MCASA

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782   Phone: 301-565-2277
Silver Spring, MD 20907   Fax: 301-565-3619
www.mcasa.org   SALI (legal): 301-565-2277

<u>Planning for Hybrid Sexual Assault Awareness Month</u>

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, where we work to build a connected community dedicated to ending sexual violence and supporting survivors. April 2022 marks the 21st anniversary of the first official SAAM.

SAAM has traditionally been focused on public awareness events and messaging. As awareness of sexual violence has skyrocketed in the past decades, we should pivot to engage more specifically in prevention.

SAAM Engagement Fundamentals

- To begin, identify what prevention strategies you will be using, or what risk and protective factors you will be addressing. In other words, pick a clear goal for your prevention efforts, grounded in best practices and best available evidence.
- If you are planning on doing a program, event, or campaign for the public, decide on the specific actions, behaviors, or skills individuals would have to adopt to contribute to this goal.
- This is also a good opportunity to reconsider systems and policies that contribute to prevention. Prevention involves community and societal change, not just individual behavior change, and SAAM can be a moment to recognize this and publicize these efforts for broader change.

Raise Your Impact

- Approach your audience as allies, instead of potential perpetrators or potential victims. Focus on things they can do, instead of only things they cannot do.
- Give your audience specific and realistic action steps for prevention behaviors.
- Know your audience and speak to them: consider their norms and values, their language, etc. What would motivate them to want to be part of prevention efforts?
- Use messages that are clear and specific, and do not contribute to systems of oppression (racism, homophobia, toxic masculinity, victim blaming, etc.).
- Reach out to influential members of your community and directly invite them to participate in your efforts.

Adapting to Our Changing Environment – Hybrid Opportunities

- As campuses continue to navigate the pandemic, it will be incredibly beneficial to offer a combination of virtual engagements and in-person engagements (if safe to do).
- If your school or organization can return to in-person events for SAAM, plan for COVID-19 safety precautions.

- Brainstorm activities that can be done individually or at a distance to increase safety
- Plan activities that can connect both in-person and virtual participants – you can use a platform to connect online students into the event by video and audio so they can participate.
- Consider creating or adapting an online campaign into your in-person SAAM events so a variety of voices are uplifted across platforms – create a hashtag to connect participants.

Best Practices for Online Campaigns
- Know your audience: Who are you trying to reach?
- Set specific goals, ways to participate, and a timeline.
- Plan your content: think about messaging, language, tone, and platform.
- When choosing a platform, consider content style:
    - Instagram is a visual platform ideal for graphics and photographs.
    - Facebook lends itself to more complex text posts, link-sharing, and event organization.
    - Twitter is best for concise messages.
    - YouTube is a video-based platform for both short and long-form content.
    - TikTok is a video-based platform for short-form content.
- Increase social media presence and opportunities for participation through methods such as:
    - Instagram polls
    - Instagram/Facebook lives to highlight SAAM and upcoming events
    - Lives with local RCC or other service providers and advocacy groups
    - Create posts spotlighting student change makers
    - Student club/organization social media takeovers
- Only post content (information, research, statistics, etc.) from trusted organizations.
- Use SAAM hashtags to widen your reach.
- Tag other organizations when sharing their content or referencing them.
- Remember to include your logo on any graphics.

Best Practices for Online Events
- Decide on a clear purpose and theme.
- Choose the right platform; consider accessibility and the type of event.
- Keep the event short and plan content for each minute; downtime can be uninviting and off-putting during virtual events.
- Create videos and visual effects to break up speakers and avoid downtime.
- Decide whether speakers will be live or pre-recorded (or both!) and make sure they are comfortable with whichever option you choose.
- Create an Agenda or "Run of Program" and distribute to anyone speaking live or providing behind-the-scenes support.
- Assign someone to monitor the chat/audience, and have a plan for removing people who misbehave from the event (various platforms offer different options for this)
- Run a tech rehearsal and dress rehearsal for the event. If the dress rehearsal is run during a different time than the event, leave extra time before the event begins to check lighting and camera angles.
- All speakers and support staff should log on at least half an hour prior to the start to sort out any potential tech and lighting issues and cue up all pre-recorded content.

MCASA
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault