

STRUCTURAL

BLACK LIBERATION

DECOLON

LOVING CULT

CONSENT

RESPECTING BOUNDARIES

GENDER IS FLUID AND EXPANSIVE

REPARATIONS

SEX WORK IS LEGAL, SAFE, WITHOUT STIGMA

DISABILITY JUSTICE

JOYFUL SEXUALITY

# ENDING RAPE CULTURE ACTIVITY ZINE

COMMUNICATION

EMPATHY FOR OTHERS

CELEBRATING NON-NORMATIVE FAMILIES + RELATIONSHIP STRUCTURES

CALLING IN YOUR FRIENDS  
ACCESS TO NEEDED RESOURCES

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

CULTURE

REPR

QUEER + TRANS LIBERATION



# What does a society without rape culture look like?

## HOW DO WE ENVISION A BETTER WORLD?

This zine includes talking points and activities to help you facilitate that visioning conversation and support or shape your approach to violence prevention work.

The Rape Culture Pyramid and Ending Rape Culture Activity were created by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance as a resource for community agencies, educators, and organizers to better understand and talk about rape culture.

We offer this resource to be used with youth, co-workers and collaborators, and community partners; please feel free to adapt this resource to best fit the communities you work with.

Please note that this requires facilitators to feel comfortable and prepared to talk about structures of oppression and their relationship to sexual violence with whomever you choose to have this conversation.

# ENDING RAPE CULTURE ACTIVITY

**TIME:** 1 hour

## **MATERIALS:**

- Printed handouts of Rape Culture Pyramid
- Printed handouts of Ending Rape Culture Activity
- Flipchart paper (or large surface to write on)
- Markers

**OPTIONAL:** Printed Ending Rape Culture handout



### **FACILITATOR TIP**

Let people know in advance that the following activity and conversation will discuss sexual violence and structural oppression. Create a space where participants can take breaks and take care of themselves and each other.

## **PROCESS:**

- 1.** Draw a large triangle on your flipchart paper and ask the group what they think of when they hear the phrase "Rape Culture."



Write down people's responses based on the structure of the Rape Culture Pyramid without telling the group the logic of where you are putting their answers (Example: you would write "purity/virginity myth" near the base of the pyramid because it is a cultural belief and practice).

Ask clarifying questions if necessary and allow the group to explore and build their own definition of rape culture.

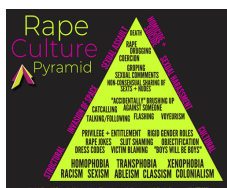


### **FACILITATOR TIP**

This is a great way to see where your group is at in their understanding of sexual violence and rape culture! It's okay if participants are having difficulty at first, ask questions and provide an example if that will help people brainstorm.

**HOW WE DEFINE IT:** A rape culture is one that normalizes and rationalizes sexual violence as inevitable and a part of "natural" human behavior rather than understanding violence as structurally and culturally created and sustained.

- 2.** Pass out copies of the Rape Culture Pyramid handout and ask the group how their responses were similar or different from the handout. Ask participants what they notice about the pyramid and its structure.



# RAPE CULTURE PYRAMID TALKING POINTS:



■ **Rape culture is not just about individual actions or behaviors**, but rather exists within all relationship dynamics, cultural beliefs, and larger societal systems.

■ **The Rape Culture Pyramid does not measure or rank types of harm.** It shows how behaviors, beliefs, and systems are built on and work in conjunction with one another.

■ While some of the examples in the pyramid, such as dress codes, are often intended to protect students in school, there is a much larger and dangerous impact in how it teaches youth about their bodies. Dress codes teach students that women's bodies are inherently sexual and that men do not have the ability to control their sexual urges or desire; **dress codes reinforce the idea that it is a woman's job to protect herself from objectification and violence by covering up her body.**

■ **There are direct connections between death and the normalization of sexual violence, including homicide and suicide;** it is also important to note that research shows connections between sexual violence and future poor health outcomes. The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study and subsequent research are helpful tools for understanding how childhood sexual abuse impacts physical and mental health.

■ **The "Invasion of Space" section is a great opportunity to explore intent vs. impact.** People often dismiss these behaviors because the person possibly did not "intend" to harm the person affected. This dismissal ignores the impact the behavior had on another person and the ways the behavior is harmful. A possibly "good" intention does not mitigate harm.

■ **The structural systems at the bottom of the pyramid are roots of sexual violence, they feed and stabilize violence.** These systems of oppression dictate whose lives, bodies, and belief systems are valuable. When some lives and bodies are deemed as less valuable, they are not just more vulnerable to harm, but their harm is also accepted as a necessary means to maintain order.

■ When people talk about rape and sexual violence prevention, they often think about ways to prevent the top half of the pyramid through awareness campaigns or bystander intervention training. **It is equally important look at the bottom half of the pyramid in our prevention work: how can we shift our culture by deconstructing stereotypes based on [race](#)<sup>1</sup> and [gender](#)?<sup>2</sup> [How will trans liberation and queer justice help in our fight to end sexual violence](#)?<sup>3</sup> [How does historical and contemporary colonialism use sexual violence as a weapon against indigenous people](#)?<sup>4</sup>** Answering these questions and using racial justice, economic justice, gender justice, and reproductive justice frameworks in your prevention work will allow you to fight against the roots of violence.



#### FACILITATOR TIP

Print out and share some of these articles or resources with your participants! A follow-up activity could include a conversation centered around one of these resources.

<sup>1</sup> <http://msmagazine.com/blog/2018/04/05/racist-roots-rape-culture/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/01/gender-stereotypes-rape-culture/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://queeringsexualviolence.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://incite-national.org/dangerous-intersections/>



# DISCUSSION QUESTION:



Now that you have a better understanding of the pyramid, is there anything you want to add to your own definition of rape culture?

**3.** Lead group is a discussion about rape culture using their definition, the Rape Culture Pyramid, and the accompanying resource guide if useful.

- Which of these items in the pyramid are visible/invisible?
- How do the words on the bottom relate to the words at the top—or each other?
- Are their particular groups of people and/or communities that are targeted by rape culture? How does rape culture impact society as a whole?
- In which level does your organization/campus/community, etc. invest the most energy to interrupt these forces?



**FACILITATOR TIP**

Only have a limited amount of time? The Rape Culture Pyramid can be used by itself to facilitate an important conversation about the roots and foundation of sexual violence.

**4** Pass out the Ending Rape Culture Activity: Now that we have a better understanding of how rape culture is a part of structures of power, cultural and community beliefs, relationships and individual behavior and biases, how can we build a better world?



**NOTE:** The “Ending Rape Culture” Activity has an outer-ring for structural changes and an inner-circle to write what is needed for a consent culture with prompts such as “loving communities,” “healthy relationships, and “joyful sexuality.” Discuss this change with participants. Why is a circle useful for this kind visioning while the pyramid is better when illustrating rape culture?

Start with the outer circle, the structural changes that are necessary to end rape culture. Then move towards the inner-circle to envision what it would be like to live in communities and have relationships that centered consent, healing, justice and respect.

Choose the best way to approach this activity with your group: small groups that then share back or individual work on the handout and a larger group discussion after.

Whichever approach you choose, bring your group together and talk about what they came up with in their smaller groups or individual processes. Use the Flipchart paper again, this time mimicking the new shape (circle with outer-ring), and create a collective vision for ending rape culture.

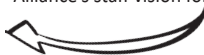


**FACILITATOR TIP**

Joyful sexuality can mean a lot of things including asexuality which is when a person does not experience sexual attraction.



**OPTIONAL:** Pass out the Action Alliance’s Ending Rape Culture Handout. This is an example of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance’s staff vision for a world without rape culture.



# Rape Culture Pyramid



# Ending Rape Culture



STRUCTURAL

LOVING COMMUNITIES

CULTURAL

JOYFUL SEXUALITY

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

# Ending Rape Culture



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