



the blue bench

Putting an end to sexual assault through prevention and care.

“Pathway to Prevention” Programs 2017

- **Sexual violence can be prevented with data driven, collaborative action.**
(NISVS, 2010)
- **Bystander model is consistent with the call for more socio-ecological approaches for prevention through focusing on peer and community norms, behaviors and interactions.**
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007; Casey & Lindhorst, 2007; Moynihan, Potter, Banyard, Stapleton, & Mayhew, 2010)
- **In studies of sexual assault survivors, receiving social support has been associated with a variety of positive outcomes, including positive life change and growth as well as reduced PTSD and depressive symptoms.**
(Borja, Callahan, & Long, 2006; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Schumm, Briggs-Phillips, & Hobfoll, 2006).

The Blue Bench “Pathway to Prevention” programs are designed to educate, empower and engage participants across the lifespan, from young children to older adults. The content and dissemination methods of The Blue Bench prevention and education programs are driven by the most up-to-date research in the field of sexual violence prevention. Our programs – based on substantial research indicating effective prevention strategies (NSVRC, 2014) – are theory-driven, multi-session, utilize varied teaching styles, foster positive relationships, and can be tailored to ensure content is culturally responsive. We are dedicated to a wider community approach and work in collaboration with schools, parent groups, youth educators, service providers, and many other types of organizations.

To maximize impact, it is recommended that programs should try to build in opportunities for follow-up and booster sessions. The Blue Bench encourages and works with organizations to create tailored scenario-based practice/skill-building sessions for participants.

The Blue Bench curricula are:

- ✓ Developmentally-appropriate
- ✓ Rooted in scientifically supported approaches to prevention – recommended by the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS, 2010) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- ✓ Evidence and promising practice based
- ✓ Fulfilling The Department of Education Office for Civil Rights’ recommendation for schools to be “Conducting bystander intervention and sexual violence prevention programs with students.”
- ✓ Approved curriculum by Denver Public Schools (DPS) Community Partnership Program
- ✓ In complete alignment with the concepts discussed in the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) academic standards (2014) for Prevention and Risk Management (standard 4), “to apply knowledge and skills that promote healthy and violence free relationships.”
- ✓ Designed to make it easy for teachers to utilize our programs to meet many evidence outcomes of CDE
- ✓ academic standards
- ✓ Facilitated by Prevention Specialists with 50+ hours of training in facilitation skills and curriculum content



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What Our Programs Do

Our curricula:

1. Promote healthy, respectful relationships among youth
2. Address beliefs, attitudes and messages that condone, encourage, or facilitate sexual violence, stalking, or intimate partner violence
3. Build understanding about the range of sexually violent behaviors and their impact on survivors
4. Develop skills and tools for engaging in bystander intervention: to change social norms and intervene before, during and after an incident
5. Educate the public about how to support a survivor
6. Educate parents and youth service providers to recognize signs of grooming and help a child who has been sexually abused
7. Provide parents with developmentally-appropriate ways to talk to their children about sexual violence
8. Ensure those affected by sexual violence are aware of their options and know how to access services and resources
9. Empower those who want to add assertiveness and self-defense techniques to their “toolbox” of safety skills

Program Evaluation and Improvement

The Blue Bench Prevention and Education department ensures high quality programming by Prevention Specialists. Prevention Specialists have over 50 hours of training on facilitation skills and sexual violence prevention theory and curricula in addition to completing The Blue Bench’s 40-hour Hotline Training. Our diverse staff work part-time with a wide range of availability which allows The Blue Bench to meet all types of scheduling needs from school-based and community organizations.

We are committed to high-quality effective prevention and education programs. The Blue Bench has implemented evaluation tools to track how well the programs are meeting the curriculum goals and needs of the host organization, as well as assess our impact over time. Participant feedback is used to guide ongoing improvement to the programs.

I loved The Blue Bench training. It was very valuable and very encouraging to want to be a pro-social bystander and keep an eye out for others.

-Student, Metro State University



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Bringing in the Bystander: Establishing a Community of Responsibility

Bringing in the Bystander, developed by Prevention Innovations at University of New Hampshire, is an evidence-based sexual violence prevention program originally designed for college populations, and adapted for developmentally-appropriate use with high school students. The bystander model approaches all students as neither a potential perpetrator nor victim, but instead as people who would want to be a part of the solution. The Blue Bench Prevention Specialists engage students to understand the role that they play in preventing sexual assault by becoming an active bystander. Through this curriculum participants will:

1. Understand the concept of prosocial bystander intervention
2. Be able to identify a continuum of inappropriate sexual behavior
3. Analyze how culture and media messages play a role in sexual violence
4. Develop empathy for those who have experienced sexual violence
5. Understand their role in bystander intervention and changing social norms
6. Understand their own barriers to bystander intervention and techniques to overcome them
7. Develop skills to safely intervene as a bystander
8. Gain commitment to intervene in the case of sexual violence before, during and after an incident
9. Understand the impacts of sexual assault on a survivor and be able to identify ways to support a friend/loved one
10. Be able to identify local resources available to both survivors of sexual violence and those who support survivors

This prevention program contains five hours of interactive content (delivered in multiple sessions) and can be modified to 90 - 120 minutes. The Blue Bench offers additional interactive skill-development booster sessions to support students in building confidence as they practice implementing active bystander intervention.

This training has truly developed leaders of character and we are optimistic to incorporate their leadership into future organizations. I am fully confident that our students will not only understand the procedures when intervening however will take action before future instances occur.

-Colorado School of Mines ROTC



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iEmpathize - The Empower Youth Program: Exploitation prevention for teens

As an approved practitioner of the Empower Youth Program, The Blue Bench is proud to bring this curriculum to metro-Denver area teens. This has included programs at the Gilliam Youth Services Center and the Marvin W. Foote Youth Services Center.

iEmpathize is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to combating crimes against children with a mission to evoke empathy and empower people to eradicate child exploitation. The Empower Youth Program was first developed in 2011 to address the great need for prevention programming with at-risk youth. Through collaborative efforts with survivors of human trafficking, experts in the field of education and educational psychology, law enforcement, and victim advocacy experts, iEmpathize developed content that addresses issues of child exploitation without sensationalizing the concepts. By inspiring students to develop empathy for those around them, the curriculum distinguishes itself as an exploitation awareness tool as well as a character education program with far-reaching transformative potential for your school, classroom, or youth program. Program features include:

1. Flexibly designed for environments ranging from traditional academic classrooms to after-school youth programs to individual counseling sessions.
2. Intended for youth in 7th grade and up.
3. Supplemental Friendly: The program can be integrated into existing curricula or existing initiatives.
4. Aligns with Health Education standards and Common Core Career Readiness standards.
5. The most impactful feature of the program is its teen showcase. The media content is led by youth who speak from their experiences of learning to navigate vulnerability.

The program is a five lesson unit comprised of two short films per lesson, discussion questions, classroom activities, and assessment options. Each lesson is 20 minutes in length with optional extension activities up to 60 minutes.

[It taught] me how to help someone and show empathy because before I wouldn't be sure what to do.

-iEmpathize participant



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Let's Talk About It: Sexual Assault Prevention for Youth

Let's Talk About It is an in-depth, five hour prevention program that is typically presented for an hour a day for five days in a row for middle school aged youth, and can be adapted to fit schedule requirements. This curriculum focuses on healthy relationships, boundaries and skill-building to become an active bystander. Trained facilitators lead participants in discussion and activities designed to make the content relevant to their own lives and empower students to be a part of changing social norms through prosocial bystander behavior. Through this interactive curriculum, students will be able to:

1. Identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
2. Understand strategies and communication skills for setting boundaries and respecting other people's boundaries
3. Identify media and cultural messages, including ideas about gender roles and masculinity/femininity, that can lead to sexual violence
4. Understand what consent is and how it contributes to healthy relationships
5. Identify verbal and nonverbal behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, sexual coercion and sexual assault
6. Build empathy for survivors
7. Describe the options for reporting sexual violence to a trusted adult
8. Describe how to support a friend and refer them to resources
9. Identify decision making steps for acting as an ally/active bystander
10. Describe strategies for becoming an active bystander against sexual assault

The Blue Bench has been an integral part of my health class for a couple years now. They have an ability to reach out to students helping them identify the components of healthy and unhealthy relationships. In just a couple days the students gain so much and have the opportunity to explore the idea around building and nurturing healthy relationships for their future.

-Health teacher, Overland Trail Middle School



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Knowledge is Power: Sexual Assault Awareness

Knowledge is Power is a 1-2 hour Education program presented in the community and in school settings.

Many times, learning about the society wide myths and facts surrounding sexual assault can act as a front line and best defense for preventing sexual assault. To help equip adults and students alike, The Blue Bench offers programs that enable them to comfortably and efficiently talk about sexual assault with their family and friends, their neighbors and within their communities. *Knowledge is Power: Sexual Assault Awareness* includes an introduction to the myths and facts of sexual assault as well as information about what sexual assault is and the services available to assist survivors of an assault. Through this curriculum, students will:

1. Learn the primary services The Blue Bench provides to the Denver metro community
2. Understand how they can support people in their lives who have experienced sexual assault.
3. Understand the reality behind some common myths about sexual assault.

Keeping Kids Safe

Keeping Kids Safe is a 1-2 hour education program for elementary students' parents, teachers, and other adult caregivers. The curriculum is designed to empower participants with knowledge, tools and strategies for talking about sexual assault with young children and intervening when they recognize warning signs. Through a discussion of the dynamics of child sexual abuse, participants will gain knowledge about proactive steps they can take to help keep children safe. This program is customized to meet the needs of each audience. Participants will be able to:

1. Describe legal definitions of sexual assault, child sexual abuse and unlawful sexual contact
2. Identify red flags of perpetrator behavior and warning signs that a child may be experiencing sexual abuse
3. Describe age-appropriate strategies for talking to kids about sexual violence
4. Describe steps parents/adults can take to help prevent sexual abuse
5. Describe how to respond to a disclosure of sexual abuse
6. Describe resources in the community for survivors and their families



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Safety and Empowerment Skills for Women and Girls

Safety and Empowerment Skills classes are 3-6 hours and offered to female-identified teens and adults 13 years and older. This curriculum offers a safe space for participants to learn and practice verbal and physical assertiveness and self-protection skills. The curriculum is based on a toolbox approach – adding tools to participant skills for dealing with situations ranging from sexual harassment to life-threatening situations. These classes can be held for a private group by request and/or are offered to the community (open classes) throughout the year at varying locations around metro Denver. Through this class, participants will gain:

1. Understanding of the meaning of self-defense
2. Knowledge of the basics of Colorado laws about self-defense, sexual assault and sexual harassment
3. Understanding of the appropriate level of response to different kinds of confrontation
4. Skills for using stronger parts of their body against the weaker parts of an attacker's body
5. Ability to execute self-defense moves: use of voice, non-verbal assertiveness, defensive stance, moving in stance, kick to knee, hand and elbow techniques; wrist and torso grab releases; strangle hold releases
6. Practice putting techniques together and thinking through an attack situation to safety

The highly trained facilitators emphasize only a perpetrator is to blame for making the choice to assault another person – the victim is never to blame. Use of self-protection techniques is a personal choice and one that only the person being attacked can make using all the information available to them.

Safe Bars

Safe Bars, a project of Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS) and Defend Yourself in Washington, D.C., offers staff working in alcohol-serving establishments training to recognize and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and assault. The Blue Bench is an approved practitioner of this program for the Denver community and is rolling out this program in partnership with Denver Police Department.

We know everyone – staff and patrons – have more fun when in a safe environment. Active bystander intervention is a promising practice in the prevention of sexual harassment and assault, contributing to safer communities. The Blue Bench Prevention Specialists offer hands-on, team oriented and tool-based training that staff in liquor-serving establishments can put into practice on their next shift!

Safe Bars is a 2 hour sexual assault prevention training designed to draw on the staff's current knowledge and experience, while increasing their depth of knowledge about dynamics of sexual violence and perpetrator behavior. The participants have an opportunity to identify effective intervention strategies that draw on their strengths and ability to work as a team, then practice intervening in scenarios that are customized to their venue.