

SAMPLE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING NEW PUBLIC NARRATIVE

This is an outline of a sample process done over 3 sessions of 3-4 hours each, with some work done by a small group between the 2nd and 3rd sessions. It's good to build in some refreshments and social time. It's also good to hold these sessions outside your normal working spaces to open up thinking.

NOTE: This is only one approach, what matters most is that you develop an approach that works for your situation.

Session I

- Relationship building, grounding in what got them work on violence prevention
- Grounding in the idea of a public narratives (meta-stories that have the power to shape people's perceptions understandings analysis and sense of what needs to be done) and then the idea of a dominant narratives
- Naming the dominant public narrative around SV/DV prevention –and then exploring the impact of that story –explored how we all are consciously and/or unconsciously complicit in this dominant public narrative.
- Where does this public narrative come from – looking at how this narrative relates to a larger narrative in our country right now. A key lesson made here is that it was created by people – so we can create and advance our own.

Session II

- Reground in dominant public narrative and deepen understanding of its power – connect to what they have seen happening, or what they have been noticing, since the last session
- Preparing to create a new public narrative – this is usually time for people to talk with each other about values/beliefs that they hold in their own lives (generally) and sharing stories about where those values came from (also builds relationships)

- Brainstorming elements of new narrative – this is done in small groups— each group writes up all their thoughts and flags those that are most resonant to verbally report back
- Group debrief and form synthesis group to prepare a draft narrative out of the work of the group

Synthesis

- Small group meets for couple hours to synthesize themes – couple people take on responsibility for drafting, circulating among group and bringing draft to next session.

Session III

- Share draft public narrative and engage group with it in three ways
 - personal and emotional - all politics is emotional as well as cognitive
 - cognitive and content
 - uses – meaning for your work
- Define next steps in fine-tuning narrative and beginning to put it to work