

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



“Connected communities experience less domestic violence. If we improve how and where we live, learn, work, and play and ensure that our environments and relationships support our overall health and wellness, then we can prevent domestic violence.”
([Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#))

The toll of intimate partner violence on communities

We all strive to live in communities that are healthy and safe; where our families, friends, and neighbors can reach their fullest potential.

But the presence of intimate partner violence (IPV), or domestic violence, can alter this trajectory in lasting and impactful ways. IPV is a pattern of abusive behaviors – including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion – that adults and adolescents use against an intimate or dating partner. It is characterized by one partner’s attempts to control the other by use of a range of tactics.

The recent National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) reveals that 20 people per minute in the United States are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner with 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experiencing this violence at some point in their lifetime (CDC, 2011). This survey also shows that victimization is impacting all types of people and communities, with a significant majority of people reporting that victimization started early, occurring before the age of 25. These trends in violence are far reaching, creating a ripple effect of social and health consequences beyond immediate injury and beyond just the individual or family unit.

“Prevention shapes a world where no one would conceive of abusing or hurting anyone they love.”
([Texas Council on Family Violence](#))

Luckily, IPV is preventable. Across the nation and in your own community, there are deeply-rooted networks of community-based organizations, advocates, and activists working to make violence a thing of the past and to ensure bright and healthy futures for youth. This work builds on decades of public health, social justice, and advocacy movements in order to support comprehensive solutions

to intimate partner violence. IPV prevention efforts seek to promote cultural and social norms that protect us from violence – like healthy relationships or family and community connectedness – and interrupt those that put us at risk for violence. The end result is safe, thriving communities where equality and respect are shared core values. But this type of change doesn't just happen overnight. The work calls for new, innovative partnerships, saturated efforts, and coordinated community support. Everyone has a role to play in this change effort, and that's exactly where you come in.

The important role of community partners

It takes a village to end intimate partner violence (IPV).

Just by living in and moving through your community, you have power to strike change. Whether it's through informal discussions with friends and neighbors, modeling healthy and respectful interactions with family, or working through various community institutions such as schools, local government, or businesses, you possess multiple points and varying degrees of influence over those around you.

This is what IPV prevention work is all about: finding ways to incorporate and actively model respect and equality in our daily lives and furthermore, seeking opportunities to reinforce and saturate these messages in various community settings. For this reason, many strong prevention initiatives include schools, churches, businesses, and a number of influencers and key stakeholders who serve our communities and neighborhoods. Successful prevention requires an approach of community connectedness – a model where everyone has a stake in creating change.

Examples from the field

Texas' Coaching Boys into Men Initiative

Athletic coaches play an extremely influential and unique role in the lives of young men; often serving as a parent or mentor to the boys they coach. Because of these relationships, coaches are poised to positively influence how young men think and behave both on, and off, the field. Recognizing this, the [Texas Council on Family Violence](#) and the [Texas High School Coaches Association](#) decided to embark on a multi-year partnership to institutionalize efforts aimed at empowering youth to build schools, neighborhoods, and communities free from violence.

The [Coaching Boys into Men](#) (CBIM) program facilitates positive-peer influence and mentorship connections by providing high school athletic coaches with the resources they need to promote respectful behavior among their players and help prevent relationship abuse, harassment, and sexual assault. Over the course of a season, CBIM coaches lead their players through brief weekly activities that address themes such as personal responsibility, respectful behavior, and relationship abuse. Teams are encouraged to involve fans, parents, faculty, other students, and school administrators in support of CBIM's respect message. Implementation of this program and this unique partnership in Texas has been especially impactful, building strong and sustained relationships among school administrators, coaches, parents and families, youth, and local community antiviolence and activism efforts.

For more information about the Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Council, or to join us in advancing a unified national prevention agenda, visit PreventIPV.org.