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Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program: research and evaluation

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Research and Evaluation

MVP, founded in 1993 by Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society, is a gender violence prevention and education program.

Extensive research has proven MVP to be highly effective in creating positive and significant changes in students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding gender violence. In-depth program evaluation conducted from 1999-2002 collected qualitative and quantitative data from 475 student leaders from 20 different urban, suburban, and rural high schools. The following findings and voices of MVP student leaders demonstrate that by meeting program goals, MVP has a powerful impact on both individuals and communities.

MVP Raises Awareness of participants about the level of men's verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of women.

- "[MVP] was useful because it made us more aware of what goes on around us that people don't really talk about."
- "This stuff in MVP was really something I went home and I thought about all the time. [I]t got to the point where I really couldn't watch something on TV or anything without thinking about it, you know?"
- After gaining valuable media literacy skills during MVP training, 78% of girls and 75% of boys agreed that the media portray disrespectful sexual stereotypes of women.
- After participating in MVP, over 91% of males and 96% of females agreed that making unwelcome sexual comments to a girl [sexual harassment] in the cafeteria or hallway is wrong.

MVP Challenges Thinking by countering mainstream messages about gender, sex, and violence.

- "I learned things I never knew about women, and my whole attitude changed."
- "I learned that nobody (gay, lesbian, straight, race) deserves to be rejected because of who they are – this changed who I am and gave me a more open mind."
- MVP empowered 96% of females and 81% of males to understand that in serious relationships between males and females, males do not have to be the leaders and decision-makers.
- Prior to MVP training, 44% of males agreed that if a girl gets drunk at a party and is raped, it is partially her fault. MVP training reduced that number to only 16% of males.

MVP Opens Dialogue by creating a safe environment for men and women to share their opinions and experiences.

- "I benefit from these classes because now I can share it with my friends and make them more aware."
- "The group discussions gave us a chance to learn from each other. I got to meet and connect with girls/guys who I normally would never talk to."
- MVP training empowered 72% of females and 82% of males to have the confidence to say something to a guy who is acting inappropriately toward a woman.
- After MVP training, over 80% of males said that they would be comfortable telling a friend to stop calling his girlfriend names compared with only 66% prior to MVP training.

MVP Inspires Leadership by empowering participants with concrete options to effect change in their respective communities.

- "I learned how to deal with potentially threatening situations – I used my knowledge at a party where a guy grabbed a girl by the throat."
- "I learned to stop watching and take action!"
- Almost 90% of male and female participants believed that MVP training provided them with the skills needed to help support a female friend who is in an abusive relationship.
- After participating in MVP training, over three quarters of males and females believed that they can help prevent violence against women at their schools.

"I strongly recommend this program to anyone. It helped me in ways I never thought possible, and it could definitely help others. If everyone had MVP, we would have nothing to talk about."



-MVP high school student leader