



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AMONG SCHOOL-AGED YOUTHS WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

1. COMMUNICATE THE ISSUE

Raise awareness about the problem of gender-based violence by developing an information campaign for students, faculty, and parents.

Helpful Hints and Resources:

- Understanding Teen Dating Violence is a basic fact sheet by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that outlines the behaviors and risks associated with teen dating violence, and the preventative measures that communities can take:
www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/TeenDatingViolence2012-a.pdf.
- Dating Matters is a free, online course that is available to educators, school personnel, and others working to improve the health of teens. Dating Matters helps educators identify the risk factors and warning signs of dating violence. Educators receive continuing education units (CEUs) for completing this 60-minute training developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters/.
- The video Break the Silence: Stop the Violence shows parents talking with teens about developing healthy, respectful relationships before they start dating:
www.cdc.gov/CDCTV/BreakTheSilence/index.html.

2. EDUCATE STUDENTS AND STAFF¹

Provide training to students and staff on the behaviors of victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence, how to respond when incidents occur, and the resources that are available for those who have been victimized. Consider how such training can be integrated into the schools' broader efforts to create a positive school climate, and delivered as part of a multitiered framework² for supporting positive student behavior.

Helpful Hints and Resources:

- Get Smart, Get Help, Get Safe is a free "train the trainer" module designed to help school counselors and school psychologists prevent teen dating violence in schools:
<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/index.php?id=1511>.
- See the Department of Education's fact sheet, Human Trafficking of Children in the United States: A Fact Sheet for Schools, for resources on preventing commercial sexual exploitation of children:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/tipfactsheet1813.pdf>.
- Consider implementing an evidence-based curriculum focused on healthy relationship promotion and gender-based violence prevention. You can learn more about various curricula by reviewing a PowerPoint presentation given by the Department of Education in 2010:
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/dypwebinar.pdf.

¹ Research shows that interventions intended to reduce bullying may be inadequate or inappropriate to fully address gender-based violence. For that reason, educators and school administrators should learn more about gender-based violence, and how to respond appropriately, in order to ensure that the school community is working effectively to safeguard students. (Gruber, J.E., & Fineran, S. 2008. Comparing the impact of bullying and sexual harassment victimization on the mental and physical health of adolescents. *Sex Roles* 59: 1-13.)

² For Federal assistance regarding multitiered behavioral supports, please see the Office of Special Education Programs' Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org) and the National Center on Response to Intervention (www.rti4success.org/).

3. REVIEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Review current school policies and procedures governing student and faculty behavior – particularly protocols for intervention, reporting, and providing victim assistance – to ensure that they specifically address sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence.

Helpful Hints and Resources:

- *Review school policies and procedures for compliance with existing State and local laws and policies and Title IX grievance procedure requirements. As part of a district's obligation under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972³ to address discrimination based on sex, including sexually harassing conduct that interferes with or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's education programs and activities, districts are required to adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of sex discrimination complaints.⁴ For more information, see the Department of Education's Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence (April 4, 2011) at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html>.*
- *See the Model Campus Stalking Policy by the Stalking Resource Center for assistance on how to ensure that school policies and procedures clearly define gender-based violence behaviors, clarify jurisdiction and report procedures, and provide for victim supports: www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/src/model-campus-stalking-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=2.*
- *In reviewing policies and procedures regarding school response to incidents of gender-based violence, schools should aim to reestablish a safe and equitable learning environment for all students, including both victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence, whenever possible.*

4. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Build relationships with community groups and organizations that provide services to victims of gender-based violence to increase awareness of community supports and resources available for students and educators. Local law enforcement and staff from organizations established to assist victims of gender-based crimes are excellent resources and are available in many communities.

Additional Resources:

Information on gender-based violence can be found at the following technical assistance center Web sites and other federally supported Web sites:

- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
www.ed.gov/ocr/prevention.html
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women
www.ovw.usdoj.gov
- U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
www.state.gov/j/tip/
- 1is2Many
www.whitehouse.gov/1is2many
- Break the Cycle
www.breakthecycle.org/
- Findyouthinfo
<http://findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/teen-dating-violence>

³ 20 U.S.C. § 1681-88.

⁴ 34 C.F.R. § 106.8(b).

- Futures Without Violence
www.futureswithoutviolence.org/
- Idaho Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence's Center for Healthy Teen Relationships
<http://idvsa.org/>
- Men Can Stop Rape
www.mencanstoprape.org/
- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org
- Office of Special Education Programs' Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
www.pbis.org
- PreventConnect
<http://preventconnect.org>
- Stalking Resource Center
www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center
- Stopbullying
www.stopbullying.gov
- Womenshealth
www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women/index.html

Sample Definitions of Behaviors and Activities Commonly Associated with Gender-Based Violence

Stalking: Stalking can be defined as a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Stalking is commonly understood to include:

- Repeated, unwanted, intrusive, and frightening communications from the perpetrator by phone, mail, and/or e-mail.
- Repeatedly leaving or sending the victim unwanted items, presents, or flowers.
- Following or lying in wait for the victim at places such as home, school, work, or recreation place.
- Making direct or indirect threats to harm the victim or the victim's children, relatives, friends, or pets.
- Damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property.
- Harassing the victim through the Internet.
- Posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the Internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.
- Obtaining personal information about the victim by accessing public records, using Internet search services, hiring private investigators, going through the victim's garbage, following the victim, contacting the victim's friends, family, coworkers, or neighbors, etc.⁵

Sexual Assault: Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Sexual assault includes such sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.⁶

⁵ Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. 2012. www.ovw.usdoj.gov/aboutstalking.htm.

⁶ Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. 2012. www.ovw.usdoj.gov/sexassault.htm.

Intimate Partner Violence or Teen Dating Violence: Teen dating violence — also called intimate relationship violence or intimate partner violence among adolescents or adolescent relationship abuse — includes physical, psychological, or sexual abuse; harassment; or stalking of any person ages 12 to 18 in the context of a past or present romantic or consensual relationship.⁷

Human Trafficking: Human trafficking is a crime involving the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.⁸ Where a person younger than 18 is induced to perform a commercial sex act, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion.⁹

⁷ National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. 2011. www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/teen-dating-violence/welcome.htm.

⁸ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State. 2013. www.state.gov/j/tip/id/domestic/index.htm.

⁹ U.S.C. §7102(8) defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as: “(A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or (B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”

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