

**2023 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in  
Higher Education**

**Boston University**

**Leading for Change: Engaging Student Leaders in Harm  
Prevention and Response**

**Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

1. Prevention: Leadership Education and Skill Development
2. Prevention: Audience-specific anti-sexual harassment education
3. Prevention: Prevention Program or Toolkits

**Description of Work:**

Purpose & goals

*Leading for Change: Engaging Student Leaders in Harm Prevention and Response* is a training program being piloted by the Boston University Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center (SARP) and the Office of Health Promotion & Prevention (HPP). This group-level intervention targets student group leaders (e.g., executive board members, team captains, and Greek leadership). The goal is to give leaders tools to foster a healthy internal group culture. A core facet of the program is changing group norms to prevent sexual misconduct and substance misuse. After completion of this program, student leaders will:

- Understand the power and responsibilities inherent in their leadership role and their ability to impact change in their organization,
- Recognize that fostering a safer, inclusive, and accepting culture in their organization will help prevent harm (i.e., sexual misconduct, substance misuse, and hazing),
- Believe that all student organizations can improve and grow their abilities to prevent harm, and
- Be equipped with tools to start the process of culture change within their organization.

What we did and how it was done

Student leaders engage in an initial foundation training that covers the tools needed to create a culture that prevents harm. After completing the foundation training, student leaders can continue to engage with SARP and HPP for consultation to build on lessons learned.

How it works

To create a culture that is safer, accepting and more inclusive, student leaders will have the opportunity to examine their organization's:

- *Values* to review and develop their organization's policies and procedures to reflect their organization's commitment to a safer, accepting, and inclusive culture.

## **2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

- *Customs and traditions* to reduce the risk of harm that may result from any current practices and identify practices that support safer, accepting, and more inclusive environments for all members.
- *Leadership structures* to have leadership that consist of students of diverse identities and account for power dynamics and differentials within the organization.
- *Internal events and social gatherings* to host events that allow for students of different experiences and identities feel welcome and safer.
- *Ability to share resources and opportunities* for all students to get support if their student organization, or its members, do not live up to those expectations.
- *Ability to engage in continued learning and self-reflection* as it relates to preventing harm (i.e., sexual violence, substance misuse, hazing etc.).

### How the work is new

Historically, targeting individuals with bystander intervention training has been used as the primary—or sole—approach to violence prevention on college campuses. At BU, we have challenged ourselves to broaden our efforts to the group level and provide skills beyond bystander intervention. Bystander intervention training is effective for a general student body because it teaches individuals the skills needed to intervene in situations that may involve or lead to sexual violence. However, student leaders have a prominent place within their group and across campus. This positionality can be leveraged for change if student leaders are offered skills more tailored to their unique roles. This was made clear over the past several years when various student leaders approached SARP staff seeking tools to address sexual misconduct upstream from where bystander intervention would be used.

### Current status of the work

Leading for Change is currently in the development phase.

1. *Development Phase One* is complete and involved collecting best practices from peer institutions conducting similar interventions. The development team met with several violence prevention staff to discuss their reasons for implementing similar interventions, the tools they used to conduct the interventions, and the methods they used for evaluation.
2. *Development Phase Two* is complete and involved a focus group with student leaders, similar to the target population for the intervention. Staff solicited leaders' needs, challenges, and receptivity to a group-level social norms intervention. These perspectives informed Phase Three and intervention content development.
3. *Development Phase Three* is currently underway and involves conducting surveys and one-on-one interviews to learn from student leaders how sexual misconduct and substance misuse has presented in their student groups.

### Plans for evaluating the success, effectiveness, and/or impact of the work

Results of the development phase efforts will inform the creation of content for the training. With the content complete, Boston University will implement and evaluate the program.

## **2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

4. *The Implementation Phase* will involve facilitation of the foundation training to over 600 student leaders of student groups/organizations.
5. For the *Evaluation Phase*, students will be asked to complete a pre- and post-test survey. Survey results will be used to explore student satisfaction with the intervention, as well as the effectiveness of meeting the program's stated goals.

### Next steps for the work

Boston University plans to pilot the foundational training and consultation service during the 2023-2024 academic year. Thereafter, student leaders drawn from various groups (e.g., funded student groups, Greek life) will be encouraged or mandated to complete the Leading for Change intervention. All programming will be evaluated for changes in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Additionally, student satisfaction will be measured to ensure the intervention meets their stated needs.

### Links to relevant webpages

- <http://www.bu.edu/shs/sarp>

**Website for further information (if applicable):** [www.bu.edu/sarp](http://www.bu.edu/sarp)

**Point of Contact Name:** Ashley Slay, Associate Director of Violence Prevention, SARP

**Email Address for Point of Contact:** [aslay@bu.edu](mailto:aslay@bu.edu)