

Media Relations

California University Launches UNH's Acclaimed Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Program

September 7, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire’s nationally and internationally recognized sexual and relationship violence prevention social marketing campaign, the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign, has been adopted by the University of California at Merced.

The first sexual violence prevention social marketing campaign that engages bystanders, the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign helps prevent sexual and relationship violence and stalking by instructing community members to take an active part in stepping in and speaking up against these crimes.

“Bystanders weigh the costs and benefits of intervening. Bystanders are worried about whether there will be retaliation against them by others, whether they will lose social status, or whether they will be physically hurt. We need community norms that work against those costs to support bystanders for making the choice to help,” says Sharyn Potter, associate professor of sociology and co-director UNH’s research and development unit UNH Prevention Innovations, which administers the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign.

The Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign is one component of UNH’s comprehensive Bringing in the Bystander Program, which is based on studies that show the role of community norms is a significant cause of sexual and relationship violence, particularly in communities such as college campuses.

UC Merced received a grant for nearly \$45,000 from the Verizon Foundation to support the launch of the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign for UC Merced, which was a collaborative project of UNH researchers Sharyn Potter, associate professor of sociology, and Jane Stapleton, research instructor of women’s studies and family studies; Kari Mansager, Violence Prevention Program director at UC Merced; and Charles Nies, UC Merced’s associate vice chancellor of student affairs.

“UC Merced is an extremely diverse campus, and we needed a social media campaign that reflected that diversity. We loved the Know Your Power campaign because we could customize it to our campus, garner feedback from our students, and actually showcase our students as the active bystanders in the images displayed,” Mansager says.

Student involvement has been an important part of the development of the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign at UNH and the translation of the campaign for the UC Merced Campus. More than 250 UC Merced students were recruited to participate in focus groups to develop the four scenarios featured in the campaign. The scenarios portray typical college scenes that explicitly model safe and appropriate bystander behaviors in the prevention and intervention of sexual violence and relationship violence and stalking. The bystander social marketing campaign includes posters across campus, free products with the Know Your Power logo to all first-year students, bookmarks distributed in student bookstore orders, dining hall table tents, a customized interactive website, and digital displays.

The campaign will be displayed from late August until early October on the UC Merced Campus. UC Merced is working with UNH to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and plan to share the evaluation findings in spring 2012.

Jane Stapleton, co-director of Prevention Innovations, notes that the collaboration between UNH and UC Merced “presents an opportunity to adapt the Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign and evaluate its effectiveness on a diverse and geographically distinct campus from UNH. Ultimately, the collaboration will put evidence-based prevention strategies into the hands of practitioners.”

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UNH Prevention Innovations is a research and training unit that develops, implements and evaluates cutting-edge programs, policies and practices that will end violence against women on campus. It is a multidisciplinary center that includes faculty from the sociology and psychology departments as well as representatives from the UNH Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program, and Women's Studies Program. The center's clients include colleges, universities, local governmental agencies and not-for-profit organizations. For more information, visit <http://www.unh.edu/preventioninnovations/>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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