



Ninety-six people just graduated from the Real Talk Domestic Violence Prevention Program at Lawrenceville Correctional Center. The Virginia Department of Health brought together prevention grantees from across the state to share what's actually working. And yes, we're already thinking about Thanksgiving.

This month's Inking isn't about big announcements or strategy. It's about momentum you can see if you're paying attention.

prevention behind the walls

Violence prevention doesn't stop at the edge of a classroom or community center. It's happening inside Virginia prisons, led by people who have lived it.

We're spotlighting the Real Talk Domestic Violence Prevention Program at Lawrenceville Correctional Center, a powerful collaboration between [REAL LIFE](#), the Virginia Department of Health, and the Virginia Department of Corrections.

The impact so far:

- 96 graduates from the most recent cycle
- 17 trained inmate facilitators now leading sessions
- A trauma-informed curriculum rooted in empathy, accountability, and the disruption of toxic masculinity
- A peer-led model that prepares participants for reentry and leadership

The first-ever Facilitator Training Completion Ceremony took place this spring, marking more than a milestone. It showed what justice-rooted prevention can look like in action.

This is real change, driven by every graduate, facilitator, and partner working to break cycles of violence and build safer communities inside and beyond prison walls.



a community committed to prevention

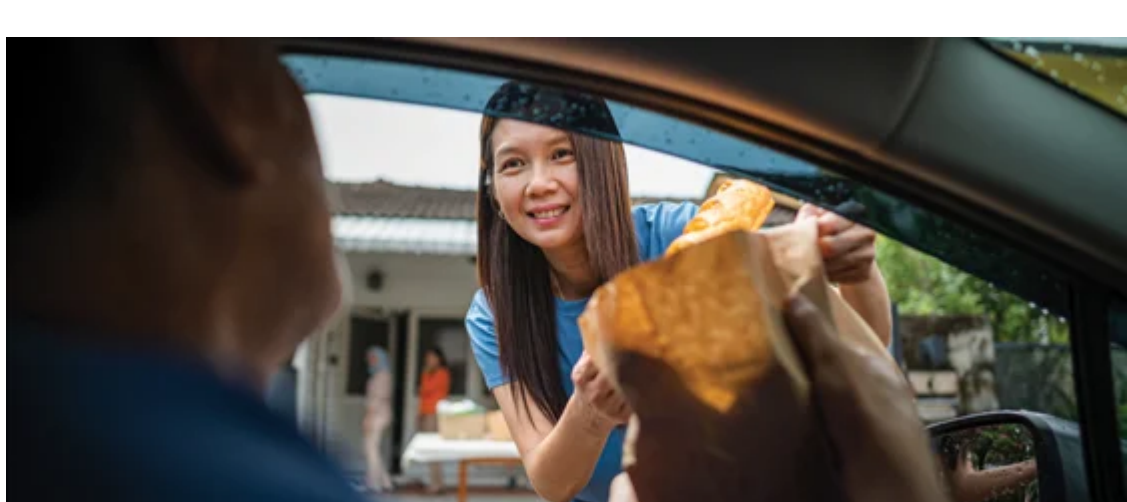
Blue Octopus proudly hosted the Virginia Department of Health Rape Prevention and Education Grantees Convening this month and the energy in the room was unmistakable. Violence prevention in Virginia is a collective movement, spanning regions, disciplines, and lived experiences.

From reimagining youth justice to advancing survivor-centered services, we heard from a diverse network of changemakers, including:

- [RISE for Youth](#) - Rethinking youth incarceration and advocating for reinvestment in communities
- [Haven Shelter & Services](#) - Supporting survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence in rural Virginia
- [Families Forward Virginia](#) - Building protective factors through home visiting, education, and policy
- [Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance](#) - Leading statewide advocacy and systems transformation
- [Sexual Assault Resource Agency \(SARA\)](#) - Providing prevention education and crisis response in the Charlottesville area
- [Greater Richmond SCAN](#) - Working across systems to address child abuse and trauma
- [Alexandria LGBTQ+ Task Force](#) - Promoting inclusive, supportive prevention through parent education

VDH shared data from their public dashboards, covering violence, shared risk and protective factors, disease, drug use, and more. Want to dig into data that can inform whatever you're working on? Check out their easy-to-use dashboards at vdh.virginia.gov/data.

We're proud to work alongside these leaders to make prevention a daily practice across Virginia.



looking ahead, cooling down, giving back

Yes, it's hot. And yes, we're thinking about Thanksgiving.

Each fall, CCHASM (Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry) distributes thousands of Thanksgiving meals to local families facing financial hardship. It's a massive effort made possible by volunteers, food donors, and a community that shows up.

Want to get involved? Now is a great time to start thinking about how you or your organization can help:

- Volunteer to help sort, pack, or distribute meals
- Organize a food drive through your workplace, church, or school
- Donate to support meals for families across the region

[start a new tradition](#)

tool of the month

Looking to ground your work in equity, leadership, or systems-thinking? **Prevention Institute's tools** offer practical frameworks for folks in any field, including trauma recovery, reentry, food access, and youth justice.

Our Rec:

- [Spectrum of Prevention](#) - For building layered, community-wide strategies
- [THRIVE](#) - For understanding how local conditions shape health and safety

These signature tools align perfectly with what groups like RISE, SARA, and the Alexandria LGBTQ+ Task Force are already doing.

[worth a look](#)

what's in the net?

As always, we cast the net wide. Here's what's floating around the Blue Octopus crew this month:

Laura is blasting Yungblud's new album on repeat. Angsty anthems meet July heat.

Carter is deep into The Truth podcast. Immersive fiction, audio drama-style.

Shelley has one summer craving and it's clear: spicy potato tacos or bust.

Quillin is anxiously awaiting Menopunks. Riot grrrrl meets menopause documentary.

From our arms to yours... stay cool, stay connected, and keep doing the deep work.

