

MICHIGAN RAPE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM 2013 – 2019: LESSONS LEARNED ON COMMUNITY-SOCIETAL LEVEL CHANGE



Center for Healthy Communities- MPH
January 2020

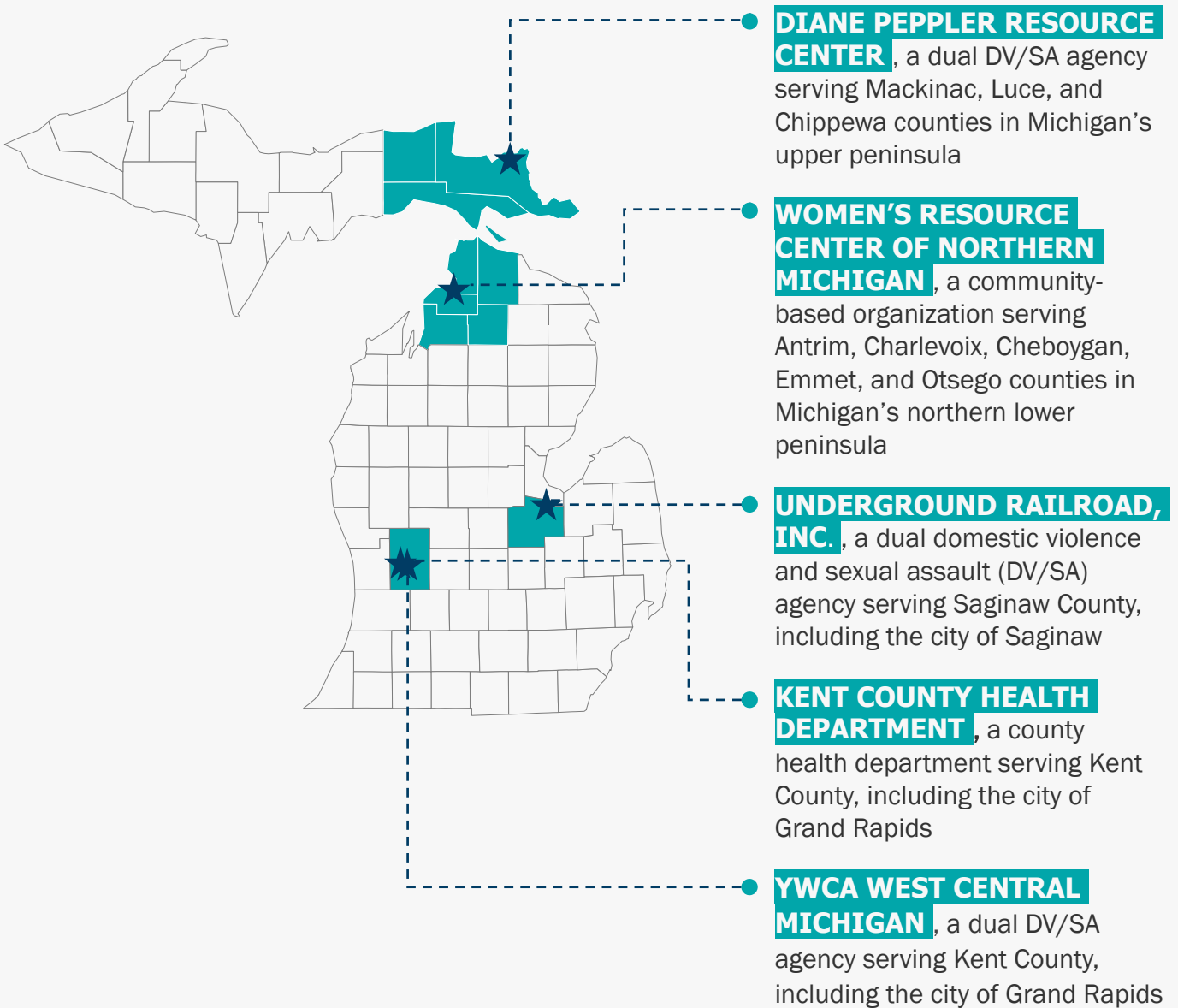


MICHIGAN'S RAPE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Michigan Rape Prevention and Education (MI RPE) Program funded five local agencies to implement and evaluate sexual violence primary prevention (SVPP) strategies from October 2013 – September 2019. These grantees took on the challenge of directing more of their efforts to impacting community-societal level risk and protective factors for sexual violence. The following report describes key lessons learned as grantees worked toward community-societal level change.

The five MI RPE grantees represented various geographic regions and populations.



"There has been a big shift to community and societal level work. We are working on more community level works and systems change efforts."

-RPE Grantee



MICHIGAN'S RAPE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Michigan RPE grantees strategies integrated the principles of effective violence prevention programming into a multi-level prevention framework (i.e., the Spectrum of Prevention). As Michigan began to shift its focus of RPE strategies to the community-societal level, grantee efforts during this time period included:



Education and engagement of local, state, and federal policymakers



Development and implementation of SVPP school and business policies and practices



Facilitation of SVPP advisory teams representing community agencies and non-profits, businesses, colleges, and governmental agencies



SVPP trainings for professional staff (i.e., bar staff, human service providers, etc.)



Social media engagement



Outreach at community events



Youth and Young Adult SVPP education

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-SOCIETAL LEVEL SVPP INITIATIVES

In Fall 2019, MI RPE evaluators interviewed MI RPE Grantees about their experiences to shift efforts to address community-societal level change. During these interviews, grantees shared successes, barriers encountered, changes in their agencies and communities over time, and what it took to be successful. RPE evaluation staff analyzed interview data and identified common themes. Three themes were clearly important to successful efforts across all grantees, regardless of service area or population. This report shares MI RPE Grantee lessons learned about:



PARTNERSHIPS



COMMUNICATION



**DATA-DRIVEN
DECISION MAKING**

MI RPE Grantee lessons learned on these themes are detailed in this report.

“There initially was a large focus on at the individual level (being in the schools), but since I’ve been here there has been a shift to doing more community and societal level work.”

-RPE Grantee



PARTNERSHIP

THE PROCESS OF PARTNERING

MI RPE grantees identified key strategies for establishing and maintaining successful partnerships to support SVPP work.

- 1 Seeking Connections Strategically:** When seeking new partners, grantees focused on identifying possible organizations, businesses, or individuals that either a) already shared common interests or b) could potentially develop a new interest in SVPP because of shared interests or values. Working to establish and maintain relationships with obvious and not-so-obvious organizations, businesses, and individuals throughout the community helped position grantees strategically to engage partners when needed.
- 2 Identifying Key Stakeholders:** Grantees also prioritized the engagement of partners that were best positioned to ensure the work could move forward, reach its intended outcomes, and be sustainable. In many cases, these key stakeholders involved decision makers and opinion leaders with the credibility or power to impact organizational policies and practices, as well people who were well connected to other community partners.
- 3 Focusing on the Relationship:** Grantees recommended focusing initially on getting to know and building a relationship with a partner, rather than focusing on the specific work they could do with a partner. This approach ultimately led to the establishment of strong and trusting relationships that supported work toward mutual goals.

THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

Among the benefits of partnership identified by Michigan RPE grantees were:

- 1 Partner Buy-In:** Growing strong relationships and connections with partners helped grantees to ensure greater buy-in, or active support, for shared goals. This buy-in was key in establishing dedicated and lasting relationships for complex organizational or community SVPP work.
- 2 Commitment through Collaboration:** Establishing highly collaborative partnerships led to greater commitment to making initiatives successful because the effort was considered mutually beneficial for both grantees and partners.
- 3 Opening Doors:** Existing partnerships often led to the introduction of new community partners, which expanded grantees' community reach and organizational capacity.
- 4 Sustainability:** Partnerships increased the sustainability of initiatives by bringing in different sources of funding, increasing the possibility of multiple funding sources, increasing access to resources such as space and staff, and engraining the work as a community priority.



Public health practitioners know that developing lasting partnerships is a cornerstone of effective prevention programming. For more tips on strategies for partnering for prevention, visit these websites:

CDC's Veto Violence "How to Build a Business Partnership"

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/child-abuse-neglect-biz/node/4>

CDC's "Cardiff Model Toolkit"

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cardiffmodel/cardiff-toolkit508.pdf>

SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERSHIP



YWCA OF KENT COUNTY

The YWCA of Kent County worked with a unique coalition of community partners serving persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) on the Working to End Assault and Violence for Everyone (WEAVE) program. In assembling this group, existing community partners helped identify potential new partners with experience serving persons with ID/DD.

This group's first task was challenging— developing a collaborative charter that included the mission, goals, conflict resolution plan, and workplan of all partners. Developing the conflict resolution plan prior to experiencing conflict was a new but welcomed effort for this group.

Using this strong foundation, the coalition conducted a community needs assessment that informed the development of trainings that were ultimately delivered to over 120 providers serving this at-risk population on topics including sexual violence prevention. The coalition members were also able to successfully support each other in developing and implementing organizational policies that better attended to preventing sexual violence among persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"We've been able to partner with more and larger agencies and businesses around SV prevention activities. This is allowing us to have greater outreach to people that we have not had reached previously."

-RPE Grantee

KEY SUCCESSES



Developed a collaborative charter that included the mission, goals, conflict resolution plan, and workplan of all partners



Developed trainings for providers serving the at-risk population on topics including sexual violence prevention. Trainings were delivered to **over 120 providers**.

"Building relationships has been the biggest component of being successful and being able to educate."

-RPE Grantee



COMMUNICATION

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Michigan RPE grantees identified good communication skills as key to expanding their community-societal level work. They identified the following themes as being key to effective communication:

- 1 Understanding Perspectives:** Making efforts to understand individual and organizational interests, values, and viewpoints was a key first step for some Michigan RPE grantees. Understanding these beliefs helped grantees see more clearly how to challenge and shift views that were barriers to community-societal level progress on SVPP.
- 2 Using your Audience's Language:** Grantees reported that tailoring their messages to use the everyday language of their audience—whether that be businesses, students, law enforcement, or athletes—was key in getting their messages across in a way that really spoke to the group. This required knowing the words that would connect and resonate with that audience.
- 3 Making Content Relatable:** Making messages relatable was important for grantees to convince audiences to care about SVPP. In order for their messages about organizational or community change to stick, grantees had to communicate clearly and empathically how the topics related to their audience's community or profession specifically.



As recent national publications have emphasized, SVPP groups have to tailor their messages in a way that is able to connect with their audience, overcome their audience's discomfort with discussing SV, and convey the need for SVPP efforts in their community.

For more tips on communicating about SVPP, check out this resource:

Raliance & Berkeley Media Studies Group's *"Where we're going and where we've been: Making the case for preventing sexual violence"* https://www.raliance.org/report_posts/where-were-going-and-where-weve-been-making-the-case-for-preventing-sexual-violence/

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNICATION

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN SAGINAW COUNTY

Underground Railroad in Saginaw County worked with community bars to train bar staff on SVPP. Initially framing the trainings as a public health intervention led to issues with owners and managers becoming defensive, offended, and resistant to participating. Underground Railroad recognized that they were not speaking the same language as the bar owners and managers and changed the way they talked about their training. Instead, they led by discussing why the trainings would be beneficial from a business perspective, leading bar owners and managers to recognize the value of the trainings and to ultimately deciding to have their staff trained. A total of seven bars participated in trainings to create protective bar environments.



Every relationship and the type of communication you have is different. You have to learn to identify how people communicate and the best way to communicate with them. Understanding the audience you are working with is a big component of being successful."

-RPE Grantee



DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

WHAT IS DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING?

Data-driven decision making is using data to make better decisions. Michigan RPE grantees reported using data for several purposes that supported their success in working toward community-societal level change.

- 1 Identifying Areas of Need:** Grantees reported using data (or wanting to use data) to identify what was going on in their community in relation to perpetration, risk and protective factors, and disparities to identify focus populations and appropriate strategies.
- 2 Identifying Potential Partners:** Grantees used data on needs and focus populations to identify and recruit possible partner organizations, businesses, and agencies for SVPP work.
- 3 Making the Case for Prevention:** Grantees reported using local data to educate and message on sexual violence and the need for primary prevention work in their communities.



Using data gives organizations and programs a less biased picture of what is going on in their communities, organizations, and programs. For more information about how to gather and use data to drive SVPP decision making, check out the resources below.

NSVRC's "Evaluation Toolkit" <https://www.nsvrc.org/prevention/evaluation-toolkit>

CDC's Veto Violence "Understanding Evidence"
<https://vetoviolenecdc.gov/apps/evidence/#%26panel1-1>

SPOTLIGHT ON DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING



THE DIANE PEPPLER RESOURCE CENTER

in Michigan's Upper Peninsula used data to identify their community's levels of SV perpetration and risk and protective factors for SV. They used SV perpetration data to develop community education and messaging about the need for prevention programming in their service area. They also used info about business SVPP-related policies to inform and strengthen policy work with local businesses, notably, with local bars.

"The RPE team for our county has undergone revitalization and recognized that we need to gather local level data and base any programmatic decisions on the local level data."

-RPE Grantee



SUCCESSSES & NEXT STEPS

The Michigan Program has worked hard to shift its focus from the individual and relationship levels to the community-societal level. While much remains to be done, many Michigan RPE grantees saw significant shifts during this time frame. Drivers for this success were improvements in:



PARTNERSHIPS



COMMUNICATION



DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

The **successes** of Michigan RPE grantees' work in the final year of this grant cycle (October 2018 – September 2019) included the following:

56



local, state, and federal policymakers educated on SVPP

12



Community Sexual Assault Awareness Month declarations

19



schools supported in improving SVPP practices and policies

15



businesses supported in improving SVPP practices and policies

853



SVPP social media messages

40



community organizations, agencies, and businesses engaged in four local SVPP coalitions

766



professionals trained in SVPP topics and skills from sectors including business, police, human service, and medicine

5,465



students ages Pre-K through College educated on SVPP topics including social norms

54



SVPP community SVPP events held, including discussion panels, movie screenings, yoga classes, prevention walks, parent engagement programs, and open mic nights

Michigan RPE grantees also saw tremendous changes in public awareness, perception, and willingness to take action to prevent sexual violence. All RPE grantees expressed a desire to continue moving toward this community-societal level approach in the years to come.

"We have seen a greater awareness of the issues of sexual and intimate partner violence in our community, which I believe has mirrored the nation as a whole... With this greater awareness, I believe that we now have doors opened for us and access to people that we may have not had before or were much more difficult. The greater awareness also brings more people who are interested in these areas and therefore want to know how they can help."

-RPE Grantee



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