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Preventing, Assessing, and Intervening in Teen Dating Abuse

A Training for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

Handout

1

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- The Meaning of Teenage Dating Abuse
- Facts About Teenage Dating Abuse
- The Roles of Service Providers in School Communities
- Levels of Providing Service
- Assessment of Healthy Relationships and Abusive Relationships
- Intervention for Students at Risk
- Prevention for All Students
- Policies
- Norms
- Resources
- Special Groups
- Review and Follow-Up
- Closing and Evaluation



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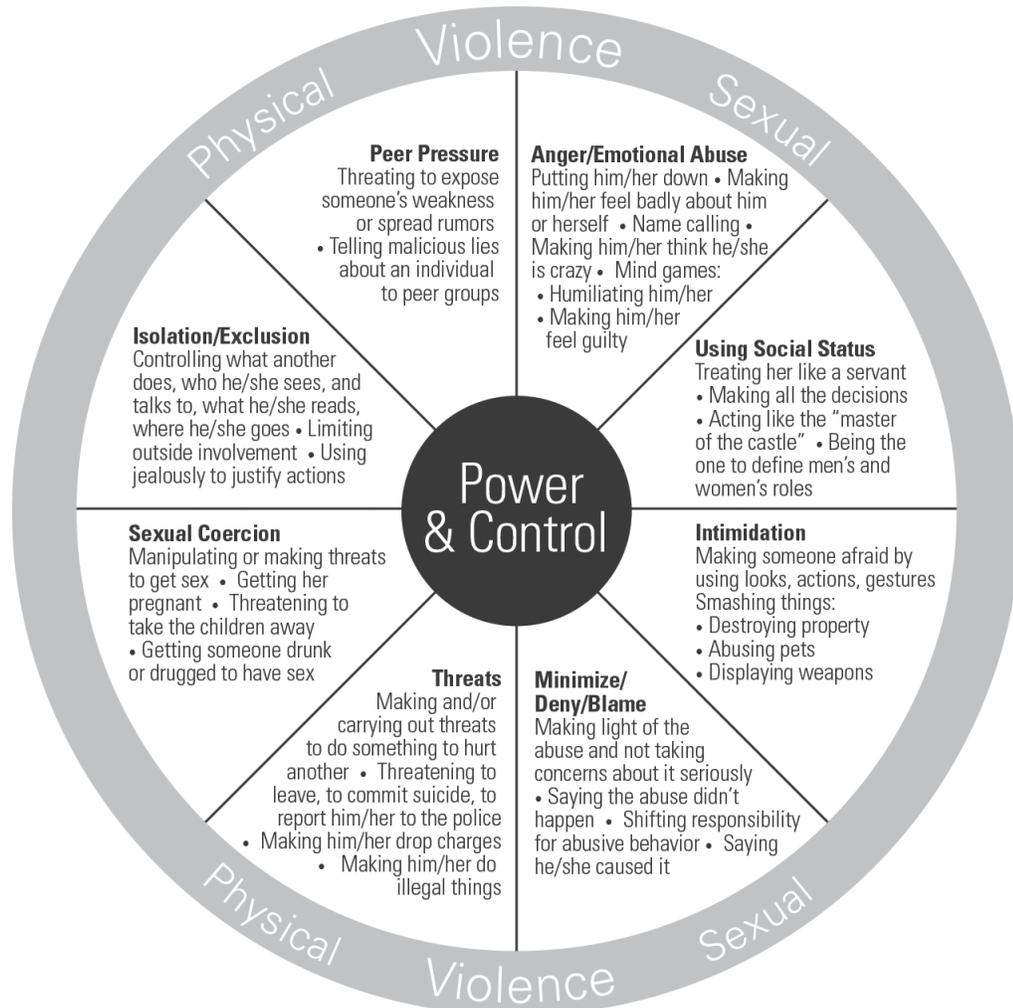
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Teen Power and Control Wheel



Building Safe Schools: A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating Violence—A Resource Manual for School Employees
Break the Cycle: Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence
www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/pdf/ta-teacher-manual.pdf



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Why *You* Are Needed

- You communicate well with students.
- You respect students.
- You have knowledge of students' issues.
- You are aware of cultural biases.
- You recognize when students are in trouble.
- You know what to do in case of an emergency.
- You can work with the entire school community, including administrators, staff, students, and their families.
- You have the information and skills to help students work through conflicts.



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Signs of a Healthy Relationship

- Shared enjoyable experiences
- Control of anger
- Resolution of conflicts without violence
- Adjustment to stress
- Open and honest communication
- Shared decision making
- Belief in own and other's autonomy
- Trust
- Respect
- Compromise
- Empathy and caring

Adapted from *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*
www.vetoviolenace.org/datingmatters



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Signs of an Abusive Relationship

Some signs may be obvious:

- One student in the relationship always seems to be controlling the other, either physically, emotionally, or verbally.
- One student in the relationship has unexplained bruises.
- One student in the relationship always defers to the other.

But look beyond the obvious toward the following school-focused behaviors:

- A drop in attendance
- A drop in grades
- Requests for schedule changes

And consider whether the student has displayed the following:

- Isolation from former friends
- Loss of interest in activities
- Loss of self-confidence
- Sudden weight change

None of these signs by themselves may indicate an abusive relationship (and the signs may be symptoms of other concerns as well), so look at them as a whole.

Adapted from Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention
www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters



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Getting Information to Assess Risk

- Has the student been humiliated?
- Has the student been isolated?
- Have the student's actions—who to see, what to do—been controlled?
- Has the student been physically violated (e.g., punched, shoved, kicked, slapped, or choked)?
- Has the student been sexually abused?
- Has the student (or the student's friends or family) been threatened?
- Has the student been defamed over the Internet?
- Has the student been receiving excessive phone calls or texts that are abusive, offensive, threatening, or unwanted?
- Has the student been constantly questioned about activities and other relationships?
- Has the student been continually insulted?
- Has the student been continually manipulated?

Adapted from *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*
www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters



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Why Teenagers Don't Get Help

1. "I love him, even if sometimes I hate what he does. I don't want to lose him."

2. "She loves me, even if sometimes she has a bad day and things get a little out of hand."

3. "It might take some time, but I know I can change him."

4. "A guy being pushed around by a girl? If anyone knew about this, I'd die of embarrassment."

5. "It's not that bad. Other people have it worse."

6. "It's my fault. I don't want to blame him for my failings."

7. "I'm afraid of what she'll do if she knows I told someone."

8. "It's better to be with him than to be alone."

9. "If my parents found out about this, they'd ground me until I was 40."

10. "People get what they deserve. I must deserve this."

11. "I've talked with my friends about it; they assured me that things would get better and that I should get used to it."

12. "I have no idea who can help me."



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Do and Don't: Responding to a Student Who Is in an Abusive Relationship

What to say:

- "I'm glad you told me about this."
- "This is important."
- "I want you to be safe."
- "Let's make sure you get the help you need right now."
- "It's not your fault."
- "You deserve to be treated with respect in your relationship."
- "I'm here if you ever need help or want to talk."

What to do:

- Listen.
- Be honest about your ability to keep information confidential; consider your professional "code of conduct."
- Be specific in your concerns, especially if you've seen abusive behaviors.
- Ask questions.
- Challenge the student to see the warning signs in his or her relationship.
- To the extent possible, given safety concerns, allow the student to make his or her own decisions about the relationship.
- Tell the student what you're required to do under the law or school policy.
- Provide information on local resources.
- Develop an "action plan" with the student.
- Continue to check in with the student throughout the school year and beyond.

But:

- Don't be judgmental about the student's relationship or choices.
- Don't try to take control of the situation, unless an emergency requires you to do so.
- Don't ignore the red flags you see.
- Don't make assumptions about how the student wants to handle the relationship.
- Don't minimize the abuse or the importance of the relationship.
- Don't assume that because the relationship is new or casual, the abuse is minor.
- Don't assume that the student is heterosexual.
- Don't share a student's private information with people unnecessarily or talk about students in public areas of the school.
- Don't show shock or disapproval if the student tells you about his or her sexual activities.
- Don't blame the student for remaining in the relationship.

Adapted from *Building Safe Schools: A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating Violence—A Resource Manual for School Employees*
Break the Cycle: Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence
www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/pdf/ta-teacher-manual.pdf



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Working With the Alleged Perpetrator

Schools should make every reasonable effort to protect the due process rights of the alleged perpetrator and the safety of the victim. Schools should consider adopting the following methods of intervention with the alleged perpetrator:

- Hold a conference with the alleged perpetrator and parent or guardian.
- Allow the alleged perpetrator an opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations.
- Emphasize expectations for positive behavior.
- Identify and implement disciplinary and other actions and consequences that will be taken to prevent further incidents.
- Inform the alleged perpetrator and parent or guardian of help and support available at the school or in the community as needed.
- Address the seriousness of retaliation against the victim for reporting the incident or cooperating with the investigation.
- Increase supervision of the alleged perpetrator as needed.
- Document the meeting and action plans on a complaint form.

Adapted from *Building Safe Schools: A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating Violence—A Resource Manual for School Employees*
Break the Cycle: Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence
www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/pdf/ta-teacher-manual.pdf



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School-Based Stay-Away Agreement

The intent of this agreement is to increase safety for students who have been the target of repeated bullying, sexual harassment, or dating violence. It is to be administered by the principal or the principal's designee in a conference with the offending student and his or her parent or guardian.

Name of student: _____

Date of most serious incident: _____

Description of behaviors involved in incident:

Date of assessment by principal or designee: _____

Date of parent notification: _____

This agreement is being administered because (*name of school*) has found that (*name of alleged offender*) has committed an abusive act. In order to protect the rights and safety of all members of our school community, you are required to stay away from (*name of targeted student*) at all times during the school day and at any school-sponsored event. This means that you may not approach, talk to, sit by, or have any contact with (*name of targeted student*) at school or on school property, school buses, and bus stops.

In addition, the following actions are effective immediately (*list schedule changes, disciplinary, or restitution actions*):

Current schedule:

New schedule:

Other disciplinary actions:

Violations of this agreement and acts of retaliation directly or indirectly toward the target or the target's friends or family members will be taken seriously and will result in further disciplinary actions. Your compliance will be monitored by *(name and title of school staff)*.

This agreement is valid from _____ (date) to _____ (date).

This agreement will be reviewed on _____ (date).

Signatures:

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Administrator: _____ Date: _____

This document will be shared with all staff, faculty, and administration of *(name of school)*.

Austin Independent School District, Texas
Student Welfare: Freedom From Harassment
www.ncdsv.org/images/AISD_BullyingSexHarassDatingViolenceComplaintFormInstruct_2010-11.pdf



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Social Workers and “Duty to Warn” State Laws

Introduction

Social workers often inquire about their duty to report threats of harm that they learn about in the course of a professional relationship with a client. A prior LDF (Legal Defense Fund) Legal Issue of the Month article, *Social Workers and the Duty to Warn*, reviewed court decisions that have addressed this topic; however, many states have passed duty-to-warn legislation and the specific contours of the duty to warn are defined on a state by state basis. This Legal Issue of the Month article focuses on the state statutes relating to the social workers’ duty to warn.

Background

Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California (1976) is the landmark case that established the duty to warn in California and its reasoning has been applied to establish a duty to warn in states across the country. Generally, a therapist’s duty to warn is based on what the courts view as a “special relationship” established between the treating clinician and the patient who is in need of mental health treatment.

By accepting responsibility for the care of a client in need of mental health treatment, the clinical social worker may owe a duty to protect third parties from harm threatened by the client. The court in *Tarasoff* found, “When a therapist determines, or pursuant to the standards of his profession should determine, that his patient presents a serious danger of violence to another, he incurs an obligation to use reasonable care to protect the intended victim against such danger” (*Tarasoff*, 1976, p. 340). Generally, the duty applies to situations where the client identifies himself as the potentially dangerous person. Thus, it would not generally apply where a client discloses in therapy that a third party intends to harm another third party.

Duty to Warn—State Variations

Mandatory Duty to Warn

Many social workers are unaware that duty to warn laws vary from state to state and that a few states have not established a statutory duty to warn. Twenty-two states have statutes applicable to social workers that establish a mandatory duty to warn. These are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. A number of these states also have court decisions that have interpreted the duty to warn laws.

“Permissive” Standard

A second group of states give permission in state statutes for social workers to warn of serious threats. These states are: Alaska, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Virgin Islands, West Virginia, and Wyoming. In some states, such as Texas, the permission to warn is limited to notifying medical or law enforcement personnel, not the threatened person or persons.

No Statutory Standard

A third set of states does not provide any statutory language for social workers addressing the duty to warn, but some of these have implemented the duty through court decisions. Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Wisconsin do not have statutory provisions, but have established a duty to warn through court decisions. States that are silent as to the social worker’s duty to warn are Georgia, Kansas, Maine, Nevada, North Dakota, and Puerto Rico.

A small number of states have statutory language or court decisions that may be interpreted as limiting the duty to warn. These include: Alabama (*King v. Smith*, 539 So.2d 262 (1989), Guam (statute) and North Carolina (*Gregory v. Kilbride*, 150 N.C.App. 601 (2002)).

Type of Threat and Duty

States that have established a duty to warn also vary as to what type of threat triggers the duty. Some states require or permit a disclosure of confidential information to prevent a general threat to the public at large (e.g. Wisconsin, Delaware, Washington, Nebraska) (NASW, 2005), while other states require or permit disclosure based only on the basis of a threat to harm a specific individual or group of individuals (e.g. Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Vermont and New Jersey) (NASW, 2005; Polowy and Gorenberg, 1997). The attached chart (“Type of Threats that Trigger the Duty to Warn”) indicates how state statutes have identified the events that may trigger a duty to warn.

The necessary actions required to discharge the duty to warn also vary from state to state. For example, in California (2007) the duty is discharged when the therapist makes reasonable efforts to communicate the threat to the victim and to law enforcement while Delaware law (2007) provides that the therapist may notify law enforcement and the victim or arrange for the hospitalization of the patient as an acceptable means of discharging the duty to warn. Many states do not designate the acceptable mode of intervention, thus leaving the social worker in a position of determining the most appropriate contact to prevent harm while limiting the disclosure to the smallest number of persons.

Analysis and Conclusions

Social workers often have responsibility for making difficult determinations regarding the assessment and treatment of clients, including taking steps to assure their safety and that of others. Some of the key issues for clinical social workers to review in a case involving a possible duty to warn are:

- Whether the client is the individual who represents a threat to self or others
- Who has disclosed the threat and under what circumstances
- How much time has passed since the threat was made
- Whether the client possesses the means and capacity to carry out the threat
- Whether the duty to warn has been established as a mandatory requirement in state law
- Whether the threat of harm is to a specific individual or represents a general threat to the public at large
- Whether the criteria for involuntary commitment may apply
- Whether the state permits disclosure of a threat even if it is not mandatory
- Who needs to be warned to effectively discharge the duty to warn (e.g. law enforcement, the intended target, the Department of Motor Vehicles, a treating physician, a responsible family member)

Social workers' obligations to provide competent care are grounded in the ethics and standards of the profession and are recognized in state laws and court decisions. Treating clients at times may encompass referring them for a higher level of care, such as inpatient hospitalization, or taking steps to warn others who may be at risk of harm by clients. Social workers need to be aware of the legal standards in their state that pertain to the duty to warn; however, they also need to develop and maintain the professional skills necessary to make valid assessments of client dangerousness.

References

California Civ. Code § 43.92 (2007).

Delaware Code Ann. tit. 16 § 5402 (2007).

Polowy, C. and Gorenberg, C. (1997). *Client confidentiality & privileged communications*, NASW General Counsel Law Note Series. Author: Washington, DC. May be ordered by calling 1-800-638-8799, Ext. 290.

Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 551 P.2d 334 (1976).

National Association of Social Workers (2005). *Social workers and the duty to warn*. NASW Legal Defense Fund Legal Issue of the Month. [Online]. Available at www.socialworkers.org/ldf/legal_issue/default.asp

Type of Threats That Trigger the Duty to Warn

Threat to Specific Victim Required for Duty to Warn

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire (includes threat to real property), New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington Wyoming

Duty to Warn May Be Based on Threat to the Public

DC (substantial risk of injury), Florida, Indiana, WV (imminent danger to self or others)

Permission to Warn of Contemplation of Crime or Harmful Act

Arkansas, Hawaii (act likely to result in death or substantial bodily harm), Iowa, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma (includes violations of any law), South Carolina, Texas (probability of imminent harm to self or others), Virgin Islands

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National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
www.socialworkers.org



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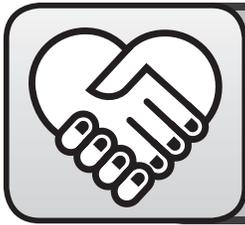
Suggestions for School Policies on Teenage Dating Abuse

A formal, written school policy should include at least the following:

- A behavioral definition of relationship abuse and other prohibited behaviors, including physical, verbal, and Internet behaviors
- A description of the consequences for the perpetrator
- A description of how relationship abuse should be addressed in terms of both counseling, support, and discipline, including outside resources
- Identification of who is responsible for resolving incidents of abuse
- Identification of who needs to be notified in cases of abuse
- Strategies to protect victims and people reporting the abuse

Add your own ideas:

Adapted from *Guidelines for Schools on Addressing Teen Dating Violence*
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.doe.mass.edu



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Sample Written Policy Chart for Schools

Student Support, Career Readiness, and Adult Education Guidelines for Schools on Addressing Teen Dating Violence

Behaviors That Are Not Allowed	Consequences	Administrator	Parents/ Caretaker	Referral	Document
Verbal/Nonverbal/Written <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of put-downs, insults, name calling, swearing, or offensive language ■ Screaming or yelling at another ■ Making threats, being intimidating, or getting friends to threaten or scare another 	First Offense Verbal warning/ education Repeat Offense Teacher-student conference/send to office/detention	Yes, if appropriate Inform	Yes, if appropriate Inform	Yes, if appropriate Dating or other violence prevention counselor	Yes Yes
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hitting, punching, pinching, pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping, kicking, choking, pulling hair, biting, throwing things, or arm twisting ■ Intimidation, blocking exits, punching walls, or knocking things around ■ Damaging or destroying another's property ■ Restraining, pinning someone to the wall, blocking someone's movements 	First Offense Detention/ education/ suspension Repeat Offense Detention plus diversion program/ suspension/ dangerousness assessment	Must inform Must inform	Parent conference Parent conference	Dating or other violence protection counselor/school security/police	Yes Yes
Using Weapons	Suspension/ expulsion	Must inform	Must inform	Police	Yes
Stalking	Suspension/ expulsion	Must inform	Must inform	Police	Yes

Behaviors That Are Not Allowed	Consequences	Administrator	Parents/ Caretaker	Referral	Document
Sexual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Name calling, such as slut, bitch, or fag ■ Catcalls or other offensive noises or whistling ■ Spreading sexual gossip or graffiti ■ Comments about a person's body or unwanted verbal or written sexual comments ■ Staring or leering with sexual overtones, sexual gestures 	First Offense Detention/ education/ suspension Repeat Offense Suspension/ psychological assessment	Must inform Must inform	Parent conference Parent conference before admittance	Sexual harassment counselor/dating violence or rape counselor/school security	Yes Yes
Forcing obscene materials on others	Suspension/ expulsion	Must inform	Must inform	Police	Yes
Pulling off or lifting clothes to expose private parts	Suspension/ expulsion	Must inform	Must inform	Police	Yes
Rape or attempted rape	Suspension/ expulsion	Must inform	Must inform	Police	Yes

Guidelines for Schools on Addressing Teen Dating Violence

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

www.doe.mass.edu



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Changing Norms

You're in a unique position to establish and maintain positive norms in a school community. The question is, how do you go about doing that?

Here are some ideas, particularly for establishing and maintaining positive norms concerning teenage dating abuse:

1. Enlist peer leaders.
 - Determine—for example, through a schoolwide survey—the peer leaders among students. Which students do the athletes look to for advice or information? Which students do the music students look to? How about the science students? The various ethnic groups? The various social groups?
 - Once you've identified the peer leaders, invite them to a special session on preventing teenage dating abuse. Give them information about the issue—what it looks like, what effects it has, and why some people in such relationships may be reluctant to get help.
 - Let the students know that they're in a position to influence their peers' behavior either positively or negatively and that you're counting on them to do the former. Give them strategies to do that, e.g., speaking at student gatherings, modeling safe and healthy behavior, and urging students who may be in unhealthy relationships to see the appropriate school personnel.
 - Be sure to tell students that they're not professional counselors and that if someone is in an unsafe situation, they should not be bound by promises of secrecy; they should get help immediately, even at the cost of a friendship.
2. Hold informational assemblies for all students.
 - Give students information about the incidence and seriousness of teenage dating abuse. Incorporate either written or oral testimony from teenagers—perpetrators as well as victims—who have experienced it. Be careful, however, about exposing students to more harassment or stigma than they might be initially aware of.
 - Identify the signs of abuse.
 - Be sure that students know where and how to get help.
 - Promote the idea of students helping each other.
3. Facilitate meetings with family members to inform them of the issue.
 - Give them information about the incidence and seriousness of teenage dating abuse. Incorporate either written or oral testimony from teenagers—perpetrators as well as victims—who have experienced it.
 - Identify the signs of abuse.
 - Be sure that family members know where and how to get help—both in and outside the school.
 - Encourage them to talk to their children about the issue.

4. Facilitate meetings with coaches, teachers, club sponsors, and representatives of other groups who have influence over students.
 - Give them information about the incidence and seriousness of teenage dating abuse. Incorporate either written or oral testimony from teenagers—perpetrators as well as victims—who have experienced it.
 - Identify the signs of abuse.
 - Be sure that they know where and how to get help—both in and outside the school.
 - Let them know that students frequently look to them for support and that you're counting on them to offer accurate information and helpful advice. Give them strategies to do that, e.g., speaking at student gatherings, modeling safe and healthy behavior, and urging students who may be in unhealthy relationships to see the appropriate school personnel.
 - Be sure to tell them that they're not professional counselors and that if a student is in an unsafe situation, they should not be bound by promises of secrecy; they should get help immediately.

5. Coordinate with the larger community (e.g., police, business, athletic organizations, social services, and especially media) to present a unified message about not tolerating unsafe or unhealthy relationships.
 - Recognize that the more places that students hear consistent messages about dating abuse, the stronger those messages will be. Essentially, you'll want to convey three messages: "This is what dating abuse looks like," "This is why it's critical that teenagers get help," and "This is how they can get help."
 - Consider coming up with a tagline to convey to the general public, e.g.:
 - "Report bad behavior—no matter who's responsible."
 - "Don't stand by while someone's getting hurt."
 - "Friends don't tolerate abuse."
 - "If it hurts, it's not funny—and it's not okay."
 - Consider coming up with a tagline to convey to victims of dating abuse, e.g.:
 - "If it's abuse, it's not love."
 - "Don't give up 'me' to get 'we.'"
 - "People want to help you. Find them."
 - "No one deserves to be abused."
 - Work with media to spread the message throughout the community, e.g., by writing editorials in the local newspaper, by being interviewed on TV and radio, and by posting relevant articles on Facebook and other social networks.
 - Enlist others' efforts in talking with students about the issue.



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What's Next?

On an administrative level:

- Be sure that school policies appropriately address dating abuse and in general reflect expectations of safe and healthy behavior.
- Identify useful resources in your community.
- Set up or improve avenues of communication so families are aware of the issue.

What are you committed to do?

On a school level:

- Identify peer leaders to promote positive norms and advocate for healthy relationships.
- Raise awareness of the issue with all students and school adults.
- Take steps to assess, intervene in, and prevent dating abuse.

What are you committed to do?

On a student level:

- Let students know that you're available to help with this issue.
- Respect all students who you counsel.
- Connect with students—and their families—as frequently and as meaningfully as possible.

What are you committed to do?



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Helpful Resources for Teenage Dating Abuse: Assessment, Intervention, and Prevention

- *Break the Cycle: Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence*
www.breakthecycle.org
- *Break the Silence: Stop the Violence* (video)
Injury and Violence Prevention and Control
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/CDCTV/BreakTheSilence/index.html
- *Building Healthy Relationships Across Virginia: A Facilitator's Guide for Teen Dating Violence Prevention*
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/dsvp/lcp/documents/2012/pdf/VSDVAA1.pdf>
- *Child Trends: Research to Improve Children's Lives*
www.childtrends.org/_listALL.cfm?LID=E5CE5353-B063-4C40-A251C53170262124
- *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*
www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters
- *Expect Respect: A School-Based Program for Preventing Teen Dating Violence and Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*
SafePlace School-based Services
www.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/ExpectRespectOverview08.pdf
- *A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating and Sexual Violence in a School Setting*
Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office
www.ocjs.ohio.gov/NCVRW/TDV_GuideAssessingTDViolence.pdf
- *Guide to Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women & Girls*
Men's Nonviolence Project
Texas Council on Family Violence
www.tcfv.org/pdf/mensguide/EngagingMenandBoys.pdf
- *Guidelines for Schools on Addressing Teen Dating Violence*
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.doe.mass.edu
- *Hanging Out or Hooking Up: Clinical Guidelines on Responding to Adolescent Relationship Abuse*
Elizabeth Miller and Rebecca Levenson
Futures Without Violence
http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/HealthCare/Hanging-Out-or-Hooking-Up_Low_Res_Cropped_FINAL.pdf
- *Love Is Respect*
www.loveisrespect.org

- Love What's Real: Center for Healthy Teenage Relationships
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
<http://lovewhatsreal.com/dating.html>
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
www.socialworkers.org
- National Dating Abuse Helpline
www.loveisrespect.org/get-help/get-help
866-331-9474
- New Choices, Inc.: Breaking the Cycle
www.newchoicesinc.org
- *The Professional School Counselor and the Promotion of Safe Schools through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/Harassment Prevention*
American School Counselor Association
www.schoolcounselor.org/files/PS_Bullying.pdf
- *Relational Aggression in Schools: Information for Educators*
National Association of School Psychologists
www.nasponline.org/resources/bullying/Relational_Aggression.pdf
- Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships
www.startstrongteens.org
- Teen Dating Violence
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html
- Teen Dating Violence: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention & Treatment Board
www.michigan.gov/datingviolence
- Teen Dating Violence Resources
www.teendvmonth.org/dating-violence-resources
- Web of Friends: Linking Teens Experiencing Abuse to Help and Hope
www.weboffriends.org/index.html
- *Youth and Child Advocate and Educator Manual of Activities and Exercises for Children and Youth*
Youth and Child Advocates and Youth Educators of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
www.vtnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Youth-Advocate-and-Educator-Activity-Manual.pdf



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Preventing, Assessing, and Intervening in Teen Dating Abuse

A Training for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

Handout 17

Understanding Teen Dating Violence: Fact Sheet 2012

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

- www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention
- P: 1-800-CDC-INFO
- E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Dating violence is a type of intimate partner violence. It occurs between two people in a close relationship. The nature of dating violence can be physical, emotional, sexual, or stalking.

- **Physical**—This occurs when a partner is pinched, hit, shoved, or kicked.
- **Emotional**—This means threatening a partner or harming his or her sense of self-worth. Examples include name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping him/her away from friends and family.
- **Sexual**—This is forcing a partner to engage in a sex act when he or she does not or cannot consent.
- **Stalking**—This refers to a pattern of harassing or threatening tactics used by a perpetrator that is both unwanted and causes fear in the victim.

Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Dating violence often starts with teasing and name calling. These behaviors are often thought to be a “normal” part of a relationship. But these behaviors can lead to more serious violence like physical assault and rape.

Why is dating violence a public health problem?

Dating violence is a serious problem in the United States. Many teens do not report it because they are afraid to tell friends and family.

- Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 22.4% of women and 15.0% of men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.¹
- About 10% of students nationwide report being physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months.²

How does dating violence affect health?

Dating violence can have a negative effect on health throughout life. Teens who are victims are more likely to be depressed and do poorly in school.³ They may engage in unhealthy behaviors, like using drugs and alcohol and are more likely to have eating disorders.⁴ Some teens even think about or attempt suicide.⁵ Teens who are victims in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.⁶

Who is at risk for dating violence?

Studies show that people who harm their dating partners are more depressed and are more aggressive than [their] peers. Other factors that increase risk for harming a dating partner include:⁷

- Trauma symptoms
- Alcohol use
- Having a friend involved in dating violence
- Having problem behaviors in other areas
- Belief that dating violence is acceptable
- Exposure to harsh parenting
- Exposure to inconsistent discipline
- Lack of parental supervision, monitoring, and warmth

How can we prevent dating violence?

The ultimate goal is to stop dating violence before it starts. Strategies that promote healthy relationships are vital. During the preteen and teen years, young people are learning skills they need to form positive relationships with others. This is an ideal time to promote healthy relationships and prevent patterns of dating violence that can last into adulthood.

Prevention programs change the attitudes and behaviors linked with dating violence. One example is Safe Dates, a school-based program that is designed to change social norms and improve problem-solving skills.

How does CDC approach prevention?

CDC uses a four-step approach to address public health problems like dating violence.

Step 1: Define the problem.

Before we can prevent dating violence, we need to know how big the problem is, where it is, and who it affects. CDC learns about a problem by gathering and studying data. These data are critical because they help decision makers send resources where they are needed most.

Step 2: Identify risk and protective factors.

It is not enough to know that dating violence is affecting a certain group of people in a certain area. We also need to know why. CDC conducts and supports research to answer this question. We can then develop programs to reduce or get rid of risk factors.

Step 3: Develop and test prevention strategies.

Using information gathered in research, CDC develops and evaluates strategies to prevent violence.

Step 4: Ensure widespread adoption.

In this final step, CDC shares the best prevention strategies. CDC may also provide funding or technical help so communities can adopt these strategies.

For a list of CDC activities, see www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/ipv_sv_guide.html.

Where can I learn more?

- CDC's Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters
- National Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474 or text 77054
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org
- Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention
www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters

References

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- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance—United States, 2009. *MMWR* 2010;59(No. SS-5).
- ³ Banyard VL & Cross C. Consequences of teen dating violence: Understanding intervening variables in ecological context. *Violence Against Women*. 2008;14(9):998-1013.
- ⁴ Ackard DM & Neumark-Sztainer D. Date violence and date rape among adolescents: Associations with disordered eating behaviors and psychological health. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 2002;26:455-473.
- ⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students—United States, 2003. *MMWR* 2006;55:532-535.
- ⁶ Smith PH, White JW, Holland LJ. A longitudinal perspective on dating violence among adolescent and college-age women. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2003;93(7):1104-9.
- ⁷ Foshee VA, & Matthew RA. (2007). Adolescent dating abuse perpetration: A review of findings, methodological limitations, and suggestions for future research. In DJ Flannery, AT Vazjoni, & ID Waldman (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Violence Behavior and Aggression* (pp. 431-449). New York: Cambridge.

Understanding Teen Dating Violence: Fact Sheet 2012
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/TeenDatingViolence2012-a.pdf>



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Handout **18**

Workshop Evaluation

1. What are three characteristics of healthy teenage relationships?

2. What are three characteristics of teenage dating abuse?

3. What is one reason why an abused student might not seek help, and what is one effective way you can respond to that student?

4. What might be a typical component of a school policy on dating abuse?

5. What are three groups in the school community that might help establish positive norms about dating abuse?

6. What is one criterion of an effective resource addressing teenage dating abuse?

7. What are three groups in schools that might need special attention for the prevention of dating abuse?

8. Please rate the extent to which you think you increased your knowledge in the following areas:

	None			A Lot
The extent of the problem of teenage dating abuse	1	2	3	4
Ways to assess teenage dating abuse	1	2	3	4
Strategies to intervene with students at risk	1	2	3	4
Ideas for establishing appropriate policies	1	2	3	4
Ideas for promoting positive norms	1	2	3	4
Ideas for identifying effective resources	1	2	3	4

9. What were the most valuable parts of the training? Why?

10. What would you change about the training? Why?

11. Other comments:

12. Please rate the training:

Terrible				Great
1	2	3	4	

Thank you! Please return your completed form to the trainer.