

# Teen Dating Violence: What Works in Prevention

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## *What Will be Covered?*

- What do we mean by TDV
- The extent of the problem, what we know and what we don't know
- Evaluation research on TDV prevention programs
  - Description of three key programs
  - What we still don't know about prevention programs

# *Measuring Teen Dating Violence*

- Teen dating violence definitions typically include physical, sexual, and emotional/psychological abuse, but many studies only measure physical abuse
- Rates of victimization and perpetration depend on how questions are asked and the population being surveyed
- Act scales are typically used to get prevalence rates

## *Extent of the Problem of TDV*

- Approximately 10% of adolescents report being a victim of physical violence from a romantic partner in the past year
- Nearly 30% report experiencing psychological abuse in the past year
- Mutual aggression is the norm in adolescent relationships characterized by physical violence

## *What We Do Know about TDV*

- *Risk factors* for both victimization and perpetration (e.g., early ASB, friends involved in dating abuse, relationship conflict/hostility, exposure to IPV, harsh parenting/family conflict, school drop out)
- *Consequences*: depression, substance use, injury and other risky behaviors
- Teens in violent relationships report equal levels of love, self-disclosure, and caring, but more jealousy, conflict, and cheating

## *What We Don't Know about TDV*

- *Developmental paths*: how TDV is related to bullying, sexual harassment, and adult IPV
- *Relationship context*: stability across partners; relationship characteristics; partner age
- Influence of peer network norms/behaviors
- LGBT youth
- Gender and power dynamics
- Better understanding of technology use

## *Findings from 2006 Review of TDV Prevention Programs*

- Whitaker et al.'s review of school-based TDV prevention programs found generally positive effects from the 11 qualified programs.
- Overall, the methods were weak and follow-up periods were short.
- Few studies measured behavior. Most measured attitudes, knowledge, and intentions.

# *Updated Review of Prevention Programs (2011)*

- Foshee's review focused on 10 studies using randomized controlled trials (RCT)
  - Still limited follow ups and focus on actual behavior change; localized samples
- Overall positive findings:
  - 8 out of 8 found impact on attitudes/knowledge, 4 out of 5 sustained
  - 4 out of 6 found impact on behaviors

# *Safe Dates* (Foshee, et al.)

- Intervention elements:
  - 10 session curriculum (45 minutes each) taught by health and physical education teachers
  - Poster contest
  - Theater production performed by students
- Evaluation design:
  - RCT study with 14 schools in rural NC
  - 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Behavior (victimization and perpetration) measured at baseline/1-month/1-year/2-year/3-year and 4-year follow-up
  - Approximately 1900 students (high retention rates)
  - Half received booster (newsletter + call from health educator)

## *Safe Dates* (Foshee, et al.)

- Adolescents receiving Safe Dates reported less perpetration of moderate physical, psychological, and sexual violence.
- Adolescents receiving Safe Dates reported less sexual and physical abuse victimization.
- Booster did not have an effect on victimization or perpetration.

## *The Fourth R* (Wolfe, et al.)

- Intervention elements:
  - Integrated classroom based curriculum delivered in health class, comprised of 21 lessons
  - Curriculum utilizes thematic approach, with focus on violence/bullying, unsafe sexual behavior, and substance use
  - Outreach and communication with parents
- Evaluation design:
  - RCT study in 20 Ontario, Canada schools
  - 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Behavior measured through 2 ½ year follow-up
  - 1700 students

## *The 4<sup>th</sup> R* (Wolfe, et al.)

- Students who received the Fourth R perpetrated significantly fewer acts of physical violence toward a dating partner at follow-up, compared to those who received standard Health classes.
- The effect was greater for boys than for girls.

# *Shifting Boundaries* (Taylor & Stein)

- Intervention Elements:
  - *Classroom component*: 6 sessions over 6-9 weeks. Consequences for perpetrators, state and federal laws, promote healthy interpersonal relationships, boundaries in relationships, role of bystanders
  - *Building component* : 6-9 weeks, temporary school based stay-away orders, hot spots mapping, posters to increase awareness and reporting
- Evaluation Design:
  - RCT with 30 NYC middle schools (4 groups: classroom only, building only, both, control)
  - **6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders**
  - Baseline, post-test, 6-month follow up
  - 2700 students

## *Shifting Boundaries* (Taylor & Stein)

- Students receiving the building intervention reduced perpetration and victimization of physical and sexual dating violence by 50%
- Students receiving the building intervention were more likely to have positive intentions to intervene as a bystander
- Students receiving the combined intervention reduced sexual harassment victimization and perpetration at 6 month follow up

# *What we Don't Know about TDV Programs*

- School-based programs
  - More effective if over multiple years?
  - More effective if include multiple settings (e.g., family, community)?
  - How effective for key subgroups (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity)?
  - Added value of youth-led components?
  - Better understanding of mechanisms of effect and link to known risk factors; key components

## *What we Don't Know about TDV Programs (cont.)*

- How effective are programs targeting boys?
- How effective are programs working with identified victims and perpetrators?
- How effective are protection orders, laws mandating schools to implement policy or programs, and public awareness campaigns?

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