

Don't Be That Guy' campaign launched in Estevan

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The Envision Counselling and Support Centre is taking aim at sexual violence and assault in the Estevan and Weyburn areas.

As part of Sexual Assault Awareness Week, Envision launched the Don't Be That Guy campaign May 5.

The program, which originated in Edmonton and has been seen in various cities throughout Canada including Regina and Saskatoon, the campaign speaks directly to young men on the issue of drug facilitated sexual assault.

In the southeast, Envision has partnered with Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming and Captive Audience Advertising to make the campaign possible.

The posters take a refreshing and new approach to tackling sexual violence among youth aged 19 to 25, and places responsibility for preventing sexual assault on the demographic most likely to be perpetrators, speaking directly to them in their language.

Posters are located in the washrooms of eight drinking establishments in Estevan and Weyburn to reach its target demographic of legal drinking age men (there is no relationship between sexual assaults and the choices of poster placement). Posters will be displayed in other locations in the southeast as the month progresses.

"Being drunk is no excuse for committing a violent crime," said Tyler MacPherson, counsellor and spokesman for Envision. "The images in the poster campaign are intentionally graphic to emphasize the bottom line - sex without consent is sexual assault."

According to the Envision press release, alcohol is by far the most common drug used in drug-facilitated sexual assaults. Young people have a mixed understanding about the issue, and there are almost no prevention programs that address alcohol-related sexual violence. Alcohol-related community services focus on addiction and drunk driving, but often do not integrate a sexual violence component.

MacPherson emphasized "The message is clear: Don't be that guy. Don't be that guy who doesn't take responsibility. Don't be that guy who looks the other way instead of stopping his buddy. Don't be that guy who doesn't make sure his partner is consenting. Don't be that guy who uses alcohol as an excuse. Don't be that guy who sexually assaults a young woman too drunk to consent to sex. Don't be that guy who believes it is not rape."

The campaign features some powerful language and graphics with the goal of raising public awareness of alcohol-related sexual assaults, while holding offenders accountable for their behaviours.

Historically, sexual assault campaigns have been aimed at women, offering techniques and advice on how to protect themselves from becoming a victim of this crime. This campaign's focus is different and unique in that it targets the actions of the offender - not the behaviours of the victim, recognizing it is the offenders themselves who are responsible for changing their behaviours.

The message is clear - someone who is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs cannot give consent, and sex without consent is sexual assault.

"In the public discourse around sexual assault, there exists a hierarchy of blame when talking about the individual/person who has been sexually assaulted," said Patt Lenover-Adams, Envision's executive director. "We make judgements about what we think is right and moral in the world, and in doing so, often blame the victim for the assault.

"But it is important to recognize that even though we may not always agree with how someone dresses, or the behaviours that they partake in, these do not negate the fact that all individuals deserve safety and security in their communities and their homes."

Captive Audience marketing company supported Envision in the production and distribution of the campaign in Estevan and Weyburn.

"Sex is meant to be consensual, and this campaign has the bold integrity to address an issue that is on point and doesn't pull any punches," said spokesman Rob Noble. "The reality is that many of us will overdo a night on the town and this campaign limits the regret from a night like that to one day, and not a lifetime."

The posters will be displayed in liquor stores and bars and hotel restrooms in the southeast. Envision received funding from Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming to run this campaign, which echoes the original launched in Edmonton in November 2010. Envision is grateful to SAVEdmonton for allowing them to use their campaign materials.

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- See more at: <http://www.estevanmercury.ca/don-t-be-that-guy-campaign-launched-in-estevan-1.1439516#sthash.UUHak0Wy.dpuf>