



PRESS RELEASE

FOR: IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FROM: Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services
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SUBJECT: VFW Bartenders Receive Training to Prevent Sexual Harassment.

December 15, 2017

Missoula Community Members Combating Sexual Violence

Harassment is a problem in Missoula’s bar-scene. Earlier this year, Make Your Move! released the results of a community-wide survey which found that 84 percent of bar-goers in Missoula experienced verbal harassment or a physical altercation at least once in 2016. The most common experience of aggressive behaviors were unwanted sexual touch (65 percent), sexist comments (69 percent), and being followed to the next destination (37 percent).

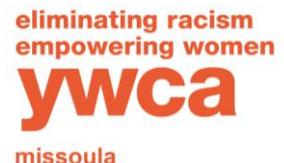
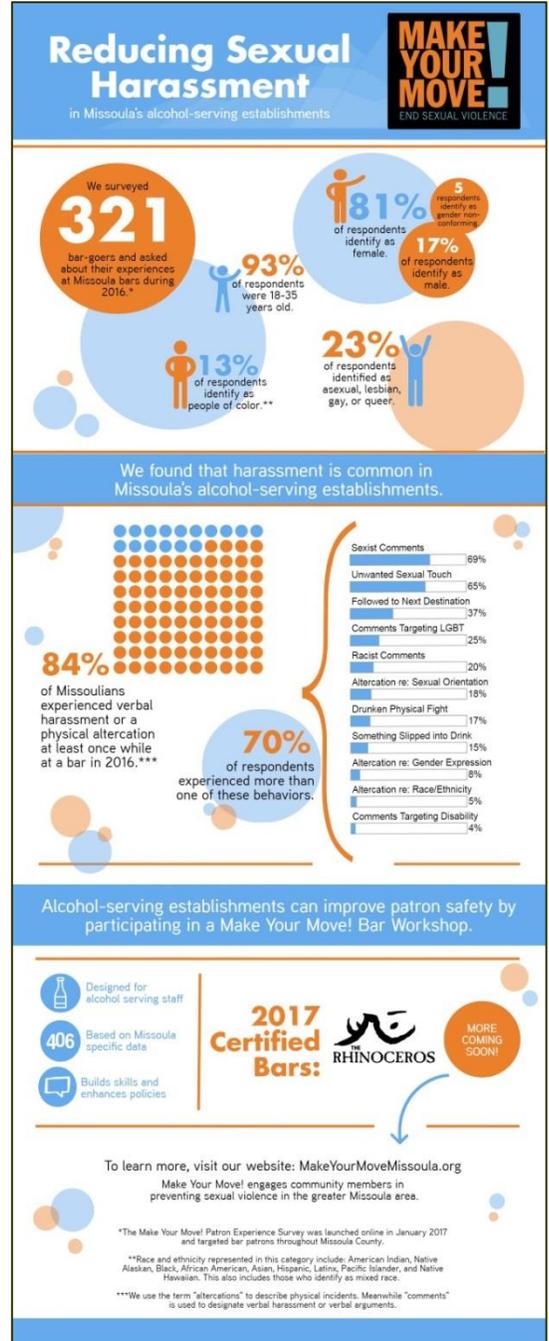
To combat this issue, Make Your Move!, a Missoula-based coalition that promotes the prevention of sexual violence, has been providing training to local bars. Most recently, VFW staff completed a sexual violence prevention training hosted by Brenna Merrill and Kelly McGuire of Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services.

“We are creating a venue in Missoula where everyone is welcome and everyone feels safe,” Tanner Court, Ole Beck VFW Post 209 manager, said.

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. More information can be found on [their website](#).

“This is great training for any bar owner or bartender who wants to provide a safer environment for their patrons,” Crime Prevention Officer at the Missoula Police Department, Ethan Smith, said. “It really helps make people more aware of the signs of harassment or relationship violence that often start in a bar. Raising awareness of these issues helps keep customers safe and gives staff more confidence to intervene on someone’s behalf.”

Smith is also involved in bar workshops to share best practices and tips with bartenders, including how to conserve evidence when a drink may have been tampered with.



Intervention training extends beyond the local bar scene. The University of Montana Student Advocacy Resource Center (SARC), a member of Make Your Move!, provides trainings for all incoming university students on how to intervene as prosocial bystanders to keep one another safe from sexual violence. Isaac La'a, outreach coordinator for SARC hopes that the bar workshops will help bring the same intervention skills to Missoula community members.

“When you are out with your friends, you shouldn't have to think about being sexually harassed. Unfortunately, that happens all too often – to local community members and to students,” La'a said.

Bar Workshops were made possible by funding through Raliance: Ending Sexual Violence in One Generation and supported by the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

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 Children and Youth.

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