

Core SVIPP Grantee's Meeting, February 23, 2017, Showcase Presentation, Atlanta, GA

How do we support our media to best (as in most appropriately) report on or cover sensitive issues? We approach them as partners on our team, expecting good intentions and best effort, vs. viewing them as the enemy, and we incentivize with hot data.

- **Suicide:** Direct and indirect exposure to suicidal behavior has been shown to precede an increase in suicidal behavior in persons at risk for suicide, especially in adolescents and young adults...“Copycat” suicides.

Unsafe messaging about suicide can normalize suicide behavior and may increase suicidal behavior among people already at increased risk.

MN had some contagion in the past couple of years and the media did not responsibly report – MDH and partners were concerned.

World Suicide Prevention Day – September 2016; Minnesota held a media training coincidental with the release of a data brief on suicide in the state.

Contracted with SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) a Minnesota organization which, for more than two decades, has specialized in media and messaging surrounding suicide prevention.

- **Sexual Violence:** One of the problems with the media's coverage of sexual assault lies with extreme stereotypes of victimhood. The perfect victim theory is the idea that if an act occurred, the victim would act or conduct herself or himself in a certain way, like readily identifying perpetrators, being able to recall events clearly and in order, or going to the authorities immediately after the assault.

The emotional and mental trauma that comes with rape doesn't guarantee a clear narrative for someone who's experienced it, yet the media and public hold victims to those standards of behavior.

The idea of perfect victims and errors in news coverage fuel skepticism toward women who come forward with rape allegations.

With input from journalists, state and federal administrators, victim advocates, legal and law enforcement professionals, and educators, our RPE partners, The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), wrote “Reporting on Sexual Violence: A Guide for Journalists,” a valuable source of guidance and support for reporters, editors, and others as they consider the language of reporting on sexual violence.

<http://www.mncasa.org/news/#sthash.KeRaO0s6.dpuf>

We believe the recommendations in this guide improve professional communications by maximizing accuracy and clarity in sexual violence reporting, and by avoiding words that create confusion, perpetuate misinformation, hurt victims, or contribute to a climate of doubt and victim blaming.

As with suicide, MDH sponsored a media training event on Friday, November 4 coincidental with a data brief release of hospital-treated sexual assault in Minnesota.