# Building Community Change Agents

## Women & Girls ExCEL Program:

*Exemplifying Change, Empowerment, and Leadership*

A program of the Rutgers Center for Women and Work

This initiative is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rape Prevention and Education grant funds, administered by the NJ Department of Children and Families, Division on Women.

# Welcome and Agenda Overview

- Introductions/Icebreaker
- Overview of sexual violence and it's overall impacts on victims and the larger community
- How leadership plays a role in decreasing sexual violence
- Change agent discussion
- Building change agent skills
- Wrap up and next sessions

This program focuses on understanding sexual violence and rape prevention education; therefore, we will be discussing some heavy topics that can be painful and triggering for some people. Our intent is to educate and do no harm, but we understand that speaking about these things may have unintended consequences. If our discussion makes you uncomfortable or becomes too difficult for you to engage in at any point, please feel free to turn off your camera, walk away, or do whatever you have to do to preserve your peace in that moment.

***The data in this presentation has been taken from "Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence (2016)" released by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**

# Introductions & Icebreaker

What are you affirming for yourself this day/this week/this year?

To Affirm:

1. state as a fact; assert strongly and publicly.

2. offer (someone) emotional support or encouragement.

# What is Sexual Violence (SV)?

SV involves a range of acts including attempted or completed forced or alcohol/drug facilitated penetration (i.e., rape), being made to penetrate someone else, verbal (non-physical) pressure that results in unwanted penetration (i.e., sexual coercion), unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling), and non-contact unwanted sexual experiences (e.g., verbal harassment, voyeurism).

# How SV Affects Women

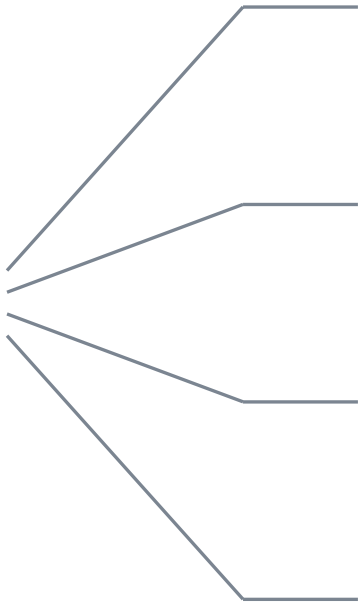
- Approximately **1 in 5 women (19.3%)** in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.
- 43.9% of women have experienced other forms of SV:
  - 12.5% have experienced sexual coercion
  - 27.3% have experienced unwanted sexual contact
  - 32.1% have experienced non-contact unwanted sexual experiences

# How SV Affects Women

| Lifetime estimates of rape or attempted rape of women: | In the LGBTQ+ community: |
| --- | --- |
| • 32.3% among multiracial women<br>• 27.5% among American Indian/Alaska Native women<br>• 21.2% among Black women<br>• 20.5% among non-Hispanic white women<br>• 13.6% among Hispanic women | • 46.1% bisexual women and 13.1% lesbian women, have experienced rape<br>• 74.9% bisexual women and 46.4% lesbian women, have experienced other forms of SV |

# Men are Affected Too…

Although studies indicate that women carry the greatest burden of SV, men are also impacted by SV.



Approximately 1 in 15 men (6.7%) have been made to penetrate someone at some point in their lives

5.8% have experienced sexual coercion

10.8% have experienced unwanted sexual contact

13.3% have experienced non-contact unwanted sexual experiences

# SV Starts Early in the Lifespan

- Among women reporting a history of completed rape, 40% first experienced it before age 18, with more than 28% indicating they were first raped between the ages of 11 and 17;
- Among men who were made to penetrate someone, 71% first experienced this before the age of 25, and 21.3% experienced this before the age of 18.
- While adolescence seems to be a period of high risk, college may also be a particularly vulnerable time. In a large, cross-sectional survey of campus sexual assault, 20% of the undergraduate women indicated that they had been a victim of SV since beginning college.

# Long Term Impact on Victims

- Girls who have been sexually abused are more likely to suffer physical violence and sexual violence re-victimization and be a victim of intimate partner violence later in life.
- Adolescents who have experienced forced intercourse at some point in their life are more likely than those who have not been forced to have intercourse to have thoughts of suicide.
- SV victimization may result in injuries that are physical (e.g., bruising, genital trauma) or psychological (e.g., depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts).
- The consequences of SV may also be chronic; some victims experience re-occurring gynecological, gastrointestinal, and sexual health problems.
- Victims may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

# Long Term Impact, continued

- SV is also associated with risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, excessive alcohol use) for chronic disease and medical conditions (e.g., high cholesterol, increased risk of a heart attack).
- In addition, sexual abuse in childhood and forced sexual initiation in adolescence are associated with increased HIV- and STD-related risk-taking behaviors, including sex with multiple partners, sex with unfamiliar partners, sex with older partners, alcohol-related risky sex, anal sex, and low rates of condom use, as well as HIV infection in adult women.
- Other negative consequences of SV victimization include decreased self-esteem and disruptions to daily routine.
- Victims may have difficulty in their personal relationships, in returning to work or school, and in regaining a sense of normalcy.

# Greater Impact on Communities

- Society incurs significant costs associated with the long-term physical and mental health consequences of sexual victimization.
- SV victims exceed non-victims in the average number and cost of medical care visits.
- Beyond medical costs, there are productivity costs and other long-term costs to victims and their families such as pain and suffering, trauma, disability, and risk of death. For example, findings from one state estimated the total cost of SV in 2009 to be $4.7 billion, or about $1,580 per resident.

# How Can Leadership Programs Help Decrease the Occurrence of SV?

Programs like ExCEL work by building **confidence and leadership skills** in young women to **influence their potential in education, employment, and community engagement**. Evaluation results from similar programs across the country show that after participating in these programs, many participants demonstrated the following outcomes:

- *increased connection to their cultural identity and values;*
- *increased their ability to develop healthy relationships with peers and adults;*
- *received performance evaluations indicating "good" or "excellent" job skills; and*
- *had increased motivation to excel at school.*

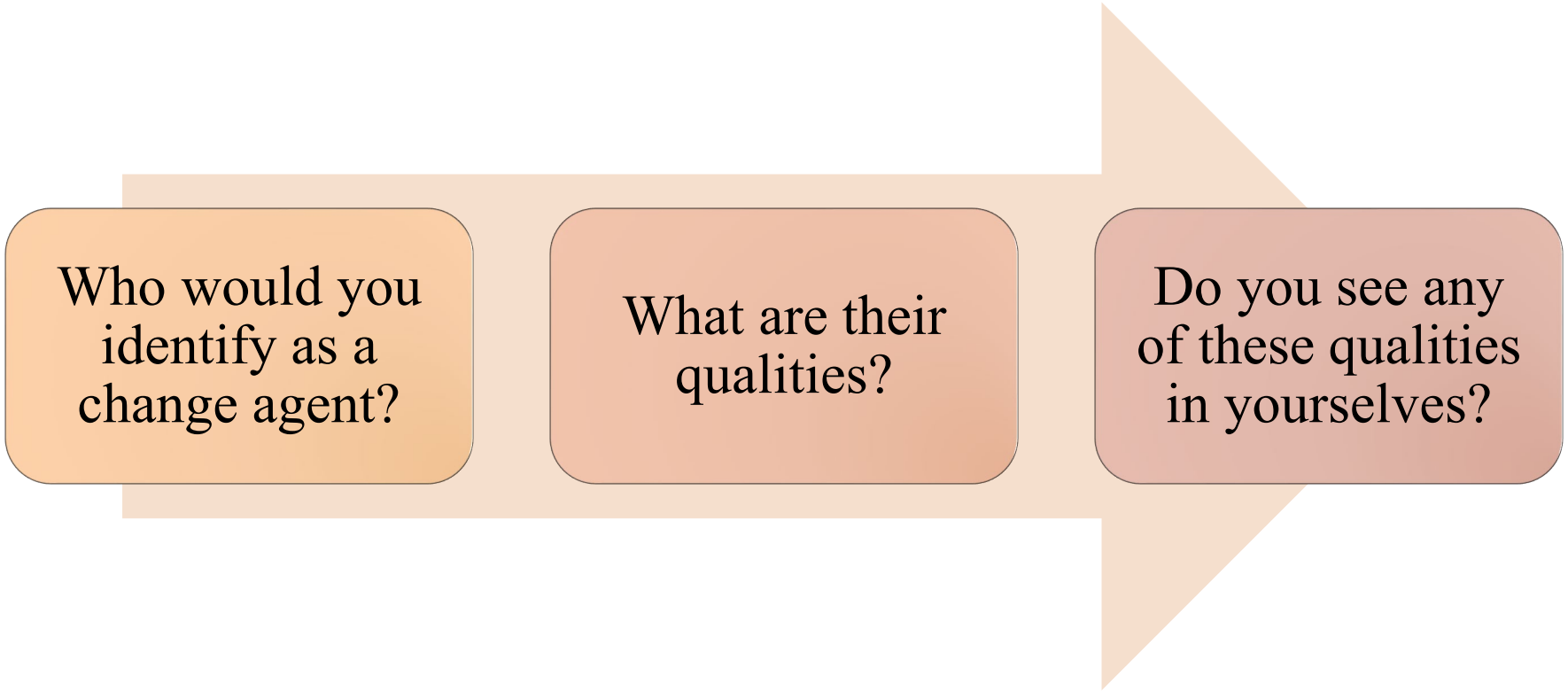
The expectation is that school success and improved job skills in adolescence will lead to reduced risk of poverty and low educational attainment which are known risk factors for SV victimization.

# Building Change Agent Leaders

*Change Agent** - An agent of change is someone who sees a problem in their community, large or small, and does something to take action for substantial change. This person is someone who listens to the people in the community where the issue exists and makes sure that they truly understand the root of the problem before implementing a new idea.

*educationpioneers.org

# Ask Yourself…



# Agents of Change

# Developing Skills as a Change Agent

As leaders, we want to provide the knowledge and skills to:

- Become effective agents of change
- Target resources: define, initiate, validate, and effect change
- Build central skills:
  - Communication
  - Engagement
  - Planning/accommodation

# Change Agents: Central Skills

1) Clear communication:

- Communicating to others about the shortcomings of the existing system, what are the problems you're trying to address
- What is the need for change, what that change should be

# Change Agents: Central Skills

2) Engage stakeholders:

- Connecting with others in the community
- Building relationships, establishing areas of common interest

# Change Agents: Central Skills

3) Planning and accommodation

- Putting together a comprehensive plan for moving forward, setting goals, targets, etc.
- Considering time, anxieties, concerns, and excitement, etc. that may come up along the way
- Dealing with setbacks and successes

# Next Sessions

Session 2 –Teamwork and Communication Skills

Session 3 – Engaging Stakeholders: Advocacy, Outreach, and Community Building

Session 4 – Planning and Accommodation: Roadmap For Success

# Closing/Questions