psycho-educational in format, the content addressed and accounted for factors at multiple levels. Evaluation results demonstrated reduced STD rates among intervention attendees compared to participants in a control condition.

A second contextualized HIV prevention intervention tapped into a specific social network context. In a series of tests of a "popular opinion leader" intervention, researchers demonstrated that training admired, well-connected and credible members of a specific social network (such as regular, popular patrons at a particular bar) to convey safer sex messages to friends and acquaintances is an effective way to reduce risky behaviors among members of the network (Fernandez et al., 2003; Kelly, 2004). This intervention involves utilizing ethnographic techniques to identify popular leaders of social networks, and engaging those individuals in skill-building related to both pro-actively talking about safer sex with friends and correcting misinformation that spontaneously emerges in conversation. Opinion leaders commit to initiating informal conversations about safer sex within their social network. As members of the community, opinion leaders can speak in the vernacular and style appropriate for the specific context, and can address localized constraints and barriers to safer sex. Results from multiple studies (including both community and randomized trials) suggest that the popular opinion

leader approach successfully increases knowledge about HIV transmission, decreases rates of unprotected sex and increases condom use within circumscribed social networks at short-term follow-ups (Kelly, 2004). This approach has been used successfully in gay communities in the U.S. and Russia, and with female residents of public housing units (Amirkhanian, Kelly, Kabakchieva, McAuliffe, & Vassileva, 2003; Fernandez et al., 2003; Kelly, 2004). This strategy may also carry the potential to reach "high-risk" individuals in their natural contexts, alleviating the concern that these individuals will not self-select into clearly delineated prevention interventions.

Contextualized prevention is particularly important for the sexual violence field. Attitudes, norms and beliefs about sex, women and relationships are deeply culturally embedded, and vary among religious, ethnic and community groups (Fontes, 1995). To be effective, sexual violence prevention needs to respond to localized worldviews. Despite this recognition, culturally and locally tailored efforts have been virtually absent from published evaluations of sexual violence prevention efforts. In a review of 69 studies of college-based prevention efforts, Anderson & Whiston (2005) found only one program with content designed for a specific ethnic group. This single intervention, by Heppner and colleagues (1999), demonstrated that race-congruent content and presenters were more effective at changing rape-related attitudes among African American men than "generic" messages.

Although context-specific sexual violence prevention programming is sparse in published literature, programs created by grassroots groups around the U.S. have proliferated. For example, drawing from community engagement techniques and rooted in analyses of the intersectionality of violence, sexism, racism and other forms of oppression, groups such as Incite: Women of Color Against Violence (www.incite-national.org) seek to address violence against women in the context of other constraints, including racism and poverty. Another example emerges from a U.S. protest movement described by White (1999), in which anti-rape mobilization initiated by African American feminists incorporated a simultaneous analysis of the

racist and sexist origins of violence against Black women. Using existing community structures

such as informal "girlfriend" gatherings of women to engage and recruit participants, this effort

culminated in printed advertisements which explicitly addressed rape myths within the context of

Black women's experiences of racism. Contextualization within the field of sexual violence

prevention requires engagement of community members in identifying local experiences,

beliefs, language and social constraints that accompany vulnerability to sexual violence, so that

prevention language and programming can mirror these considerations.

Component four: Theory-based

Although certainly not unique to ecological models, a strong theoretical rationale is an

inherent element of many multi-layered prevention frameworks (Blumenthal et al., 2005; Felner

et al., 2000; Marin, 2003); 50% of reviewed articles noted development of a testable theoretical

base for the intervention as a critical component of success. Utilizing theory to create effective

prevention programming requires both connecting prevention activities to theory about the

causes or origins of the problem and to theory regarding interventions, or mechanisms of

behavioral or community change (Felner et al., 2000; Nation et al., 2003).   Contextualized

prevention (component three) may also be advanced by prudent adapting and testing of existing

evidence-based interventions in particular community and cultural contexts. Scholarly reviews

suggest that much prevention work to date is premised on what seems logical, or what has

always been done rather than on clearly theorized rationales for included activities (Fisher &

Fisher, 1992; Nation et al., 2003). Indeed, critiques of existing sexual violence prevention

intervention point to a lack of underlying theoretical grounding as a potential reason for their

limited effectiveness (eg. Gidycz et al., 2002).

An example of a theory-driven, multi-level prevention program is an intervention to

increase condom use for inner-city women (Lauby, Smith, Stark, Person & Adams, 2000).

Combining the Transtheoretical Stages of Change model, which posits that interventions need

to be tailored to participants' current orientation towards making changes (Prochaska, Redding

& Evers, 2002), with social learning theory, which suggests that behavioral change can be influenced, in part, by role-models (Bandura, 1977), researchers found greater decreases in unprotected sex and increases in talking with partners about condom use among women in intervention communities (Lauby et al., 2000). This intervention included the production of printed materials with messages tailored to various phases of readiness to change, using "role model" stories about overcoming barriers to safer sex, mobilization of peer networks to distribute materials, and the use of outreach specialists who initiated individual interactions within specified communities.

Within the sexual violence prevention field, a strong example of theory-driven work comes from programs designed for college students by Heppner and colleagues (1999). While not multi-level, this intervention did utilize a multi-session interactive intervention aimed at reducing rape-supportive norms. The intervention incorporated social psychological theory related to attitude formation as well as principles from the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which worked to enhance attention to the core message of the intervention. The ELM posits that attention is improved by the personal relevance of the intervention content (such as the use of localized statistics or stories, or race/gender congruent presenters), opportunities to evaluate the content (such as discussion or interactive activities related to the content), and motivation to engage in the programming. Evaluation results suggest that decreases in rape supportive attitudes associated with the program were preserved on average through a five-month follow-up assessment for participants. By successfully linking the expected outcome (attitude change) to a particular theory identifying a mechanism for that change (ELM), Heppner and colleagues provide a testable, replicable intervention that holds promise for duplication and tailoring for other populations.

Other promising theoretical frameworks relevant to sexual assault prevention programming include stages of change theories (i.e. Funk, 2006; Prochaska et al., 2002), and cognitive-behavioral theory (i.e. Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe & Baker, 2007).   For example,

using Lauby et al.'s (2000) HIV intervention as a guide, a social norms-focused sexual-assault prevention intervention which focused on specific stages of change would involve the development of materials relevant for individuals in different phases of awareness (such as individuals who have never thought about sexual violence before, versus those who are concerned about the problem but unaware of how to help). Such an approach could be connected to a popular opinion leader strategy in which peer leaders are trained to assess readiness to engage among group members, and to tailor subsequent conversations regarding sexual-assault related norms based on this assessment. Theoretical considerations should also drive the timing of sexual violence prevention, which may best be aimed at adolescence. Evidence suggests that sexual aggression often emerges in adolescence (Murphy & Smith, 1996; White & Smith, 2004), as does the mounting influence of peers and social norms. Preventative interventions timed for this age group may hold a greater likelihood of disrupting the development of sexually coercive behavior and its correlates (such as rape-supportive attitudes and substance and pornography use).

Component five: Health and strengths promotion

Half of discussions of multi-level approaches to prevention highlight the importance of a dual focus on reducing risk factors as well as enhancing community strengths and opportunities for positive interactions between members (i.e. Howat, Sleet, Elder, & Maycock, 2004; Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez & Robertson, 2003; Nation et al., 2003; Shoveller et al., 2006; Wandersman & Florin, 2003). Tseng and colleagues (2003) advocate for a focus on "promotion" rather than prevention, suggesting that social change involves not only the alleviation of problems, but also the enrichment of the well-being of community members. Positive shifts in attitudes and behaviors are more likely to be sustained in environments characterized by social support, positive role modeling, and opportunities to participate meaningfully in pro-social activities and goals (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999). For example, in a multi-level conceptualization of youth violence prevention, White

(2002) argues that opportunities for both positive interactions between adults and youth, as well as for youth involvement in community decision-making are critical elements needed to integrate non-violence into young people's lives in an enduring way. Similarly, Weissberg, Kumpfer & Seligman (2003) suggest that prevention efforts which enhance social support, health and social competence are potentially beneficial not only for those at high-risk of negative outcomes, but also for lower-risk individuals who may lack the resources to realize their fullest potentials.

The Mpowerment project previously described offers a concrete example of a tested intervention that integrates a focus on strengths-promotion and positive relationships.   As its title implies, a goal of the program is to empower men to become involved in designing prevention activities, and in building a positive community. To this end, the project engages community members as partners, works to create physical meeting settings that cultivate respectful, mutually supportive social networks, and plans events that foster community cohesiveness and "health-promoting" atmospheres (Hays et. al., 2003, p. 303).   Corresponding approaches in sexual violence prevention could engage community members in the process of planning respect-promoting initiatives; provide men and boys with opportunities to form positive, respectful relationships with male role models and with women; provide positive and healthy sexuality education; and create "empowering climates," (Banyard et al., 2004; Bond, 1995) in which nonviolent norms are explicitly celebrated and rewarded.

Bystander interventions provide an example of a capacity-building approach that has the potential to not only address problematic behavior, but to increase skills and positive interactions among community members. Reviewed more thoroughly in the next section, this approach encourages individuals to take responsibility for holding peers accountable for abusive behavior, and to proactively promote respectful norms related to interpersonal relationships. In these approaches, community members are empowered as "part of the solution," and collectively, their actions hold the potential to shift peer group or community-level social norms

towards expectations of respect and positive relationships. For example, Banyard, Moynihan &

Plante (2007) developed and tested a bystander approach to sexual violence prevention in

which college students were trained to recognize potentially problematic situations as they were

developing, and to safely intervene in disrespectful or possibly sexually coercive interactions.

Students were also trained to respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual victimization.

Evaluation results at 2 months found that students receiving this training reported sustained

reductions in rape-supportive attitudes and beliefs, and significant increases in positive

bystander behavior when compared with control condition students (Banyard et al., 2007).

Component six: Addressing structural factors

While not an underlying assumption of all ecological prevention frameworks, a strong

theme in multi-levels models is attention to identifying and changing underlying social structures

that foster the condition or problem of concern (Felner et al., 2000; Tseng et al., 2002; Wingood

& DiClemente, 2002). Mentioned in 20% of reviewed articles, this principle suggests that

individual behavior is constrained and reinforced by social structural inequities such as poverty

and racism, and challenges interventionists to shift these root conditions in addition to behavior

(Tseng et al., 2002; White, 2002). This component is linked with the earlier discussion of

attention to context, and is particularly relevant to gender-based violence work, which has long

theorized that underlying social structural factors contribute to the perpetuation of violence

against women. These social structural factors include gender-based inequities in political

representation, financial security and health care; social norms that sanction rape of women in

marriage, war, or for reasons of "honor;" and a lack of community accountability for perpetrators

of sexual violence (World Health Organization, 2002). Multi-level approaches to sexual

violence prevention require a focus on underlying social norms regarding women, violence and

power (Davis et al., 2006). Addressing structural contributors to rape may work best when done

in partnership with community members who can identify the underlying factors that support

aggressive behavior in their specific environment. Frameworks incorporating a focus on

structural factors suggest that when underlying conditions are successfully shifted, the "problem" may be reduced for larger portions of communities (i.e. Tseng et al., 2002).

An example of multi-level prevention focused on altering structural factors can be found in the school failure literature. In a series of controlled trials, Felner and colleagues (2001), tackled the issue of academic underachievement and misbehavior among middle and high school students not by attempting to change the behavior of individual youth, but by altering the conditions within schools that foster poor development and achievement. By changing the structure of middle schools to reduce the number of transitions between classes and activities, to create smaller within-school learning environments and to provide greater wrap-around support for students, interventions successfully reduced both drop-out rates and behavioral and emotional difficulties among program participants when compared to control condition youth. Youth behavior was viewed as a "symptom" of larger contextual problems and was successfully shifted through changing environmental structures.

Although attention to structural factors is no small undertaking, the sexual violence field is well positioned to pursue this prevention approach. The field has long employed a social structural analysis of rape (i.e. Brownmiller, 1975), and has taken steps to shift underlying supports for sexual aggression through policy changes in the law enforcement and criminal justice systems and by advocating for attention to violence-inducing social norms. Existing individual-level sexual violence prevention programming often includes attention in educational presentations to underlying supports for sexual violence, such as gender role socialization and tolerance for interpersonal violence (see for review, Schewe, 2002). Capitalizing on this groundwork in the context of multi-level prevention involves incorporating a structural analysis of sexual violence at peer and community levels. For example, social network interventions might facilitate peer-to-peer discussions challenging gender role stereotypes or implicit supports for aggressive behavior. Community-engagement strategies could include specific conversations with stakeholders identifying core violence-supporting conditions within their locality, or

coalition-building strategies that allow for addressing the resource constraints that often underlie vulnerability to multiple forms of violence. A specific example of an approach that targets underlying supports for sexual violence is the Family Violence Prevention Fund's media campaign, Coaching Boys into Men (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2008). This campaign aims to provide adult men with skills for challenging gender stereotypes and violence-supportive norms and behaviors within peer networks and among boys and younger men. Although no experimental evaluations of this approach are yet available, this campaign is an example of a strategy that might contribute to peer, school and athletic climates free of social norms that support or excuse sexually aggressive behavior.

Emerging approaches in ecological sexual violence prevention: Social norms campaigns and bystander strategies

As previously noted, although calls for comprehensive prevention in the sexual violence field have increased, formally evaluated multi-level work to prevent sexual assault is nonexistent. Nonetheless, practitioners in gender-based violence fields have been working to develop prevention programs that reflect the prevention components summarized in Table 1. Two programs, social norms campaigns and bystander interventions, are examples of peer/community-level strategies that incorporate aspects of these six ecological prevention components. These initiatives attempt to address peer or community-level norms regarding violence, sexual behavior, masculinity, and intervention in disrespectful conduct in ways that could support individual-level changes in attitudes and behavior. Next, we briefly examine the strengths and limitations of social norms campaigns and bystander interventions, and place them in the context of previously discussed components of multi-level prevention. A summary of resources for further information about these approaches can be found in Table 2.

Social norms approaches to sexual violence prevention

Emerging from the field of substance abuse prevention, social norms approaches are based on the consistent finding that adolescents and college students substantially

overestimate the rate of risk behaviors such as drinking (Perkins, Haines, & Rice, 2005) and marijuana use (Kilmer et al., 2006) among their peers. These misperceptions lead to a false sense of community norms, and are theorized to create pressure for young people to engage in unhealthy behaviors. Applied most commonly on college campuses, social norms campaigns involve surveying students about their behaviors and attitudes and then utilizing media campaigns to "re-educate" campus members about actual low levels of support for unhealthy conduct. These approaches may lead to increased healthy behaviors (such as alcohol avoidance) by reinforcing the correct perception that a substantial portion of the community supports such behaviors. Findings on the efficacy of social norms campaigns are mixed. A recent randomized, controlled trial of an alcohol-related social norms marketing campaign found that college institutions receiving the intervention reported decreased alcohol consumption among students compared to control institutions (DeJong et al., 2006). Earlier research, however, found no impact of binge drinking-related social norms campaigns on college campuses (Wechsler et al., 2003), leaving researchers to call for additional studies of the specific factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of social norms campaigns.

Relative to sexual violence, research has documented that male college students overestimate the amount of sex their male peers have and the degree to which their peers support coercive behaviors, while underestimating the importance of consensual sex to their friends (Berkowitz, 2003; Fabiano et al., 2003). In a study by Fabiano and colleagues (2003), most men privately reported that they place high value on consent in sexual activity. Men's own rape-related attitudes and willingness to intervene in problematic behavior has been linked to their perceptions of peer attitudes (Bohner, Siebler & Schmelcher, 2006; Fabiano et. al., 2003). Researchers argue that a small but vocal minority of men who endorse rape-supportive attitudes create the perception that the sexual objectification and coercion of women are normative within male peer networks (Berkowitz, 2003), and thus generate a climate of disrespect for women. Arguing that these findings form the conceptual rationale for social

norms prevention interventions, Fabiano and colleagues (2003) call for strategies that tap the "dominant culture of safety and respect" (p.110) on college campuses, and that empower the majority of non-violent men to feel safe in speaking out against sexual aggression and disrespect. Although no rigorous evaluations of sexual violence-oriented social norms campaigns appear in the literature, college campuses and other settings are increasingly implementing media campaigns that advertise their students' beliefs about the importance of respect and non-violence in relationships, or of intervening in potential sexual assaults (Berkowitz, 2003; Fabiano et al., 2003). The goal of these strategies is to correct misperceptions of support for sexual aggression, to bolster men's belief in their peers' support for respectful behavior and to increase bystander interventions in disrespectful conduct (Berkowitz, 2003; Fabiano et al., 2003). For example, a recent campaign developed through the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN, 2008) featured posters advertising the high percentages of college-age men who report that they value consent in sexual relationships or that they would intervene to prevent a sexual assault.

Social norms campaigns embody several of the components of multi-level prevention previously discussed, including community engagement, a contextualized approach, a theoretical rationale for the intervention, and a focus on strengths and positive relationships. As a strategy that aims to change both individual knowledge as well as peer and community norms, this approach draws on positive aspects of male peer culture and calls attention to the untapped contributions of the many men who refuse to subscribe to a "rape culture." (Fabiano, 2003). As such, social norms campaigns could serve as a complement to individual-level change strategies or by buttressing reductions in individuals' rape-supportive cognitions with evidence of peer and community support for respectful attitudes and behavior.

The application of social norms models to sexual violence prevention is in its early stages, however, and could be bolstered by a more strongly theorized conceptualization of the link between social norms campaigns and the reduction of sexually aggressive behavior.

Although evidence suggests that social norms campaigns can reduce misperceptions of others'

attitudes and beliefs (see for review Perkins, 2003), it remains unclear what mechanisms might

be involved in linking rectified misperceptions to increases in positive bystander behavior or to

decreases in sexual assault perpetration. For example, in at least one study of an alcohol-

related social norms campaign, although programming successfully remedied college students'

understanding of drinking norms, this change had no effect on subsequent drinking behaviors

(Clapp, Lange, Russell, Shillington & Voas, 2003).

Further, social norms campaigns often advertise the attitudes and behaviors of the

"average" or "typical" male college student, a representative who is expected to hold influence

over the beliefs and conduct of men in general on campus. Research on the connection

between perceived norms and individual behavior, however, suggests that for some behaviors,

individuals may be more swayed by the perceived beliefs of their closest referents, such as

friends and family members than by general norms emerging from their community (Cialdini &

Trost, 1998). Indeed, recent research on alcohol use among college students suggests that

individuals' drinking is related to their perception of their friends' behavior rather than to

perceived social norms more generally (Campo et al., 2003). Additional research on sexual

behavior could examine the most influential referents for specific groups of men, and explore

the possible effects of tailoring social norm campaigns for more specified, bounded populations

of men or peer networks (i.e. athletes, specific ethnicities, or particular peer networks within

college or high school settings). Further, given that the intervention is premised on the

presence of positive, but hidden, social norms, a community-wide undercurrent of actual support

for norms of respectful behavior should be a pre-requisite to implementing the approach.

Practitioners considering the adoption of a social norms campaign approach should be aware of

the limited empirical evidence of its efficacy relative to sexual violence prevention, and of the

need for theoretical and conceptual clarifications in the strategy. Despite these cautions, social

norms campaigns represent a possible element of multi-level prevention which, when coupled

with additional change strategies targeting problematic attitudes and behavior, may be part of a comprehensive approach.

<u>Bystander and men's organizing approaches</u>

Similar to social norms campaigns, bystander interventions aim to shift community norms by making expectations of respect and non-violence more visible. These strategies attempt to enhance the ability of community members to recognize and intervene in situations which could result in sexual assault, to interrupt behavior or language that perpetuates rape-supportive social norms, and to model respectful behavior (Banyard, Moynihan & Plante, 2007). Bystander components have long been elements of anti-bullying prevention curricula, and when included in larger anti-bullying intervention efforts, have been shown to decrease observed playground aggressiveness and to increase a sense of bystander accountability among elementary school students (Frey et al., 2005).

Few sexual assault-specific bystander interventions have been rigorously evaluated, and no data exists about the impact of bystander programs on rates of sexual aggression. However, a recent study of "Bringing in the Bystander", the sexual assault-specific college campus intervention described in a previous section, demonstrated increased bystander behavior, improved self-efficacy for intervening and decreased endorsement of rape-supportive attitudes among program participants at a 2-month follow-up (Banyard et al., 2007). This program utilizes peer facilitators who conduct one or three session trainings designed to build anti-sexual violence awareness and bystander skills among co-ed participants.

A trend within bystander approaches is the emergence of men's groups organized around a commitment to anti-violence efforts and activism. Alternatively characterized as grassroots organizing, ally-building or bystander efforts, groups of boys and men have increasingly become involved in organized efforts to oppose violence against women. Groups typically aim to involve men in anti-violence activities, challenge community and peer norms that support violence, redefine "masculinity" and disentangle it from expectations of aggression, use

members' status and privilege as males to confront peer misbehavior, provide mentorship to younger boys and men and provide support to men doing the difficult work of speaking out against many forms of violence, including sexism and racism (DeKeseredy, Schwartz, & Alvi, 2000; Hong, 2000; Katz, 1995). These efforts are consistent with the multi-level principles of community engagement, contextualized prevention, addressing structural contributors to sexual violence and focusing on strengths by developing positive relationships.

Examples of men's groups include the Men Against Violence program at Louisiana State University, initiated by a group of male students concerned about local levels of violence (Hong, 2000). This program incorporates many traditional elements of community engagement approaches, including formation of an advisory board, creation of member-determined interventive strategies, and leadership from within the community itself. Although never formally evaluated, the Men Against Violence program successfully initiated community events, violence prevention education in local K-12 schools and support services for both victims and perpetrators of violence (Hong, 2000). Another, more extensively evaluated program for college students is the Men's Program designed by John Foubert (2005) and facilitated by men for their male peers. Recently augmented with a bystander education component, this rape prevention program has demonstrated an impact on sexually aggressive behavior and rape myth acceptance among college fraternity members in one study (Foubert et al., 2007).

Among other organizations addressing men nationally and internationally are the Men Can Stop Rape program in Washington, DC, and the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program designed by Jackson Katz (Katz, 1995). Based on exploring, deconstructing or "re-storying" traditional masculinity and reframing what it means to be a "strong" man (Men Can Stop Rape, 2006), these programs aim to foster male peer cultures characterized by non-violence and norms of intercession in sexist or aggressive behavior. More closely fitting a bystander model, these approaches try to shift peer network and community norms towards consistent intervention in disrespectful behavior and towards intolerance of violence against women by

modeling a willingness to intervene (Katz, 1995). For example, Katz' program is built around recruiting athletes who use their status as admired community members to publicly challenge rape-supportive norms (Katz, 1995). Although originally designed for young men, the program has expanded to include both male and female bystanders; a recent non-experimental evaluation of this program with male and female high school students found that MVP participants significantly increased their knowledge of violence against women, reduced violence-supportive attitudes, and had heightened feelings of self-efficacy related to their ability to confront harassing or disrespectful conduct (Ward, 2000). Similarly, Men Can Stop Rape's "Men of Strength" (MOST) clubs provide adolescent and young adult men the opportunity to critically evaluate "masculinity" and to enhance their capacity to take a more active stance against male violence (Men Can Stop Rape, 2006). MOST club members participate in a 16-week curriculum designed to examine masculine ideologies, raise awareness about men's violence and promote skills for future activism and positive bystander behavior. Participants are then encouraged to engage in skill-building and awareness events in their larger school communities. In a recent pre-post evaluation of MOST club participants after 16 weeks of club participation, high school aged boys reported a greater willingness to intervene in a scenario involving a young woman being inappropriately touched (Hawkins, 2005).

Evidence that bystander components can enhance individual's willingness to intervene in aggressive or disrespectful conduct (Banyard et al., 2007; Frey et al., 2005) bolster the case for integrating these strategies into prevention programming. As relatively new initiatives, however, formal evaluations are only beginning to be incorporated into ally-building and bystander programs, and with the exception of Banyard and colleagues' recent work (2007), empirical findings are limited. The further development of bystander programs could be supported by enhanced articulation of underlying theoretical rationales and greater clarity about what specific mechanisms are expected to translate bystander program activities into behavioral or community-level change. From bystander literature more generally, it can be inferred that

interventions which decrease the perceived costs of stepping forward (Fritzsche, Finkelstein, Penner, 2000), and increase individuals' perceived sense of personal responsibility and self-efficacy for responding (see for review Stueve et al., 2006) are likely to carry greater impact. Bystander programs across substantive arenas have capitalized on Latané and Darley's (1969) work identifying 5 pre-conditions to positive action, including recognizing a problematic situation, recognizing the need for intervention, feeling personally responsible to intervene, deciding to take action and possessing the skills needed to enact the intervention. Further research is needed, however, to determine what kind of interventive mechanisms best foster these supports for positive bystander behavior.

A further consideration for male anti-violence and bystander education groups is how to resolve the subtle tensions inherent in organizing men, a privileged social group, to mobilize against a community problem that is primarily perpetuated from within its own ranks. Authors have pointed to the need for men's groups to consult with women and women's groups (e.g. Berkowitz, 2002; Hong, 2000), a practice that many men's organizing groups embrace, and a consideration for practitioners contemplating the adoption of bystander strategies. Given the importance of bystander components in other prevention fields such as bullying, and the emerging evidence of their utility in sexual violence prevention programming (e.g. Banyard et al., 2007), these strategies seem to hold great promise and demand further exploration of their effectiveness as elements of multi-level sexual assault prevention.

Conclusion

The sexual violence field has had some success in identifying prevention strategies that address rape supportive attitudes and beliefs, and that raise awareness of rape among individuals. Enhancing the efficacy of future prevention efforts requires a continued commitment to pushing the boundaries of sexual violence prevention programs toward multi-level interventions that account for rape-supportive factors at all levels, including peer and community contexts. Given the growing etiological evidence of multi-level contributors to sexual

violence as well as the limitations of current strategies in decreasing rates of sexual assault perpetration, next steps in sexual violence prevention will need to involve the expanded implementation of ecologically-oriented approaches. Consistent with the components of ecological prevention reviewed above, broadening the reach and effectiveness of primary sexual violence prevention efforts requires augmenting individual-level strategies and engaging diverse peer networks and communities in the work of ending sexual assault. In keeping with the principles of contextualized, community-centered prevention, such efforts will need to be situated within the social reality of each community and informed by community members themselves. Further, both emerging approaches such as social norms media strategies, and new initiatives informed by ecological principles of prevention need rigorous evaluation to highlight the most promising multi-level strategies. As a whole, a strengthened commitment to addressing the full spectrum of risks for sexual aggression in our prevention efforts is admittedly a demanding challenge, but one that carries the potential to finally move us closer to our ultimate goal of ending sexual violence.

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