

Sexual Violence Prevention Network Quarterly Meeting, June 11, 2019: Summary of Small Group Solutions

The Sexual Violence Prevention Network (SVPN) quarterly meeting on June 11, 2019 featured a presentation by The Arc Minnesota-Greater Twin Cities Region and the Sexual Violence Center about Victim/Survivors with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. After the presentation, participants were engaged in an upstream prevention metaphor for primary prevention, and they worked in small groups using a modified “Design Thinking” process in order to create prevention solutions. Seven small groups developed seven different solutions, which are summarized below:

- People with disabilities work together to discuss ideas and solutions for how to increase safety in different situations, how to decrease fear, and how to build solutions to challenges where we can be safe in the community.
- Center the voices of people with disabilities. This will help counteract attitudes, myths, and assumptions that are made about people with disabilities, including counteracting the myths that people with disabilities can't be believed about their own experiences and that sexual assault gets falsely reported.
- Prioritize systemic education/teaching people with disabilities about their rights in order to counter-act a compliance culture. This would be helpful for all children. Also train professionals in positions of authority as well.
- Stop making assumptions, start listening to people with disabilities and self-advocates (in order to educate ourselves), and treat people the way they want to be treated.
- Modify/create supportive services job descriptions that reflect and set the stage for the concept of consent, empowerment, client-centered expectations, etc. Provide resources, support, and training to caregivers and other professionals so that they learn a different mindset- to provide support instead of manage behavior.
- Provide training for teachers and anyone who care for children so that they can help work towards dismantling ableism. Provide education for people with disabilities that is accessible (ASL, etc.) and focuses on healthy relationships and sexuality education.
- Integrate required training (like the information shared in this SVPN meeting) into professional certification/licensure programs. This training should be developed and delivered with representation (and not tokenism) from people with disabilities.