

## **Mentors in Violence Prevention (USA)**

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a leadership training program that motivates student-athletes and student leaders to prevent men's violence against women. The MVP Model originated in 1993, with the creation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society. The program was designed to train male college and high school student-athletes and other student leaders to use their status to speak out against rape, battering, sexual harassment, gay-bashing, and all forms of sexist abuse and violence. A female component was added in the second year with the complementary principle of training female student-athletes and others to be leaders on these issues.

MVP utilizes a creative "bystander" approach to gender violence and bullying prevention. It focuses on young men not as perpetrators or potential perpetrators, but as empowered *bystanders* who can confront abusive peers—and support abused ones. It focuses on young women not as victims or potential targets of harassment, rape and abuse, but as empowered bystanders who can support abused peers—and confront abusive ones. It is built on the premise that most men who abuse are not sociopaths and that many men who disapprove of violence do not speak up or take action because they do not know what to do.

The heart of the model is interactive discussion, in single-sex and mixed-gender classes and workshops, using real-life scenarios that speak to the experiences of young men and women in high school, college, and other areas of social life. The chief curricular innovation of MVP is a training tool called the Playbook, which consists of a series of realistic scenarios depicting abusive male (and sometimes female) behavior. The Playbook—with separate versions for boys/men and girls/women—transports participants into scenarios as witnesses to actual or potential abuse, then challenges them to consider a number of concrete options for intervention before, during, or after an incident.

The MVP Model can be utilized in numerous educational settings. The MVP playbooks and trainer's guides are customizable for diverse populations of students. Currently, materials are available for high school boys and girls. In some cases, these materials can be used with middle-school students as well. (MVP classes and workshops with middle school students are typically conducted by MVP mentors who are high school students.)

One of the most important lessons learned in ten years of MVP is the need for early buy-in and follow-through on the part of key administrators and faculty. MVP trainers can come from outside of the school and provide interesting and rich learning experiences for students, in the course of a few days or over a period of weeks. But for the MVP Model to truly transform a school climate, educators need to be committed to training a new cadre of student mentors each year, and provide them with the on-going support they need. One way to achieve this buy-in is to invite key athletic personnel, administrators,

and teachers to participate in an MVP training of trainers as early in the process as possible.

For more information on MVP, please go to:

<http://www.sportinsociety.org/vpd/mvp.php> or visit

<http://www.jacksonkatz.com/playbooks2.html> for a sample of the scenarios used in the training.

Source: Extracted from “Mentors in Violence Prevention” by Jackson Katz available from <http://endabuse.org/bpi/discussion4/V.pdf>

**Program Name:** Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program, Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Boston, MA

**Contact Name:** Jeff O'Brien

**Phone Number:** (617) 373-7651

**E-mail:** jobmvp@aol.com

**Key Words:** (1) Mixed gender and male only; (2) college, high school, and middle school age; (3) racially diverse; (4) university, high school, and middle school setting; (5) multiple session, curriculum based, and one-time workshop

**Population served** This prevention program serves approximately 350 high school students per year with its

Train-the-Trainer program. The program is delivered to racially diverse, mixed- and single-gender groups in middle schools, high schools, military schools, and universities. It also serves more than 1,000 college students per year with awareness-raising presentations.

**Medium used to convey message**

The program uses the MVP curriculum, which is a multiple-session training regimen (six or seven 2-hour sessions; 2- to 3-month timeframe). Male and female participants explore with MVP trainers different types of abuse and the ways in which this abuse touches their lives.

The Train-the-Trainer program involves graduates of the MVP program. Students learn public speaking and group facilitation skills in preparation for conducting their own awareness-raising workshops with younger students in their schools.

The program delivers activities based on the empowered bystander approach. The program is a gender violence prevention and education program, which views student athletes and student leaders not as potential perpetrators or victims but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.

**Goals, objectives, and desired outcomes**

The primary goals of the program are to affect knowledge change, attitude change, and efficacy (are people more likely to intervene). The specific goals for the program vary according to gender.

**Theoretical/scientific basis for the approach**

The program was created in 1993 by Jackson Katz.

**Level of evaluation** The program recently completed a 3-year mixed-methods evaluation. This involved preand

post-testing of knowledge and attitudes measuring the efficacy of the program. The evaluation focused specifically on the MVP Massachusetts high school initiative, funded primarily through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

**Staff capacity** The program is facilitated by mixed-gender, multiracial teams. The high school Trainthe-Trainer programs involve a 15-hour training course. The college and professionallevel Train-the-Trainer programs involve three 8-hour days. Approximately 15 hours of that time is used to raise awareness, and the final hours are used to teach the trainers how to present the materials.