



# Event Planning Guide



## **Planning a Sexual Assault Awareness Month Event**

Are you passionate about ending sexual violence and want to channel that energy into action? Plan a Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) event in your community! Your leadership and action this April are more important than you think – the widespread impact of these events can show support for survivors, provide meaningful education about consent, and share valuable information about resources and services. Change starts with awareness – so start planning, start organizing, and start conversations that will help bring into focus a safer world for us all!

### **Who should be involved?**

Everyone. Everyone's voice is necessary in preventing sexual violence. The more we spread awareness and educate folks on the issue, the



more allies we have in the effort to support survivors and prevent sexual violence before it happens.

### **Who should plan SAAM events?**

Anyone! You don't have to work in a rape crisis center or be a Title IX Coordinator to take action this April. You can coordinate events through your school, work, or other community organizations. You can even organize small actions yourself or with a group of friends.

## Event Goals

**Awareness** – Useful for sharing information about sexual violence, promoting resources, and establishing new relationships in the community.

**Fundraising** – Fundraising activities can be incorporated into many other types of events to support sexual violence prevention and services.

**TIP:** Plan your event for the SAAM Day of Action on Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>!

**Healing** – Designed to support survivors in speaking out, sharing their stories, and connecting with other survivors and support networks.

**Community engagement** – Increase community members' abilities to collectively change policies, systems, and social norms.

**Public policy** – Events and activities educate and engage lawmakers and community members around policies related to sexual violence.

**Prevention** – Prevention is an ongoing process of changing community norms and individual behaviors. SAAM events can help reinforce existing prevention messages, mobilize community members, and engage new partners in prevention.



# Event Ideas

- Take Back the Night rally
- Paint the town teal
- Tabling
- Coffee sleeves
- Art exhibit/visual display
- Workshop on consent and healthy relationships
- Handprint of support
- Teal color run
- Walk or run
- Candlelight vigil
- Survivor clothing exhibit
- Health fair
- Essay or poster contest
- Proclamation signing
- Library book display
- Storytelling play
- Rock painting
- Film screening
- Teach-in
- Poetry slam/open mic
- Restroom campaign
- Storefront display
- Chalk the walk
- Panel/roundtable discussion

## Movies to Screen During SAAM\*

- The Hunting Ground
- I AM EVIDENCE
- Spotlight
- Audrie & Daisy
- The Invisible War
- Precious
- Anita: Speaking Truth to Power
- Roll Red Roll
- The Tale

\*please note that licensing fees for these films may apply

# Planning an Event

## Before SAAM

### Recruiting volunteers

- Start reaching out to friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, neighbors, etc.

**TIP:** Document your event! Designate one volunteer who will be in charge of sharing on social media during the event.

### Find collaborators on campus or in the community

- Reach out to local nonprofits and other organizations.
- Local businesses may be willing to donate space for events and supplies, help cover other costs, or use their space to advertise.

## Decide on programming

**Consider:** What's going to be high impact? What will be educational? What will evoke change in the community?

### Get materials

- Visit NSVRC's store to purchase resources and merchandise or download resources for free at [www.nsvrc.org/saam](http://www.nsvrc.org/saam)
- If you're on a campus, ask departments or clubs if they can donate supplies.

**Train your team:** Sexual violence is a complex topic and personal to many people. It's important that you and your volunteers understand how to approach this issue in trauma-informed ways. By incorporating a trauma-informed approach, you can minimize the risk of re-traumatizing individuals who have either experienced sexual violence or those who have a close relation to it.

Some simple ways to implement trauma-informed practice are:

- including trigger warnings
- ensuring that participants have contact information for local resources
- double-checking that programs do not include victim-blaming language/ideas

**TIP:** Not a graphic designer? Try using free websites like Canva.com and utilize their pre-set designs to make your own compelling event flyers, share graphics, and more!

## Advertise the event

**Local media:** Invite members of your local media to promote your event ahead of time.

**Social media:** Create a Facebook event page, invite folks to join, and share the event with local Facebook community pages.

**Flyers:** Post flyers at local businesses and in other community spaces.

## During SAAM

**Recruit allies:** Use SAAM as an opportunity to network and connect with other individuals who want to organize around anti-sexual violence initiatives.

**Listen:** Lots of different people will show up to your event, from survivors, to loved ones of survivors, to those interested in how they can help prevent sexual violence. Listen to what they have to say about what more could be done in your community to help survivors and prevent sexual violence.

**Evaluate:** Evaluations should be short enough that participants feel they are manageable to complete, but the questions should be sufficient enough to offer valuable insight.

**TIP:** Print out SAAM coloring pages to provide a self-care activity at your event that can also serve as a conversation starter.

## After SAAM

**Thank your collaborators:** A lot of physical and emotional labor goes into coordinating SAAM. Celebrate your team and yourself and thank all of those who were involved!

**Share your good work:** Share photos and video of your event on social media. Remember to ask permission before posting posed photos of participants. Also, if a survivor is sharing their story, ask for permission beforehand to record and share it online.

**Keep the momentum going!** Use the energy of SAAM to keep spreading awareness – call on your network to begin organizing around future events or actions.

## Individual Actions

**Host an online fundraiser:** Raise funds for your local rape crisis center.

**Library display case:** Ask your local library to put together a display of books that address sexual assault.

**Rock painting:** Collect rocks and paint teal ribbons and messages of support on them. Leave your rocks in frequently traveled places.

**Distribute resources in your community:** Download or purchase materials like our SAAM poster, palm cards, handouts, or stickers.

**Write a letter to the editor:** Submit a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or media outlet.

**Engage your faith-based community:** Ask your faith leader to address sexual violence during services or offer prayer sessions for survivors.

Register your SAAM event with NSVRC: [bit.ly/SAAMEvent](https://bit.ly/SAAMEvent) to get the latest campaign updates and news!

## Advice from past SAAM event planners

“Don’t focus on the number of attendees – focus on the quality of your event.”

- Bridget with University of Alaska Anchorage

“DELEGATE. Having just one partner will help lower the stress of planning the event. Also, remember why you are doing the program. If you’re planning a SAAM event, you’re already doing something amazing for your community and for survivors around the world.”

- Cecilia with Violence Outreach Informing our Community with Education (V.O.I.C.E.)

“Start planning and order swag early, and don’t underestimate your ability to reach your goals. SAAM is so important, and it’s amazing how many people will be influenced by your event.”

- Morgan with Virginia Commonwealth University Police Department

“When seeking project partners, connect with organizations who can provide resources that can help further the success of your event. This can include additional people working on the event, promoting the event to their networks and connections, offering ideas you may not have considered, and providing items you may not have.”

- Courtney and Eva with Florida Council Against Sexual Violence

“Give yourself permission to start small. Create safe, easy, broadly inclusive opportunities for people to participate as allies. Not everyone will be ready to identify as a survivor. And don’t quit if you only have a small turnout. Word of mouth will help next year’s event grow larger than the first one. But these events are always worth doing, whether 4 or 400 people turn out.”

- Cara with Vanderbilt University