

## **Hey Buddy . . . . . don't be that guy!**

### **A sexual assault awareness and prevention initiative targeted at 18-25 year old males**

The Edmonton Police Service goal for 2010 was to reduce the number of alcohol facilitated sexual assaults by 5%. While they long believed that alcohol facilitated sexual assault was a problem in their city, as it is world-wide, they elected to bring the issue forward in 2010 with the hope of reducing the crime type, raising awareness and challenge long held societal attitudes. Discussions with the Edmonton sexual assault nurse examiner team (SANE) revealed that an estimated 70-80% of sexual assault victims reporting to the hospital involved alcohol. The director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) estimated that 90% of sexual assaults they were dealing with involved alcohol. Those findings raised significant alarm.

The Superintendent in charge of Major Crimes for the Edmonton Police Service envisioned a campaign to address that concern – not a campaign that focused on women and offered tips to protect themselves from being sexually assaulted, but a campaign that would take a stand against victim blaming and focus blame for sexual assault exactly where it belongs – squarely at the feet of the offender. She brought together a very diverse group of stakeholders from the community to work together to achieve this goal. And the *Don't be that guy!* campaign was born.

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service, the University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre, Saffron Centre of Sherwood Park, Covenant Health Prevention of Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth (PARTY Program), Responsible Hospitality Edmonton, Red Cross, Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (PAAFE), University of Alberta Women's Studies, and community advocates formed a coalition they called Sexual Assault Voices of Edmonton (SAVE).

Years of experience and multiple perspectives highlighted that previous strategies had generally directed sexual assault prevention strategies at women rather than men. Formal evaluations of the impact of these campaigns are virtually non-existent, but general agreement was that their effect was limited.

Results of a UK study of 18-25 year old males that revealed 48 per cent of males in the study didn't consider it rape if a woman is too drunk to know what was going on mirrored the experience of the Edmonton group. They concluded that it was important to develop and evaluate a sexual assault prevention campaign that focused on increasing awareness and changing behaviours in the targeted 18 – 24 year old male population.

The group worked with a marketing firm to develop a poster campaign they titled "Don't Be that Guy". The objective of this novel campaign was not only to educate males and promote responsible sexual behaviour, but to send the message to the men that choose to be "that guy" that the police service had experts who investigated these types of sexual assaults and held perpetrators accountable for their behaviour.

The posters feature graphic images and messages and key message reinforcing that sex without consent is sexual assault. The group worked with transportation and hospitality industry representatives to ensure posters were displayed in high profile Edmonton entertainment districts, on Edmonton Transit, in the University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan University newspapers, local entertainment magazines, and above urinals in bar bathrooms. The campaign ran from the end of began November, 2010. Response has been extremely positive.

Considerable effort went into ensuring that the campaign reached its target market. The Sexual Assault Centre at the University of Albert conducted informal research by walking around campus and asking young men for their feedback to the posters. Through funding secured through the Edmonton Police Service, a professional marketing firm was hired to conduct more formal research. Focus groups were used to gauge the impact and effectiveness of proposed images and wording. Comments were elicited from sober participants and from participants who had consumed a fixed quantity of alcohol. Researchers noted that responses did not considerably between those who had consumed alcohol and those who had not consumed alcohol. Findings were used to carefully tailor the images and verbiage on the posters. Posters that did not resonate with the target groups were modified or discarded.

Focus group leaders found it particularly interesting that several young males who participated in the focus group sessions indicated that they were unaware that sex with an intoxicated or drunk female without consent was illegal. Several indicated that they knew "that guy" – men who had had sex with women under those conditions. A number also indicated that they would be sharing what they learned with their friends.

The following posters were selected for the initial campaign.



**JUST BECAUSE SHE ISN'T SAYING NO...**

**DOESN'T MEAN SHE'S SAYING YES.**

sex without consent = sexual assault

**DON'T BE ~~THAT~~ GUY.**

[sexualassaultvoices.com](http://sexualassaultvoices.com)



**JUST BECAUSE YOU HELP HER HOME...**

**DOESN'T MEAN YOU GET TO HELP YOURSELF.**

sex without consent = sexual assault

**DON'T BE ~~THAT~~ GUY.**

[sexualassaultvoices.com](http://sexualassaultvoices.com)

**Just because  
she's drunk,  
doesn't mean  
she wants  
to f\*\*k.**

sex without consent = sexual assault

**DON'T BE ~~THAT~~ GUY.**

[sexualassaultvoices.com](http://sexualassaultvoices.com)

The campaign received strong print, radio and television coverage not only in Edmonton, but across Canada, and was the subject of blogs, and social media networks. It generated considerable interest and prompted enquiries from Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia and India, and from magazines, feminist centres, sexual assault centres, and universities in Canada and the USA.

SAVE is pleased to share campaign materials. They ask only that you credit SAVE, Edmonton with the campaign development.

Evaluation to gauge the impact of the campaign is planned for 2012.

Further information on the campaign is available from: [info@sace.ab.ca](mailto:info@sace.ab.ca)