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Middle School Boys May Hold Key to Stopping Relationship Violence Before it Happens
Clinical Trial of "Coaching Boys Into Men" shows new promise for violence prevention among boys, 11-14

San Francisco, Calif., January 13, 2020-- Futures Without Violence today received prestigious scientific recognition of "Coaching Boys Into Men," the organization's signature program that seeks to teach healthy relationship skills and prevent dating violence among adolescents, through "everyday education" delivered by athletic coaches to their young male athletes in high school and college.

According to clinical trial results published today in *JAMA Pediatrics*, Coaching Boys Into Men is also effective in reducing abusive behaviors among male athletes toward their female peers, as early as middle school (ages 11-14).

"This groundbreaking evidence shows we can effectively reach youth at their most impressionable ages, while they are in middle school," said Esta Soler, president of Futures Without Violence. "This affirms the years of work we have done primarily with high school and college student-athletes and provides new opportunities for helping even more youth build positive, healthy relationship skills earlier in life."

The trial, led by Elizabeth Miller, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, examined the short- and long-term effectiveness of Coaching Boys Into Men.

"Given the prevalence of sexual violence and relationship abuse, as well as precursors like sexual harassment and homophobic teasing, we wanted to test whether the program could help middle school youth and have a similar impact as it has among high school students," said Miller, who also is professor of pediatrics, public health and clinical and translational science at the University of Pittsburgh.

The UPMC study, conducted between spring 2015 and fall 2017, included 973 male athletes in 41 middle schools, half of which were randomly selected to participate in the program. Participants receiving the intervention reported increases in positive bystander behaviors — such as intervening

when a peer is being disrespectful toward others — by more than 50% by the end of the sports season, compared to participants in the control group.

This effect persisted through the year of follow-up. Male athletes at schools that implemented the program as intended were more than twice as likely to report positive bystander behaviors a year after its conclusion than male athletes at schools that did not participate in the program. Improvements also emerged in athletes' recognition of what constitutes abusive behaviors as well as their attitudes related to gender equity.

“As mentors and role models for their young athletes, coaches are well-positioned to deliver messages about stopping violence against women and girls,” said Brian O’Connor, Director of Public Education Campaigns and Programs at Futures Without Violence, and co-developer of Coaching Boys Into Men. “With this new evidence, we are particularly ready and eager to implement the program with youth even earlier with even bigger results.”

The JAMA Pediatrics report can be found [here](#).

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ABOUT FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

FUTURES, a national nonprofit organization, provides groundbreaking programs, policies, and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world, help individuals and communities heal, and prevent violence before it happens.

For more than 30 years, we have worked to transform social norms, training professionals such as health providers, judges, educators and coaches on improving responses to violence and abuse. We also work with advocates, policy makers, creative artists and others to build sustainable community leadership and educate people everywhere about respect and healthy relationships.

For more information, please visit <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>.

ABOUT COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) is the only evidence-based curriculum program designed to train and motivate coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that all violence against women and girls is wrong. The 15-minute lessons just once a week (aligned with the 12-week sports season) are easily integrated into the routine practice or game schedule. The program’s training for coaches occurs before implementation and continues throughout the season to ensure messages are delivered consistently and effectively.

Learn more about CBIM, a Futures Without Violence program, at www.CoachesCorner.org.

