

Interpersonal violence – Teen Dating Violence and Risk Sexual Behavior

- Dr. Kineka Hull: [00:03](#) Welcome to Elevate Youth Programming, a podcast for adolescent pregnancy prevention programs and other youth-serving agencies. In each episode, we will discuss best practices, tips, and strategies to strengthen your programming. Each episode will cover a specific topic discussed with experts from the field. Listen along as our guests join me to discuss these relevant topics. I'm your host, Dr. Kineka Hull.
- [00:30](#) [00:00:30] Personal Responsibility Education Programming is primed to address teen dating violence through adult preparation subjects addressing healthy relationships which help adolescents recognize characteristics of unhealthy and healthy relationships, establish beliefs that healthy relationships are important and attainable, and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to form healthy relationships, including skills needed [00:01:00] to avoid being a perpetrator of violence. PREP programming also builds youth communication, negotiation and refusal skills, as well as coping skills related to well-being and self-regulation.
- [01:14](#) In this episode, we speak with Dr. Marni Kan to learn tips and strategies to increase knowledge of teen dating violence, best practices in addressing teen dating violence and programming, and ways to support youth. Dr. Kan [00:01:30] is a research psychologist with more than 20 years of experience conducting research on the promotion of healthy relationships and behaviors among adolescents, young adults and families. Dr. Kan adapts and evaluates teen dating violence prevention programs, sexual violence prevention programs and programs that promote strong family relationships. Her recent work has involved special populations including teens who are pregnant or parenting [00:02:00] and military service members.
- [02:02](#) Hi, Marni. Welcome to the Elevate Youth Programming Podcast. How are you?
- Dr. Marni Kan: [02:08](#) Hi, Kineka. Thanks so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here.
- Dr. Kineka Hull: [02:11](#) I have really been looking forward to having this conversation about teen dating violence. For those of you guys who are listening, Marni is a fantastic project director at RTI International and I have the pleasure of assisting her with one of her projects that actually deals with teen [00:02:30] dating violence. And so I have been looking forward to this conversation. So let's jump in. Let's start with defining what teen dating violence and intimate partner violence actually are. Can you tell us some definitions for those please?

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- Dr. Marni Kan: [02:44](#) So teen dating violence and intimate partner violence encompass several different types of behaviors including physical violence, so things like hitting or kicking, sexual violence, so forcing a partner to engage in a sexual act [00:03:00] or touching a partner when they don't consent or are unable to consent. It also includes psychological aggression, so various verbal or nonverbal communication that may do emotional or mental harm. And also stalking is part of the definition of teen dating violence and intimate partner violence. So unwanted attention and contact repeatedly from a partner that may cause fear or concerns for safety. And intimate partner violence is the [00:03:30] sort of adult version of the term, and teen dating violence is what we use to describe these behaviors among young people, but it's really a continuum that often starts in adolescence and can continue into adulthood.
- Dr. Kineka Hull: [03:43](#) Thank you for that. Are there any data or trends that you would like to share with our listeners?
- Dr. Marni Kan: [03:48](#) Well, teen dating violence and intimate partner violence are both relatively common, at least based on our understanding from surveys. And the proportion of folks that report experiencing [00:04:00] these behaviors in surveys are often higher than the number that ever interact with systems of care for these issues. But among teens, we've seen pretty consistently, I would say, over the last several years, between maybe 8 to 10% are reporting physical violence experiences and sexual violence experiences on nationwide surveys. But there are other studies that have documented even higher [00:04:30] rates than that. So some of these national surveys put out reports every couple of years, but there have been several studies, community-based studies and even national studies that report it's more like 20 to 25%.
- [04:43](#) I think the hard thing about nailing down the prevalence is that there are a lot of ways that these behaviors are defined and asked about, and that just really makes it hard to get a common understanding of what folks are reporting on when they say, "Yes, that has [00:05:00] happened to me." So certainly psychological aggression is much more common than physical aggression even in most adolescent samples at least. It's possible that in some communities, the majority of adolescents are experiencing some sort of psychological aggression.
- [05:17](#) And I would say the main trend over time is not necessarily about the prevalence, but the way that these behaviors are being enacted. So as most folks [00:05:30] who work with youth know, nowadays technology is being used much more than ever

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including to perpetrate aggressive and controlling behaviors. So even though I didn't call that out as a type of aggression under the definition, some people do think about it as a separate category, but I tend to think about it as just a way that psychological aggression can be enacted. So the same types of behaviors that may be done verbally in person [00:06:00] like threatening or trying to manipulate or control somebody can also be done via technology, online. There's name-calling. There's harmful interactions as well as ways of trying to control people by tracking where they are or logging into their account without their permission or posting pictures of them when they didn't give permission.

[06:23](#)

So that is certainly a recent trend that we've been studying actually for probably 15 to 20 years [00:06:30] now, but we're much more aware of it now, much more able to assess it and working constantly on how to assess it and how to talk with teens about it because so much of the behavior using technology is seen as very normal and common and not necessarily a problem. So finding that balance and that line of when is it aggressive or abusive and when is it just something that people do and accept and is okay can be tricky.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[06:59](#)

I know. I saw a very [00:07:00] disturbing TikTok. So my nieces and nephews are teaching me about TikTok. So I'm down the rabbit hole of watching TikTok videos and it was someone showing how to sew an apple AirTag into people's tennis shoes and clothing to track where they are. And I was like, "So this wasn't a very helpful video. This is kind of disturbing. That's a controlling or stalking or a monitoring behavior." But so many people were liking the video and [00:07:30] saying, "Oh, I'm going to try this." And I'm like, "No, no, no, no, no. That's not what we should be sharing and teaching other people how to do."

Dr. Marni Kan:

[07:36](#)

Yeah. I'm sure there's so many things like that that haven't even hit our radar yet. And I think that's part of the hard thing about working with young people when you're an adult, is they tend to be a step ahead of us on some of these behaviors and creative uses of technology for better or worse.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[07:53](#)

Let's talk a little bit about the impacts of teen dating violence, especially when it comes to sexual [00:08:00] health and teen pregnancy.

Dr. Marni Kan:

[08:01](#)

Yeah. So there, as you can imagine, a number of consequences and negative effects of experiencing teen dating violence, certainly for mental health. Teens and young people who are

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victims of teen dating violence tend to engage in other unhealthy behaviors like substance use or bullying or theft, and their mental health tends to be worse. We have also seen [00:08:30] in some studies that their likelihood of having an unintended pregnancy is higher. And the mechanisms and reasons for that are still being studied and we're trying to understand that better. There's a lot of potential contextual factors there, but the sort of healthy relationships umbrella is how I think about the intersection between teen dating violence and reproductive health and sexual health. And teens who may be victims of [00:09:00] abusive or controlling behaviors may have a harder time advocating for their own needs in relationships. And certainly if there is sexual or reproductive coercion where a partner is pressuring them either to have sex or to have unprotected sex, that can certainly lead to consequences for their sexual health and unintended pregnancy.

[09:21](#)

So there's a lot of potential intersections there. And certainly all of these consequences are sort of at the population level, kind of statistical associations. [00:09:30] Not every teen who their partner calls them a name is going to end up in a bad situation, but there certainly are some negative impacts potentially. And the more severe the aggression or abuse is, the more likely it is to have a negative effect on the young person. So certainly a lot for us to care about as we work with young people in terms of the consequences.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[09:54](#)

With those consequences in mind, are there any unique challenges or risk factors that young people [00:10:00] face that actually impact the perpetration of or experiencing teen dating violence?

Dr. Marni Kan:

[10:06](#)

Yeah. So there are a number of risk factors that have been identified, and some of them are kind of overlapping with a lot of other potential risks and outcomes. I think one of the strongest ones, because this is really about relationships, is the relationships that they are in as young people and that surround them as they're growing up. So if they [00:10:30] see aggressive or controlling behavior in their home, in their community, if they're witnessing a lot of violence, if they're in a violent neighborhood or in their home between their parents or other family members, that has certainly been demonstrated as a risk factor. Again, not necessarily going to determine how things go, but puts them at greater risk of both perpetrating violence and potentially being a victim. Because it really sort of sets the stage for [00:11:00] what is seen as normal or acceptable, it really shapes young people's expectations about what a relationship is

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and what they should expect a partner to do or how they might act.

[11:16](#)

There are certainly other potential experiences including if they experience abuse themselves as a child, that could also sort of set them up to be at risk. But one thing that's important to note is that teen [00:11:30] dating violence does affect all types of youth from all backgrounds, different socioeconomic levels, race, ethnicity, it really does seem to cut across. I think we used to see more that some regional variations in the US based on norms and cultures. And we've seen some high rates of violence overall in urban communities. But again, I would say there really isn't a demographic other than [00:12:00] the one exception when it comes to demographics I would say is that youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ do tend to be at greater risk for all types of violence victimization, including teen dating violence victimization.

[12:14](#)

So that is a clear factor in terms of background characteristics and something that's important for providers to be thinking about. But otherwise, it really tends to be the risk factors that are most consistent tend to be their parenting, their [00:12:30] experiences with their parents in their homes growing up, in their communities and other sort of social determinants in general of their experiences.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[12:40](#)

Thank you. That's great information. I know you mentioned earlier cyber bullying, cyber stalking and things that contribute to young people seeing things as normative. And so, one of the examples that I like to use when I'm facilitating is several years ago there was [00:13:00] a interaction between Cardi B and her husband Offset. They're both rappers. They were having some relationship issues and he had been trying to apologize to her. And so for some reason, he thought it was a good idea to show up at a concert, which is technically her job, unannounced, bringing flowers, taking the microphone in the middle of one of her songs saying, "Please forgive me. Take me back." And you could [00:13:30] see that she was visibly upset, right? And so all of the audience is like, "Oh, that is so sweet." But then we had a conversation that said, "Well, is that appropriate?" She asked for space, she asked for distance. You came to her job in the middle of her shift, showed up with flowers, put her on the spot, and she's visibly upset.

[13:53](#)

So we talk about that relationship dynamic and what is actually healthy. So for some people, that was sweet, [00:14:00] that was thoughtful, he was very sincere. But to the other half of the classroom, he was aggressive. He didn't respect her boundaries.

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He didn't give her an opportunity to process. He was pressuring her for an answer and forgiveness by trying to elicit help and response from her friends. And so you could actually see this play out in real time, look at the difference in opinions. And so it was very interesting to see where some young people saw that [00:14:30] as okay. They saw that as being normative. They saw that as if someone is following me around and popping up on my job, that means they love me, right? And other people were saying, "No. If you come to my job, if you come to a place where you were not invited and not asked when I asked you to stay away, that is not you loving me. That's you being controlling." And so I just love to see that dynamic and the impact that technology and social media has on relationships.

Dr. Marni Kan: [15:00](#)

[00:15:00] Yeah, that's really interesting. I think so much about healthy relationships is about boundaries. And I don't know if we do a good enough job honestly addressing that in our curricula and in our interventions, but I do think it's an issue that cuts across in-person and online. And we certainly have not quite scratched the surface even of how to set boundaries when it comes to technology and online interactions, but it starts with physical ones, [00:15:30] I think. Those are the basic ones that you can start with when children are very young. And respecting boundaries just seems to be a huge theme that's coming up these days. And I don't know if it's gotten harder or we just have kind of lost sight of it, but that's a really interesting example and a great example of how to use pop culture and celebrities to talk with young people about these issues that really does seem to resonate more when they see it in the mass media. That's a great practice.

Dr. Kineka Hull: [16:00](#)

[00:16:00] My other example is when you do become stressed, I think one of the most catchy songs is by Jazmine Sullivan that talks about knocking windows out of people's cars. And so we are like, "No, that's also not the extreme. Let's talk about self-regulation and anger management." But I feel like there are a lot of examples that show what not to do. And as practitioners, we have an opportunity to say, "Let's pivot to see how this could have been handled differently." But that [00:16:30] leads me to my next question. When you talked about the statistics and trends earlier, you expressed how a lot of this is under-reported. Are there any reasons that you can help us understand why folks may not seek help if they are experiencing teen dating violence?

Dr. Marni Kan: [16:48](#)

Yeah, I think there are several barriers for young people to seek help beyond just overall stigma associated with help seeking for a number [00:17:00] of problems. I would say it really depends a

little bit on the community and on what's available, but sometimes young people don't know where to go or who to ask for help. It's sometimes the case we've found that providers in the community that specialize in domestic violence or sexual assault aren't necessarily set up to work with young people like minors. There are some challenges certainly related to providing services to minors around those issues. And so [00:17:30] sometimes there are barriers just related to getting access to those services. Sometimes there's not really time and space made for it in settings that youth find themselves in, certainly school or other community settings.

[17:46](#)

And I think one of the big barriers for teen dating violence particularly is the issue of sometimes youth not knowing if what they're experiencing is really a problem or if it's just the way things are and not feeling [00:18:00] like they should be ruffling any feathers or upsetting any systems by reaching out and saying something. And often, youth care a lot about the people that they're with and around and don't necessarily want to get their friends or partners or peers in trouble. So that can be another challenge to talking about these issues, especially if they are in a committed relationship. There's a lot of mixed emotions potentially. And there are downsides to getting help. There are potential [00:18:30] consequences that they have to work through. That's hard to think about as an adult. It would be even harder with the mind of a young person to kind of-

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[18:37](#)

Absolutely.

Dr. Marni Kan:

[18:38](#)

... weigh those different options and think about how to keep themselves safe and their friends safe. There's a lot of reasons. I think it used to be the case maybe. 20 years ago, we used to say that adults didn't think that teen relationships were something to really take seriously. I feel like the tide has shifted a bit on that. Certainly in the practitioner communities, folks that work with young people I think understand [00:19:00] now how important these relationships are to their development even if they're not long-term relationships or they're all different types of relationships from very casual to very committed. They're all important for teens development and their brains and their ability to have healthy social interactions. So I feel like that has shifted in a good way, but we still haven't necessarily caught up with all the resources. Again, depending on the community, they just may not have a great place to turn [00:19:30] and may feel like there's too many downsides to reaching out for help that the potential benefits aren't worth it.

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[19:37](#)

And so that's our job as the folks that work with young people, is to convince them otherwise and help them overcome some of those barriers, make those helping agencies and helping people more accessible to young people and leave the space for that and destigmatize it to the extent that we can. I guess that's one way that maybe technology can help us, right? The more [00:20:00] people see things, we're much more aware of each other's lives, at least a version of each other's lives. So young people see other figures out there asking for help or getting help for different things. Hopefully that will be an encouragement to them.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[20:14](#)

Young people really watch and they treat other people the way that they see you being treated or how you treat them

Dr. Marni Kan:

[20:22](#)

With technology, it is harder to set boundaries because we have so much unlimited access to each other. [00:20:30] And so we have to establish some new norms as a society about what is acceptable and healthy for the amount of communication that happens. Just because you can text somebody all day long doesn't mean you should, but I don't know that we've sort of settled down from the excitement of being able to do that yet. Or at least among young people, when they get their phones, they're just very excited to be able to be in touch with each other all the time. [00:21:00] And so just like we set boundaries in person, we need to start learning how to do that with technology.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[21:06](#)

Yeah, no, I just really think that we have to just be really mindful of that. I think sometimes we forget just what we experience, young people experience. And technology and social media are here to stay, and so we have to find a way to harness the power and the impact that it has for good. And so I love to see young people advocating for their well-being and the well-being of [00:21:30] others.

[21:30](#)

So for listeners, if you are not familiar with our We Think Twice Campaign, it's a digital campaign for young people, by young people. And so we'll put that link in our resource card for you to share with the young people that you work with or that are a part of your lives because it gives them some great resources on mental health and on healthy relationships. And so I like the fact, Marni, that you highlighted that sometimes [00:22:00] as the practitioners or communities, we need to build our knowledge and our skill set around how to be supportive of young people and how to recognize some signs of teen domestic violence and other risky behaviors. Do you have any strategies that you would suggest that grantees and other youth

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servant agencies can do to be better prepared to help young people?

Dr. Marni Kan:

[22:23](#)

Sure. Yeah. I mean, I think the resources that are available online that you just mentioned are really great. [00:22:30] And there's a lot of great information out there just about this topic. I always recommend the CDC website as well because it goes over all of these issues. They've done a good job collating all of the resources and strategies that are out there that have some evidence behind them for addressing this. So there's just a lot of good information.

[22:51](#)

And I would say that talking with or partnering to the extent that they can with experts and specialists in [00:23:00] violence prevention is always recommended. If there are opportunities to take a training or have a meeting with folks in your community that do provide specialized domestic violence or sexual assault related services, again, it'll be up to the grantee, the youth serving organization and staff to assess how youth centered that work is in their community. But even if it's not, I think the information and their perspective, the [00:23:30] perspective of providers in the domestic violence and sexual assault space is just really helpful to understand and get a sense of what they do and what they do have to offer. Often they have information cards or brochures or things that they're happy share, and that can be something to have on hand.

[23:48](#)

One other thing that could be helpful is just to also ask the youth that you serve what they think about this topic and get a sense of how they're talking about [00:24:00] relationships and how they're talking about some of these behaviors. You can use current events. There's never a shortage of stories in the news or other things could be a talking point. And that's a great way to learn, not necessarily about the statistics or anything like that, but just about how it's defined, explained and assessed in your community because it's going to vary a lot. Some communities have a much easier time even talking about it than others. So sort of getting the lay [00:24:30] of the land, getting a read on how youth are thinking about this issue, whether it's even on their radar. Usually it is, but is probably also a great way to just learn about this topic and understand how these behaviors happen or what other behaviors might be related to teen dating violence in their community.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[24:50](#)

I like how you said sometimes people just don't know enough about the topic or don't feel very comfortable speaking about the topic, or as [00:25:00] you said earlier, don't understand how significant teen relationships can actually be. And so for

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them, they see it not as important of an issue, but we know that it is. And so as our listeners, who are grantees and youth serving organizations, think about how to incorporate these conversations into their programming and emphasizing to use the importance of and the significance of teen dating violence, what [00:25:30] are some strategies that you would recommend?

Dr. Marni Kan:

[25:32](#)

Starting with reaching out to a local organization that specializes in this? If you as a youth serving organization or a grantee have not really directly addressed this topic before, we tend to recommend starting with developing some sort of partnership or at least opportunity to talk with a local organization that provides domestic violence and sexual assault services. And using that to again, orient yourselves [00:26:00] to how they work and what they might have to offer. And then I would say think about to what extent you would want to address this issue in your programming because it can really range a lot from having materials available as needed to adding an entire curriculum or a curriculum module to what you're offering. There's quite a range there in what grantees and youth serving organizations can do.

[NEW_PARAGRAPH]So I think part of [00:26:30] deciding about that is understanding what the needs are of the youth. What are you hearing? What challenges are youth experiencing? What are they interested in talking about? Obviously, that's a great way to make decisions about what you're going to cover and how. A lot of youth are really excited to talk about relationships and relationship challenges. So that might be a good entry point for addressing this topic. And it's important to know what is available that matches the needs [00:27:00] of your community. So that's where some of these resources that are online can really be helpful in looking over curricula or materials that have been developed for different populations and different age groups and figuring out what is going to be most useful to the young people that you serve.

[27:20](#)

But yeah, you don't have to do that alone. We've seen organizations that serve youth have a lot of success when they engage in some cross-training with a domestic violence [00:27:30] or sexual assault provider. So the idea would be that your staff would get trained some on this topic and how to be a support to youth, how to best go about figuring out if a young person that you're working with needs more enhanced services and trying to connect them with those services. And then you can also educate that provider about the work that you do and what you hear from young people in your community and the issues that are important to them. So it's a great opportunity

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[00:28:00] to kind of share information in both directions. We see that it tends to result in kind of a stronger plan and more consistent collaboration over time.

[28:11](#)

So then I would say depending on whether you determine that an additional curriculum or a module or something is available, I mean those can really range from something very brief to a multi-hour program. So it would depend on what the organization decides [00:28:30] to use. I would recommend looking into what supports are available for the materials that you think are going to work best for your young people and whether adaptations are going to be needed to make it fit, make it relevant, make it work for the people that you serve.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[28:48](#)

I think that is wonderful how you talk about really being in tune to the population that you're serving and tailoring things to make sure that it's the best fit for them. And that's a huge [00:29:00] part of preparing for implementation and knowing your audience. And also, like you said, bringing in experts because you're talking about sensitive information for a young person who may not realize that they're experiencing dating violence. And so you want to have someone readily accessible to talk them through some things that they're processing, what is happening. And so a lot of our listeners are going to have an advisory board. And so when you're thinking about your partners, [00:29:30] it's a good fit to have someone who can provide psychological or mental health support, someone who is well versed in sexual assault and teen dating violence because as young are learning about what's normative and what's not, you may need someone on hand in case someone self-reports or self-disclosed that they are going through something. And so when we think about trauma-informed practices and referrals, are there any best strategies or tips [00:30:00] that you would like to give our listeners?

Dr. Marni Kan:

[30:01](#)

Yeah, I would say one of the things that we've learned is that it's pretty rare for youth to disclose directly to, especially in a group setting or in a school setting or somewhere where they're not receiving necessarily specialized services, but just kind of getting general education or general prevention programming. It's pretty rare that they would come up and disclose something. Where the value is in providing them [00:30:30] with the information and the tools that they might need. So there's a strategy like you were just saying, providing general information about what a healthy and unhealthy relationship might look like, examples of different behaviors. And asking them not directly, but sort of in a rhetorical way, "Does this seem familiar? Is this similar to what you've experienced in

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relationships??" things like that, just to get them thinking [00:31:00] about whether they may have experienced teen dating violence or some type of unhealthy relationship behavior.

[31:07](#)

And making sure that they know where to go if they want to talk with somebody, whether that's you as the organization facilitator of a program, whether that's someone at their school or someone else in the community, whether they are able to contact a provider of violence related services. So whatever that situation is in your community, it's really helpful to [00:31:30] just give them that information and that education, even if you're not getting... Maybe you do a presentation or you bring in a special speaker to make a presentation and you're talking about the issue, not expecting a lot of young people are going to come up after and say, "I need help with this." That's not likely to happen. But giving them that information and the resources and tools to know where to go, we have seen to be a good practice.

[31:55](#)

Along with potentially asking them in a confidential setting [00:32:00] if that's available. We recognize that it's really hard sometimes to get youth one-on-one if that's not part of normal programming. And we can do it in surveys, we can ask questions, but that information is when we're doing a survey not used to follow up and provide services. So it requires a bit of creativity if you really want to solicit information, but it's not necessary.

[32:23](#)

I think the most important thing is sort of knowing who you can refer youth to and who they can approach themselves [00:32:30] if they're not going to disclose. And I think those same providers in the community that provide violence-related services could also provide resources or training if that's something that your organization is interested in related to trauma-informed practices. But all, I think some of that boils down to understanding the community, understanding what the experiences of the young people in your community generally have been, what [00:33:00] the backgrounds of the young people might be, and whether you have a lot of young people who have experienced what we call adverse childhood experiences, different types of stressors in their lives. So yeah, it kind of goes in hand with knowing the needs of your community and the young people that you're serving.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[33:17](#)

I like how you asked, "Does this sound familiar? Have you experienced or seen this?" I know a lot of times when we're talking with young people, they'll say, "Well, I'm not

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experiencing this myself, but [00:33:30] I know someone who may be." And so I like how you emphasize that sometimes young people may not feel comfortable disclosing, even though they may view you as a trusted adult, but making sure that they know the mechanisms to seek help for themselves or share resources or help for someone that they know might need it. I feel like that fills their ability to advocate for themselves.

Dr. Marni Kan: [33:54](#)

Some programs actually use the strategy of helping friends, helping others [00:34:00] as a way to teach young people how to be a good support to others, but sort of indirectly also teach them how to ask for help or what to look for in an unhealthy relationship. And it sort of takes the pressure off a little bit of them feeling like they're being watched, but just how to kind of keep an eye on what's going on in the relationships around you. So that's also a great strategy that some programs have used.

Dr. Kineka Hull: [34:27](#)

I like that. And so we talked a lot about what [00:34:30] agencies and facilitators or grantees can do, but what are some ways that we can get parents involved and let them know about this important topic and ways that they can support youth and programs can support them?

Dr. Marni Kan: [34:44](#)

That is a tough one. Maybe that's changing a little bit, I think. It has historically been difficult to even tell parents that this is an issue that they need to be concerned about. I think getting them engaged in sexual health [00:35:00] related efforts. Some grantees have challenges there too with parents in certain communities, but if you think that's hard, try talking to them about teen dating violence. But there are certainly resources. There are some great sort of brief tip sheets, conversations starters, different tools online that have been developed for parents, both for providers to share information with parents and also for parents to use and talking [00:35:30] with youth.

[35:30](#)

I think relationships are an area where it's very hard to be a parent and talk to young people about what's going on, especially if they're relating to their peers and their partners in ways that their parents didn't experience in the previous generation. That makes it even more challenging. And I do think the explosion of technology and use of technology for good and problematic relationship [00:36:00] behaviors is a potential strong entry point for engaging parents because I think parents do care about keeping their children safe online and how to best monitor what their children are doing with technology or how to keep it from taking over their children's lives. So that might be a creative way to start the conversation with parents and reach out about dating abuse as well, because it's all part of

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that same spectrum of issues that parents [00:36:30] are really concerned about.

[36:31](#)

So I would recommend that a youth serving organization that's going to be talking about these topics at least share something brief with parents about what they're covering with the young people and what the resources are. But there's also, at the other end of the spectrum, whole curricula for working with parents on talking to young people about sexual health and healthy relationships and violence prevention.

[36:56](#)

So again, depending on the approach that's going to work best [00:37:00] for your organization and fits with what your community is interested in and engaged in, there's a variety of options. But I will not pretend that it's easy to get parents to the table to have frame conversations about dating violence and preventing that. There may be groups of parents already organized that could be leveraged for having conversations about this. And again, piggybacking on things that the parents are already interested in [00:37:30] and bringing in speakers to talk about. I know my kids school's PTA had an event about internet safety, and so that could be a jumping off point for a discussion about healthy relationships, even if that's not necessarily the original intent of that session. So think creatively about ways to get parents to the table and talking about this. And I am hopeful that the tides are changing there too, where parents are a little bit more open to hearing about and thinking about how they can [00:38:00] help support their young people.

Dr. Kineka Hull:

[38:02](#)

I consider myself to be a fun 'tie. So for those of you guys who are familiar with the podcast, that's a fun auntie. And I'm trying to stay on top of the trends and conversations, not just professionally, but personally. And I think one of the most helpful things that came out a couple of years ago professionally and personally was a cheat sheet of acronyms and emojis and different things that we're going through. And it was [00:38:30] saying like, "If your child is speaking in this lingo or you're seeing text messages or posts that have these phrasings, like this is what it means." And I was like, "Kids are creative." I don't think we were that creative in finding ways to talk about things that went over adults' heads.

[38:48](#)

And so I think that now that we are in this age of social media, in this age of technology where things are moving so fast, as practitioners, parents, [00:39:00] guardians, trusted adults, that we have to keep our eyes and ears on the pulse of what's happening. But like you said, we cannot and don't have to do that alone. As practitioners, we're constantly learning and

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leaning on each other. And hopefully parents and young people realize that we are all partners and willing to share expertise and do anything that we can within our grasp to help young people. Is there anything [00:39:30] else that you would like to share with listeners?

Dr. Marni Kan: [39:32](#) Well, I guess I would love to reiterate the hopeful message that teen dating violence, intimate partner violence is preventable and there are a lot of great resources and strategies out there now. And so it's definitely worth continuing to have these conversations with young people, engage them and keep those lines of communication open with both the young people and their families [00:40:00] and encourage them to do that with each other to keep the community looking out for each other in this area. There are going to continue to be new and unexpected challenges, I think, for practitioners, but you all are the experts with the young people that you serve and your community and just sort of staying connected and continuing to keep the conversations going. I think we'll go a long way.

[40:27](#) As well as helping young people continue [00:40:30] to develop the skills. Even if the skills are implemented a little bit differently than maybe they used to be, it is a similar set of skills of communication, negotiation, speaking up for oneself. Some of those things cut across these different areas. And so I think those are always useful to talk about and to help build in the young people.

Dr. Kineka Hull: [40:54](#) This has been a fantastic conversation with a lot of valuable information. And [00:41:00] with everything that you shared that I know will be extremely useful with our listeners, is there one key thing that you would like to close with?

Dr. Marni Kan: [41:11](#) I would say that teen dating violence prevention is not that far removed from sexual health promotion and teen pregnancy prevention. They are both really interconnected and under this umbrella of healthy relationships. And so it's not [00:41:30] a far stretch to be able to address both of those in your programming and in your efforts.

Dr. Kineka Hull: [41:36](#) Thank you very much, Marni. This has been a fantastic episode and I look forward to seeing all the great things that you continue to do in the topic. This has been another episode of the Elevate Youth Programming Podcast. Thank you for listening.

[41:56](#) If you enjoy today's conversation, be sure to like and follow [00:42:00] Elevate Youth Programming on your podcast

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platform of choice. For information on today's topic and resources in adolescent pregnancy prevention visit The Exchange at teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov.

[42:17](#)

The Elevate Youth Programming Podcast is funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau. The content in each episode is not the opinion of FYSB, nor is training and technical assistance contractors. [00:42:30] I'm Kineka Hull, and this has been another episode of Elevate Youth Programming.