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SCIENTIFIC BASIS

Given the extraordinary human cost of failure, we must inform every aspect of what we do with the most current science, then divest personal ego and scrutinize our work with objectivity and scientific rigor, course correcting each step of the way. A partial summary of the major bodies of theory and research that inform the central tenets of Green Dot is provided below.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A review of the literature within the field of violence against women suggests that little has been done that has resulted in effective, measurable prevention. However, an examination of the outcome/evaluation research does provide some clear indicators of prevention strategies that have not been effective. For example, a meta-analysis of sexual assault education programs conducted by Anderson and Whiston in 2005 found that traditional awareness programming in the form of one-time only educational programs, large-scale events and the dissemination of printed educational materials – are not effective means to reduce violence. Traditional program content, including facts, statistics, myths/facts, and definitions have also failed to demonstrate a decrease in violence. These types of approaches have demonstrated success at increasing basic knowledge, as well as some success at improving violence-related attitudes, particularly in the short term. These approaches have also had some success in increasing utilization of direct services (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). There is little to support prevention programming that focuses exclusively on risk reduction targeting women, and there has been little demonstrated effectiveness in approaching all men as potential perpetrators with messages related to obtaining consent.

APPLICATION TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Stop doing what doesn't work. Stop calling "awareness education" "prevention." Look outside our own field for potential applications of successful prevention strategies from other disciplines.

BYSTANDER LITERATURE

Within the field of Social Psychology, there are decades of research documenting basic principles of bystander behavior that have a broad impact on individual and group choices. This body of research seeks to understand why individuals choose to intervene or remain passive when they are in the role of a bystander in a potentially risky, dangerous or emergency situation. The current body of knowledge demonstrates bystander influences such as: (1) diffusion of responsibility – when faced with a crisis situation, individuals are less likely to respond when more people are present because each assumes that someone else will handle it (Darley & Latane, 1968; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002); (2) evaluation apprehension - when faced with a high risk situation, individuals are reluctant to respond because they are afraid they will look foolish (Latane & Darley, 1970); (3) pluralistic ignorance – when faced with an ambiguous, but potentially high-risk situation, individuals will defer to the cues of those around them when deciding whether to respond (Clark & Word, 1974; Latane & Darely, 1970); (4) confidence in skills – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high-risk situations when they feel confident in their ability to do so effectively; (5) modeling – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high risk situation when they have seen someone else model it first (Bryan & Test, 1967; Rushton & Campbell, 1977). These well-documented principals not only suggest what inhibits bystanders from intervening, but also, strategies for effectively overcoming these inhibitions and increasing the proactive and reactive responses of bystanders.

APPLICATION TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION: The bystander research provides the targeted behavior we want endorsed. The behaviors include actively intervening in situations that are imminently or potentially high-risk for violence, as well as effective means to elicit that targeted behavior. Further, this body of research provides specific strategies to increasing the likelihood that the trained individuals will actually intervene when they are in the role of a bystander.

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION / SOCIAL DIFFUSION THEORY

The social diffusion theory (Rogers, 1983) is based on the premise that behavior change in a population can be initiated and then will diffuse to others if enough natural and influential opinion leaders within the population visibly adopt, endorse and support an innovative behavior. Based on this model, early adopters of any given population are systematically identified, recruited, and trained to serve as behavior change "endorsers" within their community and sphere of influence, resulting in a shift in the targeted attitudes and behaviors within that community. In other words, opinion leaders shape social/behavior changes by making it easier for others to initiate and maintain certain "new" behaviors. Diffusion of innovation theory and the influence of early adopters to establish new behavioral trends has been studied extensively for decades and proven widely successful across settings and content areas (Kelly,

2004). For example, Kelly et al. (1997) has demonstrated the effectiveness of training early adopters in increasing safe-sex practices among populations of gay men. One study targeting gay men in four cities, implemented five, weekly training sessions, and found at the one year follow up an increase of more than 25% in condom use. Additionally, Sikkema (2000) focused on safe-sex practices among impoverished, inner-city women. At the one-year follow-up they found a 12.5 % drop in unprotected sex and an increase of 17% of condom use. The strength of the community-wide behavior shift was further demonstrated, as populations where changes were made – the population still demonstrated the documented improvement at the three year follow up (despite that the actual intervention had ceased within the first year). Though there is evidence that over-use or misuse of early adopters can backfire, an appropriate utilization of Social Diffusion Theory has been consistently demonstrated to be an effective and efficient method for creating culture change.

APPLICATION TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Given that sexual, domestic and stalking violence in our communities exists on a scale that clearly reaches the scope of a public health concern that requires broad-based, community level change, it is imperative that a critical mass of individuals endorse and engage in targeted behaviors that are proactively and visibly intolerant of violence. Since few organizations have the resources to provide direct training to enough individuals to obtain this critical mass, strategically targeting the most socially influential individuals becomes necessary, as these "popular opinion leaders" can then most effectively and efficiently impact the attitudes and behaviors of their peers through modeling, endorsing and engaging in the targeted behaviors.

PERPETRATOR DATA

There are growing bodies of research that give insight into the behaviors and patterns of perpetrators. Research on batterers demonstrates the mechanisms most often used to exert power and control over a target – from the earliest warning signs to the most extreme forms of violence (Johnson et al., 2006). Literature examining the behaviors of sexual offenders, particularly offenders known to the victim, gives profound and clear insight into their patterns – including how they target, assess, and isolate a victim. (Lisak & Roth, 1988; Lisak & Miller, 2002).

APPLICATION TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION: If Social Diffusion Theory speaks to "who" and Bystander Theory speaks to "what," then understanding how perpetrators operate in targeting, assessing and victimizing speaks to the "how." While the proposed model wants engage bystanders in active intervention when they see a high-risk situation, the perpetrator literature is valuable in clearly delineating what constitutes a potentially high-risk situation. By knowing what a perpetrator is likely to do, a bystander can be alerted to behaviors that require intervention.

MARKETING / REBRANDING RESEARCH

Rebranding of corporations, organizations and services is a process that has been well examined and documented within marketing research. A smart rebranding strategy, allows an entity the chance to meet the needs of consumers and investors, and is most often prompted by a gap between the espoused brand, and the actual brand image that others may have (Davies and Chun, 2002) or underperformance toward meeting the organizations goals (Kapferer, 1997). When engaging in a rebranding effort, key issues include: focusing on how the brand should be changed; weighing the potential costs and benefits to a brand change; and, understanding and addressing the internal resistance that key stakeholders may have to the change (Merreilees and Miller, 2008). In addition, it is essential to carefully and thoroughly review an organization's mission, vision and values – then, redefine in a way that translates into an image that is relatable to the targeted audience and sensitive to the customer base (Ewing et al., 1995). Finally, marketing literature emphasizes the need to re-vision the brand based on a solid understanding of the consumer, to meet both existing and anticipated needs (Merreilees and Miller, 2008). Though a rebranding effort can involve considerable commitment, the research is full of examples of companies that were able to revitalize their products, reputation and consumer buy-in through this process.

APPLICATION TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION: The evidence is clear and consistent that there is a significant gap between the espoused "brand" of violence against women prevention (i.e., inclusive, want men to join the movement, urgently relevant to all of us) and the brand perceived by the community (i.e., man-hating, choir-only, not their issue). Despite our best intentions, this branding crisis is resulting in the violence against women prevention movement remaining a largely choir-based, women's only movement that has gained little traction in terms of broader community support in the past several decades. By better understanding and addressing the explicit and implicit concerns of the "consumer," (community members we are trying to engage) we can reposition ourselves in a way that can reduce the obstacles that prevent more from joining prevention efforts. Another key application of the marketing research involves the importance of working closely with key stakeholders (i.e., current educators, advocates and direct service providers) to ensure they are fully engaged and supportive of the rebranding and any pockets of resistance are addressed (Merreilees and Miller, 2008).