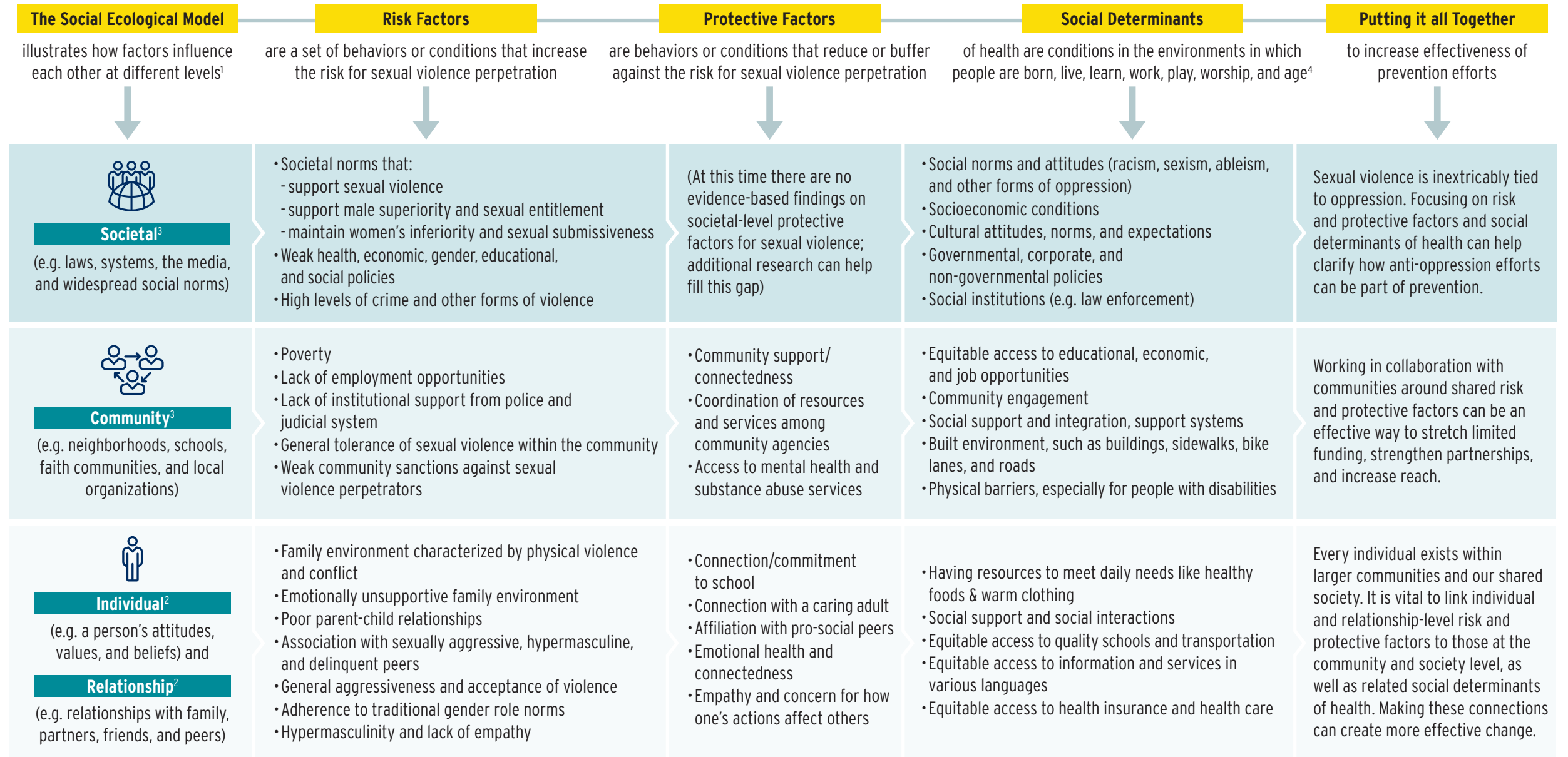


RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

This chart maps out risk and protective factors and social determinants of health along various points in the social ecological model. Understanding these factors and determinants at the societal, community, and individual/relationship levels can increase the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention efforts.



What are risk and protective factors?

Risk factors are a set of behaviors and/or conditions associated with a greater likelihood of sexual violence perpetration, and protective factors are behaviors and/or conditions that may reduce or buffer against the risk for sexual violence perpetration. These are contributing factors and might not be direct causes. Not everyone impacted by risk factors goes on to use violence against others.

Why are they important to use in our work?

Risk and protective factors can connect us to others doing complementary work

There are risk and protective factors common to many public health issues, such as suicide, bullying, and teen dating violence. There are even connections with efforts to increase healthy families and communities, create pay equity and economic justice, and end racism and other forms of oppression. We can work together around shared risk and protective factors to stretch limited funding, create and strengthen partnerships, and increase reach.

Risk and protective factors can connect larger societal issues and oppression to our prevention work

We choose how to behave based on our beliefs and values, which are shaped by our relationships, families, communities, and societal norms. Because primary prevention aims to prevent sexual violence before it even has a chance to happen, we must influence all the areas that shape our beliefs and values. This means that focusing on societal issues like pay equity, anti-oppression, and healthy communities is also a way to prevent sexual violence.

Risk and protective factors can help us talk about our prevention work

Referencing risk and protective factors can be a helpful way to show that our prevention work is based in evidence. It can help us connect our work to specific behaviors, values, and systemic norms associated with a lower prevalence of sexual violence. It can also help us highlight the connections between social determinants of health and sexual violence prevention.

Additional Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Connecting the dots: Exploring the overlaps between multiple forms of violence and working toward collaborative prevention*.

Retrieved from <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/connecting-the-dots/>

Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., & Klevens, J. (2014). *Connecting the dots: An overview of the links among multiple forms of violence*. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting_the_dots-a.pdf

References

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *The social-ecological model: A framework for prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

²Tharp, T. T., DeGue, S., Valle, L. A., Brookmeyer, K. A., Massetti, G. M., & Matjasko, J. L. (2012). A systemic qualitative review of risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 14*, 133-167. doi:10.1177/1524838012470031

³Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B., & Lozano, R. (Eds.). (2002). *World report on violence and health*. Retrieved from the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/full_en.pdf?ua=

⁴World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Social determinants of health*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en/

NSVRC would like to thank Linda Dahlberg, Senior Advisor to the Director, CDC's Division of Violence Prevention for review and contributions to this publication.