Building Capacity for Prevention*

*The willingness and ability of staff members AND agencies to engage in mission-driven efforts seeking to prevent violence in an effective manner.

What does it take to build capacity for prevention?1

Questions to consider when thinking about building and sustaining capacity for doing prevention work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirations and strategies</th>
<th>Organizational skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a clear agency-wide prevention agenda?</td>
<td>Do staff have the ability (and support) to conceive of, map-out, execute, and regularly adjust the implementation of prevention initiatives?</td>
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<td>How will you realize it?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organizational structure</th>
<th>Organizational culture</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do managers understand the knowledge and skill sets necessary for prevention positions?</td>
<td>How does your organization see itself?</td>
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<td>Are they able to accurately represent that understanding in recruitment?</td>
<td>Do you, and your community, see it as primarily a service delivery organization, a social change organization, both, or neither/other.</td>
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1 For more on these strategies, check out VSDVAA’s Moving Upstream Newsletter (Volume 6, Issues 1 & 2)
Preventing violence in your community

Successful prevention efforts seek to bring about change in individuals, relationships, communities, and society through strategies that:

- Challenge narrow ideas about what it means to be a man/woman
- Help people be financially independent so they can make decisions about relationships based on well-being rather than financial need
- Talk about the connections between violence, racism, homophobia, and poverty

**Shift culture**

- Challenge our communities to reject all types of violence
- Promote the expectation that all people will be treated with respect in their relationships
- Help people learn how to have healthy conflict and resolve their differences in respectful and non-controlling ways
- Support youth in learning and exercising leadership
- Encourage people to speak up if they see something that’s not cool—show them how and help them practice

**Build skills**

- Have conversations (in schools, with friends, and in the community) about what healthy relationships look like and feel like

**Address root causes of violence**

- Our Domestic Violence Housing First program is focused on eliminating housing as a reason to stay in an abusive relationship, which helps prevent future violence.
- The Refuse To Abuse® domestic violence prevention campaign with the Seattle Mariners uses male athletes as role models to promote respect and healthy masculinity.
- WSCADV launched a Teen Leadership Council (TLC). We recognize the importance of youth leading us (and each other) in the work to end violence in relationships.
- We developed In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence, a scenario-based training that helps adults talk to young people about their relationships.
Planning for Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention work</th>
<th>Address root causes of violence</th>
<th>Shift culture</th>
<th>Build skills</th>
<th>Promote healthy relationships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities we’re already doing</td>
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<td>Activities we’d like to be doing</td>
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**Next Steps**

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<th>By When</th>
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5 ways to increase your program’s capacity to do prevention

Get your board on board
• Affirm that your organization has a commitment to prevent violence.

Start talking
• Domestic violence is preventable! Spread this message.

Stay connected
• Network with other people doing prevention work and share ideas. We do this work better together!

Try it out
• Evaluate how it went and learn from it.
• Try again.

Make the connection
• Share with your funders and your community how prevention work connects to victim services.²

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² Prevention work is in service to and is directly linked to the experiences of victims and survivors for a variety of reasons:

• Victims don’t want their kids to experience domestic violence.
• Victims inform what we know about the nature of abuse dynamics and therefore inform our strategies to prevent it.
• Prevention strategies help victims in future relationships.
• Skills for healthy relationships keep everyone safe (including victims) from future violence.