

Breakthrough: Preventing Campus-based Sexual & Gender-based Violence

About Breakthrough

Breakthrough is a global human rights organization working to make all forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence unacceptable by transforming the norms and cultures that enable it.

What we do

In the U.S., Breakthrough contributes to preventing and reducing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in college life to make campuses safer. We do this by inspiring, equipping, and emboldening a cadre of campus leaders to eliminate the culture of SGBV through:

- **Training students, administrators, staff and faculty** via workshops to help them identify harmful norms and practices, and levers for change
- **Providing innovative, interactive tools** to build **awareness** and skills for **action**
- **Harnessing the power of stories** to shift hearts and minds
- **Coaching and mentoring** to those we engage to provide ongoing support
- **Supporting impact driven action plans** to transform harms through **incubation labs** and **fellowships**
- **Building support networks** to sustain long-term change

Our culture change model and its results have made Breakthrough a leader in the field of violence prevention. We are called upon by U.N. agencies, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Center for Disease Control and its respective state-level agencies, colleges and universities, mainstream media, and others to advise, share our learnings, and implement our programming.

What Breakthrough delivers

We offer what most don't – culture change. Our unique approach to preventing SGBV is holistic and deeply intersectional – going beyond bystander intervention and primary prevention – to create deep ecosystem shifts. Our model for preventing SGBV in college life results in:

- 40%-100% increase in awareness of harmful social norms and practices that results in violence within the campus ecosystem among workshop participants
- Increased actions led by campus leaders to disrupt the status quo (9,665 to date)
- New norms, practices, behaviors, and beliefs that institutionalize a culture of respect and healthy relationships--backed by social influencers and campus institutions
- Skilled and confident leaders who sustain change
- More men finding their own stake in transforming a culture of violence
- Contribution toward reductions in acts of SGBV

How we assess the effectiveness of our work

We undertake formative research and convene focus groups of campus stakeholders to inform program design, interventions, messaging, and engagement strategies.

To monitor progress and assess impact, Breakthrough employs a mix of qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques and case studies. Using comprehensive indicators, baseline/endline surveys, digital analytics, and other measurement tools, we aggregate data from monitoring activities and other sources to assess outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Who Benefits

Breakthrough's holistic, intersectional, culture change approach contributes to reductions in acts of SGBV, safer campuses, and healthier relationships. Those who benefit include:

- Campus administrators: who maintain safer campuses, improve their reputations as leaders in safety, excel in meeting Title IX requirements, and achieve better results in climate surveys
- Alumni: who want their alma maters to prioritize greater student safety
- Parents: who want their children to be safe and fulfill their potential during college
- Students: who find their own stake in transforming a culture of violence, feel safer and more accountable to their communities, and build leadership skills for their futures

Why now

Approximately 1 in 5 women, 1 in 2 transgender people, and 1 in 16 men experience GBV during their college education in the US. Interventions to address this pandemic have focused largely on survivor services, risk reduction for potential victims, or bystander intervention just before violence occurs. While important, this work has failed to shift the overall normative environment to ultimately reduce and prevent violence.

Since the 2016 elections, the situation has worsened. The Southern Poverty Law Center has marked a dramatic rise in incidents of hate, with 40% of incidences occurring in educational settings including colleges and universities. Students report that the cultural climate on campuses has shifted to one of fear, and observe that new public narratives are encouraging perceptions that women, LGBTQI communities, Muslims, people of color, and others have less value. These trends have emboldened sexually predatory behavior, encouraged men's sense of entitlement to women's bodies, increased levels of harassment and violence, and enabled a culture of impunity – reducing reporting and accountability (especially among peers).



Why Breakthrough

Breakthrough's story begins with our founder, Mallika Dutt. A lawyer and human rights advocate by background working with domestic violence survivors in India, she observed that policies and services to address violence against women could not prevent the problem without changing the underlying cultural norms that enable it. Today, the U.S. Breakthrough team is made up of human rights advocates, pop culture producers, digital strategists, community mobilizers, SGBV prevention and mental health experts, curriculum experts, and monitoring and evaluation gurus – all with a shared passion and vision for building a new world order in which all people are valued equally and live with dignity.

Leveraging our diverse talents and passions, we create INNOVATIVE, INSPIRING and FUN programming that connects with the hearts and minds of young people and other campus stakeholders. With this approach, we build the capacity of change agents to tackle human rights abuses through everyday actions, both big and small – bringing change to homes, communities, schools, places of work, and other spheres of influence. We meet people where they are, and create positive pathways for everyone to become part of the solution.

Testimonial

Breakthrough “opened my eyes to how pervasive this issue is throughout our society, and how we have to stop letting the ‘little things go’ that perpetuate attitudes and actions that can lead to violence and discrimination against women. I am now motivated and equipped to take action.”

–Workshop participant, NY

Recognition of Breakthrough’s work

Breakthrough is proud of the credibility we have gained and has been recognized by mass media, social media outlets, government and others:

- Been featured in the [New York Times](#), [Newsweek](#), [Time](#), [The Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [The Advocate](#), [Journal of College Admission](#), and more.
- Been showcased by [Facebook](#) as a leading organization using social media effectively for social change.
- Partnered with [NO MORE](#) on a [campus organizing guide](#) to prevent SGBV
- Advised the US Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women on strategies for addressing LGBTQI violence on campuses
- Trained staff of the federal public health agency, the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) Division for Violence Prevention on our culture change approach
- Trained 10 CDC state-level domestic/sexual violence partner agencies in AK, CA, DE, FL, IN, ID, MI, NC, OH, RI
- Scaled our work through state-level domestic and sexual violence agencies (CA, RI, VA) and state-wide university systems (IN)

To date, Breakthrough has implemented programs that have achieved the following reach:

- Trained 530 leaders representing nearly 80 campuses nation wide
- Supported 9,665 actions taken by students and allies
- Engaged 57,400 currently enrolled college constituents, representing 1 in 270 students ages 18-24 across the U.S. – of which nearly 40% are men
- Reached 267,700 in-person through community mobilization
- Garnered 48,199,000 impressions through social media and digital campaigns
- Garnered 781,000,000 impressions through traditional mass media (print, radio, etc.)

For more information on our services

Breakthrough is a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation. We provide tailored programs for specific campuses. Please contact us for more information or to request a quote at campus@breakthrough.tv or visit our website at <http://us.breakthrough.tv>.

