
TEEN DATING VIOLENCE TASK FORCE



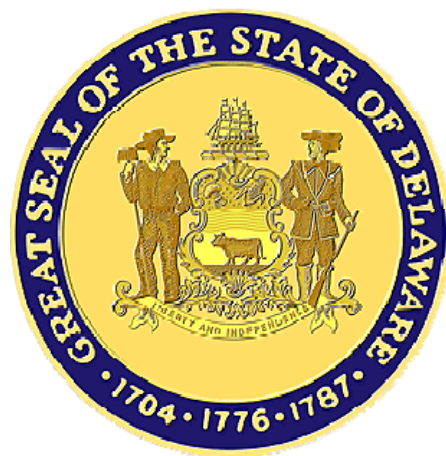
Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 (SCR 21) Task Force Report and Recommendations

To:

**Honorable Jack A. Markell
Governor, State of Delaware**

**Dr. Lillian Lowery
Secretary, Department of Education**

Members, General Assembly



May 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 (SCR 21)

In June 2009, Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 (SCR 21) was passed by the members of the Delaware General Assembly to establish a Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Task Force (Appendix A1-pg. 20). This Task Force was asked to submit teen dating violence policy recommendations for schools. A written report with the recommendations is to be given to the Governor, the Secretary of the Department of Education, and to members of the General Assembly by May 1, 2010.

Chaired by Senator Liane Sorenson with staff provided by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, the TDV Task Force and Community Partners (Appendix A2-pg 22; A3-pg 24) began meeting in August 2009. At this meeting, members developed the following definition of dating violence:

Dating violence shall be defined as a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors that one person uses against another in order to gain or maintain power in a current or past relationship. The abuser intentionally behaves in ways that can cause fear, degradation, humiliation, injury or harm or uses any other coercive behaviors to control the other person. Abuse can occur in both heterosexual and same-sex or serious and casual relationships and covers a wide range of behaviors that includes harassment, verbal, emotional and economic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and physical abuse.

To help develop the recommendations, three Working Groups were established: Teen Focus Groups; Curriculum; and Policies and Procedures for Schools. Members voted that recommendations should be implemented by all middle and high schools in the State of Delaware.

Task Force members and Working Groups met over a nine month period. During this time, teens were interviewed, state and national policies and initiatives were reviewed, and national literature was researched to understand the scope of teen dating violence.

In the course of researching national initiatives, the Task Force found that in 2009 and 2010, twenty-two (22) states introduced or enacted legislation that directs their Department of Education to implement policies for reporting and responding to dating violence and/or required schools to provide dating violence education (Appendix A9-pg 37).

IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

According to Kiersten Stewart, Family Violence Prevention Fund, Director of Public Policy, “Dating violence affects every school and every community. We urgently need, and our youth deserve, a comprehensive prevention response from schools, parents, teens themselves, and the government.”

**“It’s a problem...it can be stopped...
it’s just not a priority to some people
...it has got to be stopped.” Delaware Teen**

Approximately 43% of teen dating violence victims reported that the dating abuse they experienced occurred in a school building or on school grounds.¹

The 2009 High School Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Appendix A9-pg 37) indicates the following:

Eight percent of females and 9% of males reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months and 16% of females and 9% of males reported being victims of dating-related emotional violence.

Among females, 14% reported having been forced to have sexual intercourse, while 6% of males reported having been forced.

Violence is even more pronounced among sexual minority youth, where 28% of homosexual and 19% of bisexual youth report physical dating-related violence, 23% of homosexuals and bisexuals report emotional dating-related violence, and 33% of homosexuals and 35% of bisexual students report being forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.

Rates are also higher among students reporting disabilities.

Minority students are more likely to report physical violence and forced sex, but not emotional violence.

Students in Delaware who report being victims of dating-related violence are 50% more likely to be current drinkers and twice as likely to be binge drinkers.

¹ C. Molider, and R.M. Tolman. (1998). “Adolescent Dating Violence Victimization and Psychological Well-Being”: Journal of Adolescent Research, Vol. 18, No. 6, 664-681 (2003).

They are also twice as likely to use marijuana and illicit prescription painkillers.

Students who are emotionally abused are three (3) times more likely to report having attempted suicide in the past year, while those who report physical dating abuse are four (4) times more likely, and those who have been forced to have sexual intercourse are more than six (6) times as likely to have attempted suicide.

“After a while they end up believing the bad stuff people tell them.”

Delaware Teen

Dating violence involves a pattern of coercive, manipulative behavior that one teen uses against the other for the purpose of establishing and maintaining power and control. Teens, like adults, use power and control in their abusive relationships to guarantee influence over another.

“They tell you what you can and can’t do, what to wear...who to talk to...always wondering what you are thinking...” Delaware Teen

Teens are unlikely to report dating violence. The majority of teen dating violence victims in one major study told no one about their victimization. Only 22% told someone – always a peer – and less than 5% told a parent.

“Most teens don’t want to talk about it... I wouldn’t if it happened to me.”

Delaware Teen

The reasons that teens are reluctant to report dating violence vary considerably. They may fear that:

- No one will believe them;
- The person who has hurt them (or their friends) may retaliate;
- What they report may not be kept confidential;
- Parents, in an effort to protect, may restrict their activity.

Although most teen dating violence is perpetrated against girls in heterosexual relationships, reflecting key societal gender and power disparities, teen dating violence also occurs in gay/bisexual/transgender relationships.

Teen dating violence occurs in all socioeconomic and cultural groups but is most common among teens that are disadvantaged, vulnerable, or disenfranchised.

Teen dating violence is a threat to school safety and undermines our schools' capacity to accomplish their core mission, academic achievement. Violence in a student's relationship stifles the ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Academic success may not be achieved unless students have the ability to empathize with others, learn how to negotiate, and understand the consequences of their actions.

“They are struggling with things that go wrong in their life and just don’t know who to take it out on.” Delaware Teen

Ignoring teen dating violence may result in liability issues for schools. Based on Title IX, the Supreme Court held that a student subjected to sexual harassment by another student has a private cause of action for money damages against the school. Davis v. Monroe County Bd. of Ed., 526 U.S. 629 (1999). In Davis, the Court held that the school may be liable if it was “deliberately indifferent” and the harassment was severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive.

Unfortunately, there have been several murders of teens by their abusive partners on school campuses. On March 27, 2003, 15 year-old Ortralla Mosley broke up with her 16 year-old boyfriend Marcus McTear, both sophomores at Reagan High School in Austin Texas. The next day, as school let out, Marcus found Ortralla in a hallway and stabbed her to death with a butcher knife. Ortralla Mosley's family filed a lawsuit against the school claiming that school officials knew about Marcus' controlling and abusive tendencies toward Ortralla and did not have a policy to address her safety and his behavior. The Austin Independent School District negotiated a settlement for \$200,000.



WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Teen Focus Working Group:

The Teen Dating Violence Task Force recognized the need to incorporate the voice of teens to help guide the recommendations.

In order to hear the voice of teens, The Teen Focus Working Group was established.

The Teen Focus Working Group, Co-Chaired by Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Dawn Schatz, MSW, Dr. Judith Herrman, and Patricia Dailey Lewis, Deputy Attorney General, developed a survey tool to explore teens' attitudes and beliefs about healthy and unhealthy relationships and to identify consistently stated themes, surprises, and confirmations about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

In order to ensure ideas that were grounded in the perceptions of teens and that our recommendations were informed by key stakeholders, we conducted youth focus groups throughout the State of Delaware. The eight focus groups with 58 teens were conducted in each of the three counties at schools, community groups, and in service settings. Groups of young men and women from ages 14-18 from a variety of ethnic/racial groups and communities were asked about their thoughts on teen dating violence (TDV), the realities of TDV in Delaware, and perceptions about dealing with TDV in their worlds.

The forty-two pages of narrative notes were sifted through for emerging, prevalent themes and dimensions. The teens shared insightful perceptions, some confirming the thoughts of the Task Force and others reflected true surprises. The six predominant themes that "rose to the top" include:

- From youth the perspective, teen dating violence (TDV) is a problem.
- TDV has varied faces.
- Teens have mixed feelings about who can help in cases of TDV.
- People abuse others for a variety of reasons.
- People stay with those who abuse them for a variety of reasons.
- Teens have ideas about what they need to prevent and deal with TDV.

The themes, and example quotes, are found in the (Appendix A6-pg 27; A7-pg 28). Other quotes are found throughout this report. These powerful thoughts provide a window into the minds of Delaware teens and can help us explore preventative solutions and deal with the issues right here in Delaware! We thank the teens who shared their thoughts with us!

Questions used for the Focus Groups (Appendix A5-pg 26) were compiled through a collaborative effort of Working Group members. Dr. Judith W. Herrman, R.N., Coordinator of the Undergraduate Program School of Nursing, University of Delaware, was instrumental in coordinating the efforts of the focus group activities.

Rationale:

- To explore students' perceptions of dating, antecedent events that lead to dating violence, and ways adults can help students refrain from involvement in dating aggression.
- To explore how students' perceptions of dating differ from adults' perceptions.
- Adults are unaware of the extent of their influence in helping students desist from dating violence.
- Young people are rarely asked to describe their own thoughts and beliefs.

Curriculum Working Group:

The Teen Dating Violence Task Force supports middle and high schools to utilize strategies and curricula that focus on teaching teens the skills to promote healthy relationships. The foundation of teen dating violence education should be on primary prevention.

To give guidance to schools about teen dating education, a Curriculum Working Group was established.

The Curriculum Working Group, Co-Chaired by Jennifer Penzoza, MSW, and Dr. Jacqueline Christman, identified that schools should emphasize the importance of healthy relationships by focusing on primary prevention to help teach teens make sound personal decisions, and build relationship skills where a culture of respect becomes the norm.

Primary prevention is an active assertive process on creating community conditions where healthy relationships thrive. This process works to mobilize people and groups to challenge damaging norms and replace them with attitudes and beliefs that lead to community health and wellness.

“Need to know what is a healthy relationship...need to have trust, equality...communication...sincerity.”
Delaware Teen

Rationale:

Research has shown that effective dating violence programs incorporate a variety of knowledge, attitude, and skill-building objectives in order to reduce violence in teen dating relationships and to promote healthy, respectful communication in all relationships.

The benefits of integrating a healthy relationship curriculum into the school’s health education program are to:

- End teen dating violence through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and changes in attitudes;
- Reinforce that what students learn is personally meaningful;
- Increase the likelihood that teens will not experience dating violence, both in childhood and later in life;
- Improve social and emotional competencies;
- Create a positive school climate;
- Provide/support a safe, civil learning environment.

Policies and Procedures Working Group:

The Teen Dating Violence Task Force recognized that if students have information about healthy relationships, they may be more likely to report to school officials when their relationship is unhealthy and possibly violent.

To help schools develop model policies and procedures when teens report dating violence, a Policies and Procedures Working Group was established.

The Policies and Procedures Working Group, Chaired by LeVerta Bradford, MHR, identified that schools should have written policies in place that are clear to students, parents, and school staff when a student reports acts of dating violence to school staff.

Also, because teens are more likely to trust and confide in other teens, schools should develop procedures to establish Teen Peer Groups. Peer groups can help to reinforce new behaviors that promote healthy relationships and assist teens when they report dating violence.

**“Peers and friends have a high impact...you listen to them...respect their opinion...and believe them.”
Delaware Teen**

Rationale:

School teen dating violence policies and procedures help to ensure a safe learning environment.

These policies should identify:

- Negative behaviors associated with teen dating violence;
- Appropriate response to identified behaviors;
- Protocol implementation where a Protection From Abuse Order exists;
- Creating adult supervised Teen Peer Groups with a strong emphasis on recruiting male adults and male students;
- Strategies for students’ safety.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The members of the Task Force believe that middle and high schools across the State should develop a standard framework of intervention and policies in order to address teen dating violence.

The following recommendations provide a foundation upon which to build on this framework:

Policy Development, Monitoring, and Enforcement

- A Teen Dating Violence Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Committee should be established by the Governor and/or by the General Assembly through legislation to implement the recommendations set forth by the Teen Dating Violence Task Force. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee develop a model policy to share with schools.

Without oversight and guidance, these recommendations are likely to have a limited impact.

This Advisory Committee should include, but not be limited to, teens, community members with knowledge of teen dating violence, representatives from programs that provide services to teens, members from the Governor's Office, the Department of Education, Family Court, school district administrators, the State Board of Education, legislators, ContactLifeline, the DE Victim Rights' Task Force, the Domestic Violence Task Force, the Delaware Office of Women's Health, Division of Public Health, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, the Division of Family Services, and the Department of Justice.

- A referral should be made to the Delaware Abuse Intervention Consortium of the Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC) to determine how Delaware Child Abuse reporting laws impact:
 - Teens that experience teen dating violence (including sexual assault);
 - Department of Justice;
 - Division of Family Services;
 - Department of Education;
 - School policies.

Upon review, the Teen Dating Violence Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Committee will develop a model school policy incorporating CPAC recommendations.

**“We need information about laws about
age of consent for sex and about crimes.”
Delaware Teen**

**“All forms...verbal, physical, mental, and
sexual...it can all really mess somebody up.”
Delaware Teen**

- Schools should identify “Front Line Responders” and professionals in the community with the expertise to develop case sensitive strategies and guidance.
- Schools should foster a violence-free climate by helping to develop (with student input) and oversee Teen Peer Groups. Teen Peer Groups can provide a forum to promote positive messages and to help other teens who experience dating

violence. Special consideration should be given to recruit adult male teachers and teen males in order to enhance positive role models.

**“Need to know how to tell if you are abusive
and how to get help.”
Delaware Teen**

- The Department of Education should enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Justice, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council to receive training on both the substantive and procedural aspects of Delaware’s Protection From Abuse (PFA) law.
- School administrators or designated staff should develop a teen victim safety plan with teens that does not impose restrictive conditions to be met by the victim in order to receive services (e.g., counseling, seeking a Protection From Abuse Order, etc.).
- Middle and high schools should implement policies and procedures that define dating violence (including sexual abuse in dating relationships), identify associated negative behaviors, reporting procedures, actions to be taken in response to these behaviors (including how to respond when victims and perpetrators attend the same campus), and include school and community resources for both the teen victim and teen offender. Schools should submit these policies and procedures to the Department of Education.

**“Need to learn the warning signs and to act on the
warning signs, need to know what dating violence is,
and how to make and use safety plans.”
Delaware Teen**

- Schools should ensure that reporting processes and initiatives are in place so that students feel safe to report dating violence and sexual assault without reprisal.
- The Student Code of Conduct should include the definition of Teen Dating Violence, the behavior associated with teen dating violence, consequences for those who engage in this behavior, and the schools commitment to student safety.

**“Parents are role models...
they should know this is a problem.”
Delaware Teen**

- Schools should have a thorough and consistent process in place for:
 - Investigating all incidents;
 - Identifying intervention strategies and discipline procedures;
 - Handling Orders of Protection From Abuse (PFA);
 - Identifying those who are responsible for implementing the procedures;
 - Providing safety for those who report and/or experience dating abuse;
 - Documenting complaints and tracking compliance;
 - Documenting TDV requirements monitoring process in School Climate protocols;
 - Responding to TDV (School Crisis Intervention Plan);
 - Listing resources that students and staff can refer to, including the identification of teen peer groups and trained teen mentors; and
 - Implementing youth-led campaigns/programs to prevent TDV.

Prevention and Intervention

- The Department of Education should ensure the inclusion of an interpersonal violence prevention program within the scope and sequence of a comprehensive health education curriculum.
- Schools districts, Department of Education, and the Division of Public Health should partner with community organizations that promote health, safety, and public health-oriented violence prevention strategies.
- Communities/programs that provide child(ren)-centered services should adopt age appropriate messages that promote healthy and respectful relationships throughout their program structure.
- Schools should focus their teen dating violence curriculum on primary prevention.

**“Start talking about healthy
relationships...
we don’t learn this in school.”
Delaware Teen**

- Collaboration on curriculum planning for Teen Dating Violence should occur among at least representatives of the following: Department of Education, each school district, and professionals in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault. Additional representatives from other local community-based organizations should also be considered as part of the collaboration for both input and use of prevention education within an educational setting.
- Every curriculum, at a minimum, should include the following “best practice” components:
 - Power and control in relationships;
 - Gender stereotypes and expectations;
 - Media literacy;
 - Effective communication skills to promote healthy behaviors such as boundary setting and maintenance; and
 - Taking an active role in promoting a respectful environment.
- All schools at all levels should have a portion of their pre-K, elementary, middle and high school curriculum devoted to healthy relationships.

**“You have got to start young...
talk about relationships and respect.”
Delaware Teen**

- Schools should foster a violence-free climate for all abuse (bullying, teen dating and sexual abuse) and convey and reinforce positive messages to address cyclical, subculture messages that promote or normalize violence.

Data Collection

- The Department of Education in partnership with the University of Delaware, Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, should monitor trends in self-reported teen dating violence to determine programmatic needs and evaluate outcomes.
- The Department of Education should establish protocols for reporting incidents of teen dating violence in schools as part of the comprehensive data reporting requirements.

Training

- In collaboration with State and community partners, schools should implement professional development training for teachers and school staff relating to teen dating violence (warning signs and response) and healthy relationships.
- In collaboration with State and community partners, schools should provide professional development to middle and high schools in teaching the model healthy relationships curriculum unit of instruction and track implementation.
- “Front Line Responders” and other school personnel should receive training on school policies and procedures that address all aspects of teen dating violence, including reporting responsibilities, investigation and parental notification, handling of Protection From Abuse Orders, victim safety plans, and handling responses to the teen offender.
- Students who sit on Teen Peer Groups should receive training on dating violence, how to help teens, community resources, school policies, and promoting positive relationship messages within the schools.

**“Need to know how to explain
thoughts and feelings
...how to respond to people.”
Delaware Teen**

CURRENT STATE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INITIATIVES

State and community organizations have begun to respond to the challenge of addressing teen dating violence in Delaware. Many of the Teen Dating Violence Task Force recommendations will complement and build on these existing initiatives.

Project P.R.I.D.E (Promoting Respect in Dating Experiences)

Project P.R.I.D.E., developed in 1999 by CHILD, Inc., is a dating violence intervention program for adolescents and young adults in New Castle County. Project P.R.I.D.E. strives to help young people stop and prevent future abuse in their dating relationships. Services include: Individual counseling with young women and men who have been/are in an abusive relationship as well as interactive, educational presentations for young people in schools and the community about the issue of abuse in dating relationships.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Since 2006, the Governor of the State of Delaware signed a Proclamation and Delaware's General Assembly passed a Resolution that declared February as Delaware's Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.

During this month teens have participated in projects to promote awareness about teen dating violence.

Expansion of the Protection From Abuse Petition to Include Dating Relationships

In 2007, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Legislative Subcommittee drafted legislation to amend the definition of parties considered protected under the State's Protection From Abuse statute. This change allows individuals (including minors) who are in substantive dating relationships to petition Family Court for relief. Parents or guardians petition the Court for relief on behalf of their minor child.

Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders usually include a no contact provision between the Petitioner and the Respondent. The civil orders may also require the Respondent to attend domestic violence intervention, substance abuse counseling, and/or other relief to help prevent future violence.

School Wellness Centers

In 2007, School Wellness Centers throughout the State received Teen Dating Violence Toolboxes with information and materials about dating violence for teens and their parents that include safety plans and resources.

CURRENT STATE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INITIATIVES (Cont'd)



Adolescent Dating Abuse Intervention Standards

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, (DVCC) voted to approve the Adolescent Dating Abuse Intervention Standards, developed by an Ad Hoc Committee of the DVCC Treatment Subcommittee. The Intervention Standards were developed to promote best practices and consistency of intervention for programs working with adolescent offenders. The Dating Abuse Standards are based on the principle that successful intervention requires individuals to assume responsibility for their abusive behavior. The programs will emphasize the successful acquisition of skills to support healthy, safe, non-abusive relationships.

The Department of Education

The Department of Education promotes the implementation of a comprehensive school health education program in all public schools. Each district and charter school is required to submit a description of their curriculum and submit evidence of instruction

CURRENT STATE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INITIATIVES (Cont'd)

based on State Health Education Standards. On December 9, 2009, Dr. Lillian M. Lowery, Secretary of Education, and the State Board of Education endorsed the inclusion of “interpersonal violence prevention” as a “necessary component” of the district and charter school health education program.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and Delaware School Survey Data

Through a cooperative agreement between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Education, a surveillance system has been established to monitor a wide range of priority health risk behaviors among Delaware youth and youth in the nation. The instrument, called the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), is conducted biennially among representative samples of 9th through 12th grade students in Delaware by the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware.

This data can be used to determine how risk behaviors change over time among students nationwide. In addition, this information is used to guide public policy and develop educational programs to address the health risk and promote healthy outcomes among youth. Survey findings are posted on the Delaware Data website at <http://www.edel.edu/delawaredata/>.

This report includes injury and violence-related behaviors (e.g., seat belt use, weapon carrying, physical fighting, interpersonal violence – including sexual abuse, attempted suicide), tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, dietary behaviors, physical activity behaviors, obesity, and asthma.

DELTA Program

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to participate in the national Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements Through Leadership and Alliances Program (DELTA).

Through these efforts, students and faculty at local schools and adjudicated youth and staff at youth rehabilitative facilities across the State began receiving the DELTA *Developing Healthy Relationships* curriculum and participating in complimentary primary prevention activities.

In 2009, representatives from the Department of Education, DCADV’s State prevention team, and local DELTA coordinators began work to adapt the DELTA *Developing Healthy Relationships* curriculum into a recommended unit of instruction to be made available to Delaware’s Public School Health Instructors for Statewide implementation into their annual health curriculum.

CURRENT STATE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INITIATIVES (Cont'd)

With continued CDC DELTA funding, plans are underway to conduct teacher training to implement the *Developing Healthy Relationships* primary prevention curriculum in their unit of instruction, collect evaluation data, develop a complementary middle school curriculum, and provide further resources and support to schools.

A Delaware-specific website has been developed to promote healthy relationships, www.safeandrespectful.org, with pages for teens, parents, and teachers.

ENOUGH Teen Dating Violence Program

In 2008, YWCA Delaware introduced their statewide ENOUGH Teen Dating Violence Program to students in 7th – 12th grade. The ENOUGH program addresses healthy and unhealthy relationships and includes a discussion on gender stereotypes and boundaries. Teens learn how to be safe and free from abuse so that they are in control of their lives.

Nine schools have participated in the program: Woodbridge High School, Cape Henlopen High School, Sussex Tech High School, Sussex Central High School, Lake Forest High School, Dover High School, Glasgow High School, Mariner Middle School, and Georgetown Middle School.

Teens from the Aquila Treatment Center and Juvenile Probation and Parole have also taken part in the Program.

Safe Dates for Young Mothers

A recently awarded grant from the American Association of University Women will allow for the implementation of a teen dating violence prevention program for pregnant and parenting adolescents. The stresses associated with pregnancy during the teen years increases the risk of violence and unhealthy relationships. This program, planned and administered through the University of Delaware, trains nursing student peer leaders who will travel the State providing a prevention curriculum. The Delaware Girls Initiative and Delaware Adolescent Program, Incorporated, are partners in this important initiative.

CONCLUSION

The Teen Dating Violence Task Force supports middle and high schools to utilize strategies and curricula that focus on teaching teens the skills to promote healthy relationships. A healthy relationship curriculum will help teens make sound personal decisions and build relationship skills where a culture of respect becomes the norm.

Currently legal and educational systems have begun to address teen dating violence. Lawmakers and school officials must consider the pervasiveness and complexity of violence in teen relationships when drafting laws. Without adequate policy and procedures, both victims and perpetrators are likely to continue the cycle of violence...thus, compromising school and community safety.

Teens that have information about healthy relationships may be more likely to report to school officials when their relationship is unhealthy and possibly violent.

Therefore, schools should develop written teen dating violence policies and procedures that are clear to students, parents, and school staff.

Schools should also establish Teen Peer Groups to help reinforce new behaviors that promote healthy relationships and assist teens when they report dating violence.

The Task Force concluded that teen dating violence is a major public health and safety concern in the State of Delaware due to the detrimental effects of violence and the impact it has on young victims, offenders, their families, their schools, and their communities.

By providing the knowledge, systematic support, and positive culture through a healthy relationship curriculum and school policies, we empower teachers, parents, and students to act against dating violence (Appendix A4-pg 25).

While SCR 21 directed the Teen Dating Violence Task Force to make recommendations for schools, members concluded that violence in interpersonal relationships is everyone's concern. Although initiatives exist in Delaware to promote healthy relationships and deter teen dating violence, additional efforts are warranted. The percentages of teens that experience teen dating violence, and the powerful statements by teens themselves, validate continued attention to this important issue.

Therefore future initiatives should address engaging all segments of our community, including business, faith communities, media, youth programs, and governmental agencies (such as the Division of Public Health, Department of Justice, and Department of Education) to collaborate and coordinate efforts to promote healthy relationships.

Appendix A1

SPONSOR: Sen. Sorenson
Sens. Blevins, Bonini, Cloutier, Connor, Hall-Long,
Peterson, Sokola; Reps. Barbieri, Booth, Carey,
Cathcart, Hudson, Kovach, Lavelle, Lee, Manolakos, M.
Marshall, Ramone, D. Short, Thornburg

DELAWARE STATE SENATE 145th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 21

ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS OF POLICIES RELATING TO TEEN DATING VIOLENCE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, recent reports on dating violence note that one in three adolescent girls becomes a victim of interpersonal violence, and that girls exposed to physical dating violence also report greater exposure to other types of violence; and

WHEREAS, eighty-one percent (81%) of parents surveyed either believed dating violence is not a problem or admitted they did not know it is a problem; and

WHEREAS, violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications for victims, who are at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, suicide, and adult re-victimization; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence has become a prevalent problem in high schools, junior high schools and middle schools throughout our country; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Teen Dating Violence Task Force will benefit students, families, schools, and communities,

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 145th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Teen Dating Violence Task Force is hereby established.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall be composed of the following members;
One member of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore, who shall serve as the Chair;

One member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

One representative of the Department of Education, appointed by the Secretary;

One representative of the Delaware School Boards Association, appointed by the Association;

One representative of the Department of Justice, appointed by the Attorney General;

One representative of the Family Court, appointed by the Chief Judge;

One representative of School Resource Officers, appointed by the Superintendent of the Delaware State Police;

One representative of the Parent Teachers' Association, appointed by the organization;

One representative of the School Wellness Centers, appointed by the Director of Public Health;

One member of the DE Coalition Against Domestic Violence, appointed by the organization;

One member of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, appointed by the Chair;

One member of the Domestic Violence Task Force, appointed by the Chair;

One member of the Sexual Assault Network of Delaware, appointed by the organization;

One member of the Victims' Rights Task Force, appointed by the Chair; and

One Teen Dating Violence Counselor, appointed by the Teen Dating Violence Task Force Chair.

One faculty member of the University of Delaware, appointed by the Teen Dating Violence Task Force Chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the first meeting shall be held within 30 days following the date this Resolution is enacted and the Task Force shall submit a written report and recommendations to the Governor, the Secretary of the Department of Education and the General Assembly by May 1, 2010.

SYNOPSIS

This Resolution establishes a Teen Dating Violence Task Force to evaluate and make recommendations on policies for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Education in Delaware.

AUTHOR: Sen. Sorenson

Appendix A2

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 21 **TEEN DATING VIOLENCE TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Senator Liane Sorenson, Chair | Member of the Senate,
Appointed by the President Pro
Tempore |
| 2. | Representative Michael Barbieri | Member of the House of
Representatives, Appointed by the
Speaker of the House |
| 3. | Janet Arns Ray | Representative of the
Department of Education,
Appointed by the Secretary |
| 4. | No Representative* | Representative of the Delaware
School Boards Association,
Appointed by the Association |
| 5. | Patricia Dailey Lewis, DAG | Representative of the
Department of Justice, Appointed
by the Attorney General |
| 6. | Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn | Representative of the Family
Court, Appointed by the Chief
Judge |
| 7. | Sergeant David Weaver | Representative of School
Resource Officers, Appointed by the
Superintendent of the Delaware
State Police |
| 8. | No Representative* | Representative of the Parent
Teachers' Association, Appointed
by the Organization |
| 9. | Dr. Jacqueline Christman | Representative of the School
Wellness Centers, Appointed by the
Director of Public Health |

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE TASK FORCE MEMBERS (Cont'd)

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|--|
| 10. | Noel Duckworth | Member of the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Appointed by the Organization |
| 11. | Representative Deborah Hudson | Member of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, Appointed by the Chair |
| 12. | LeVerta Bradford | Member of the Domestic Violence Task Force, Appointed by the Chair |
| 13. | Polli Funk | Member of the Sexual Assault Network of Delaware, Appointed by the Organization |
| 14. | Jennifer Sellitto-Penzo | Member of the Victims' Rights Task Force, Appointed by the Chair |
| 15. | Dawn Schatz | Teen Dating Violence Counselor, Appointed by the Teen Dating Violence Task Force Chair |
| 16. | Dr. Judith W. Herrman | Faculty Member of the University of Delaware, Appointed by the Teen Dating Violence Task Force Chair |

* The organization did not identify a representative to sit on the Teen Dating Violence Task Force.

Appendix A3

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE TASK FORCE **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

- Robin Case Department of Education
- Blanche Creech People's Place, II
- Daniel Cruce Department of Education
- Susan Haberstroh Department of Education
- Jasmine Hilliard Catholic Charities
- Bryan Horsey U.S. Senator Ted Kaufman's Office
- Alysha McLaurin YWCA Delaware
- Tina Robinson ContactLifeline, Inc.
- Theresa Sedivec Department of Justice
- Sterling Seemans Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their
Families
- Cynthia Smith DE State Parent Advisory Council
- Natasha Smith Family Court
- Lakresha Stanford Family Court
- Eleanor Torres Family Court
- Elizabeth Thomas Curriculum Consultant
- Will Wightman DE Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Nancy Will DE Victim Center, DSP Victim Services
- Sarah Wyshock-Wolfe YWCA Delaware

Appendix A4

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

Background & Definitions	Data Collection	Policy Development	Training	Prevention and Intervention	Monitoring and Enforcement
Define dating violence and Intimate Partner violence and sexual violence	Using DE YRBS continue process for ongoing collection of data on TDV that focuses on behaviors among youth. -Percentage of students reporting being hit, slapped or physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend. -Percentage of students reporting being forced to have sexual intercourse	Expand the Student Code of Conduct to include TDV	Provide awareness session for all school staff, including information on warning signs and response.	Develop TDV/IPV units of instruction for high school and middle schools that reduce violence and promote healthy relationships (Health Education)	Establish protocol that identifies behavior, consequences, who is responsible, parent notification, referrals and reporting requirements. Ensure that protocols protect victim rights.
Statement of the problem, statistics, warning signs, and impact on society	Develop and administer module for TDV questions as part of the University of DE, Center for Drug & Alcohol Studies, Delaware School Survey every other year.	Institute a multi-disciplinary advisory board that utilizes a collaborative process to address the issue and determine roles and responsibilities of partners.	Target professional development to school staff responsible for reporting, investigating, and parent notification, including handling court issued PFAs, victim safety plan	Ask schools to develop intervention, resource and referral services, including youth-driven awareness campaigns to reduce violence in relationships	Require schools to document complaints and track compliance per DE law and DOE regulations
	Assess how TDV risk behaviors change over time. Establish trend data	Develop a model policy to share with schools and require each school district to submit their policies	School administrators or designated staff develop victim safety plan that handles responses to alleged perpetrator and does not impose restrictive conditions on victim	Include TDV/IPV instruction in school-based health education and coordinate programs with support services in schools and communities	School Climate protocols will include TDV requirements in monitoring process
	Promote the inclusion of TDV incident reporting in school data collection efforts	Revise MOU between DOE & DSCYF to ensure uniformity between law, policy & practice to DOE	Identify and collaborate with schools, State and community partners and advocates to provide training	Provide professional development to MS & HS teachers in model units and track implementation	School Crisis Intervention Plans shall include schools' response to teen dating violence
	Report Delaware data annually to promote public awareness	Inform parents, guardians on rights and responsibilities	Target professional development to wellness center staff, nurses, and counselors		

Appendix A5

SURVEY TOOL – TEEN FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe a healthy relationship? How would you describe an unhealthy relationship?
2. What does ‘dating violence’ mean to you? What does ‘abusive relationship’ mean to you? Are they the same? Are these problems among teens?
3. What impact do peers have on dating violence? The media? The family?
4. Why do you think some teens hurt the person they are dating? Why do some people continue to date someone who hurt them?
5. When teens are involved in ‘dating violence’ or ‘abusive relationships’ who do you think has the greatest influence in helping them with that situation?
6. What resources do you believe should be available in the school or community to foster healthy relationships and deal with dating violence or abusive relationships?
7. What are the tools you think teens need in order to prevent dating violence?
8. What components do you believe make up a healthy relationship? How can teens learn about healthy relationships? If you were to design a curriculum on preventing teen dating violence, what would it include?

11.6.2009
Jwh

Appendix A6

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE FOCUS GROUP **STRONGEST THEMES, SURPRISES, AND CONFIRMATIONS**

Strongest Themes

1. Teens aren't talking to one another about teen dating violence.
2. Teens want to be educated about teen dating violence.
3. There are underlying issues.
4. Teens want to know how to break the cycle of power and control.
5. Teens believe that there are justifications as to why the perpetrator victimizes.
6. Teens suggest that relationship education cannot be just about sex.
7. Peers have a big impact.
8. There must be trust in a relationship.
9. Some teens are stuck on dominant male roles.
10. Females do not have to be soft.
11. Teens need tools to be able to help themselves.
12. Teens recognize verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Surprises

1. Teens have differing definitions for: violence/abuse/relationship/dating
2. There is a fear of retaliation.
3. Teens are unclear about age of consent laws.
4. Teens acknowledge that violence is learned in the home.
5. Some believe that girls in love never hit back.
6. Parental controls are needed.
7. Teens abuse on the "down-low" during play.
8. There is a need for more school counselors.
9. For confidentiality purposes, teens prefer going to a stranger for help.
10. In Rhiana/Chris Brown incident, girls question what Rhiana did to make Chris turn violent.

Confirmations:

1. School Wellness Center is a prime source for support.
2. Peers are a strong influence.
3. Abuse is a problem among teens.
4. Teens feel that hurting the person they are dating is a way of showing love.
5. Teens are aware of the different forms of abuse.
6. The role of the Guidance Counselor is limited to academic planning.
7. Teens need more knowledge about healthy relationships.
8. Teens find pamphlets/brochures useless.
9. Dating violence means physical violence.

Appendix A7

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE FOCUS GROUP QUOTES SAMPLE OF EMERGING THEMES AND EXEMPLAR QUOTES

From youth, the perspective of teen dating violence(TDV) is a problem.

- “My mother died from domestic violence.”
- “Everyone knows it’s going on and no one talks about it.”
- “It’s a problem...it can be stopped...it’s just not a priority to some people...it has got to be stopped.”
- “Definitely happening. We need to be up front about what is going on.”
- “I think a lot of people are abusive on the ‘low.’”
- “Two black eyes don’t give us 20/20 vision.”
- “Fighting is not the answer...even if it feels good at the time.”
- “Men get abused too...but most times it happens to women.”
- “Dating violence isn’t the way to go.”

TDV has varied faces.

- “It is about control issues...grabbing and pushing is okay...it’s allowed, but then it goes too far.”
- “They tell you what you can and can’t do, what to wear...who to talk to....always wondering what you are thinking...they know how to make you mad.”
- “controlling...obsessing...stalking.”
- “All forms...verbal, physical, mental, and sexual...it can all really mess somebody up.”
- “A lot of people have fights and violence because they don’t trust.”
- “Females need to be put in check sometimes.”

Teens have mixed feeling about who can help in cases of TDV.

- “Most teens end up having to help themselves.”
- “Parents have to step up.”
- “Parents are role models...they should know this is a problem.”
- “Most teens don’t want to talk about it....I wouldn’t if it happened to me.”
- “It’s like rape...it’s not easy because you don’t know what people may say.”
- “Friends can support, but can’t help you change.”
- “Friends know it is happening but will say nothing.”
- “Friends can’t always be trusted.”
- “It can be hard to connect with friends...they may judge you.”
- “Peers and friends have a high impact...you listen to them...respect their opinion...and believe them.”
- “You can talk to your parents...but then may say ‘Why is this happening to you?’ ...”
- “If you see your family love each other...you will want that.”
- “You can share anything with a stranger and not worry about it.”

People abuse others for a variety of reasons.

- “Males beat on females because they really love them.”
- “Emotional problems lead to abuse.”
- “Peer pressure makes me want to punch my girl...it’s okay to beat girls.”
- “They are struggling with things that go wrong in their life and just don’t know who to take it out on.”
- “Someone uses their size to get what they want.”
- “Families don’t pay enough attention.”
- “They have a low self-esteem.”
- “If they do it once...they will do it again.”
- “Maybe they just hit to hit.”
- “People tell you they love you but show you something different.”
- “If they are in it together...depending on one another for drugs or alcohol.”
- “Girls don’t want guys to be soft.”
- “Girls beat on guys and get away with it...abuse should be looked at both ways.”
- “It is just playing...then it gets out of hand.”
- “Saw the same behavior when you were growing up...when your parents fight...you fight.”
- “Guys only do what you allow them to.”
- “You only have to hit me once...and I will hit ‘em back.”

People stay with those who abuse them for a variety of reasons.

- “If it is all they know...they love them...they don’t want to start over.”
- “When you are in love, you ignore the advice of others.”
- “After a while they end up believing the bad stuff people tell them.”
- “They love them...think they can’t get anyone else.”
- “They put a show on.”
- “They think... ‘what will they do if I leave? If they are doing this now...’”
- “When you are in love, you avoid the advice of others.”

Teens have ideas about what they need to prevent and deal with TDV.

- “Young people to relate to...to tell it like it is.”
- “A safe environment to talk about it.”
- “Would rather talk to someone than get pamphlets.”
- “An honesty box.”
- “If we are old enough to drive and work...we should be respected.”
- “Need to know what is a healthy relationship...need to have trust, equality...communication...sincerity.”
- “Need to know how to explain thoughts and feelings...how to respond to people.”
- “Need to see good relationships...need to know yourself.”
- “Not to view relationships as just what you’ve seen.”
- “Need to know how to tell if you are abusive and how to get help.”
- “We need information about laws about age of consent for sex and about crimes.”
- “Start talking about healthy relationships...we don’t learn this in school.”
- “Partners should work it out together...couples should not get outside help.”
- “Talk it out...like we are doing...more talk about it.”

“Private groups where people can come talk about their feelings.”
“Better ways to get out of relationships.”
“How to let go.”
“There doesn’t have to be control.”
“Learn how to respect yourself and others.”
“We need to learn different ways to show love and control anger.”
“Need to know what makes good relationship.”
“It is healthy to argue...you have to have arguments to get through disagreements to get to another level.”
“Show perspectives and points of view from different sexes and types of personalities.”
“Use the term partner.”
“Safe sex is about when you are ready AND protection.”
“You have got to start young...talk about relationships and respect.”
“Need to learn the warning signs and to act on the warning signs, need to know what dating violence is, and how to make and use safety plans.”

Appendix A8

There's a Fine Line...Adolescent Dating Violence and Prevention

Judith W. Herrman

Domestic violence is a paramount issue in society today. One component of this is the violence associated with dating and interpersonal relationships in the teen years. Current research demonstrates that a significant percentage of teens have experienced some degree of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from a dating partner. Pediatric nurses may interface with teens before, during, and after violent episodes. It is important for nurses to know the definitions of dating violence and rape, data about the incidence and prevalence of this issue, risk factors for violence in intimate relationships, dating violence myths, and the potential impact of youth dating violence. Youth perceptions and current research must be analyzed to frame current and potential interventions to reduce teen dating violence. Pediatric nurses have an integral role in counseling teens, ensuring youth safety, and preventing violence in the adolescent years.

Pediatric nurses may interface with teens before, during, and after violent episodes. It is important to be aware of the potential "red flags" pediatric nurses may encounter in the assessment and intervention of dating violence during the teen years. The role of the nurse may include detecting suspected cases of violence, counseling teens, ensuring youth safety, and preventing violence in dating relationships through education and programming. This article will define dating violence and rape, share data about the incidence and prevalence, discuss risk factors for violence in intimate relationships, disclose dating violence myths, and describe the potential impact of youth dating violence. Youth perceptions and ongoing research will be analyzed to frame current and potential initiatives to reduce teen dating violence.

Dating Violence

Dating violence is the occurrence of physically, sexually, and/or psychologically violent episodes in the intimate interpersonal relationship. Glass et al. (2003) defined dating violence as the "perpetration or threat of an act of violence by at least one member of an unmarried couple within the con-

text of dating or courtship (same sex or opposite sex)" (p. 228). The violent relationship includes a victim and a perpetrator in which one individual commits an act interpreted as violent against another within the context of the dating relationship. Many believe that adolescent development and the volatile relationships associated with the teen years increase the risk of violence (O'Keefe, 2005).

It is important to determine how teens themselves define abuse to intervene with the issue on adolescent terms. Teens have defined abuse according to context, intent, and actual harm associated with violent episodes (O'Keefe, 2005). In cases of revenge, retaliation, or to "save face," teens disclosed that hitting and other acts of abuse were justified actions or reactions toward the other individual (Sears, Byers, Whelan, & Saint-Pierre, 2006, p. 1197). Teens discussed difficulty in differentiating abuse from "just kidding around" or the demonstration of caring behaviors (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1197).

Research has found that there are significant differences in the definitions of interpersonal violence among youth based on gender. Girls perceived violence as a means to exert control or to dominate; boys tended to link violent acts with being provoked or "forced" into violent episodes (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1199). Girls viewed their own violent behaviors as "joking around" events, while boys were "serious" when they inflicted pain and violence (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1198). Boys discussed that girls were able to "get away" with the minor offenses for which boys would be pun-

ished (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1198). In addition, boys defined abuse based on whether it was intended to cause pain as opposed to it being "an accident" or if "there is anger behind it" (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1197). In contrast, girls judged an episode as violent if the events result in "uneasiness, physical or emotional hurt, or fear" (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1197). These gender-related beliefs may have an impact on rates, responses, and means to intervene with adolescent dating violence.

Authors describe a "cycle of violence" related to the exertion of power and control over another individual (Seimer, 2004). This cycle includes the first phase of tension (including increasing levels of arguing, blame, and anger), the phase of violence (characterized by hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, use of objects or weapons, verbal threats or abuse, and sexual abuse), and the "honeymoon" phase (noted by calm, denial, apologies, excuses, and promises) (Seimer, 2004).

Prevalence

Studies project a wide range of percentages of youth experiencing dating violence, with figures ranging from 9% to 57% (O'Keefe, 2005). According to the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 9.9% of high-school-aged teens reported violence in response to the question, "During the past year, did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?" (Eaton et al., 2008). Among teens considered high-risk – or those participating in high risk behaviors,

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living in poverty, or from disadvantaged homes – it is believed that these rates climb to 33% of boys and 68% of girls (Chase, Treboux, & O'Leary, 2002). It is estimated that one in three girls report some level of dating violence (O'Keefe, 2005). About 8% of girls report that they were forced to have sex against their will, and 9% of boys and girls stated that they ended a relationship due to violence (Eaton et al., 2008; Seimer, 2004). It is believed that dating violence begins to emerge as a key issue in the 10th grade, with rates increasing in subsequent grade levels (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2008).

In contrast, inquiry of younger middle-school-aged students reveals that dating violence may occur earlier, with initial episodes occurring before 15 years of age. These early episodes of violence establish patterns of interpersonal violence that follow the individual throughout life (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004). Seimer (2004) noted that 11% of those who reported fighting during their previous date were 8th grade students. As more young teens are involved in dating, greater numbers of teens date at earlier ages, younger teens are involved in more single partner relationships, and teens date partners with significant age differences, dating violence rates among young adolescents may escalate (O'Keefe, 2005). Earlier ages of menarche and physical maturation may also have an impact on physical attraction, dating practices, sexual activity, and emotionally intense relationships, which may invoke violence (Champion, Foley, Sigmon-Smith, Sutfin, & DuRant, 2008).

Although domestic violence in adults is most often a male against female crime, research suggests that girls and boys are both victims and perpetrators of dating violence, with 8.8% of girls and 11% of boys reporting a violent occurrence (CDC, 2008). However, the nature of the violence is very different. Girls most often inflict minor physical and psychological abuse on a partner; boys are more likely to commit severe physical and sexual abuse (Sears et al., 2006). When girls do abuse, they tend to commit minor to moderate abusive acts, including scratching, slapping, and throwing objects (O'Keefe, 2005). In contrast, the abuse from boys has more severe consequences, including those rendered from the use of weapons, punching, and forced sexual activity (O'Keefe, 2005). Authors caution against equalizing the impacts of male and female abuse due to the

significant impact of male against female violence and the more long-term nature of these abusive relationships (O'Keefe, 2005). Males tend to develop patterns of abuse, females tend to hold roles as victims, and these relationships are characterized by ongoing power and violence rather than being episodic or related to single stimuli (O'Keefe, 2005).

Epidemiology

Intimate or dating violence occurs regardless of age, religion, or ethnic or socioeconomic background (Seimer, 2004). Demographically, dating violence victimization and perpetration are more common among African Americans than Caucasians and Hispanics (CDC, 2008; Glass et al., 2003). Youth dating violence is associated with many high-risk behaviors, such as tobacco use, drinking and driving, lack of seat belt use, episodic heavy drinking, unsafe sexual practices, access to weapons, physical fighting, expulsion or suspension from school, membership in a gang, lower levels of academic achievement, concerns for personal safety, and histories of previous dating violence (Champion et al., 2008; Fry, Lessel, & O'Connor, 2008; Glass et al., 2003; Hanson, 2004; Seimer, 2004).

Several correlate factors have been associated with being either a victim or perpetrator of adolescent relationship violence. Dating violence may be associated with families in which violence is used to resolve conflicts with patterns of abuse, where low levels of parental control and supervision are present, and where poor parent-child relationships exist (Chase et al., 2002; Seimer, 2004). The role of early childhood attachment and relationships with parents continues to be investigated, wherein tenuous parent-child attachments may lead to a life course of violence, including dating violence (Rapoza & Baker, 2008).

A history of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse as a child serves as a strong risk factor for both victims and perpetrators of dating violence (Cyr, McDuff, & Wright, 2006; Rapoza & Baker, 2008). The number of years a teen experiences sexual abuse as a child may increase the risk for interpersonal violence (Cyr et al., 2006). Researchers noted that individuals who experience sexual intercourse as part of the abuse experience demonstrate higher rates of interpersonal violence (Cyr et al., 2006). Recent life stressors and traumatic events may

also serve as risk factors for dating violence (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2008). Levels of community organization and the ability of the community to support its youth have also been found to be related to dating violence, indicating the role of context in violence (Champion et al., 2008). Authors have noted that both victims and perpetrators bear several common personality traits, including feelings of betrayal, jealousy, insecurity, and hostility (O'Keefe, 2005; Seimer, 2004).

Those who commit violent acts in the dating relationship are often identified to have a high response to social pressures, have difficulty with anger management, and exemplify poor interpersonal skills (O'Keefe, 2005; Seimer, 2004). Perpetrators are also prone to substance use and abuse, and a high proportion of dating violence incidents in the teen years is connected with alcohol use (Chase et al., 2002; Rapoza & Baker, 2008). Bossarte, Simon, and Swahn (2008) found a higher proportion of perpetrators of dating violence had a previous history of involvement in peer violence.

Those who are victimized by violence often perpetrate violence on others, further perpetuating the contagious nature of violent acts (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004). The role of self defense in violence episodes while dating has been investigated as it relates to the escalation of violence, which can impact the individuals involved and perceptions of the event (O'Keefe, 2005).

Another variable contributing to the victimization of dating violence during the teen years is pregnancy. Most pregnancies during the teen years are not intentional. These conceptions add to the already high level of stress inherent in the teen years. Although teens are capable of having healthy pregnancies, concurrent risk factors, such as lack of prenatal care, poor nutrition, and substance use, may put these pregnancies at greater risk, further adding to emotional upheaval. It is estimated that a pregnancy during the teen years increases a young woman's chance of being victimized five-fold (Silverman, Raj, & Clements, 2004). Approximately 14% of pregnant adult women are victims of domestic violence, while 21% of pregnant teens are victimized (Seimer, 2004). Conversely, girls experiencing violence in a dating relationship were four to six times more likely to have a history of a pregnancy (Silverman et al., 2004). Domestic violence is also

associated with high-risk sexual behaviors, such as increased sexual activity, being diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases, having more than four sexual partners, and reporting a younger age of initiating sexual activity (Seimer, 2004; Silverman et al., 2004).

Other Risk Factors

A myriad of studies assesses the risk factors that increase domestic violence rates during the teen years. One study noted that as a region, southern U.S. states had the greatest dating violence rates. The authors attributed this to the more traditional views of men and women residing in the southern U.S. and the potentially increased tolerance to violence (Marquart, Mannini, Edwards, Stanley, & Wayman, 2007). Several studies indicated that dating violence is more common in rural areas, again speaking to beliefs about male and female roles, the isolation and lack of structured activities, and the common practice of "driving around" with alcohol (Marquart et al., 2007; Spencer & Bryant, 2000, p. 203). One study noted that teens were likely to emulate the violent behaviors of friends and parents, but that aggressiveness among friends was more powerful than parental behavior, reinforcing the potent role peers play in role modeling and youth behavior (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004). Acceptance of violence among friends may be a strong predictor of personal participation in violence (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004).

Although much of the discussion related to dating violence involves heterosexual couples, studies have examined violence in gay and bisexual relationships. Freedner, Freed, Yang, and Austin (2002) noted that gay male and lesbian couples report high levels of interpersonal violence. At highest risk are teens who are in covert bisexual and homosexual relationships. Freedner et al. (2002) found that much of the physical and emotional abuse in these relationships is associated with "outing" or divulging a person's sexual preferences to others (p. 472).

Another vein of research pertained to the justification for dating violence as a result of sexual betrayal. Forbes, Jobe, White, Bloesch, and Adams-Curtis (2005) examined teens' views by reviewing several case studies articulating episodes of sexual betrayal or betrayal of a confidence toward a partner in a dating relationship.

Participants were then asked to rate which behaviors would warrant violent retaliation. The authors noted that a significant number of teens believed that sexual betrayal and betrayal of a sensitive piece of information represent justifiable cause for minor physical abuse, including hitting, "getting even," and being angry (Forbes et al., 2005, p. 1292).

Researchers have attempted to determine the impact of the media on beliefs about and behaviors related to dating violence. Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, and Reed (1995) studied the influence of listening to rap music, which included themes of female degradation, male dominance, and references to violence. The subordinate roles of females perpetuated in this genre of music were noted to be significantly related to increased tolerance to violence and increased condoning of aggressive behaviors (Johnson et al., 1995). Another study subjected participants to viewing perceivably violent wrestling videotapes. After watching these wrestling matches, participants reported more tolerance of violent behaviors and stated they had engaged in more violent acts than a control group (DuRant, Champion, & Wolfson, 2006). Merten (2008) explored the relationship of sports with dating violence. Although sports participation or level of competition were not found to be related to dating violence, there was a strong correlation between the "need to win" and violent behavior (Merten, 2008, p. 31). The influence of media violence and the portrayal of gender on violent behaviors should be further investigated to include other mechanisms, such as video games, violence in dramatic movies, and in other music forms.

Detection of Dating Violence

Nurses and other adult advocates have key roles in identifying teens experiencing domestic violence. Several issues make domestic violence a challenge to detect during the teen years. According to Ashley and Foshee (2005), teen domestic violence is far less likely to be reported than adult episodes. It is estimated that about 1 in 11 episodes of teen dating violence is reported to adults or authorities, and many episodes are reported but not addressed (Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Research by Ashley and Foshee (2005) demonstrated that 60% of victims and 79% of perpetrators of dating violence did not seek

assistance. Males and older individuals were more likely than other adolescents to seek help (Ashley & Foshee, 2005).

There are several reasons believed to be associated with non-report of episodes of dating violence. Fear of retaliation or revenge, ongoing emotional ties, denial, self-blame, hope that the situation will improve, fear of escalation in levels of violence, and feelings of helplessness after abuse are just a few of the rationales noted when youth are asked about unreported dating violence (Seimer, 2004). Teens cited they believed they "deserve" the abuse, and therefore, do not want to report events (Sears et al., 2006, p. 1200). Young parents with children may be reluctant to report the episode out of loyalty to or dependence upon the father. Angelucci (2008) discussed that many males do not report violence against them due to embarrassment, leading to further victimization and decreasing the likelihood of receiving help. In focus groups studies, teens stated both boys and girls tend to hide abuse out of embarrassment (Sears et al., 2006). Perhaps most ingrained and difficult to deal with are the cultural, regional, family, or community perceptions that some violence is "normal" and that the violence is learned from adult role models (O'Keefe, 2005).

Another issue undergirding lack of disclosure may be related to the "double standard" associated with teens and physical violence. Teens believe that violence is sanctioned related to gender norms. Males reported that girls were able to inflict violence on boys and that it was not punished because of the decreased likelihood for the boy to sustain significant injuries (Sears et al., 2006). In contrast, girls perceived that abuse by males is considered normative behavior and is, therefore, unattended to even if reported to adults (Sears et al., 2006).

When asked who they would or had gone to for support after an episode or pattern of violence, respondents listed friends, family members, teachers, and counselors. Girls were more likely to divulge information to friends, siblings, and parents, whereas boys were more likely to go to non-family members and professional adults in their world to discuss a violent act (Ashley & Foshee, 2005). These findings may pinpoint education points for use with teens and assist in the identification of key contacts to support teens during these difficult times.

Table 1.
Organizations and Web Sites

The Alabama Coalition Against Dating Violence www.acadv.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Choose Respect www.chooserespect.org
National Center for Victims of Crime www.ncvc.org
National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women www.vawnet.org
The National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline/Web Site www.loveisrespect.org
The Women's Law Organization www.womenslaw.org

Impact on Adolescents

The physical injuries sustained by victims of dating violence and the potential for death are of prime concern. Approximately 8% of teens report visiting an emergency department to seek out care from injuries sustained in dating relationships (Foshee et al., 1998).

Less apparent outcomes must also be considered. Sexual abuse in a dating relationship has a high propensity to be associated with unprotected sexual activity and high-risk sexual behavior (O'Keefe, 2005). Subsequent unintended pregnancy, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus, and a propensity to unhealthy sexual practices may result. Poor self-esteem and environmental influences may lead to poor nutrition and lack of attention to safety measures. Females with a history of dating violence victimization have an increased risk of eating disorders (Seimer, 2004).

Physical fighting as a means to address conflict may escalate as violent behaviors beget increases in violence. Substance use and abuse, which often preclude violence, may also be used as a means to cope with the emotional and physical injuries (Champion et al., 2008). Both victims and perpetrators have been noted to have increased reports of suicidal ideations and attempts after violent acts (Bossarte et al., 2008).

There are additional long-term outcomes to be considered. Violence in a dating relationship during the teen years may develop into a life-long pattern of intimate partner violence and poor relationship skills (O'Keefe, 2005). Problems with attaining and

maintaining meaningful relationships, both with friends and intimate others, may occur (Bossarte et al., 2008). Chronic exposure to violence, both as a victim and a perpetrator, may result in mental health issues (Marguaret et al., 2007). Internalizing disorders (including depression, guilt, loss of trust, and social withdrawal) and externalizing disorders (including sexual promiscuity, behavior problems, and participation in high-risk behaviors) have been associated with interpersonal violence (Chase et al., 2002; Marguaret et al., 2007). Post-traumatic stress disorder and severe depression have also been noted in youth experiencing dating violence (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2008). Nurses must turn their attention to these outcomes and actively participate in the prevention, detection, and intervention with adolescents subjected to interpersonal violence.

Interventions

Many interventions are in place to address the issue of adolescent dating violence. Several national organizations bring dating violence into the consciousness of teens, parents, and other adults. Table 1 includes some prominent groups that have pioneered efforts to raise public awareness and make dating violence a commonly discussed topic. In response to the alarming data associated with dating violence, the CDC (2006) launched a campaign entitled *Choose Respect*. Through public service announcements, a Web site, interactive teaching methods, clickable quizzes, bathroom literature campaigns, and advertising materials, this initiative purports positive relationship messages as a way to

prevent dating violence (CDC, 2006).

Prevention of dating violence through school or community-based education has been a common area of intervention. Many high schools include topics, such as dating violence, interpersonal skills, and healthy relationships, in health classes. Two curricula have been identified as effective in the prevention of relationship violence. The first, *Safe Dates Program*, uses a dramatic play, a 10-session curriculum, and a poster contest to address dating violence with high school students. This curriculum uses "cognitive mediating variables," such as improving conflict management skills, changing dating violence norms, and decreasing gender stereotyping to influence adolescent attitudes toward dating violence (Foshee et al., 1998, p. 619). *Safe Dates* has been shown to be effective in reinforcing positive and egalitarian relationship skills, decreasing reports of serious physical violence, and reducing sexual violence victimization and perpetration both one and four years after the intervention (Foshee et al., 1998, 2004). Interestingly, a *Safe Dates* booster, which included a newsletter and contact by a health educator, did not contribute to sustained reductions (Foshee et al., 2004).

The second curriculum, *Healthy Relationships*, has content related to intimate relationships and marriage, and has been found to decrease rates of dating violence. Gardner and Boellaard (2007) evaluated the longitudinal impact of this relationship-building curriculum on high school students. The implementation of the 3-month course demonstrated immediate and long-term increases in self-esteem, decreases in dating and relationship violence, and higher levels of family cohesion (Gardner & Boellaard, 2007). The authors contended that teaching positive relationship-building skills, conflict management, methods of communication, values clarification, and self-awareness early in life may serve to increase the quality of current and future interpersonal relationships.

McNulty, Heller, and Binet (1997) described using a dramatic play, *The Yellow Dress*, to share information about dating violence. A sincere investment by the school, community support, and after-performance debriefing created a comprehensive approach to raising awareness and engaging in a discourse on adolescent interpersonal violence. This play, developed and marketed through a private foundation, includes a female

Table 3.
Interview Questions

Directive Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the past year, did your boyfriend or girlfriend do anything physically to you that made you feel very uneasy or uncomfortable? • Do you feel safe at home? • Do you feel safe in your relationship? • Have threats of violence been made? • Does your partner seem jealous, controlling, or possessive? • Have you been forced to have sex? • Have weapons been used against you?
Probing Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time when you have felt unsafe in your home. • Tell me about a time when you have felt unsafe in your relationship. • To what types of violent behaviors have you been subject? • Tell me about your partner's behaviors related to jealousy, control, or possessiveness. • Tell me about your experiences when forced to have sex. • Tell me about your experience when weapons were used against you.

may include unexplained injuries, injuries that appear to be from questionable sources (such as burns or bruises), wounds of various stages of healing, delays in seeking care, strained partner relationships, or conflicting reports from patients.

Research indicates that teens are not likely to disclose events of domestic violence unless specifically asked about events, similar to adults. Seimer (2004) cited research indicating a 6% incidence of violence for patients who were not questioned about histories of dating violence. This number rose to 30% when patients were specifically asked questions relating to interpersonal violence. The question asked on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (for example, "During the past year, did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?") may be used to screen for violence. For individuals who appear reticent to admit issues of violence but for whom suspicions continue, other questions to ask that might discover violence are found in Table 3. Probing questions may be used when "red flags" emerge to ensure more qualitative, informative, and comprehensive assessments.

It is important for the nurse to establish a rapport with the individual, listen intently, and convey a sense of belief about the incident. The nurse should be attentive to the patient's affect, and provide empathy and support throughout the patient relationship. This relationship-building and sensitive questioning may be difficult in busy, fast-paced working environments. This highlights the need for

standard questions asked in private areas as part of the interview format to make astute assessments of those at greatest risk of dating violence.

As is true of many nurse-adolescent relationships, the nurse cannot promise or ensure confidentiality with dating violence situations. The professional role of mandatory reporter dictates that nurses report any situation suspect of self-harm or harm to others. It is important to clarify the nursing role of counselor and the goal to prevent future violence. The nurse must maintain this sensitive balance and identify the teen sustaining minor injuries but denying any dating violence, refusing to identify perpetrators, showing behaviors they are not ready to address the issue, or refusing to press charges. In this case, the nurse must respect the patient's privacy but also assess for risk of additional injury, report incidents, and maintain trust with the patient. The nurse and other case workers must be aware of state laws that may dictate mandatory reporting, informing parents in the case of minors, reporting cases to protective services, obtaining protection or restraining orders, and other issues that may impact the management and referral of victims and perpetrators. The involvement and role of parents and guardians must be considered when attending to the safety and best interests of the teen.

Conclusion

Nurses have an important perspective to provide tertiary prevention for

victims and perpetrators of dating violence. A key role for nurses is referral to appropriate agencies for legal advice, law enforcement, client protection, avenues of recourse, child support, mentoring, counseling, and access to other resources for both the perpetrator and the victim. Pediatric nurses can assist teens to identify a supportive adult in their environment in whom to confide in the event of violence. Seimer (2004) reinforced that teens are less prone to have an established safety plan than adults experiencing domestic violence. Pediatric nurses can assist teens to "future think" and to develop a plan for a safe place to go, procuring money and resources, making a list of key phone numbers, and ensuring the safety of self and children (if a parent). Developing safety behaviors may be difficult at a very stressful time, so the nurse may provide access to resources to facilitate this process.

Pediatric nurses may connect teens to resources on the Internet, refer them to community services, and provide educational materials that may assist in learning about and intervening with adolescent interpersonal violence. Hotlines, shelters, legal advocacy programs, and other interventions strive to assist victims and perpetrators to resolve immediate and long-term issues arising from dating violence. The Society of Pediatric Nursing (www.pedsnurses.org/) may be an important group to reinforce the advocacy role of pediatric nurses and to provide information to assist in this important issue. Research conducted by pediatric nurses related to risk factors, youth perceptions, prevention, intervention, and outcomes will continue to build what is known about dating violence in the teen years, and hopefully, reduce the incidence and impact of such violence. Nurses have an integral role in the development and evaluation of interventions to reduce or alleviate this important public health issue affecting teens today.

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From the Editor

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Nursing Advocacy for the Earth's Health

Nurses share the responsibility with everyone to give attention to the potential threats to our fragile ecosystems. Because of their potential leadership roles in the community, nurses can find voice for the health concerns that affect the public and become champions for action locally and globally. Environmental literacy is the foundation for collective action and advocacy. Being "Green" is consonant with good health.

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Appendix A9

WEBSITES

California Model Policy on School Response to Teen dating Violence
and Sexual Violence

http://www.cwlc.org/files/docs/Model_Protocol_v9.pdf

Conference of State Legislatures. Issues & Research. Teen Dating Violence – Updated
March 12, 2010

www.ncsl.org/?tabid=17582

Delaware Teen Dating Violence Website

www.safeandrespectful.org

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC)

(A copy of the Teen Dating Violence Task Force Report can be downloaded from the
DVCC website.)

<http://dvcc.delaware.gov/>

Massachusetts Department of Education: Guidelines for Schools on Addressing Teen
Dating Violence

www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/tdv/guidelines

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and Delaware School Survey Data

<http://www.edel.edu/delawaredata/>

Love is Respect

National Teen Dating Violence Helpline

www.loveisrespect.org

Break the Cycle's Dating Violence Safe Schools Model Policy
A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Dating Violence and Sexual Violence in
District of Columbia Schools

www.breakthecycle.org/system/files/pdf/dc-model-school-policy.pdf

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RAPE CRISIS/SEXUAL ASSAULT

24-HOUR HOTLINE NUMBERS

New Castle County

Domestic Violence	302-762-6110
Rape Crisis/Sexual Assault	302-761-9100

Northern Kent

Domestic Violence	302-678-3886
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Kent and Sussex

Domestic Violence	302-422-8058
Rape Crisis/Sexual Assault	800-262-9800
Bi-lingual Hotline	302-745-9874

National

Teen Dating Violence Hotline	866-331-9474
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