

Manifesto point 1: each student has access to and is strongly encouraged to participate in an appropriate evidence-based introductory workshop such as bystander training, and has access to additional evidence-based gender transformative workshops that have been demonstrated to reduce sexual violence.

The institutions which signed the Manifesto have ever since introduced a variety of workshops and training for their students. Explaining the need and purpose of such workshops, choosing strategic moments to be visible to students and cooperation with student associations are all good practices to attract wide and diverse groups of students. Choosing evidence-based workshops is the best way of ensuring that student participation will make a real difference.

What are the challenges and solutions?

All institutions that have signed the manifesto have since rolled out a variety of workshops. During the recent conference, working groups with staff members and representatives of outside organizations which offer training for students discussed key challenges in providing students with workshops. Here are the main obstacles that came up and possible solutions to them.

Challenge: Attracting wide and diverse groups of students.

In the experience of most staff members, workshops dedicated to topics of consent and sexual violence often only attract audiences of students who are already familiar with the topic and women are more willing to engage than men. The training often does not reach the groups which are not acquainted with the topic, lack knowledge and are not (fully) comfortable with discussing these issues.

In the context of this challenge, some members of staff from different institutions brought up the discussion of mandatory workshops during the conference. Some staff members shared their practice of mandatory talks, but many others emphasized their concerns around mandatory training, especially the possible result of bigger reluctance of students, the financial burden and practical and legal issues.

Solutions:

1) Explaining the importance and reasoning behind the workshops.

Putting the invitation to a workshop in the context relevant for a given student community is helpful. To explain the need for the training and its objectives, for example by highlighting the enormous difference that the skills gained during a workshop can make in a student's life and the positive impact they have on the feeling of safety among the student body.

2) Choosing the right place and time to be visible to students.

There are occasions throughout the academic year when and where students are more willing to engage with new initiatives and pay attention to what the university has to offer. It is important

that during these moments, such as various university events and fairs, the university presents what workshops it has to offer and encourages students to participate.

Read more about communication strategies on the main page.

3) *Cooperation with student associations.*

Reaching out directly to various student associations and offering them workshops can be an effective way of reaching diverse groups of students and improving the safety of students on and off campus, if the associations introduce good practices.

Read more on cooperation with student associations on the main page.

4) *Including conversations on these topics in classes of the existent curriculum.*

While it can be difficult to reach diverse groups of students, in the experience of most staff, students are willing to discuss these topics when they are already in the room during a class. For students who usually would not participate in conversations on consent, boundary-setting and sexual violence it can be a good first opportunity to reflect upon these topics.

However, there are some important considerations to make here. First, there is no single classroom without people with a personal connection to the topic of sexual violence. So, it always needs to be discussed in a trauma-sensitive manner and include information about where to reach out for help (e.g., contact to Centrum Seksueel Geweld and first points of contact within university).

Read more about trauma-sensitivity on the main page.

Secondly, for some programs it can be more difficult to naturally include these topics within existing courses and in general, bringing up these issues in class can be a part of the solution, but it is not an alternative to comprehensive workshops.

Challenge: Providing workshops which are useful to students and make a difference.

Once students are willing to participate, the question is how to select the workshops that will bring about the desired results.

Choose workshops and trainings based on scientific evidence and evaluation.

Despite everyone's good intentions, there are some workshops and trainings which turn out not to make any difference or even be counterproductive. Fortunately, there is a growing body of research-based workshops available in the Netherlands and a lot of possibilities to learn from what has been tried already abroad.

For example, during the conference, Alice Wellum (researcher and teacher at University College Maastricht) brought up an example of introducing a sexual assault prevention program "Flip-The-

Script with EAAA (Enhanced, Assess, Acknowledge, Act)” at her university. The effectiveness of this program has been backed up by scientific research from Canada, where female students who participated had a 50% reduction in risk of attempted and completed rape and sexual violence for 2 years. More examples of evidence-based workshops from abroad can be found here: [Prevention Programming Matrix | Culture of Respect](#). For more information about evidence-based workshops and her PhD research on seksual violence (prevention) in higher education you can reach out to Alice Wellum alice.wellum@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

Before deciding on a training provider, it can be helpful to ask them about the research that they base their strategies on and if they evaluated the effectiveness of their workshops.

What workshops are available?

During the conference, representatives of different organizations which offer workshops talked about their work and its results. Here is an overview of what they presented which can give an idea of what training is available to arrange for students. For a full list of possible external partners for workshops and more see: [Background to the manifesto for higher education institutions - Amnesty International](#).

- 1) Fairspace, <https://fairspace.co/nl>.

Fairspace works towards a safe and inclusive public space. They offer workshops such as ‘Bystander Intervention Training’ which gives practical tools to stand up to observed sexually transgressive behavior and ‘Workplace Safety and Inclusion’ which includes topics of accountable leadership, power and privilege, and incident response.

- 2) Emancipator, <https://www.emancipator.nl>.

Emancipator works to change societal norms for men and masculinity. They offer workshops which break through the harmful norms that are projected by society onto boys and men and connect these issues to the prevention of (sexual and/or gender-related) violence.

- 3) Gelijkspel, <https://www.gelijkspel.org>.

Gelijkspel creates and give workshops on the norms around sex to student organizations and associations. Their TIE program uses different situations that take place in student life to spark a conversation with the students about taboo topics and rewrite the norms of conduct regarding sex.

Financing

A last issue that was brought up in the workshop is the lack of finances for workshops and training. One of the tips that was mentioned was to organize the workshops through the student well-being office as then it is easier to get it subsidized. Besides that, the financial solution does not always has to be found internally within the institution. Government and municipality also provide subsidies on this theme.