

WEBINAR

Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Program



FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau

Adolescent Pregnancy
Prevention Program



Like, Love, Follow:
**Understanding Teen Dating Violence
in The Digital World**

March 23, 2023

3:00 – 4:30 PM EST

Sydney Briggs
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Child Trends

Presenters



Sydney Briggs

Research Scientist
Child Trends



Abigail Wulah

Research Analyst
Child Trends

Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Describe foundational information on the prevalence and dynamics of teen dating violence;
- Describe the contemporary, digital context in which teens are dating and experiencing romantic relationships;
- Discuss strategies for promoting healthy relationship skills within Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) programming to prevent teen dating violence;
- Identify grantee- and youth-focused resources on teen dating violence.

Dating Violence: True or False?

1. Dating violence is rare among high school students and college students.
2. When a young person leaves an abusive relationship, the abuse usually ends.
3. Drug and/or alcohol use is often a factor in dating violence incidents.
4. The best way to get a friend to leave an abusive relationship is to "cut ties" with them.
5. If violence occurs once in a teen dating relationship, it is likely to happen again.

Adapted from the NCDSV Dating Violence Quiz



Foundational Knowledge, Concepts, and Statistics on Teen Dating Violence

Abigail Wulah

Intimate Partner Violence

- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), also referred to as domestic violence (DV), is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner **to maintain power and control** over another partner in an intimate relationship.
 - IPV can take place between current or former partners.
- Some examples of these behaviors include physical, sexual, economic, emotional, or psychological aggression (including coercive acts).

(Breiding et al., 2015)

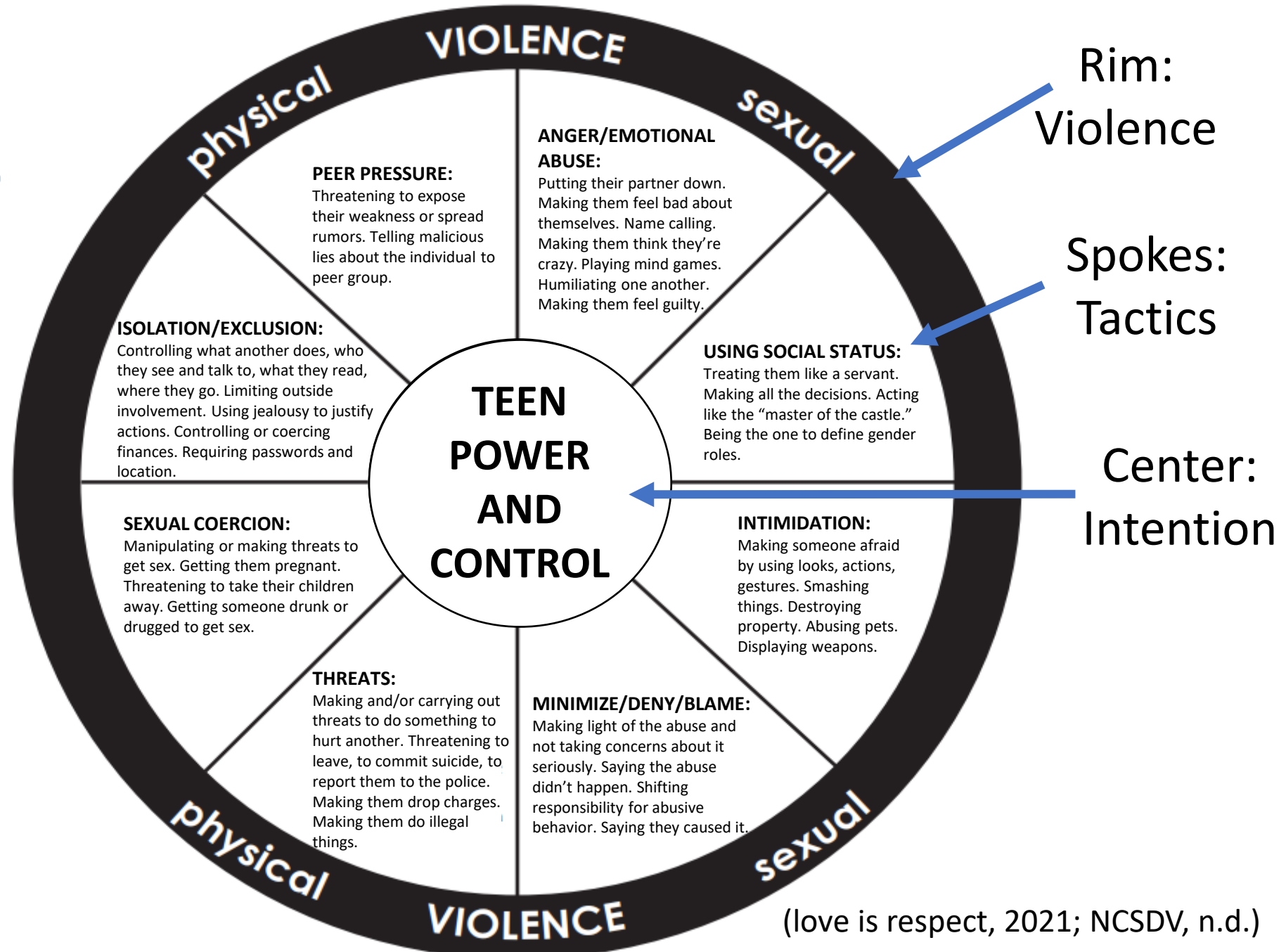
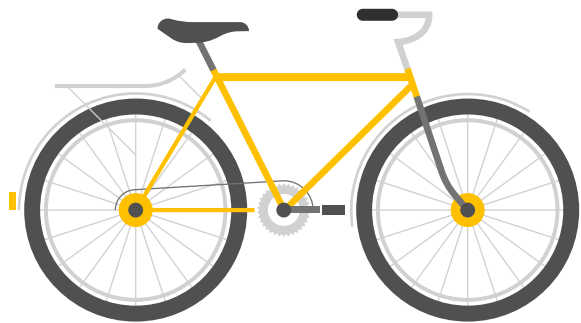
Teen Dating Violence

- IPV between persons ages 13 – 19 is known as Teen Dating Violence (TDV).
- TDV can take place in person, online, or through other technology.
- Millions of teens experience TDV, which can lead to:
 - Future IPV and sexual violence at later point(s) in life.
 - Serious negative impact on teens' health and well-being in their adolescence and through adulthood.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022)

Teen Power and Control Wheel

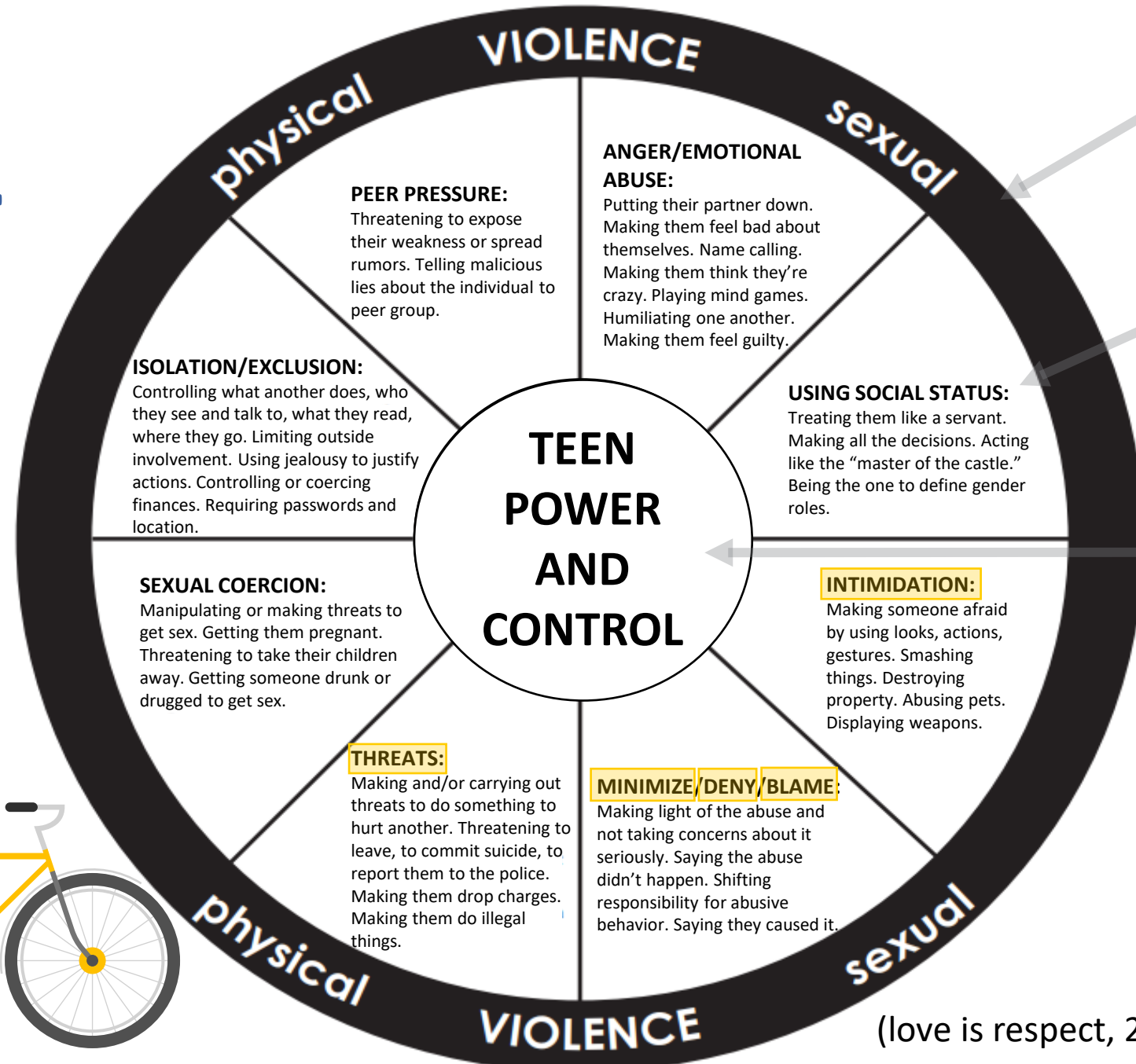
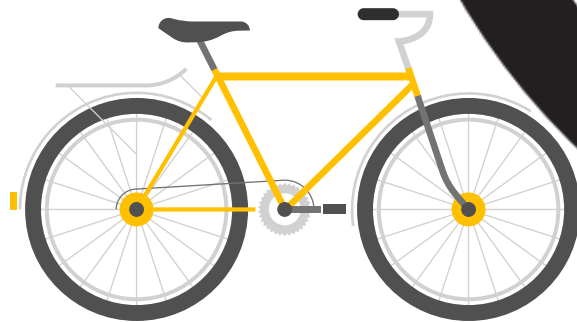
Teens can use multiple tactics to exert power or control over their intimate partners. Ultimately, these behaviors form patterns of physical or sexual violence.



(love is respect, 2021; NCSDV, n.d.)

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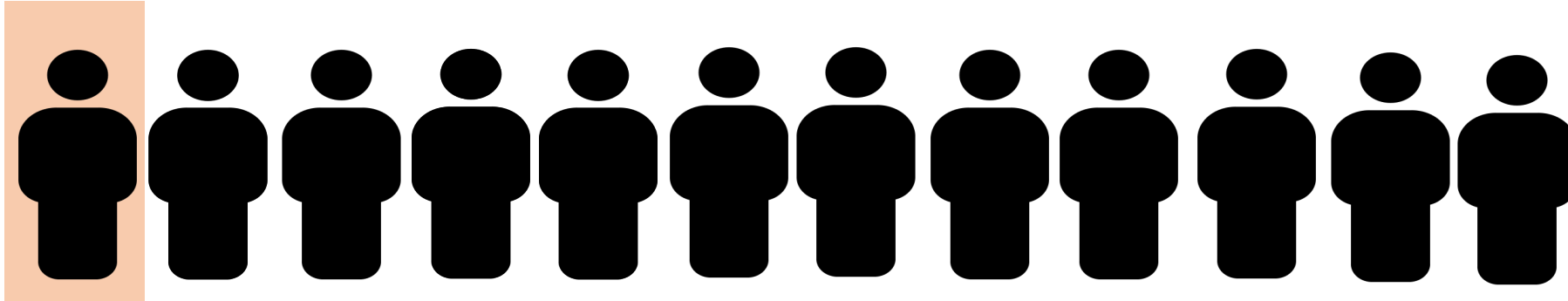
Rim:
Violence

Spokes:
Tactics

Center:
Intention

(love is respect, 2021; NCSDV, n.d.)

TDV Prevalence in US



Among U.S. high school students that reported dating in the past year:

At least 1 in 12 experienced physical dating violence

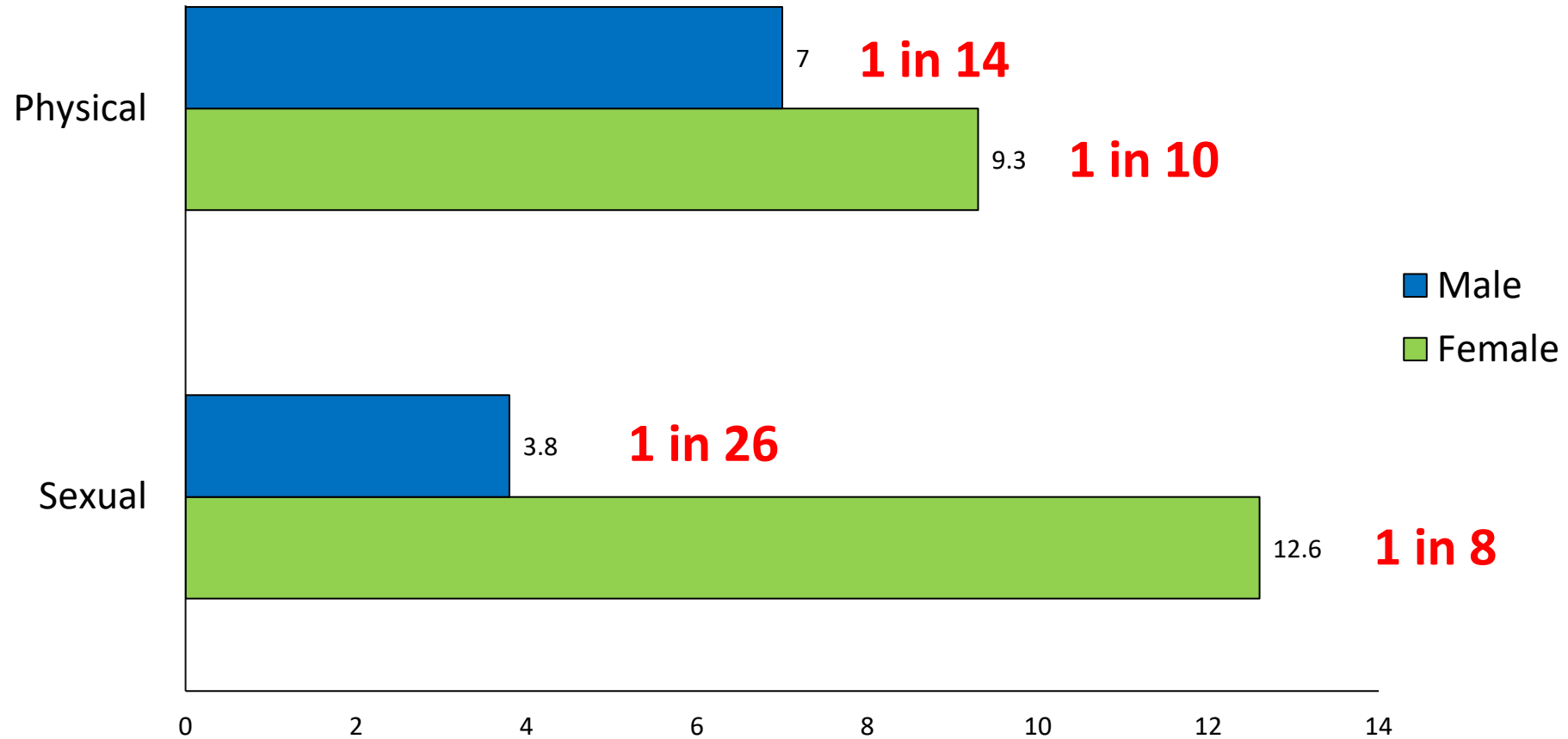
At least 1 in 12 experienced sexual dating violence

However, TDV prevalence rate can vary between studies based on measurement tools used and the respondent age

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022)

Female students experienced higher rates of physical and sexual dating violence than male students

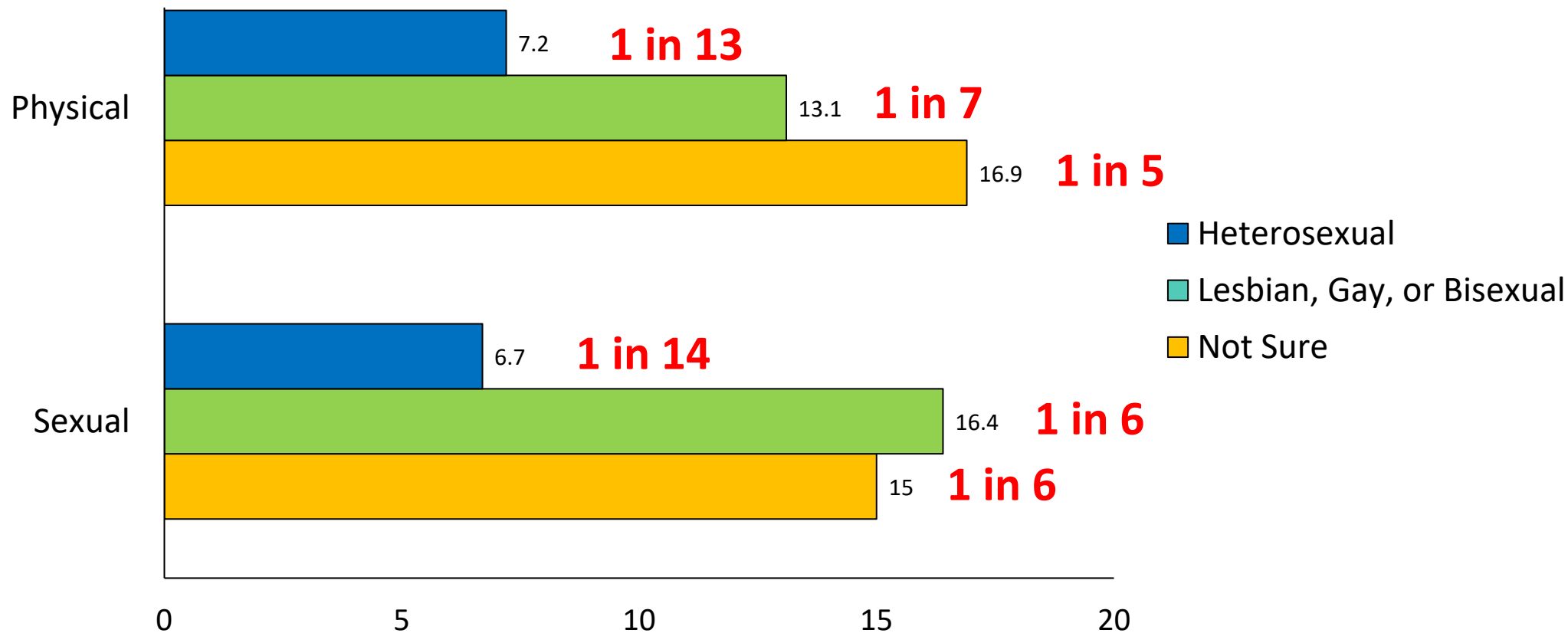
Percentage of High School Students Who Reported Dating and Experienced Physical and Sexual TDV During the Past Year by Sex, United States, YRBS, 2019



(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022)

Students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual identity experienced higher rates of physical and sexual TDV than heterosexual students

Percentage of High School Students Who Reported Dating and Experienced Physical and Sexual TDV During the Past Year by Sexual Identity, United States, YRBS, 2019



(Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022)

Strong Risk Factors for TDV

Experiencing violence

- Family or parental violence, including IPV
- Prior TDV victimization
- Normative beliefs about gender inequality
- Peer acceptance of TDV
- Sex before age 16

Using violence

- Family or parental violence, including IPV
- Prior TDV experience or use
- Sexual risk taking (i.e., early sex, multiple sex partners, inconsistent condom use)
- Approval of violence
- Depression
- Substance use
- Delinquency (i.e., minor crimes)

(Youth.gov, n.d.; Mennicke, et. al., 2021; Spencer, et. al. 2019)

The Impact of Experiencing TDV

TDV is associated with many negative outcomes for teen health and well-being.

Physical and Mental Health

- Depression
- Substance use
- Anxiety
- PTSD
- Eating disorders
- Suicidal ideation
- Death

Social Life and Relationships

- Sexual risk-taking
- Bullying (and other anti-social behaviors – lying, theft, hitting)
- Social isolation
- Future IPV

Education and Career

- Poor school performance and absenteeism
- Expulsion
- Juvenile/criminal record or confinement
- Job loss

(Padilla-Medina, et. al., 2021; Russell, et. al., 2021)

Protective Factors for TDV

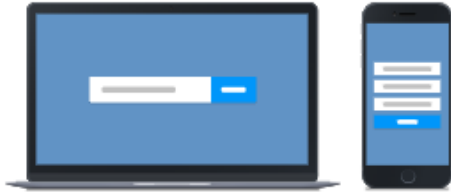
- Social support
- Parental monitoring
- Empathy
- School belonging



(Spencer, et al., 2019; Espelage, et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2019)

Poll Everywhere Logistics

Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **ZBALEN223**
- 3 Respond to activity

Join by Text



- 1 Text **ZBALEN223** to **22333**
- 2 Text in your message

What are behaviors or changes that might make you concerned that a young person is experiencing dating violence (TDV)?

Possible Warning Signs That a Young Person May Be Experiencing TDV Include...

- Problems at school
 - Consistent attendance problems
 - Noticeable drop in grades
 - Sudden requests for changes in class schedule
- Noticeable weight change
- Changes in behavior
 - Passive or quieter than usual
 - Drop in self-confidence
- Isolation from social group
- Regular bruising or other injuries
- Alcohol or drug use
- One teen seems to be controlling the other
 - Physically – one person's arm is always firmly around the other person
 - Socially – one person monopolizes the other person's time
 - Electronically – one person is repeatedly calling, texting, etc. when communication is unwanted

Activity from Dating Matters® Toolkit

What are behaviors or changes that might make you concerned that a young person is abusing their partner?

Possible Warning Signs That a Young Person May Be Using TDV Include...

- Insists on walking dating partner to class
- Threatens to hurt others
- Threatens to hurt self if dating partner breaks up with him/her
- Insults a dating partner in public or private
- Damages or destroys a dating partner's personal belongings
- Attempts to control what a dating partner wears

Activity from Dating Matters® Toolkit

Summary

- Teen Dating Violence is a common experience among U.S teens. Female and sexual minority students experience higher rates of TDV than their male and heterosexual counterparts, respectively.
- TDV can have negative and long-lasting impacts on many areas in the teen's life, including their physical and mental health, social life and relationships, and education and career.
- Social support, parental monitoring, having empathy, and school belonging can decrease a teen's risk of experiencing or using TDV.
- Knowing the warning signs for TDV can help you identify teens who may need help or support.

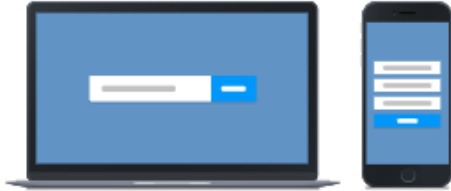
A photograph of three teenagers sitting on concrete steps, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The person on the right is holding a smartphone. The person on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants. The person in the middle is wearing a grey t-shirt and light blue jeans. The person on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and light blue jeans. The person on the left is wearing dark sneakers. The person in the middle is wearing dark sneakers. The person on the right is wearing colorful sneakers (orange, blue, and white).

Teen Dating Violence in the Digital World

Sydney Briggs

Poll Everywhere Logistics

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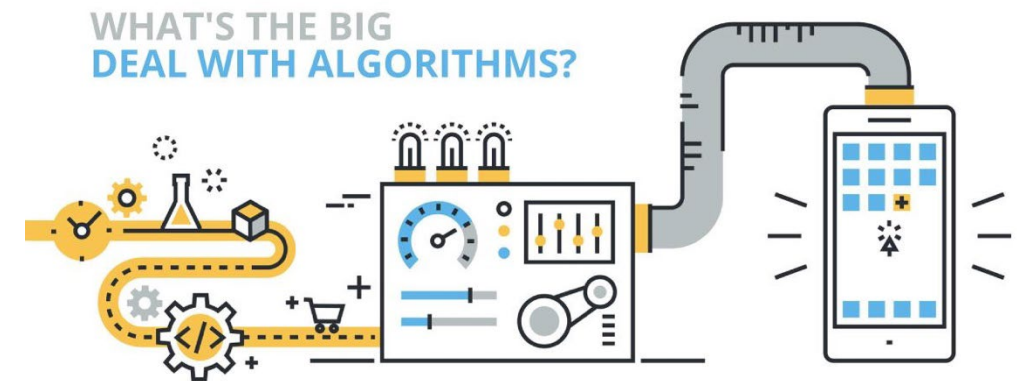


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Think back to when you were a teen, what did dating look like for you? How did you define dating when you were a teen?

Social Media Influences How Teens View and Behave Within Relationships

- 97% of teens report going online (Vogels et. al. 2022)
 - 46% report that they are online “almost constantly” and 48% “several times a day” (Vogels et. al. 2022)
- Social media algorithms
 - What you view and who you follow will shape what you see
 - AI will clump ‘like’ people together and show certain videos and images
 - Can expose youth to negative messaging on relationships
- Influencers
 - Dictate trends and normalize topics
- Online ‘challenges’
 - Creates trending videos
 - Performative behaviors



Teen Dating in the Digital World

- **Social environment** of romantic relationships is **online** and more **visible**
- Ability to read and **analyze online interactions** of romantic partners
- **Self-esteem** linked to **social media portrayals** and **interactions**
- **Visual depictions** of romantic relationships deemed **important**
- **Searching** for ex-partners on social media leads to higher **stress**, **longing**, and **lower personal growth**
- **Sharing passwords** as a mutual **token of love** and trust and as an insurance policy against unfaithfulness

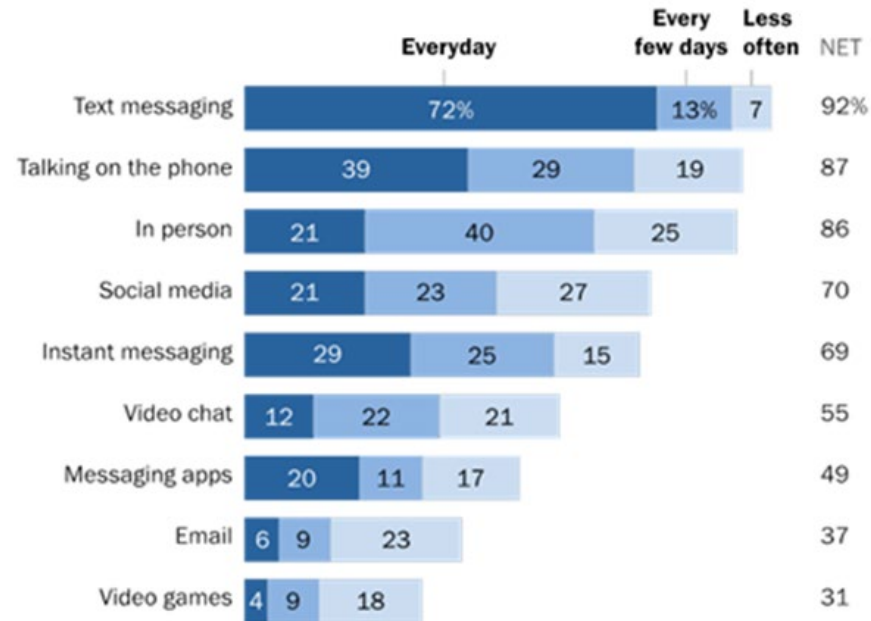
(Lenhart, 2015; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

What Digital Spaces are Teens Using in Their Relationships?

- Text messaging
- ‘DMs’
- Social media
 - Tik Tok
 - Instagram
 - Snapchat
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - BeReal

Text Messaging Dominates Daily Communication for Teens and Romantic Partners

% of teens with relationship experience who spend time with a significant other in the following ways



Source: Pew Research Center Teens Relationships Survey, Sept. 25-Oct. 9, 2014, and Feb. 10-March 16, 2015 (n=361 teens ages 13 to 17 who have ever been in some kind of romantic relationship).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(Lenhart et. al., 2015)

Digital Dating Abuse

The control, harassment, stalking, and abuse of one's dating partner via technology and social media

Types of Digital Dating Abuse

Harassment

Control

Monitoring

Sexual
Coercion

(Hellevik, 2019; Zweig et. al., 2014)

Many Teens Experience Digital Dating Abuse

$\frac{1}{4}$ of young people (12-17) reported being a victim of digital dating abuse in the past year

(Hinduja et. al., 2021)

- **Online disinhibition effect:** Perceived distance from those they are interacting with online leads to people saying and doing things they may not in person

(Suler, 2004)

Digital Harassment

- Checking up on romantic partner **with excessive calls, texts, or messaging**
- Getting **angry or upset** with partner when they **don't respond** to texts, calls, social media
- **Spreading rumors, insulting, or humiliating** partner online
- Sending or leaving **threatening messages** by voicemail, messages, or texts including **threat to harm self, partner, or property**

(Hellevik, 2019; Van Ouytsel, 2016)

Digital Harassment

“He **sent texts all the time** [...] in the beginning that was exciting, we were so in love. [...] But then he started to **get very angry**. If I fell asleep without saying ‘Good night,’ when I woke up, I would have **20 unanswered phone calls**. [...] And he would get these **fits of rage** [...] if I didn't answer the phone – it would be a lot of voicemails about him **‘coming to get me’** and stuff like that.”

(Hellevik, 2019)

Digital Monitoring

- **Demanding** to know **passwords** and pin codes
- Reading and **checking partner's phone** and **messages** without permission
- Checking on **where** partner is and **what** they are doing, possibly **tracking location** of partner's phone
- **Monitoring** partner's **social media** posts, likes, friends and other accounts that partner may appear in

(Hellevik, 2019; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

Digital Monitoring

“If I put my phone in flight mode because I'm busy, he will say ‘No, you didn't, it was turned off,’ and then **he'll send a lot of text messages**, either from a **known number or hidden**, and if I answer the phone he will hang up immediately, because then he knows that I have seen his texts, and then I was **afraid that someone had tagged me** in a photo, so that he would **see that I was here [at event].”**

(Hellevik, 2019)

Digital Control

- **Controlling whereabouts** of partner by asking what partner is doing and with whom, especially when based on images and videos posted online without the partner present
- **Controlling** and asking questions about **posts** and **friends list** of partner's online profiles
- **Asking** (forcing) partner to **remove friends, posts, photos**, etc. on social media

(Hellevik, 2019; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

Digital Control

“I had to stop hanging out with male friends [...] I would **block all boys on Instagram** and such things, those **were things that I had to do** that I did not like, I was allowed to be friends with boys on Facebook, **those he knew who [they] were**, but I was **not allowed to talk to them...**”

(Hellevik, 2019)

Sexual Coercion

- **Pressuring** partner into **sending sexually explicit pictures**
- **Taking and sharing sexually explicit pictures/videos** of partner without permission
- **Forcing partner to engage in sexual acts** via the internet or phone

(Hellevik, 2019; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

Sexual Coercion

*Context: “The boyfriend [...] took a photo of her breasts and distributed it to a friend, who posted it on The Pirate Bay after the boyfriend **tried to blackmail her into sending him more revealing, intimate pictures.** She refused.”*

"Yes, it [the **picture getting sent to the friend**] didn't happen until just recently, maybe a month ago, or maybe more than that. He [the ex-boyfriend] sent it out, [...] he **sent it out a long time after we had broken up.**"

(Hellevik, 2019)

Digital Dating Abuse Goes Beyond the Digital World

- Online victimization associated with in-person victimization
 - Sexual, psychological, and physical forms of offline dating violence
 - Non-partner sexual violence
- Linked to other forms of abuse
 - Offline bullying
 - Cyberbullying

(Hinduja et. al., 2021; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

81%

of students who
**experienced digital
dating abuse**
had also been the
**target of traditional
dating abuse**

(Hinduja et al., 2021)

Correlates of Experiencing Digital Dating Abuse

Emotional and Psychological Outcomes

- Depressive symptoms
- Anxiety & anxious partner attachment
- Anger or hostility
- Suicidality

Health Risk Behaviors

- Heavy episodic drinking
- Sexual activity
- Higher number of lifetime sexual partners
- Contraceptive non-use

Other Risky Behaviors

- Bringing a weapon to school
- Vandalism
- Attempted theft
- Engage in other online risky behaviors

(Hinduja et. al., 2021; Van Ouytsel et. al., 2016)

A group of people with their hands stacked in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and support. The image is overlaid with a blue semi-transparent filter.

Empowerment, Agency, and Consent – Using an Asset-Based Approach

Sydney Briggs

Elements of Healthy Relationship Programming

- Examine characteristics of healthy and unhealthy romantic and sexual relationships.
- Define sexual consent and discuss its implications.
- Explore gender norms and stereotypes.
- Build communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Teach strategies for safe intervention or help-seeking.
- Provide resources on relationship abuse and sexual assault.
- Train staff on understanding TDV, handling disclosures, and fostering positive school climate.

(Futures Without Violence. Vision for Healthy Relationships Education. Checklist for Healthy Relationships Curriculum.)

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(Futures Without Violence. Vision for Healthy Relationships Education. Checklist for Healthy Relationships Curriculum.)

Agency and Empowerment

- “The personal capability to act and make free and informed choices to pursue a specific goal” (UNICEF, n.d.)
- “A person’s agency in a brief episode of interaction is, in part, whether he or she initiates an idea, agrees with, elaborates on, questions, or disagrees with what someone else initiated, or refrains from responding. It also depends on whether her or his action is accepted, elaborated, questioned, challenged, or ignored.” (Gresalfi et al. 2009)
- Context dependent, occurs in social practice (Nagaoka et al. 2015)

Consent

- “Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity.” (RAINN, n.d.)
- “Consent cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious.” (RAINN, n.d.)
 - Legal definitions of what constitutes underage vary according to states’ age-of-consent laws and close-in-age or “Romeo and Juliet” laws.
- Consent cannot be freely given in situations of intimidation or threat.
- Past consent does not constitute future consent.
- A person can change their mind, thereby withdrawing consent, at any time.
- Physiological responses do not constitute consent.

Consent

Discussion questions for adolescents

- “What do you think consent means?”
- “Why do you think so many people place a great deal of importance on consent?”
- “What do you think about consent?”

Possible response

- “Other people’s bodies do not belong to us.”
- “Everyone is entitled to feel safe during a sexual experience.”
- “If we’re having partnered sex for fun and pleasure that can only happen if everyone involved wants what’s happening.”
- “Touching someone sexually without their consent is a crime.”



(Thornhill, 2020)

The Relationship Spectrum

HEALTHY

A **healthy relationship** means that both you and your partner are:

Communicating: You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.

Respectful: You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital and sexual boundaries.

Trusting: You believe what your partner has to say. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.

Honest: You are honest with each other, but can still keep some things private.

Equal: You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.

Enjoying personal time: You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.

UNHEALTHY

You may be in an **unhealthy relationship** if one or both partners is:

Not communicating: When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.

Disrespectful: One or both partners is not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.

Not trusting: One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels entitled to invade their privacy.

Dishonest: One or both partners tells lies.

Trying to take control: One partner feels their desires and choices are more important.

Only spending time with your partner: Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.

ABUSIVE

Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner:

Communicates in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demeaning.

Disrespects the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.

Physically hurts or injures the other partner by hitting, slapping, choking, pushing or shoving.

Blames the other partner for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.

Controls and isolates the other partner by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.

Pressures or forces the other partner to do things they don't want to do; threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they resist or say no.

Activity

Where do these examples belong on the relationship spectrum?

1. Your partner uses a name or pronoun that you don't like but stops using it once you correct them or ask them not to.
2. When you go to your favorite restaurant and order something different, your partner acts disgusted and calls you stupid for ordering it.
3. Your partner appreciates your passions and encourages you to do the things you love.
4. Your partner randomly stops by your job even though you told them it made you uncomfortable.
5. If you have a disagreement, your partner uses the silent treatment and won't talk to you for days.
6. After an argument, your partner blocks the doorway and takes your keys to prevent you from leaving.

(Activity from the love is respect Healthy Relationship High School Educators Tool Kit)

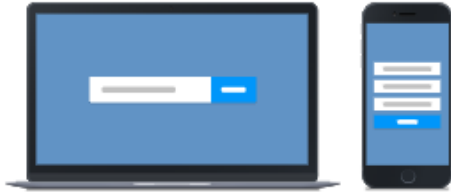
Supporting Youth Experiencing TDV

- Share your concern for the youth's safety and well-being.
- Be supportive and understanding, not accusatory or judgmental.
- Focus on behaviors, not the person.
- Believe them and take them seriously.
- Talk about safety and provide resources.
- Ask how they feel, how they want you to support them, and what they want to do.
- Be aware of reporting mandates and be upfront about them.

(Information adapted from the love is respect Healthy Relationship High School Educators' Tool Kit and the love is respect TDVAM 2021 Action Guide)

Poll Everywhere Logistics

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Join by Text



- 1 Text **ZBALEN223** to **22333**
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What are some ways you might respond to this statement:
"I feel like my partner wants to pressure me into doing things I don't like or know if I am ready for."

Activity – Example Responses

“I feel like my partner wants to pressure me into doing things I don’t like or know if I am ready for.”

“That sounds like a really challenging thing to go through and I’m glad you felt like you could raise it with me. You shouldn’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. What do you think might happen if you talked to your partner about feeling pressured?”

(Activity adapted from the love is respect Parent Discussion Guide on Youth Healthy Relationships)

**What are some ways you might respond to this statement:
"I really love my partner, but they keep demanding I skip
work. I'm worried I might be fired."**

Activity – Example Responses

“I really love my partner, but they keep demanding I skip work. I’m worried I might be fired.”

“You have a right to space and responsibilities outside of your relationship and your partner should be supportive of your independence. Your feelings are valid. How have things gone previously when you’ve talked to your partner about this?”

(Activity adapted from the love is respect Parent Discussion Guide on Youth Healthy Relationships)

**What are some ways you might respond to this statement:
"I am not sure why my partner wants my phone password,
but I don't want to share it."**

Activity – Example Responses

“I am not sure why my partner wants my password, but I don’t want to share it.”

“Passwords are private, and it is important to have digital boundaries in a healthy relationship. Boundaries are yours to build. What do you think might happen if you don’t give your partner your password?”

(Activity adapted from the love is respect Parent Discussion Guide on Youth Healthy Relationships)

Key Takeaways

- Dating violence is a relatively common experience for young people and it must be taken seriously.
- Dating violence can have long-lasting impacts on young people who experience it.
- Digital dating violence is highly relevant to young people today.
- SRAE programs have an opportunity to prevent dating violence by addressing it directly and by promoting self-efficacy and healthy relationships.
- If you're concerned that a young person is experiencing TDV, talk with them non-judgmentally and let them guide any next steps.

The background is a dark blue gradient with a repeating pattern of question marks inside speech bubbles. The speech bubbles are in various shades of blue, purple, and grey, and are scattered across the entire image. The word "Questions?" is written in white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and slightly below the vertical center.

Questions?

Highlighted Resources

love is respect. Healthy Relationship High School Educators Toolkit.

love is respect. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month 2023. Action Guide.

CDC. Dating Matters® Toolkit.

Futures without Violence.
thatsnotcool.com and the Cool Not Cool Quiz

VAWnet. Preventing and Responding to Teen Dating Violence – Pregnancy Prevention Programs.

FYSB. Incorporating Teen Dating Violence Prevention into Your Personal Responsibility Education Program.

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Thank you!

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