

8

Using an institutional example, this chapter offers strategies to effectively navigate institutional culture, processes, and structures to engage the entire campus community in addressing sexual violence.

Navigating Institutions and Institutional Leadership to Address Sexual Violence

Kathy Sisneros, Monica Rivera

“We’ve put up with this too long. To the men of CSU: Men are responsible for the vast, vast majority of sexual violence. We need to do better. We have to do better. We are better than this. We can end sexual violence—and we need to do it now.”

—Dr. Tony Frank, President of Colorado State University

Institutions are often compelled to address issues like sexual violence after a prominent and public incident occurs. At Colorado State University (CSU) however, we have worked proactively on educational efforts for students and the campus as a whole. What began as small educational efforts out of the Women and Gender Advocacy Center (WGAC) has grown into a large-scale institutional initiative implemented across the entire campus community with support from senior leadership, including the president. In this chapter, we draw on our experiences leading this transformative change to address sexual violence, sharing our story of how the institution embraced the *Reframe: Thinking and Acting Differently to End Interpersonal Violence* initiative. Based on our experience launching this initiative, we share five key elements of our implementation process that we believe are applicable to other institutions of higher education. These include (1) identifying key stakeholders and partners; (2) fostering a culture of collaboration; (3) cultivating senior leaders as champions who create processes for transformation; (4) providing consistent education, communication, and messaging; and (5) initiating ongoing assessment and continuous improvement.

Description of *Reframe*

The *Reframe* initiative was born out of the WGAC, where one of us served as director (Sisneros) and one of us as assistant director (Rivera). The WGAC is responsible for educational programming on sexual violence and is the primary location for confidential victim advocacy related to interpersonal violence. Our vision for *Reframe* was to provide a consistent, comprehensive institutional response to sexual violence from the front lines to senior administration leaders. We sought to do so by strategically navigating the institutional cultures, processes, and people to create the widespread culture change necessary to reduce rates of sexual violence on campus and a campus culture that contributes to the overall healing, support, and retention of survivors. Prior to its launch on campus, staff worked behind the scenes for nearly a year, meeting with various stakeholders to garner buy-in, seek feedback, and raise awareness about the initiative. To reinforce campus-wide ownership of the initiative, WGAC was intentional about infusing the CSU mascot (a Ram) into the title (RefRAME) and did not place WGAC's logo on promotional materials. Leading with institutional commitment versus situating this solely as the responsibility of a small office on campus increased credibility and broadened support for the initiative. To promote campus-wide implementation, a common tagline for the initiative: "thinking and acting differently to end interpersonal violence," was shared with offices on campus along with area-specific materials and language that appealed to the students with whom the office works.

After our numerous meetings with stakeholders, we formally launched the *Reframe* initiative in fall 2014. Since the rollout of *Reframe* we have seen an increase in students, faculty, and staff seeking resources to support victims and to educate others about consent. We have also seen improvements in campus communication avoiding the use of victim-blaming language related to consent and sexual violence. In reflecting on what supported our success in developing campus capacity for the *Reframe* initiative, we share five key elements of our implementation process that fostered its success and may be relevant to other campuses.

Identifying Key Stakeholders and Partners

The kind of transformative institutional change necessary to address the roots of sexual violence effectively takes time, involvement, resources, and investment from stakeholders in all corners of the institution. Key stakeholders include frontline staff who provide education, resources, and support; faculty, staff, and senior administrative leaders; internal and external governing bodies; students, parents, and families; and alumni. A starting point for transforming the ways in which sexual violence is addressed is for these parties to come together to unlearn what has previously been defined as acceptable behavior, thinking, and ways of interacting with one another

(Schein, 2010). If individuals across campus units and from varying levels in the organization are not able to collaborate to disrupt historical victim-blaming culture and practices, change will not occur.

It is important for all key stakeholders to develop open, ongoing, and sustained relationships with one another so that they can continually engage in (sometimes challenging) discussions about transforming the culture to support survivors. On most campuses, there are one or more people in varying roles designated to respond to sexual violence, including:

- Title IX investigator
- Title IX coordinator
- Confidential victim advocate
- Resource to the alleged perpetrator (case management, counseling, student legal services)
- Student conduct officer(s)
- Campus safety or police
- Resource for the university's interest (general counsel, public relations)

When looking at these positions in isolation, one can make some reasonable assumptions about their roles, responsibilities, and entry point for engagement in addressing a report of sexual violence. The CAS Self-Assessment Guide for Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Protection Programs (2012) provides specific guidelines that detail how to develop and assess the roles and responsibilities for various leadership positions related to addressing sexual violence.

Considering students spend most of their time outside the classroom, it is vital to identify which offices interact with students most readily. For example, on residential campuses, residence life plays a significant role in a student's experience, whereas on a commuter campus, an advising center may have more regular ongoing contact with students. Additionally, identity-based centers on campuses may serve as crucial spaces for minoritized students to create community and connect with staff with whom they feel safe in confiding. Investing in survivor-supportive foundational education for staff across the institution about resources and avenues for support spreads the investment and responsibility needed for a culture shift. Key elements of this education may include appropriate language to support survivors, knowledge about confidential referral resources, and how to navigate their roles as mandatory reporters in ways that minimize harm to a survivor.

Helping stakeholders see the value in a holistic effort to address sexual violence, and how their roles connect to these broader initiatives, also reinforces supporting survivors as a priority. For example, at CSU, posters sharing confidential resources are present in all the restroom facilities within the residence halls, student center, and academic buildings. Staff members worked with leaders in facilities to ensure that there was buy-in and training

for custodial staff to assist with maintaining the posters and notify WGAC when a poster is missing or damaged. The shared understanding of purpose and values among WGAC and custodial staff was critical in the success of this part of the initiative.

Fostering a Culture of Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

I (Sisneros) often use the phrase, “learning how to play in the sandbox” when discussing how to work with campus partners. Like children who initially enter a sandbox, the reality is that our roles and responsibilities often situate us with what can be viewed as competing commitments, at least on the surface. However, when multiple players center supporting students as the shared underlying goal, the ways in which we are willing to engage in the work of developing solutions can be much further reaching and more effective.

As one of our colleagues, Ann Hudgens, Executive Director for the CSU Health Network, often reminds us, each role should (or must) consider the impact on the individual(s), community, and institution to varying degrees (a perspective that aligns with the Center for Disease Control’s [2015] social ecological model, which is explicated in Hong and Marine’s Chapter 2). Different offices will likely concentrate on one of these spheres first before the other areas are considered. For example, the confidential victim advocate will attend to the needs of the survivor before considering the needs of the residence hall floor in which the survivor and/or perpetrator may live, whereas the hall director may be most attentive to the needs of the community. The challenge is knowing how to come together in the best interest of the survivor, while simultaneously holding the best interest for the community and institution. If there is little trust among colleagues, believing that all are coming together for shared interests is a leap of faith that can be hard to navigate. With an ongoing, sustained relationship, institutional trust is built over time, as is the ability to set one’s ego aside.

A critical first step for cultivating collaboration among key stakeholders in implementing change is to audit existing relationships. For example, consider the following questions:

1. How well do offices collaborate?
2. What current initiatives or programs are happening?
3. Who are the stakeholders on campus linked to mental, physical, and sexual health?
4. Who is linked to diversity programming?
5. Who is linked to compliance and Title IX reporting?

This audit will provide insight into how institutional partners view their roles and responsibilities in supporting survivors of sexual violence. This information should also be considered from the vantage point of

survivors, noting how they may perceive or experience these resources and initiatives.

Cultivating Senior Leaders and Creating Processes for Transformative Change

Through *Reframe*, we cultivated explicit and ongoing support from top university officials, an element that is essential, yet often missing in institutional change about sexual violence. The quote presented at the start of the chapter is from CSU President Tony Frank, who, since Fall 2015, has included comments about sexual violence prevention in his speech at opening convocation, in start-of-semester welcome emails, and during the annual presidential fall address. Not only are presidents important leaders in addressing sexual violence, other senior-level leaders are too, including provosts, deans, and governing boards. Once these leaders are invested in addressing sexual violence directly and unapologetically, they must be educated about sexual violence so they can disrupt victim-blaming narratives. Thus, a process of “coaching up” might be necessary to help ensure they are able to be actively supportive of the creation and enactment of systems for change.

Coaching Up. For transformational change to occur, it is important for those closest to the day-to-day work of supporting survivors to educate and “coach up” individuals in key leadership roles to create a survivor-centered approach. The goal is to provide senior administrators the language, education, and data points to understand and engage in shifting culture within the institution.

One way to provide this support for senior leaders is by helping them find the balance of demonstrating the commitment and fortitude to work actively toward reducing sexual violence, while also demonstrating a commitment to due process. This balance is critical, especially when considering how many students come to campus having already experienced sexual violence and thus may need survivor-related accommodations and support. If a campus operates from a false dichotomy between supporting survivors *or* supporting due process, it limits the ability to address the overall impact of sexual violence on the lives of students, especially for those students who never engage in any formalized conduct system. The goal should be to focus senior leaders on speaking about the standards, expectations, and type of community that actively works to reduce the sexual violence while also diminishing rape-supportive culture.

At CSU, we have an external communications team with different people responsible for messaging to the university community and to the broader public. A collaboration between this team, senior leadership, and the WGAC was crucial in changing the language from unintentional victim blaming toward a more survivor-centered approach. For example, we have moved toward routinely including messaging statements such as “the only

person who can prevent a sexual assault is the person who commits it” in proactive and reactive messages related to sexual violence.

Creating and Enacting Systems for Transformational Change.

Once senior leaders are committed to working toward ending sexual violence, the next step is to leverage their support to create, develop, and situate systems, processes, and structured communication. As these systems and processes are formed, some guiding questions can be helpful. Pertinent questions include: Who on your campus seeks student input about students’ experience with reporting sexual violence? Who makes the decisions about how information about the reporting process is shared with all stakeholders? How do your confidential and nonconfidential resources communicate with one another? How do your confidential and nonconfidential resources share information with victims of sexual violence? Who on your campus is responsible for developing policies and processes related to sexual violence? Who on your campus is actively thinking about the different realities of sexual violence for traditionally marginalized and minoritized identities based on sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, country of origin, and more? Who on your campus is creating educational messaging around the impact of rape-supportive culture on survivors and those who support survivors?

Although one office may be charged with taking the lead with a particular process, feedback, and input from across the institution are necessary to balance and include the needs of individuals, communities, and the institution. Certainly, institutional culture is important, however, unit-specific culture leads to work getting carried out. If cross-collaboration and intentional consultation with other offices does not occur regularly, it is unlikely for any transformation to occur below the surface.

As Schein (2010) stated, “Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious” (p. 14). The assumptions below the surface have historically perpetuated rape-supportive culture and victim blaming. Beyond the initial trauma, which may have occurred hours, days, years, or decades ago, survivors on a college campus must also endure a culture that often silences and discredits their experiences. This reality can be magnified for individuals from minoritized groups. Survivors are balancing the typical academic, employment, family, and social responsibilities while also coping with the emotional and psychological aftermath of their trauma. Nearly every facet of our campus communities has an impact on survivors. Statistics indicate that most midsized to large institutions have thousands of survivors on campus each semester living in residence halls, eating in dining centers, joining student organizations, using recreation facilities, and attending classes. Seemingly mundane tasks such as getting to and from work, getting enough sleep, meeting small groups for study sessions, or visiting an advisor or professor during office hours can seem insurmountable for survivors. For this

reason, and when considering what survivors must navigate to complete their degrees, it is crucial for everyone on campus to have some education about how to respond to survivors and to address realities of sexual violence and its aftermath in retention efforts as a clear indication of understanding and support.

Consistent Education, Communication, and Messaging

Change toward addressing sexual violence on campus requires an institutional commitment to education, communication, and messaging for all potential constituents. Here, we use *Reframe* as an example of how to address sexual violence across the entire campus community to ensure a unified and coherent message.

As outlined in Chapter 2 by Hong and Marine, we must message sexual violence as a social justice issue. The real question here is how to identify all significant touchpoints on the campus that potentially need to unlearn and relearn messaging about sexual violence in ways that reject harmful socialization and myths. Important too is considering the methods or strategies that will be most effective with different audiences.

To appeal to different audiences, *Reframe* is intentionally multifaceted, balancing the frameworks of primary prevention, bystander intervention, and feminist risk reduction, which emphasizes empowerment, as opposed to blame (McCaughey, 1997). It is also multilayered in its approach, combining awareness raising, skill building, and social norming to shift culture on campus. Most campuses have staff and faculty interested in being a part of shifting the culture around sexual violence, however, some of these individuals may struggle to know how to get involved. They may also be unfamiliar with the language to use, especially if they are new to sexual violence prevention. CSU uses *Reframe* to reach out and include primary stakeholders on campus so that all constituents feel confident and competent to engage in the work of changing culture.

Building Capacity and Tailoring Messages. We suggest reaching out to students, faculty, and staff who are formal or informal leaders across the institution and who may have a positive influence addressing sexual violence holistically. Ultimately, it is important to keep the messaging simple and accessible to multiple audiences. It is also important that messaging for parents and families mirror messaging that students are receiving.

Students. Given the fact that many students have had very little formal education about sexual violence and the topic of consent before coming to campus, new student orientation is a prime opportunity to offer much needed education and set institutional expectations. For this type of training to be successful, relationships need to be forged between staff who are responsible for educating on sexual violence and the staff who oversee new student orientation to ensure consistency in content and messaging. For students (current and prospective) at CSU, summer Ram Orientation uses

the *Reframe* initiative as the backdrop for a 45-minute-long, peer-facilitated session titled, *Understanding Consent*. We are intentional in the use of peer educators who represent diverse identities in terms of race, gender, and sexuality to illustrate that sexual violence affects everyone. Peer educators must successfully complete the 16-week academic course, *Introduction to Gender-Based Violence in a US Context* before they are eligible to apply for a paid summer position. Once hired, peer educators attend a two-week long intensive training, rehearse in front of live audiences, and receive feedback from various campus stakeholders before orientation begins.

Faculty. Engaging faculty to build capacity for addressing sexual violence is vital. Faculty are situated on the front lines of academic concerns that arise in the aftermath of sexual violence; their response often unknowingly makes or breaks the support, healing, and retention of survivors. Most campuses consider the majority or all their faculty to be mandated reporters—they are required by law to report knowledge of any form of sexual misconduct under Title IX. Research shows that the response of the person to whom a survivor makes an initial disclosure has a significant effect on their healing process (Ullman, 1996). Educating faculty about survivor-centered best practices can drastically improve survivor support and retention on campus. These best practices include mentioning the faculty role as a mandated reporter on a syllabus, having information about confidential resources ready should a student disclose, allowing students to select their own small groups for projects, discussing appropriate boundaries between students and teaching assistants before the class has begun, and offering the choice for an open or closed door during office hours.

We use *Reframe* targeted-marketing efforts to educate faculty at the start of the academic year. For example, every faculty member receives a Reframe pencil pouch containing dry erase markers and an informational brochure with faculty-specific information related to sexual violence. The brochure contains tips for making classrooms more conducive to survivor success such as: language about their role as mandated reporters for course syllabi (which has been fully vetted by the office of equal opportunity), facts about the impact of sexual violence on a survivor's academic performance, trauma-informed strategies for structuring office hours and/or small group projects, and information about where they can refer survivors for confidential advocacy and resources.

Staff. Partnering with staff across the institution to ensure they are equipped to address sexual violence with consistent communication and messaging is an important step in shifting the culture. Even the most well-intentioned staff member can unintentionally perpetuate rape-supportive culture, rooted in myths they learned in broader society. For example, if a person responsible for crafting welcome emails for incoming students includes a suggestion for students to “make smart choices” when attending parties, it perpetuates the myth that the would-be victim is responsible for preventing their own rape or that people who experience rape lack common

sense. The reason we need to teach first-year students, particularly women, “party safety” at all is because their vulnerabilities are often intentionally targeted by perpetrators, particularly men on campus. Subtle adjustments like saying “don’t use alcohol to loosen someone up for sex” allows the university to name the connection between alcohol and sexual violence while also avoiding placing the blame on those who choose to drink.

In addition to helping staff become aware of their messaging, *Reframe* also provides them with an opportunity to publicly denounce sexual violence using marketing videos and poster campaigns. When we launched *Reframe*, we made sure the primary language and messaging was the same across campus while also customizing presentations and materials to apply to various constituencies on campus such as athletics, Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), housing and dining, facilities, and senior administrators. This approach creates a department-specific feeling, while aligning with a broader campus-wide message.

Another avenue to build capacity for educating and communicating about sexual violence is to ensure that staff are equipped to effectively engage parents and families. Given the national attention surrounding sexual violence on college campuses, we continue to see family members concerned about sexual violence happening to their children. Increasingly, however, parents of children of all genders seek to move beyond risk reduction and express a desire for educational tools around consent, bystander intervention, and prevention approaches. At CSU, we have an office dedicated to serving parents and families that we use as a communication channel to provide information about prevention and bystander strategies through newsletters, on the parent and family webpage, during summer orientation, at the welcome week safety sessions, and through resource fairs. Having a well-educated body of parents and families decreases the potential for misguided questions, and increases support for survivors who are more likely to feel supported if family members are educated about resources.

Another potential impact on parents and families occurs during first-year student move-in week. As has been demonstrated widely, many first-year students encounter rape culture during move-in week when they may witness large yard signs attached to houses surrounding residence halls. Examples we have witnessed on our own campus include signs like “freshmen drink free” or “She has been calling you daddy for 18 years. Now it’s our turn.” One way that a university can clearly demonstrate a commitment to ending interpersonal violence is by directly addressing these displays of rape-supportive culture. If a university has knowledge about a house that regularly displays these signs, they can contact the house ahead of time (with an aim of preventing the signs from being created in the first place) or, at the very least, address the issue during move-in with counter-messaging from peer educators. By voicing objection to these signs, the university sends a message to parents and families that a rape-supportive culture is not acceptable.

Assessment for Continuous Improvement

One of the greatest challenges for an institution to stay engaged in efforts to end sexual violence on campus is that competing commitments are sure to arise. For example, our campus facilitates a student climate survey and a faculty and staff survey on alternating years. We have at least one person who makes sure to include questions related to sexual violence or the Reframe initiative. Additionally, CSU participates in Haven-Understanding Sexual Assault (EVERFI, 2015) and the National College Health Assessment II (American College Health Association, 2015). These are three examples that provide us with tangible data that reinforce the need to better address sexual violence and how we might do so. When an institution is faced with limited resources and hard decisions need to be made, being able to support our case through evidence-based data can be key. Since *Reframe's* launch, we have seen increases in students, faculty, and staff seeking educational resources about sexual violence. As the initiative continues to gain traction, we hope to see changes in students' perceptions and behaviors.

As national attention regarding how higher education handles reports of sexual assault continues to increase, outside resources for institutions to be more responsive is more prevalent. We recommend that each institution proceeds with due diligence about what outside services and products will best support the goals of your institution. If your campus has the resources to develop your own climate survey regarding sexual violence, it may be the most effective approach as you know your campus and your students best.

In assessing a campus, it is crucial to focus on the knowledge and awareness of faculty and staff on campus in addition to student experiences. Relevant questions include: Are they aware of their role and responsibility? Are they aware of the resources available to students? Do they understand how to support a student who discloses? All of these questions help to assess what ongoing training is needed and what efforts have been effective.

Conclusion

We know that addressing sexual violence on campus is an enormous undertaking. We also know that for any culture change to occur, efforts need to infiltrate all facets of the institution and not relegated to one or two designated offices. At the core of the change needs to be institutional values commitment, investment of resources (human, financial, educational), and a culture of collaboration and institutional leadership. Our students deserve to be educated in an environment where individuals understand the impact of sexual violence and to be on a campus where all community members know that they have a role to play in ending sexual violence. The continued work requires an investment in educating, collaborating, and interrogating policies and practices that address how sexual violence and rape-supportive culture impacts survivors on campus. Those of us who have been

committed to ending sexual violence not only welcome the investment of others on campus, we are counting on it.

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KATHY SISNEROS is the assistant vice president for Student Affairs at Colorado State University and teaches in the Student Affairs in Higher Education master's program.

MONICA RIVERA is the director of the Women and Gender Advocacy Center at Colorado State University. She is an instructor in the Center for Women's Study and Gender Research where she teaches a course on gender-based violence.