DATING VIOLENCE AND YOUTH: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Wayland High School
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Adolescence and Relationships

- Core developmental tasks
- Impact of evolution
- Relationships, risk and reward
Prevalence

- 1 in 10 youth have experienced physical or sexual dating abused
  - 1 in 6 girls, 1 in 25 boys
- 1 in 3 LGBT youth have experienced dating abuse
- 1 in 2 youths have experienced controlling behavior
  - 1 in 4 experienced these behaviors through technology
- 4 out of 5 teens know someone who has been a victim of controlling behaviors from a boyfriend or girlfriend
- 2 in 3 know someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- 1 in 3 know someone who has been verbally abused
Only 1 in 3 teens experiencing dating violence reported the abuse anywhere.

When they did report:
- 4 out of 5 teens who have been in an abusive relationship have turned to a friend for help.
- 1 in 3 teens turned to their parents for resources and support.
2 out of 3 parents report talking about dating abuse with their teen.

3 out of 4 parents say they have had a conversation about healthy relationships with their teen.

- 3 out of 4 boys & 2 out of 3 girls say they have not have a conversation with a parent about dating abuse in the last year.
Education

- Only 1 in 4 high school students receive education around dating violence prevention and healthy relationships in school.
- Of students who received these classes:
  - 3 out of 4 say they learned about the signs of an abusive relationship in class and now feel confident that they would be able to judge whether a relationship is abusive.
  - 2 out of 3 found the classes helpful in learning about appropriate dating and relationship behavior.
Defining dating

- How do youth define relationships?
  - Language
  - Behavior
Sociological Definition

pattern of behavior one person uses to gain and maintain power and control over their partner
Scenarios

- Does this scenario describe dating abuse?
- Who is being abusive? How?
- What are the consequences of any abusive behavior described in the scenario?
Challenges teens face:

- Peer pressure to create & maintain relationships
- Inexperience defining relationships & boundaries
- Limited social mobility
- Limited economic independence
- Belief that the abuse is their fault/their problem to solve
- Family expectations around dating
- Dissonance in relationships with adults- isolation
Scenario

- Put yourself in the narrator’s head.
- Would you be leaving? Staying?
- At what point are you seeing these behaviors as concerning?
- At what point are you asking for support?
How does violence begin?

Incident

Hearts & Flowers

Remorse

Incident

Tension building

Same Old Stuff
Why Teens Aren’t Talking:

- Normalization of the relationship or behaviors by peers
- Do not identify as victims
- Fear of punishment
  - Abuser-driven
  - Parent or Authority-driven
- Embarrassment
- Isolation and hopelessness
- Fear of being “talked at” instead of “talked to”
- Never have before…
Best Practices

- Consistent messaging
- Over time
- Dialogue
- Experiential
- Engages both parents and youth
- Values-based
- Encourages knowledge and skills development
- Encourages collaborative decision-making
Scenarios

☐ As an adult, how would you want to advise the youth in this situation?
☐ What fears, reservations, concerns would you have?
☐ What do you think needs to come out of the conversation?
☐ Knowing all of this, how would you engage in this conversation?
Questions to Ask

- What are your friends’ relationships like?
- Have you ever seen abusive behavior in friends’ relationships?
- Why might someone be abusive to another person?
- Why do you think someone might stay in an abusive relationship?
- What might you say to a friend who is being abused or is being abusive?
- How is your relationship going?
- Where can you/a friend go if you need resources?
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