

“Lockers”

A real life drama of teens dealing with issues of sexual assault.

The Problem: Area teens are dealing with the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment in new and unprecedented ways. Technological advances and modern media that “pushes the envelope” mean students are exposed to more unhealthy behaviors and actions that can quickly spiral out of control. In fact:

- **1 in 4 girls & 1 in 6 boys are sexually assaulted before age 18.**
- **Almost half of all teens have sent, received or posted sexually explicit messages.**
- **One in seven youth has been sexually solicited online.**

Each year MOCSA educates more than **40,000** students in **over 150 middle and high schools** on the topics of **Sexual Harassment, Date and Acquaintance Rape, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Dating Violence, Drug Facilitated Rape, Gender Stereotypes** and **Media Safety**. This curriculum meets evidence-based standards and has proven efficacy for sexual violence prevention education.

Because teens are accustomed to receiving much of their information via the media, MOCSA educators also utilize this tool. Videos are an effective way to maintain interest and attention, but unfortunately, current sexual violence prevention videos are so out-of-date that students dismiss them as lacking credibility.

The Solution: MOCSA is seeking funding to partner with Johnson County Community College (JCCC) and Larry Garrett, Emmy award-winning writer/producer and long-time MOCSA volunteer, to create videos and a study guide to effectively communicate essential sexual violence prevention messages to youth.

“Lockers” would be a series of short videos aimed at today’s teen audience that is immersed in phone apps, video games, film and television programming. It would be written and shot much like a 1½ hour television movie and would interweave the stories of 6-10 key characters as they interact with each other in a school setting. The film would be edited into no more than fifteen-minute segments with subtle breaks at pivotal points to allow for a facilitated in-class discussion. The Johnson County high school setting would look familiar to students, thereby promoting credibility among viewers.

Utilizing the Centers for Disease Control’s highly endorsed soap opera format ensures that the messages of the videos actually reach their intended audience. This project would capitalize on the passion that teens have for television dramas like MTV’s popular show “Skins” or the CW’s “Gossip Girls”. These shows allow time for the listeners and viewers to form bonds with the characters and allow the characters to evolve gradually in their thinking and behavior. “Lockers” would capitalize on these bonds to begin conversations about sexual violence prevention. The characters and the story lines will be what youth experience every day. The tone will not be didactic, as with most educational videos or public service announcements. Rather, this format allows students to learn with the characters and leaves room for discussion along the way.

This project will engage area high school and JCCC students to ensure that the videos are realistic and effective, while also creating unique opportunities for students who are interested in fields related to entertainment, education or public health.

MOCSA’s nationally recognized and extensively evaluated youth education programs include experiential learning, and the ability to utilize quality videos would significantly enhance the program.