

# Prevention Guidelines for Domestic Violence Programs in Washington State

---

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s vision for prevention is in line with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Their core strategy for preventing DV is the promotion of respectful, non-violent relationships by addressing factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. We value the insights of the [socio-ecological model](#) and approach our prevention work across those levels as well. Finally, we appreciate and are guided by the [principles of prevention](#) that are brought forward by our colleagues in the sexual violence field.

It is our view that successful prevention efforts seek to bring about change in individuals, relationships, communities, and society through strategies that:



Address root causes of violence



Shift culture



Build Skills



Promote healthy relationships

## *Approach to prevention*

Domestic violence programs who want to meaningfully engage in violence prevention efforts should embark on programming that works across the four frames and be able to show how their efforts are in line with at least one of the frames.

### Address root causes of violence

- 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

### Build skills

- 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

### Promote healthy relationships



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

This approach is in line with addressing risk and protective factors. Communities that try to decrease risk factors for abuse and increase protective factors are engaging in evidence-based prevention efforts. The Virginia Action Alliance provides helpful [guidance](#) on what that might look like.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, best practices indicate that there should be an emphasis on multi-session efforts with a small-defined community. Programs can seek guidance for how to work with small-defined communities from the [community development model](#).

### Prevention matrix

Programs can use the rubric below to evaluate if their strategies fit into our current prevention framework.<sup>2</sup> If activities and strategies can fit into the matrix, then the work is considered to be a domestic violence prevention effort. If it doesn't fit, then the work is outside of the scope of prevention.<sup>3</sup>

Prevention work  Delivery Method 	Address root causes of violence	Shift culture	Build skills	Promote healthy relationships
<b>Individual</b>	E.g. Offer an anti-oppression workshop that helps participants examine the intersections of sexism, homophobia, racism, and violence.		E.g. Review <i>Love Like This</i> series about making a move and consent – discuss the concept of an enthusiastic Yes! and practice asking for consent.	
<b>Relationship</b>	E.g. Host a discussion on money and relationships. Challenge participants to reflect on the role that money plays in their decision-making about relationships.	E.g. Use How's Your Relationship cards to have a conversation about expectations of intimate relationships with a small group of teens.	E.g. Provide a dating 101 class for new daters.  E.g. Provide a dating 101 class for parents of new daters.	E.g. Deliver a school-based curriculum on healthy relationships in a classroom setting for 12 weeks.
<b>Community</b>	E.g. Work for affordable housing in your community so that people do not have to move in together in order to make ends meet.  E.g. Join allied social justice movements (like Black Lives Matter) to work to end oppression in all its forms.	E.g. Have a community reads program with your local library and read a book with a relationship theme and discuss the hallmarks of healthy relationships and shared power.	E.g. Provide relationships skills classes where you teach skills for healthy conflict resolution and shared decision-making.	Run a break-up clinic to provide support for participants who want to break up in a way that prepares them and their ex for healthy relationships in the future.
<b>Society</b>		E.g. Work for policies and practices that hold abusers accountable in a meaningful, culturally relevant way.		E.g. Join the Refuse to Abuse campaign with the Seattle Mariners to promote respect as part of a healthy relationship.

<sup>1</sup> Review pages 39-42 for risk and protective factors and review pages 44-60 for examples of prevention work that addresses those factors.

<sup>2</sup> Because there is a growing spotlight on prevention work and a requirement for a state planning process, some things may change as we learn more.

<sup>3</sup> Being outside the scope of prevention does not mean the work is not valuable, just that it cannot be characterized as prevention. It still may be an important or impactful activity, simply under a different category such as awareness or community education.