

Sexual Assault Prevention in Tertiary Institutions with Applied Theatre

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Issues: Sexual Assault Prevention, Health Promotion in Tertiary Education, Theatre of the Oppressed, Drama Therapy.

Description:

Shadow Liberation is a participatory theatre initiative facilitating sexual assault prevention in tertiary education. Shadow Liberation integrates Drama Therapy for trauma informed practice, Theatre of the Oppressed as a participatory method for critical dialogue and Shadow Theatre for its aesthetic richness in representing the otherwise unspeakable.

Lessons learned: Shadow Liberation can be an effective approach to Sexual Assault Prevention for Tertiary Institutions as a compliment to holistic Institution-wide prevention programming. This conclusion is based on case studies and participant surveys as indicators of behavioral change. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States recognizes bystander intervention as a promising approach to sexual assault prevention (2014). Research on dating violence intervention programs at colleges in the United States shows that while initial survey findings after programs can look promising, their effect diminishes over-time, casting doubt on the effectiveness of one-off interventions (Kaukinen, 2014). There is also research that demonstrates that some Sexual Assault Prevention programs backfire at Colleges and Universities (Malamutha, Huppib, & Linzc, 2018), where interventions serve to reinforce previously held prejudice in some men.

Next steps: Sexual Assault Prevention programming needs to be ongoing and integrated with other initiatives focussed on well-being within Institutions. The Shadow Liberation approach has the potential to be adapted to be culturally relevant for communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand.