

REAL WORLD ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY CHANGE FOR PREVENTION:

Examples from Michigan
Rape Prevention &
Education Program

2021

Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program

Introduction

This brief highlights organizational policy change efforts conducted by the local subrecipients of Michigan's Rape Prevention and Education (MI RPE) program between October 2020 - September 2021. Their stories offer practical examples of how to apply CDC's Policy Process Framework to support policy change in the context of RPE programming.

We hope you can use these real-world stories to see how the policy process progresses (it's not always from one stage directly to the next) and appreciate how much work it takes to move from stage to stage. Most importantly, we hope these stories will inspire you to consider new possibilities for expanding your organizational policy change work to end sexual violence.

Policy Process Background

Organizational policies take many familiar forms—rules, contracts, procedures, administrative actions, and voluntary practices. Because organizational policies are binding, enforceable written statements that reflect the values and decisions of a group or organization¹, it's not surprising that prevention work to create, change, implement, and evaluate them can be intensive, slow moving, and challenging. One tool to support policy work and its evaluation is the CDC's Policy Process Framework² (Note: The Policy Process background information in each stage below draws heavily from the Centers for Disease Control: CDC Policy Process website²).

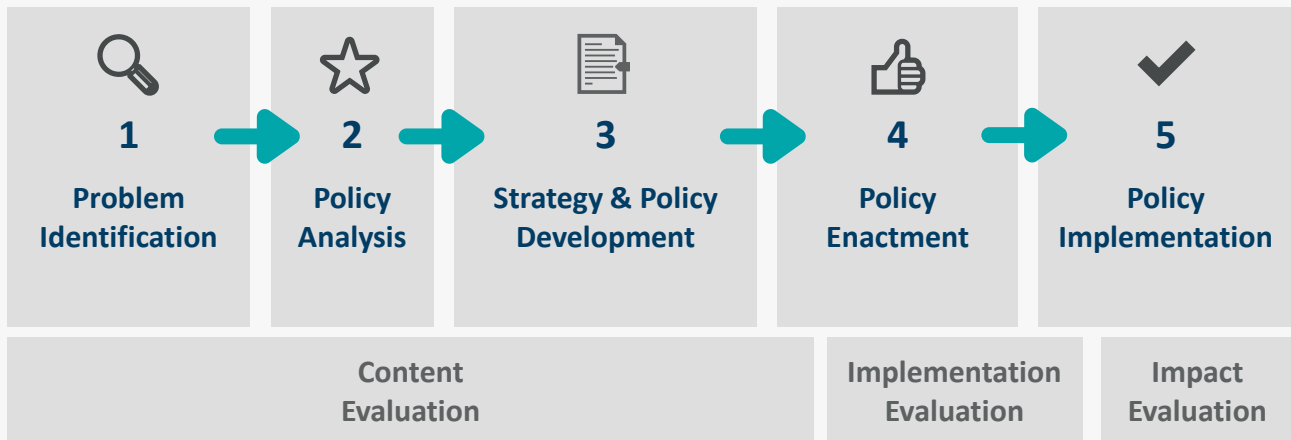
The framework has five stages: problem identification, policy analysis, strategy and policy development, policy enactment, and policy implementation. As you can see in the visual below, stakeholder engagement and education is built into in all five stages. For more information on this process, visit the *Veto Violence: Violence Prevention in Practice* website¹.

CDC's Policy Process Framework



Background

In addition to guiding policy change efforts, this framework also guides the evaluation of these attempts at change³. Evaluation is a key component of progressing through these iterative steps. Evaluation helps stakeholders to understand how the process worked and what the impacts were. Three evaluation approaches are generally used, and all can be mapped onto the stages of policy change. See the figure below for an illustration adapted from the CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention & Control that shows these relationships. Throughout this report, these five stages of the CDC’s Policy Process Framework are denoted using the following icons:



For more information on evaluating policy change efforts, please visit the Brief 1: Veto Violence Overview of Policy Evaluation website⁴.

Examples from Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program

Safe Haven Ministries



Safe Haven Ministries is a community-based organization that serves Kent County, including the city of Grand Rapids.



Safe Haven Ministries' (SHM) Young Leaders Against Violence (YLAV) is a youth-led initiative that engages young people in promoting social norms that protect against violence in their communities. During learning sessions, adult mentors educated youth on Title IX's history and purpose, and some youth shared personal stories that highlighted deficiencies in how Title IX is implemented in their schools. This led to a **problem identification** 🔍 process, where YLAV youth identified the need for improvements to school policy related to Title IX implementation and chose it as a focus for the coming year. Moving into early **policy analysis** ☆ work, each YLAV youth reviewed their individual school's Title IX enforcement policy. Two schools were identified based on problems such as:



Lack of transparency around who the Title IX Coordinators were



Reporting processes that were unclear to students



Dress codes that disproportionately impacted Black students

After the review, one YLAV youth asked their school principal who the Title IX Coordinator was. After multiple referrals to various school staff, the youth eventually learned that the school principal was the Title IX Coordinator! YLAV's first step in promoting social norms that protect against violence was to write a letter to the school calling for transparency in organizational Title IX policies and procedures, as well as education for all students and staff on Title IX's purpose and processes in the school. After the school received the call-to-action letter, the YLAV youth representing the school notified the group of several changes. The school became more transparent about how students can engage in Title IX and took incidences of sexual harassment and bullying more seriously.

Examples from Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program

YWCA West Central Michigan

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
west central michigan

YWCA West Central Michigan is a community-based organization serving Kent County, including the city of Grand Rapids.



YWCA West Central Michigan's (YWCA) work with Grand Rapids Pride Center (GRPC) focuses on policy and practice support to create protective environments for youth at GRPC, a nonprofit organization supporting LGBTQ+ youth in Kent County, Michigan.



In the previous funding year, the two partner agencies had identified a need for an anti-oppression policy review tool that could be used in **policy analysis** ☆ to ensure that existing GRPC policies and procedures were equitable. Early into the partnership, however, they **identified a more immediate problem** 🔍:

- ❗ There were not sufficient procedures in place for youth who needed to report incidents that took place at GRPC, and
- ❓ Staff were unsure how best to create protective environments to prevent incidents among youth.

The YWCA & GRPC did a **policy analysis** ☆ of existing incident reporting procedures and position descriptions, identified gaps, and recommended improvements. Moving into **strategy and policy development** 📄, they outlined specific guidelines for facilitators to follow when working with LGBTQ+ youth to help all GRPC youth feel safe. The YWCA and GRPC then developed formal staff position descriptions for youth support group facilitators that highlighted relevant skills for working with LGBTQ+ youth to create safer spaces.

YWCA staff will compile the relevant policies and procedures highlighted above into an official GRPC Handbook for staff, facilitators, and volunteers.

Examples from Michigan’s Rape Prevention & Education Program Women’s Resource Center of Northern Michigan



Women’s Resource Center of Northern Michigan

is a community-based organization serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, and Otsego counties in Michigan’s northern lower peninsula.



Women’s Resource Center of Northern Michigan’s (WRCNM) “Engaging Men on Environmental and Policy Change” strategy builds on their work to identify organizational policy changes that create protective environments. Qualitative data from 2007 and 2019 focus groups **identified potential problems** 🔍 to address as well as a group of men interested in working on policy changes. A brief, informal **policy analysis** ☆ following the 2019 focus groups identified very few organizations with policies in place to challenge unhealthy social norms. Moving into **strategy and policy development** 📄, WRCNMI held a virtual community town hall in November 2020, where local men engaged in brainstorming potential policy change strategies to use with local organizations. Ideas from this virtual town hall helped WRCNMI to focus on providing male allies with a roadmap that applies the “Van Dam Cultural Fundamentals” as a framework for promoting anti-violence norms and policies within community businesses. The Van Dam Cultural Fundamentals outlines the collective language, values, and norms that were identified by Van Dam Custom Boats (a local business) as elements that can help create an environment of trust, mutual respect, and continuous learning among team members. WRCNM anticipated that using a framework developed and successfully implemented by a well-respected local business would result in greater cultural resonance and increased buy-in among engaged men and potential partnering businesses.

VAN DAM	OUR BOATS	THIS IS VAN DAM	OUR PROCESS
1	Practice continuous improvement every day, all day. Always be thinking about how you can improve, whether it is a process, a skill, or an attitude. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. Keep getting better.		
2	Treat others the way you want to be treated. Be aware of your words and actions when interacting with customers, co-workers, friends and family.		

Image of the first two Van Dam Cultural Fundamentals

Examples from Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program **Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan (continued)**

After the town hall, WRCNM adapted this locally-developed framework into a customizable "Fundamentals Statement" (please see appendix for example) to support organizations in creating trusting and respectful environments. This document was presented to the men's group at a virtual meeting in March 2021. The meeting grounded group members in the work they will be doing in the community. This included skill-building on how to:

- use the draft statement to identify problem areas,
- implement the fundamentals into action in businesses, and
- make a business case that creating a protective work environment through shared values of hard work, good communication and no tolerance for abusive language and behavior can improve employee morale and retention.

In collaboration with men's group members, WRCNM also developed a "Sector Specific Implementation Guide" to help organizations create and implement individualized cultural fundamentals in specific settings (i.e. businesses, human services, etc.). WRCNMI will use the Sector Specific Implementation Guide and draft Fundamentals Statement to support local community-driven organizational policy change.

Examples from Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program

Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health



Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) is a statewide organization serving all of Michigan.



MOASH's "Establish Culture of Consent in Schools" strategy focuses on creating protective environments by working with schools to improve school environments, policies, and procedures. In 2021, MOASH worked to establish a trusting relationship with parents of transgender students and district administrators in a suburban Southeast Michigan school district. This allowed MOASH to **identify the problems** 🔍 faced by these students, including a thorough understanding in the barriers to and opportunities in creating protective environments for transgender and nonbinary students. It quickly became clear that relationship building and community education on what is involved in developing or updating a policy would be critical for community engagement and support. MOASH worked on critical community relationships and education while also **analyzing policies** ☆ from other Michigan districts' school administrators. MOASH helped **develop a policy strategy** 📄 by presenting best practice policies and ideas for effectively tailoring these examples to the needs of this specific community.

Using these key pieces, MOASH helped **develop a policy** 📄 focused on inclusive practices of transgender and nonbinary students. The draft policy was then reviewed and updated by community stakeholders and school lawyers, ensuring alignment with community and school district values and requirements.

At the same time, MOASH worked to preemptively support successful implementation of the policy by increasing the community's understanding of the policy, its importance, and what enactment would ultimately look like. Having this understanding meant that already-supportive community members (including parents) and those who didn't fully understand the policy and its implications could have more informed conversations about how inclusive school practices support academic achievement and the importance of ensuring that transgender and nonbinary students feel safe and valued in the school environment.

MOASH also conducted ongoing trainings for staff, administrators, and the school board to ensure seamless enactment once a policy was adopted. The district successfully **enacted** 👍 an inclusive transgender and nonbinary student policy in Fall 2021, and **policy implementation** ✓ is currently underway.

Examples from Michigan's Rape Prevention & Education Program

Kent County Health Department



Kent County Health Department is a county health department serving Kent County, including the city of Grand Rapids.



Kent County Health Department's (KCHD) "Organizational Change for Schools and School-Based Healthcare" strategy was initially focused on solving a **problem identified** 🔍 in a previous funding year: school-based health center staff at their partner organization, Cherry Health, didn't know enough about sexual violence prevention strategies they could use in their positions. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCHD and Cherry Health had been **developing a strategy and policy** 📄 to require asynchronous online sexual violence prevention (SVP) focused trainings for these staff that would equip them with skills needed to create protective environments with school-aged youth at Kent County schools.

After experiencing COVID-19 rollout delays in 2020, KCHD re-engaged with the Cherry Health workforce development leadership in 2021. During discussions on how to enact this policy by incorporating the SVP trainings into Cherry Health's Online Learning Management System, the partners explored the possibility of addressing a larger **problem** 🔍: there were no sexual violence prevention trainings for other healthcare staff in the Cherry Health system, a much bigger group with a wider reach than the school-based health center staff.

In **analyzing existing policies** ☆, KCHD and Cherry Health found that while the health system primarily mandates trainings required by funders or by compliance standards, trainings can also be required by workforce development leadership as part of Cherry Health's Annual Compliance Review (ACR) for all healthcare staff. Required trainings for the ACR already contained modules on human trafficking prevention and mandated reporting, but the prevention module was determined to be outdated.

KCHD then partnered with Cherry Health leadership to **develop a strategy and a policy** 📄 for updating and expanding Cherry Health's training modules and requiring this training of all staff. When the content is completed in late 2022, Cherry Health will **enact** 👍 and **implement** ✓ its new policy, requiring the annual SVP-focused training modules be completed by all Cherry Health staff.

Michigan's Rape Prevention Education Program

Final Thoughts

MI RPE Subrecipient work highlighted in this report offers real world examples of how to use the Policy Process Framework in the context of RPE programming. We hope practical examples of communities striving to shift organizational policy to prevent sexual violence help break the substantial effort involved in policy development, implementation, and evaluation into more manageable parts. It may also help organizations hoping to engage in policy work to better understand how the policy process progresses, how much work it takes to move from stage to stage, and how to effectively evaluate the process.

References

¹ Centers for Disease Control. *Veto Violence: Violence Prevention in Practice*. <https://vetoviolenace.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/policy#!/> Accessed 20 March 2022.

² Centers for Disease Control. *The CDC Policy Process*. <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/polaris/policyprocess/index.html>. Accessed 20 March 2022.

³ Glover, M. & Scardaville, M. (2021). *Webinar: Evaluating Efforts to Improve Policies and the Impact of Policy*.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control. *Veto Violence: Brief 1 Overview of Policy Evaluation*. https://vetoviolenace.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/sites/vetoviolenace.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/files/Policy-Brief-1_Overview-of-Policy-Evaluation.pdf. Accessed 20 March 2022.

Appendix: Cultural Fundamentals Document

Fundamentals

*Adapted from Van Dam Custom Boats Cultural Fundamentals

This statement shows what this group values and prioritizes

Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Be aware of your words and actions when interacting with community, customers, co-workers, friends and family.

Act with integrity.

Bigotry, misogyny, racism, and hate are not tolerated in our language, our daily activities, or our culture. Be the example that lives this message.

Practice continuous improvement every day, all day.

Always be thinking about how you can improve, whether it is a process, a skill, or an attitude. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. Keep getting better.

Own it.

Your experience is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

Do the right thing, always.

Demonstrate an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing in every action you take and in every decision you make. There is no better way to build trust than to steadfastly do what is right for others.

Move with purpose.

Purpose gives focus. Focus gives energy. Energy gets things done.

Pay attention to the details.

Do the little things right so the big things work out.

Create an atmosphere of friendliness and warmth.

Pay attention to every interaction and be sure you're setting a tone of friendliness, warmth, and helpfulness.

Be curious about our community/customers.

Get to know them; it is critical to our success.

Go the extra mile.

Be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish the job...plus a little more. Work hard to exceed people's expectations.

Do what you say you are going to do, when you say you are going to do it.

Follow up on everything.

Keep things fun.

Remember that the world has bigger problems than the daily challenges that make up our work. Stuff happens. Keep perspective. Don't take yourself too seriously. Laugh every day, and enjoy the journey.

Place your family first in your life.

Keep harmony in your personal life. Functional, happy families are what give our lives meaning.

Participate.

Participate in finding solutions to challenges, brainstorming sessions, decision making, and meetings. Participation builds a stronger team that is fun to be a part of.

Check your ego at the door.

Remember we are a team. We win and lose together. It's not about you. Don't let your ego or personal agenda get in the way of doing what is best for the team.

Listen generously and fully.

Listening is more than simply "not speaking". Be present and engaged. Truly listening is one of the greatest skills you can ever learn.

Speak straight.

Have clear and direct conversations. Address issues directly with those who are involved or affected.

Share information.

With appropriate respect for confidentiality, share information freely. Learn to ask yourself "who else needs to know this information".

Communicate to be understood.

Know your audience. Write and speak in a way that they can understand. Avoid using internal lingo, acronyms, and industry jargon unless appropriate for the audience. Use the simplest possible explanations.

Always ask why.

Don't accept anything at face value if it doesn't make sense to you. Be curious and question what you don't understand. Healthy, vigorous debate creates better solutions. There is no better question than "Why?"

Practice blameless problem solving.

Apply your creativity, spirit, and enthusiasm to developing solutions, rather than pointing fingers and dwelling on problems.

Get the facts.

Don't make assumptions. Gather the facts before jumping to conclusions or making judgements. Be curious about what other information might give you a more complete picture.

Create win/win solutions.

Learn to think from other's perspectives. Discover what they need and find a way to help them meet those needs while also fulfilling your own.

Assume positive intent.

Work from the assumption that people are good, fair, and honest, and that the intent behind their actions is positive. Set aside your own judgements and preconceived notions. Give people the benefit of the doubt.

Practice the “human touch.”

Listen for, and pay attention to, the things that make people unique. Use handwritten notes, personal cards, and timely phone calls to acknowledge their specialness. Genuine compassion can't be faked.

Find a way.

Take personal responsibility for making things happen. Respond to each situation by looking for HOW we can do it, rather than explaining why it can't be done. Be resourceful and show initiative.

Get clear on expectations.

Create clarity and avoid misunderstandings by discussing expectations up front. Establish mutually understood objectives and deadlines for all projects, issues and commitments.

Celebrate success.

Regularly extend meaningful acknowledgment and appreciation in all directions throughout our company.

Deliver results.

While effort is appreciated, we reward and celebrate results.

Protect the environment.

It is both our playground and our livelihood.

Practice gratitude.

Think of all we have to be grateful for and appreciate the people and opportunities we are lucky enough to be a part of.



Michigan Rape Prevention & Education Program
Center for Healthy Communities – MPHl

Published June 2022