Addressing the Trauma of Intimate Partner Violence on College Campuses: Consensus and Advocacy Points for Change

Recognizing that intimate partner violence (IPV) on college campuses is a significant issue facing young people, the Office on Women’s Health, Region II contracted Witness Justice and the GlassBook Project to bring together advocates from different communities in New Jersey and elsewhere to discuss and develop an issue brief as a starting point for change in the region and beyond. These experts feel that a number of things should happen to ensure that students have the best support possible to prevent IPV and related trauma on college campuses.

All students should undergo an orientation to IPV upon beginning their academic work and hear similar messaging throughout their academic experience at college.

Students who report IPV should be informed of treatment, support and victim rights by campus programs and services, faculty and staff.

National, regional and local domestic and sexual violence and stalking resource groups should be encouraged to include cyber stalking in educational materials around IPV on college campuses.

A lethality screen or threat assessment tool should be developed for use on college campuses to help identify students at risk.

A universal trauma and IPV education and awareness program on campuses should be implemented nationally.

A national media campaign should highlight acceptable behavior in relationships and how to break the cycle of IPV, as well as how inactive bystanders only perpetuate the problem.

Best practices in preventing and addressing IPV on campuses should be shared nationally with colleges.

National standards to prevent and address IPV on college campuses should be encouraged, with legislation and funding consequences attached.

State governments should mandate state funded institutions to regularly have all faculty and staff educated on IPV.

Universities and faculty should receive incentives to integrate IPV education (awareness and prevention) into classroom curriculum across disciplines.

Law enforcement must be trained in IPV and related trauma so they can be effective and sensitive during investigation and prosecution.

Appropriate training should take place with campus staff and law enforcement officers who respond to campus IPV to prevent secondary or vicarious traumatization.

To view the full issue brief, visit the Advocacy section at GlassBookProject.org. The meeting and issue brief development were facilitated by Helga Luest, President & CEO, Witness Justice. The brief was created following a roundtable discussion in New Jersey, attended by numerous experts. We gratefully acknowledge John Snow, Inc. which provided support for this effort on behalf of the Office on Women’s Health, US Department of Health and Human Services.

Funding for this activity was made possible in part by the HHS, Office on Women’s Health. The views expressed in written materials or publications by speakers and moderators at HHS-sponsored conferences, do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does the mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.