SPORT+ SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Recommendations for Next Steps In Research and Evaluation
In November 2017, Raliance, a partnership working to end sexual violence, unveiled its online Sport + Prevention Center that included a report developed in partnership with the UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) that analyzed sexual violence prevention opportunities in and with sport. The analysis found that “sport is uniquely positioned to support and model healthy relationships, values, and norms that can reduce, and end, sexual violence (SV) and domestic and dating violence (DV) within the sport system.” Organized sport offers a tremendously useful platform to address sexual violence with large and diverse audiences across the lifespan, but it has also contributed to the perpetuation of sexual violence by failing to address instances of violence within athletic systems. Unfortunately, there is limited research on how to engage with sport effectively to eliminate sexual violence both within the system and as a platform to reach society. With this in mind, Raliance and GEH convened a Sport and Sexual Violence Prevention Researcher Think Tank on January 24th, 2018, at the University California San Diego campus. Attendee names and affiliations are listed at the end of this report.
The Think Tank was comprised of multidisciplinary researchers from across the US, trained in social sciences and public health, such as prevention scientists, epidemiologists, psychologists and others working at the crossroads of gender based violence and sport. This group of researchers was hand-selected and brought together to provide insight into the state of the research on sport and gender based violence prevention and to identify research gaps and priorities for future research, with the goal of guiding the additional work needed to support sport involvement in the elimination of sexual violence in the United States.

The day began with brief lightning presentations on specific areas of expertise from select researchers in attendance. Following these presentations, the Think Tank participants were divided into four groups to discuss and collaborate on questions regarding 1) gaps in research and policy, 2) intervention creation and logistics, 3) sport and sexual violence prevention structures and 4) intricacies of sport structures as a platform and avenue to affect sexual violence at scale. A larger discussion followed to gather consensus regarding key issues to undertake to move the field of violence prevention forward. The meeting concluded with consensus building on what activities should be prioritized for work at the next stage. Overall, these discussions identified groundwork to be done to connect to sport stakeholders (parents, coaches, athletes, fans, endorsing companies, team owners, sport administration) and address identified research gaps. General results of the Think Tank suggest that groundwork must be laid to engage stakeholders, gaps in the research exist, and there is a need to strongly encourage evaluation of current research efforts.

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SPORT STAKEHOLDERS
- Athletes
- Coaches
- Endorsing Companies
- Fans
- Parents
- Sport Administration
- Team Owners
The Think Tank expressed the need for etiological research that can better contribute to our understanding of the relationship between sport and SV, specifically whether and under what circumstances sport serves as a risk, or protective factor, for adolescent SV perpetration and victimization. For example, developmentally tailored approaches to prevention requires the need for more research on age-specific risk and protective factors, as well as on how and when sport, in general, operates as a protection for children and adolescents. The discussion focused on understanding racial/ethnic disparities in sexual violence and how this may relate to sport. For example, sport can operate as a stabilizing factor for youth contending with intersections of marginalization (e.g., being a racial/minority and impoverished) and for others sport may place youth at greater risk for victimization or perpetration. Such research will require innovations in methodologies to gain insight into multi-level factors including those within sport structures that contribute to risk and resiliency against sexual violence and its harmful effects across the lifespan. More precise and effective interventions are possible with a better understanding of the etiology of the issue.

To encourage investment in prevention efforts, open and respectful dialogue is necessary, as is powerful and effective leadership for implementation of safety interventions and prevention programming. To create effective partnerships between advocates, researchers, and sport stakeholders, open dialogue that avoids alienating and/or accusatory tones are necessary. Stakeholders, especially athletes themselves, may be less receptive to intervention and prevention programming if they feel they are being stereotyped as perpetrators of sexual violence. Once stakeholders are committed and open to change, it is imperative that researchers and advocates foster the development of powerful and effective sport leaders (be that sport directors, coaches, or team captains) who can influence and uphold systemic and cultural change. Finally, to maintain stakeholders’ commitment and participation in programming, researchers and advocates must think about how to create intervention and prevention programming that is seen as a “win-win” to sport stakeholders. In other words, identify how to inspire participation in programming (keeping goals of sport and SV prevention programs aligned). In alignment with the findings from the Raliance-produced report on how sport can help end sexual violence, the proposed path capitalizes upon and embraces Sport’s role as an avenue internally (within sport) and a platform externally (as an influencer) to SV/DV prevention.
More evaluation research was also recommended. The Think Tank highlighted promising programs that included those focusing on coach-led interventions and peer-focused bystander intervention, as well as promising alcohol prevention programs and child abuse prevention programs with which sexual violence prevention could be integrated. However, many such programs have not been rigorously evaluated or have not been evaluated across diverse populations. Highlighted was the need for evaluation of evidence-based and promising programs across different sport populations or different educational institutions (e.g., Division 1 vs Division 2 athletic programs). Participants also discussed the importance of looking at the effectiveness of mandatory vs. voluntary sexual violence prevention training for coaches or athletes, as well as whether mandated reporting can affect engagement in prevention activities. A call for developing and testing programs with key social media content was also made. The group also called for investigation into novel approaches to addressing sexual violence prevention through sport. Many members pointed to the importance of engaging longitudinal approaches in future research, especially in instances where young athletes are involved. Participants also called for better investigation into messaging and marketing systems as they relate to athletes and fans in sexual assault prevention efforts. “System dynamics modeling” was also suggested as a useful tool used in other forms of research that may be applicable to violence prevention. Finally, the group unanimously agreed that research moving forward should show greater concern for the role and influence of coaches and leadership figures in sport, particularly to better utilize their potential to promote and implement violence prevention initiatives.

Participants also identified a need to improve research of implementation science as it relates to sexual violence prevention and sport. It was felt that it is imperative that researchers better understand the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation of sexual violence programming delivered through sport platforms. With this understanding, researchers may assess the relative effectiveness of primary sexual violence prevention trainings for athletes and athletic leaders. Barriers to engagement in these multi-level interventions must also be determined along with a developed understanding of best-practice implementation strategies for evolving evidence based practices. With this, the Think Tank hopes, programs that are responsive and flexible to various cultures across sport will deliver successful sexual violence prevention efforts.
Prioritized Next Steps

For the coming year, the Think Tank identified the following four goals to build momentum and move the field forward:

**SPORT AS A SYSTEM**

Continue to think about sport as a system, comprised of athletes, trainers, coaches, educational advisors, families (e.g. parents as active bystanders), administrators, organizations & leagues, and corporations. All components of this system should be engaged in intervention and prevention efforts, to increase the collective impact to end SV/DV. Identify motivators and incentives within the different levels of sport and among sport stakeholders (i.e. What is important to coaches and athletes? To sport directors and sport organizations?). Use this knowledge to inform prevention strategies, develop and evaluate effective interventions and strengthen the connection through the pipeline. Refine approaches to prevention efforts based on specific audiences (i.e. coaches versus athletes). Strive to translate research findings into easily disseminated information that is translated into sustainable and effective safety practices through all levels of sport, with the audience in mind.

**INFORM AND ENGAGE**

Inform and engage advocates, researchers and sport stakeholders, in order to foster an informed contingent that are committed to the pursuit of a similar approach to sexual violence prevention in sport. Identify and share existing measures assessing sexual violence in sport-specific settings, and disseminate them for use in developing evaluations related to sexual violence prevention efforts. Consider the establishment of a central repository for research methods and strategies for the evaluation of sexual violence prevention in sport. Evaluation tools and shared measures could then be easily disseminated and kept up-to-date. A public forum detailing challenges related to data collection, intervention implementation and dissemination of findings would also promote transparency and encourage improvement. Investigate under what circumstances protective/resiliency factors occur in sport, to better understand existing opportunities for informing prevention efforts.

**IDENTIFY PRACTICES**

Identify what constitutes best practices in sexual violence prevention and sport. Specifically, work harder to gather empirical data on the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention programs in the context of sport and incorporate existing evidence into available sexual violence toolkits. Provide identified “best practices” to program-funding organizations, to inform funding strategy and decisions, and support implementation of evidence-based practices.

**COLLABORATE**

Collaborate with community and youth sport. While there are an estimated 460,000 college athletes in NCAA, it is projected that there are 45 million youth athletes. Engaging this population is imperative in any work moving forward given sexual violence starts so young in the lifespan. Determine how best to engage parents in research and prevention efforts, as they are a significant conduit to youth sport safety given their roles as a parent, as coaches, as club organizers and as volunteers. Continue to engage in sexual violence prevention efforts with colleges and universities, which recently increased efforts to prevent sexual violence in college athletics. Evaluate current programs to ascertain effectiveness, and investigate what programs schools are implementing to comply with the standards. Key stakeholders such as the NCAA are important partners in this work. Engage in transdisciplinary research of sexual violence prevention. Work with epidemiologists and marketers alike to effectively disseminate findings.

The Sport and Sexual/Domestic Violence Research and Advocacy communities must work together to operationalize existing and future research and evidence in the field of sexual violence prevention, by fostering partnerships. Knowledge generated and next steps identified at this forum must be disseminated to key stakeholders. It is vital that this work continues in order to generate an environment and the political will to allow the aforementioned gaps in research and programming to be addressed effectively and in good time.
List of attendees and affiliations

Kathleen C. Basile, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist, Office of the Associate Director for Science, Division of Violence Prevention (DVVP) at CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Ann Coker, Ph.D., M.P.H.
University of Kentucky - Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology UK College of Medicine

Abby DuPre, B.A.
Program Coordinator for the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness in the Department of Public Health Education at UNC Greensboro

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United States Center for SafeSport Director of Education and Outreach

Keith Kaufman, Ph.D.
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APPENDIX A.

APPENDIX B.

Lightning Presentations

The Conundrum of Promoting Gender Equity in Gender Inequitable Sports Settings

Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD
Dr. Miller presented her work evaluating the Coaching Boys Into Men program, which engages high school coaches as gender-based violence prevention counselors and role models. She highlighted the importance of implementation science research, given the deeply rooted social norms supportive of gender discrimination and violence held by coaches and athletes that are substantial barriers for uptake of programs like Coaching Boys into Men. She underscored that these norms are the same biases that influence bystander behavior (i.e., both interventions with peers’ disrespectful and harmful behaviors as well as supporting survivors of violence). Dr. Miller emphasized the value of interventions that can reach even younger populations at a time when these norms and behaviors (such as sexual harassment and homophobic teasing) are manifesting and are more easily influenced (e.g., middle school), but highlighted that institutional barriers can impede reach to youth populations.

Rape Culture and Intercollegiate Athletes – Making the Connection to Provide Effective Prevention

Kristy McCray, PhD, MEd
Rape culture’s influence is pervasive in sports, and understanding athletic culture is critical in implementing and evaluating effective violence prevention education in sports. There are opportunities to use the influence of athletes as leaders in campus prevention efforts, but it is vital to meet athletes where they are developmentally, as well as understanding how athletic culture (i.e., sex segregation, traditional gender roles, male dominance in a microcosm of rape culture) is impacted. Elements of effective education include comprehensive dosage and active learning strategies covering topics including rape culture, healthy sex education, gender roles, and bystander intervention. In addition, there must be a necessary paradigm shift on gender role expectations and equity in athletic departments to fully realize effective prevention education in intercollegiate athletics.

Links Between Alcohol/Drugs and Sexual Assault

Sandia L. Martin, Ph.D., MSc
Dr. Martin presented on her research on the links between substance use and sexual violence, on college campuses across the United States. Emphasis was placed on the fact that half of all instances of sexual assault involved alcohol use, and in particular highlighted the bidirectional affect between sexual assault and substance use.11-13 Dr. Martin pointed out that this correlation may be of particular significance to college students and athletes. Dr. Martin opposed the need to interrupt the linkage between substance abuse and sexual assault.20,21

Three Approaches To Enhancing Youth Sports Safety

Keith L. Kaufman, PhD
Dr. Kaufman presented on sport as both a risk and protective factor for child sexual abuse. Recommendations were offered to help foster safety in community based youth sports, and included the 1) creation of safety education and training, 2) policy change, 3) culture and environment context.22 Dr. Kaufman also shared his strategy for addressing sexual violence on college campuses by shifting campus culture to focus on warning signs and risk prevention.24

How Bystander Programs might Reduce SV, SH, IPV and Attitudes Supporting Same Among Athletes and Fans

Ann Coker, Ph.D., MPH
Dr. Coker described the Green Dot High School intervention in Kentucky delivered across 28 high schools, which encouraged bystander behavior and reduced sexual violence.2 Difficulties faced in communicating with administrative officials about importance of sexual violence prevention were outlined, a recommendation to address this difficulty included conveying the fiscal costs of perpetration and violence to help inspire financial and academic support.

The Role of the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness (IPAHW) and Sexual Violence Prevention

Jeff Milroy, Ph.D., MPH
Dr. Milroy’s presentation highlighted the development and implementation of a web-based sexual violence prevention program designed for collegiate student-athletes. He described the importance of including content aimed at increasing awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence and sexual misconduct, increasing awareness of consent and its role with regard to sexual violence and sexual misconduct, as well as content highlighting the importance of bystander intervention can play in preventing sexual violence and sexual misconduct.

From Symbolic to Authentic: Clarifying Goals & Measuring Impact of Sports Efforts to Prevent Sexual Violence

Brendan Parent, JD
Brendan Parent, policy expert, described the enormous influence sports have on culture and society, bolstering the emphasis on the social and cultural responsibilities of sport and athletes. The importance of motivating sports systems to take authentic (as opposed to symbolic) efforts was emphasized, given Sport’s influence and subsequent ability to improve the sport culture and include communities and youth in their efforts.25 Dr. Parent’s presentation promoted combating sexual violence in a proactive rather than reactive fashion, across communities, and prioritizing transdisciplinary approaches.

Using CDC Technical Packages to Frame Research Questions and Prevention Efforts

Kathleen C. Basile, PhD
Dr. Basile discussed the need for a better understanding of whether the different sports serve as risk or protective factor for sexual violence among youth, and highlighted the importance of identifying the context(s) in which sport is protective, in order to better facilitate prevention efforts.26 This requires an understanding of what types of sports are protective, sex differences in protection, and whether sports are protective against perpetration, victimization, or both. Dr. Basile also reiterated that the role sport plays in the etiology of sexual violence is necessary to understand to inform prevention. Dr. Basile discussed sexual violence prevention strategies that may be particularly relevant to the sports context, including promoting social norms that prevent violence, creating protective environments, and engaging influential adults and peers.