

Event planning guide

The following list of event ideas can help in planning an effective Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) campaign. While April is only one month out of the year, SAAM events can provide excellent opportunities to establish partnerships, launch new campaigns and programs, and initiate prevention activities that will continue throughout the year and beyond.

As you get started in planning your events, it is helpful to decide on your campaign goals, as different types of events can have different results and meaning in the community. Choose events and activities that will meet your goals and your community's needs and adapt them according to your timeline and resources. With planning, creativity, and support, great events can come together on short time frames and limited budgets.

Remember to consider whether there are activities already happening in your community that you can support and promote. Also, be sure to add SAAM events to the national calendar at www.nsvrc.org/calendar.

Types of events

Different types of events can achieve different types of goals. The event ideas listed in the pages that follow have been labeled to help you find events that fit your goals. Many events can be used to achieve several goals at once.

Awareness

Awareness events are useful for sharing information about sexual violence, promoting resources, and establishing new relationships in the community. Awareness can be an important first step toward many other goals.

Fundraising

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

Healing

Events with a healing focus are designed to support survivors in speaking out, sharing their stories, and connecting with other survivors and support networks.

Community engagement

Community engagement opportunities increase community members' abilities to collectively change policies, systems, and social norms.

Public policy

Events and activities to educate and engage policymakers and community members around policies related to sexual violence.

A step toward 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. Look for ways to use your event as a "step toward prevention."

Examples of events

PAINT YOUR TOWN TEAL

Use the color teal to promote awareness in your community. Tie a teal ribbon to your car. Wear a teal ribbon or teal-colored clothing, such as a teal tie. Paint your nails teal. Tie teal ribbons around trees or string teal lights in the center of town. Ask others to wear and display teal all month.

Set up baskets with teal ribbons at libraries, banks, gas stations, and doctors' offices. Ask a craft store to donate teal ribbons or offer a nonprofit discount. Wherever you put ribbons, be sure to have information about sexual assault awareness and prevention.

SET UP AN AWARENESS TABLE

Staff an awareness table at a community event. Decorate with teal, distribute campaign resources, and offer SAAM products/giveaways. To purchase SAAM products, visit the NSVRC store at www.nsvrc.org/store.

Prevention focus: While staffing the table, engage people in discussions about healthy sexuality and sexual development; they likely have children in their lives.

CREATE A COMMUNITY DISPLAY

Approach local businesses and libraries about setting up displays or decorating window space related to sexual assault awareness with SAAM flyers and your program's information.

Prevention focus: Talk with the librarian to see if there are groups that meet at the library, and offer to provide a series of workshops about healthy sexuality and sexual development and related prevention topics.

KEY



Awareness



Community engagement



Fundraising



Public policy



Healing



A step toward prevention

LAUNCH A RESTROOM CAMPAIGN

Take advantage of unused advertising space by placing flyers on the back of restroom stall doors at college campuses, bars, businesses, and state agencies. Remember to ask permission before posting flyers.



PRESENT AT UNIQUE LOCATIONS

Consider delivering presentations at unique locations in your community, like a local beauty salon. You can hang a poster with sexual assault information and your organization's services, or you can provide your organization's contact information to be added to stylists' business cards.

Prevention focus: Engage with the owner and offer to provide bystander intervention training for stylists.



SPONSOR A MOVIE SCREENING

Use discussion guides to get the audience talking about sexual violence and the issues addressed in the film, or ask a panel of local experts to participate. Be sure to have advocates available to provide support to anyone who needs it and hand out information with the local hotline number. Inquire at local theaters about having selected movies shown

during April, with a portion of proceeds donated to local sexual violence centers. Know your audience and choose a film to engage their attention. You can pick a film that's educational, uplifting and engaging.

ADD TO THE MONUMENT QUILT

A visual quilt comprised of the stories creates a public healing space by and for survivors of rape and abuse. The Monument Quilt gives churches, schools, towns and communities steps to support survivors of rape and abuse. You can participate in the project by making a quilt square or organizing a workshop for a group. A toolkit and instructions are available online: www.themonumentquilt.org

TEAM UP WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Get to know your local law enforcement officers and invite them to become involved with your agency. Request permission to tie teal ribbons to police cars in April.

Prevention focus: Offer to provide additional prevention training throughout the year to new recruits, at roll call, or through designated training events about their role in prevention and changing social norms in the community. Consider offering similar training to district attorneys and local judges.

SHOWCASE AN ART EXHIBIT

Showcase art or photography created by survivors as a part of their healing journey, either individually or as a group. Consider shadow boxes, quilts, clothing, collages, and jewelry. Display the art in a public space, offering

SAAM DAY OF ACTION!

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015

This nationally-recognized day provides an opportunity for preventionists and advocates to engage with their communities and kick-off SAAM events that are planned throughout April. Plan or support a SAAM event in your community on April 7, and keep the conversation going all month long on social networking.

WAYS TO CONNECT

- Use tweets, posts, and status updates to spread the word about SAAM. Check out our *Social media toolkit* for ideas.
- Visit the SAAM blog for campaign updates and prevention resources. Join the conversation, leave a comment or share: www.nsvrc.org/blogs/saam
- Post a SAAM video to NSVRC's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/NSVRC.
- Update your online profile or website with a SAAM background, teal ribbon or logo.
- Highlight your event on the national event calendar, and check out events happening locally and across the country. Visit: www.nsvrc.org/calendar.
- Connect with us on social media and share your events, photos, and stories.



a place for participants to comment on the impact that the artwork has on them.

Prevention focus: Talk to local youth performance groups or peer educators to participate in the event or organize similar events in the future.

HOLD AN OPEN HOUSE

Provide an opportunity for your organization to raise its profile in the community and to share valuable information. Provide brochures, signs, and educational information and share about volunteer opportunities. Invite board members and local officials. Publicize the open house in newspapers, on radio stations, and online. Ask if you can have time on a local radio show to promote SAAM and your agency's efforts in the community.

Prevention focus: Engage the local media and offer to provide training or resources throughout the year.

HOST A "BREAKFAST WITH" EVENT

Invite local legislators who have sponsored legislation that addresses sexual violence to talk about current public policy issues related to sexual violence. You can invite local law enforcement agencies, attorneys, city and county officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders in pending or recently passed legislation. Use this event as a time to (re)introduce your agency to community leaders to foster ongoing relationships. Host the event yourself or ask a local restaurant to provide an organizational discount.

Prevention focus: Create a social marketing campaign aimed at changing social norms

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around sexual violence and invite legislators and community leaders to participate as spokespersons for the campaign.



POLICY ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Participate in political advocacy during SAAM by writing letters to local, state, territory, tribal, and national government officials about policies related to sexual violence that impact your community. Provide information and templates to community members - including young people - to encourage them to participate in this campaign. Connect with organizations in the area to learn policy action you can support.



FOCUS ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

Ask local coffee shops, book stores, and small restaurants to collaborate and donate a percentage of their sales to a local rape crisis center. Partner with local businesses to "shop to end sexual violence" with discounts or proceeds for purchases to benefit sexual violence prevention programs in your community. Or ask a local eatery or business to contribute a small percentage of their profits on the "SAAM Day of Action" or another day in April. Be sure to promote your collaboration.

CONNECT WITH LOCAL BARS, NIGHTCLUBS AND HOT SPOTS

Have a custom hand stamp created with a slogan, like “consent is sexy” and your organization’s website. Encourage local bars to use the stamp for entrance during the month of April. Get the word out about your organization and promote a healthy sexuality message.

Prevention focus: Talk with the manager/owner about the important role bartenders, waitstaff, and other employees can play in preventing sexual violence as engaged bystanders, and offer to provide training. For resources, visit www.barcc.org/active/bars.

PARTNER WITH CORPORATIONS

Encourage major corporations in your community to add a note to employee’s paychecks with your agency’s information and information on sexual assault. This can also be done with utility and cable companies by requesting the information be placed in customers’ bills.

Prevention focus: Engage with corporate leaders and offer to provide training to staff and management on sexual harassment prevention, bystander intervention, and related topics.

ENGAGE FAITH-BASED & YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Ask local faith communities to address sexual violence during their services, offer prayer sessions, or make donations to local rape crisis centers. Ask local youth-serving organizations, such as scouting groups and mentoring programs, to support youth in getting

ENGAGE COMMUNITY TALENTS

POETRY SLAM


Host an event where poets share their writing. English and Performing Arts Departments at local universities, coffee houses, or local bookstores may be interested in providing a venue or cosponsoring. Invite your local media to advertise and cover the event, or partner with your local radio stations for DJs, judges, and hosts. Consider collaborating with a local poet to coordinate a workshop for community members about poetry-writing for healing and social change.

ESSAY CONTEST

Invite community members to write essays about the impact of sexual violence on their lives and their role in prevention. Collect, publish, and distribute these stories around your community, to donors, and to partner organizations.


POSTER CONTEST



Hold a contest for students to create your organization’s SAAM posters. Use social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter to promote the contest and announce the winners. Offer prizes to encourage participation.



 **Prevention focus:** These events can be excellent opportunities for youth leaders to apply their skills and gain experience with planning, marketing, and hosting activities to engage their peers and other community members for sexual violence prevention.

involved with SAAM activities. Provide a list of suggestions such as wearing teal, volunteering at a SAAM event, or hanging awareness posters.


Prevention focus: Talk with the leaders of the organizations about starting a youth-led prevention effort with young people in their program. Or offer to provide parent workshops on healthy sexuality and sexual development and other sexual violence prevention topics.


 **ORGANIZE A WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN**
This campaign involves men working to end violence against women, raises awareness in the community, and supports organizations that deal with the consequences of men's violence against women. Men who participate wear a white ribbon and sign a pledge stating they will never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence. For more, visit www.whiteribbon.ca.


  **PLANT FOR CHANGE**
Honor and recognize survivors and victims in your community with the new life of a tree or plant. These ceremonies may be held in conjunction with Earth Day or Arbor Day in April. Partner with local home and garden businesses and greenhouses and consider asking these companies to donate trees or flowers to plant during your event.


  **SHOWCASE "SOLE SURVIVORS"**
Set up a display of shoes, teal flags, or another object to represent the number of people who experience sexual violence each year in your community, or another statistic that represents sexual violence. Staff a table to answer questions about the display and distribute information about local resources.


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Prevention focus: Use symbols like shoes or flags in connection with social marketing and community education activities to encourage people to be engaged bystanders. The symbols can represent opportunities for bystander intervention to prevent sexual violence.

 **"SHINE THE LIGHT" TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Originally developed by the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles Sexual Assault Crisis Program, this can be as simple as encouraging community members to use car headlights, candles, lamps, or flashlights during a chosen point in time to create awareness about sexual violence. You could also coordinate a community event, such as a candlelight vigil at dusk.

  **GET MOVING!**

Many social and health causes have started annual walks/runs to raise money and awareness. You can plan a walk for sexual assault awareness or reach out to other organizations that are holding walks/runs during April to form a team representing the anti-sexual violence movement. Consider hosting a Zumba, yoga, or dance class during April to get your community moving to end sexual violence.

HONOR DENIM DAY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015



Denim Day is an international protest responding to the Italian Supreme Court's overruling of a rape conviction in 1999. Although the assailant had been found guilty at trial, the Supreme Court argued that because jeans are difficult to remove, the assailant couldn't have done so without the victim's help.

To honor Denim Day, encourage community members to wear jeans to work or school to promote discussion of the misconceptions that surround sexual violence. Participants can share pictures online and use the hashtag #DenimDay. You can also promote this as a fundraising event by asking organizations and businesses to collect donations from staff who participate, to benefit their local rape crisis center. For more, visit www.denimdayusa.org.



HOST A "ROCK AGAINST RAPE" CONCERT OR 1BLUESTRING EVENT

Host a benefit concert and invite local musicians to play. Proceeds can benefit community or campus rape prevention programs. You may have multiple performers come to one venue, or arrange with local bars/restaurants to host live musicians over several evenings. Talk with the musicians about the 1BlueString campaign, which asks guitarists to replace one of their strings with a free blue string to represent the one in six men who have survived child sexual abuse. Encourage them to use the blue string as an awareness tool all year. For more, visit www.1bluestring.org.



CREATE A CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

The Clothesline Project uses art created on T-shirts and then hung on a clothesline to promote awareness about sexual and domestic violence, hate crimes, and child abuse. Most events include a shirt-making session with a display of new or previously created shirts. Consider asking local businesses to donate the shirts and other supplies for this event. For more, visit www.clotheslineproject.org.



SUPPORT V-DAY

V-Day promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and stop violence against women and girls. Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of The Vagina Monologues to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups in their communities. For more, visit www.vday.org.



PARTICIPATE IN "SLUTWALK" EVENTS

SlutWalk protests and marches began in Toronto, Canada, to rally against victim-blaming attitudes that excuse or explain rape by referring to an individual's appearance or dress. The SlutWalk movement promotes the International Day Against Victim-Blaming on April 3. This event focuses on spreading awareness on social media by using the hashtag #EndVictimBlaming. For more, visit www.slutwalktoronto.com.





LAUNCH A "BANDANA PROJECT"



Created by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Bandana Project raises awareness about the exploitation of women working on farms. Bandanas are a symbol of those worn by women to cover their faces to avoid unwanted sexual attention and harassment.

Bring community members together to create art on white bandanas and hang them in a public to start a dialogue about sexual violence prevention.

PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL ANTI-STREET HARASSMENT WEEK

APRIL 12 - 18, 2015

  Join thousands of people across the world who gather in cities and online to collectively speak out about gender-based street harassment (catcalls, sexist comments, flashing, groping, stalking, and assault). Speak out, raise awareness, and rally against harassment. For more, visit www.meetusonthestreet.org.

  **TEACH-INS TO END RAPE CULTURE**
Schedule an informal educational forum can to share information about sexual violence. The goal is to get audience members to participate and take action. Participants can challenge one another to identify the root causes of violence and unlearn myths and stereotypes. How can your community take a stand against victim-blaming and rape culture?

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

Do you have an event idea or feedback?
Share your ideas, photos and videos.



MORE STEPS TOWARD PREVENTION

- ★ **SPREAD MEDIA LITERACY**
Messages in media are often a barrier to public education about sexual assault. Images in popular culture can portray myths, misinformation and victim-blaming. Gather community members and build your skills to understand and interpret media messages. When the messages are off you can take action by challenging misinformation, starting a petition or contacting the source.
- ★ **PROMOTE HEALTHY MASCULINITY**
Events are a great opportunity to further engage men in the movement to end sexual violence. Focus on promoting healthy masculinity and discussing gender norms. Challenge participants to discuss harmful gender roles, stereotypes and how these dynamics contribute to violence and oppression. Remember all members of a community can experience sexual violence and play a role in the solution.
- ★ **AFFIRM HEALTHY SEXUALITY**
The conversation on consent goes beyond no means no. Individuals need skills to understand healthy sexuality and communicate affirmative consent. Open the dialogue on how to reach yes means yes. Create a space for participants to learn about understanding and respecting boundaries. The audience can practice how to identify their wants and needs and establish consent.