



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Missoula Coalition Releases Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit**

“Empower people to step in and step up, and get involved if they see somebody that needs some help,” states Anne Hancock, a bartender at the Rhinoceros and a recent participant in the Make Your Move! Bar Workshop.

Make Your Move! is a Missoula-based coalition that promotes the prevention of sexual violence.

The coalition recently surveyed Missoulians and found that 84 percent of bar-goers experienced verbal harassment or a physical altercation at least once in 2016. The most common experience of aggressive behavior were sexist comments (69 percent), unwanted sexual touch (65 percent) and being followed to the next destination (37 percent) ([see related Missoulian article](#)).

Armed with this information, Make Your Move! created a workshop for local bar staff promoting bystander intervention, a proven strategy to prevent sexual violence. Facilitators also help bar owners and managers develop policies to keep their patrons safe.

On Aug. 16, the group released a digital toolkit which aims to help Montana communities replicate Missoula’s efforts preventing sexual violence in bars.

“Everyone deserves to have a good time when they’re out,” Brenna Merrill, an outreach specialist for Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services, said. “We heard many stories of people being grabbed or harassed at bars and no one intervened to help them. No one told the person harassing them that it wasn’t okay. We think Montana can do better, and this toolkit will help them do just that.”

“Many sexual assault organizations in Montana have limited resources,” Kelsen Young, Executive Director of the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV), said. “By sharing successful programs across the state, we have a better chance at actualizing true community change.”

The toolkit release was accompanied [by a video on social media](#), in which coalition supporters, including Missoula Mayor John Engen, talk about the importance of preventing sexual violence.

This isn’t the first campaign the group has released. In 2012, Make Your Move! released a poster campaign promoting bystander intervention in sexual violence. That campaign received international attention, being reproduced in Denmark and Canada and cities across the nation.

“We’re very proud to make Missoula a national leader in sexual violence prevention, and to have such strong support from our city and county government,” Shantelle Gaynor, Department Manager of Missoula City-County Relationship Services, said.



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Merrill and her colleague Leah Fitch, who works for the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth at the Missoula City-County Health Department, were featured at the Montana Department of Revenue's Alcohol Education Summit. They talked about the intersection between sexual violence and alcohol to conference participants.

"Alcohol is commonly used as a tool by aggressors to facilitate a sexual assault, and alcohol is involved in about half of sexual assaults," Fitch said. "When community members working to prevent DUIs and substance abuse collaborate with those working to prevent sexual violence, we can better achieve shared goals for a healthier and safer Missoula."

The toolkit was supported by a grant from Raliance, a national collaborative initiative to end sexual violence in one generation, made possible through a commitment from the National Football League (NFL). The competitive grant was awarded only to 27 projects nationwide in its first round of funding. The Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) served as the group's fiscal sponsor for the grant.

Make Your Move! Bar Workshops are available free of charge to any alcohol-serving establishment. Interested businesses should contact Brenna Merrill at (406) 258-3838. The digital toolkit is also free of charge and can be downloaded from the [Make Your Move! website](#).

Established in 2012, Make Your Move! is a campaign that promotes sexual violence prevention through social marketing and workshops. Partner agencies include Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services, YWCA Missoula, the University of Montana Student Advocacy Resource Center, and the Missoula Forum Children and Youth.

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