



Prevention Models

Numerous theoretical models have emerged to describe the causes of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and dating violence, such as: feminist, power-based models; cultural models, psychological models, and biological models. Each of these models contributes valuable insight and knowledge into the causes of these types of violence – the risk and protective factors surrounding violence. For that reason, prevention practitioners build and shape their programs around these very theories. In fact, ensuring that your prevention program is theory-driven is one of the nine [*Principles of Effective Prevention Programs*](#).

Social Ecological Model

The social ecological model is widely used in the violence prevention field. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adapted this model from the [*World Report on Violence and Health*](#). “Social” denotes social or society and “ecology” refers to the relationship between human groups and their social and physical environments.

The social ecological model is a four-level ecological model examining the individual, relationships, community, and society factors that protect or put people at risk for experiencing or using violence. According to the model, there is interdependence or interrelationships between ourselves, others, community, and society. Broader physical, social, political, economic, ethical, and cultural contexts and histories influence us. Within each broad context there are factors that protect people (protective factors) or put people at risk (risk factors) for experiencing or using violence. To be effective, the [*Principles of Effective Prevention Programs*](#) suggest that prevention efforts should be comprehensive and target each level of the social ecological model.

You can learn more about the social ecological model from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

The Spectrum of Prevention

The spectrum of prevention, developed by Larry Cohen, is a tool to bring comprehensive action and norms change. Similar to the social ecological model, the spectrum focuses not just on individuals but it also explores the context or environments in which intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and dating violence occurs. The spectrum outlines six levels at which prevention efforts should occur: (1) strengthening individual knowledge and skills, (2) promoting community education, (3) educating providers, (4) fostering coalitions and networks, (5) changing organizational practices, and (6) influencing policies and legislation. When combined, efforts at these six levels can result in an effective comprehensive prevention strategy.

You can read [*Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention: Towards a Community Solution*](#) or review the [*Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention Fact Sheet*](#) to learn more about the spectrum of prevention and its six levels of intervention.