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Editor: Linda Chamberlain PhD, MPH
We are using this edition of the Health E-Bulletin to highlight great work that is being done around the country with young people who have experienced violence and harassment in their relationships. The contributing authors in this issue are all working in communities to lift up young people’s voices to find out how we, as a field, need to meet the needs of young people and support them in the ways they deserve.

In our first article, contributors from the Defending Childhood Program discuss the process of developing a strengths-based intervention that supports young moms, who are figuring out what it means to be in a healthy relationship, by reducing isolation and reflecting self-worth.

Young people are experiencing violence and abuse in relationships in ways that differ from their parents. The use of technology to control, hurt or harass a partner enables 24-7 access as never before. Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh share some of their latest findings about young people’s experience of digital harassment and abuse.

You will also hear from a youth advocate at a domestic violence organization in Rhode Island who describes the strategies that they are using within their community to support young people in making healthy decisions about their boundaries with sex and intimate relationships.

Each of these contributions underscore the importance of youth voices in developing violence prevention and responsive programming for young people. We hope that this edition of the Health E-Bulletin is helpful and inspiring for those of you who are working with youth in your community to prevent dating violence and support survivors.

Linda Chamberlain, PhD, MPH
EDITOR
Multnomah County (Portland, Oregon) is one of eight Defending Childhood Initiative (DCI) demonstration sites in the country, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to work with systems and communities to better recognize, respond to, and prevent childhood exposure to all forms of violence. One project goal is to provide technical assistance to social service organizations who support children and youth so that they have increased capacity to meet the needs of those impacted by violence and trauma. In 2012, Multnomah County DCI partnered with a local organization, Insights Teen Parent Services, to provide workforce development and technical assistance opportunities across their programs. Insights’ mission is to “To provide positive options for young parent families.” Realizing that their participant population is at high risk for experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV), Insights and DCI worked together to redesign the agency’s approach to recognizing and responding to IPV with the families they serve. Through on-going training and consultation, all Insights staff gained basic competencies in recognizing the signs of IPV, while developing role appropriate, supportive responses that are integrated into home visits and other existing practices. As Insights began to integrate an enhanced IPV response in to their programming, utilizing tools and training from Healthy Moms, Happy Babies Curriculum and DCI, the need...
for population specific tools and resources became evident. DCI, Futures Without Violence, and Insights conducted a review of national tools and literature, and concluded that there is a significant gap in tools for home visitors to engage in dialogues with young moms about healthy, safe relationships. So, working collaboratively, and with the wisdom of young moms themselves, the Young Moms, Strong Kids safety card was developed as an addition to the Healthy Moms, Happy Babies curriculum.

The core value that underlies each of Insights’ programs is an unyielding belief that young parents can be great parents when they are supported and honored. Today, Insights is the largest teen parent home visitation provider in the country and currently operates seven distinct programs, each offering strengths-based and evidence-informed services. Insights will serve over 300 young families this year. Since its inception, Insights has worked with over 10,000 parenting adolescents and over 12,000 children, helping them build concrete skills and supports that lead to a better future for both young mothers and their babies. Insights shared with our collaborative team that staff were consistently needing to adapt all parenting materials, including those developed for survivors of IPV, to accommodate the unique needs of young parents. Insights staff also knew that IPV safety concerns and warning signs can look different for young parents, and that young parents often identify and describe their intimate relationships differently than adults.

Our collaborative team worked together over several months to develop the content of the new resources, drawing from the shared knowledge of Rebecca Levenson and Linda Chamberlain (co-authors of Healthy Moms, Happy Babies Curriculum), Insights and DCI staff, as well as faculty from Portland State University. The team developed a content outline, and Insights home visitors who are already skilled in speaking with young moms about IPV, shared the

**Staff were consistently needing to adapt all parenting materials, including those developed for survivors of IPV, to accommodate the unique needs of parents.**
The card helped them think not only about their intimate partnerships, but about the health of all their relationships and that they were likely to share the card with other young moms.

to begin conversations with young moms about healthy relationships with the intention of identifying the home visitor as a safe person to talk with about relationship concerns now or in the future. Because the tool is population specific and does not need to be adapted for younger parents, Insights staff report greater ease and comfort starting conversations that reduce shame and isolation related to IPV concerns. Moms who received the Young Moms, Strong Kids card and discussed it with their home visitor reported that they “can relate to it” and that they enjoy the positive images of young moms and their children on the front of the card. They also report that being a young parent experiencing IPV can feel isolating, and a tool made just for them reduces that feeling of isolation while promoting a positive view of self care as a parent. Many moms also reported that the resource helped them think not only about their intimate partnerships, but about the health of all their relationships and that they were likely to share the card with other young moms.

The Young Moms, Strong Kids card helps a young mom define what being in a relationship means to her while giving her the opportunity to take the lead in the conversation with her home visitor. Insights staff report some lessons learned that may benefit other home visitors using this resource with young moms:

- Normalize the conversation by explaining that you are sharing this card with all of your participants, because you want all moms to have the healthy relationships they desire.

- Don’t expect a certain outcome from your conversation. Plant a seed, and trust that your client will talk with you more when she is ready – remember you are using the card to start one of many conversations.

- The content of the card may bring up experiences of violence or abuse from the mom’s own childhood; be prepared and comfortable speaking with her about how what she witnessed or experienced in
her own childhood might be impacting the way she parents her own children now.

- The card can be used as a conversation starter about what young moms learned in previous relationships and help establish desires for future relationships.

- Be aware of who is in the room when you share the card with your participant and do not engage with the content in the presence of others who might not be safe.

- Remember the card is a resource tool, not a diagnostic tool.

Home visitors, early childhood staff, teachers, and other adults can utilize the Young Moms, Strong Kids card to begin rich and meaningful conversations with young moms, encouraging them to dream and plan for the safe and healthy relationships they want. Normalizing conversations about healthy relationships in the context of home visiting has the power to help young families be the best they can be!

Young Moms, Strong Kids Safety Card is available to order and download from Futures Without Violence’s online store.

References:

Young Moms, Strong Kids is a safety card designed for adolescent parents that home visitation and health care providers can distribute as part of universal education about healthy and unhealthy relationships. In addition to providing safety resources for young moms, this tool also functions as a prompt for providers to discuss the impact of abusive relationships on health, coping strategies, and getting support.

Young Moms, Strong Kids Safety Card is available in English to order and download from Futures Without Violence’s online store. Accompanying training module available!
Adolescents have incorporated technology into their everyday lives. Adolescents and young adults ages, 18 to 29, are the most likely to use social media; 90% of those in this age bracket report social media use. Adolescents increasingly have access to a smartphone (73% in 2014-2015 data), and among those smartphone and traditional phone users, 90% report exchanging texts. The ways in which technology and social media can be used by adolescents is constantly evolving. Teens are texting not just through the text messaging service provided by their phone company but are also using app-based messaging services such as WhatsApp. New smartphone social media apps are continuously being developed, released, and incorporated into the social fabric of adolescents’ communication. One more recent example is the app called After School, which restricts its users to high school students and lets them anonymously post comments and images on message boards associated with individual high school campuses. Recently published work by Sherman and colleagues simulated the social photo-sharing app Instagram and showed adolescents photos with varying numbers of “likes” and documented their subsequent mock Instagram behavior while measuring their neural response with functional MRIs. Participants were significantly more likely to “like” photos depicted with many “likes” compared to photos with few “likes” and their brain exhibited more activity when shown photos with more “likes”. This research into the neurological processes and behavioral outcomes that occur while adolescents view their peers’ feedback on social media postings provides a glimpse into why technology and cyber communication is a powerful mechanism influencing adolescent development, be it positive or negative.

Electronic technologies also provide adolescents a forum for social interaction with opportunities for harmful communication. This was first recognized in the research literature as harmful behavior between...
peers and termed cyber bullying. The cyber part of this bullying means that the bullying can happen at any time, that the audience for the bullying is much wider than what in-person behavior would generate and the photographic or written embarrassing, false, or hostile material can be viewed repeatedly and is difficult if not impossible to delete. This same technology and the unique aspects of its potential for harm can also be used between adolescents in dating relationships. Cyber dating abuse involves the use of technology to control, harass, threaten or stalk another person in the context of a dating relationship. Some researchers believe that cyber dating abuse is a component of adolescent relationship abuse, in its psychological form while others see it as a distinct form of abuse.

Examples of behaviors included in the research measurement of cyber dating abuse are when someone in a dating relationship:

- made a threatening or aggressive comment to you using mobile apps, social networks, texts, or other digital communication
- sent others a private, intimate picture or video that you shared with him/her without your permission
- used your social networking account without permission
The distinction may be irrelevant as adolescents’ use of technology and social media becomes ubiquitous and therefore lines between face-to-face and cyber interactions become further blurred. Regardless of whether cyber dating abuse is a distinct phenomenon or not, there remain key gaps in our understanding of these behaviors and impact on adolescent health and well-being. To guide prevention and intervention efforts, researchers should continue to investigate and understand the health behaviors and outcomes associated with cyber dating abuse and how those associations may change over time. Additionally, we should place this knowledge within the context of what physical or sexual forms of abuse may also be occurring in their dating relationships, and what other harmful online behaviors they may be experiencing at the hands of a peer or that they may be witnessing or perpetrating against others.

Although the body of research into cyber dating abuse is still small, we do know that cyber dating abuse is prevalent and associated with health risk behaviors. In a sample of adolescents seeking care from their high school-based health center, 41% of teens surveyed had experienced cyber dating abuse within the past three months. This study also found that among the teens who had experienced any cyber dating abuse in the past 3 months, about half of them experienced at least one such abusive behavior “once or twice a month” or more. The females in this study exposed to any recent cyber dating abuse were 2 to 4 times more likely to not use any form of contraception and 3 to 6 times more likely to have experienced recent reproductive coercion (birth control sabotage and pressure to become pregnant by male partners), compared to non-victimized females. A recent study in Belgium also found a significant association between cyber dating abuse and unprotected sexual intercourse. The Belgium researchers reported that adolescents (ages 16 to 22 years old) that had experienced cyber dating abuse in the past 6 months were significantly more likely to engage in recent (past 30 day) heavy episodic drinking.

As indicated by Sherman’s research on cognitive and behavioral responses to peer endorsement through social media, it is likely that the behaviors that adolescents witness or perceive their peers to carry out can have a significant impact on their own behavior. If a teen believes that the cyber bullying a peer perpetrated garnished that individual with some social rewards, will that teen be more likely to take part in cyber bullying as well? With an estimated 70 percent of students saying they frequently see bullying online [https://nobullying.com/cyber-bullying-facts/] this presents an enormous opportunity for influence. Furthermore, as adolescents are sifting through what is normal and acceptable behavior online, there is likely a tangential effect on the ways teens act, both online and in-person, to their dating partners. Figure 1 depicts the linkages between cyber dating abuse, cyber bullying and adolescent relationship abuse, and research literature that supports each overlap. Linkages are either by victimization experiences, perpetration, or both.
While there is limited research\textsuperscript{14,15} to date that establishes the connection between specifically cyber peer bullying and the other two concepts in Figure 1, the broader base of teen dating violence and peer abuse research consistently demonstrates an overlap between peer and partner abuse (for a detailed discussion, see\textsuperscript{16}). From a policy and intervention perspective, this linkage is particularly important as it suggests that any effective mechanism reducing the prevalence of one type of abusive behavior may also prevent or decrease another form of abuse. We therefore need to support prevention efforts that increase education about the many different forms of abuse in adolescent dating and peer-to-peer relationships, and to encourage parents, teachers, coaches and others to talk to young people about what healthy relationships look like on- and offline.

References


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New Resources from the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence

“Caring Relationships, Healthy You” Safety Cards and Poster for LGBTQ Communities

With the help of the Los Angeles LGBT Center, National Coalition for Anti-Violence Programs, FORGE, The Northwest Network, Kaiser Permanente of Northern California, Casa de Esperanza – National Latin@ Network, Community United Against Violence (CUAV), Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Gender Based Violence, The Network/La Red, and the University of Pittsburgh, Futures Without Violence has developed new materials that are specifically for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer and Trans/Gender-non-conforming people of all ages. The Caring Relationships, Healthy You safety cards and poster are survivor-centered tools that are useful conversation starters for health care providers who are doing universal education around healthy relationships and assessing for intimate partner violence.

Because queer and trans people experience violence at similar, and in some instances higher, rates as heterosexual cisgender people, it is critical that health care and other providers ensure that their practice is culturally inclusive for queer and trans people and that they are talking to all of their patients about the effects that intimate partner violence can have on health. These safety cards and poster are available in English and Spanish for pdf download and to order on our online store. For more information visit www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/lgbtq-ipv/

Do my partner(s):
✔✔ Support me and respect my choices?
✔✔ Support me in spending time with friends or family?
✔✔ Feel comfortable talking about my feelings, sex, and other important things with my partner(s)?
✔✔ Support my partner(s), their independence, and their identities?

These are some elements of healthy relationships, which can contribute to good physical and mental health. Help is available.

Is your relationship affecting your health?
Do you or your partner...
✔✔ Have you noticed a change in your appetite, weight, or eating patterns?
✔✔ Are you drinking, smoking, or using drugs in order to cope with what is going on in your relationship(s)?
✔✔ Have you noticed a change in your appetite, weight, or eating habits?

These are some elements of healthy relationships, which can contribute to good physical and mental health. Help is available.

Unhealthy: Do you or your partner...
✘✘ Feel the other person down or make them feel bad about themselves?
✘✘ Pressure the other person to do something sexual they don’t want to do? Or fetishize or exoticize the other person’s identity and/or body without their consent?
✘✘ Refuse to recognize the other person’s name, pronoun, identity or preferred language?
✘✘ Control the other’s money or spending freedom?
✘✘ Restrict the other’s access to medicine (hormones, substance replacement therapy, birth control)?
✘✘ Control the other’s children to control or hurt them?
✘✘ Refuse to recognize the other person’s gender identity, sexual orientation, HIV status or immigration status to garner power over them or their friends, family, or at work?
✘✘ Threaten to out the other’s gender identity, sexual orientation, HIV status or immigration status to garner power over them or their friends, family, or at work?

Is your relationship affecting your health?
Do you or your partner...
✘✘ Feel the other person down or make them feel bad about themselves?
✘✘ Pressure the other person to do something sexual they don’t want to do? Or fetishize or exoticize the other person’s identity and/or body without their consent?

Is your relationship affecting your health?
Do you or your partner...
✘✘ Have you noticed a change in your appetite, weight, or eating patterns?
✘✘ Are you drinking, smoking, or using drugs in order to cope with what is going on in your relationship(s)?
✘✘ Have you noticed a change in your appetite, weight, or eating habits?

Do you have health issues that can be worsened by chronic stress? The resources on the back of this card can help you make a plan to talk to your provider about how your relationship could be affecting your health.
“A positive about this class is that we all got to be ourselves. We could talk about topics here that we couldn’t talk about anywhere else,” explained one 13-year-old student who completed the Wyman Teen Outreach Program (TOP) at the Segue Institute for Learning. TOP is a two-year long teen pregnancy prevention and healthy relationships-focused program facilitated by Sojourner House advocates, for seventh and eighth graders. As students reflected on their journey learning about interpersonal dynamics, sexuality, safety, and self-empowerment, they noted that some of the most rewarding experiences arose from the way Sojourner House advocates created the space for students to shape their curriculum to be as accessible and enjoyable as possible. The freedom to let students determine how to engage with the curriculum by asserting how they best learn, suggesting difficult topics to discuss, and by deciding as a group ways to create a safe space in the classroom is just an extension of Sojourner House’s mission to promote self-efficacy and agency in the populations we serve.

Sojourner House, a comprehensive domestic violence agency in Rhode Island, administers TOP, among many
other educational programs designed for middle school, high school, and college students. We bring our prevention programs to local organizations, schools, churches, and businesses in Providence and Northern Rhode Island municipalities. Our programs foster community engagement by presenting domestic violence as a community issue, instead of solely an individual or a family problem. Sojourner House’s educational materials teach youth how to forge healthy partnerships, to spot the warning signs for abusive relationships, and to access different resources.

In one academic year, Sojourner House delivers approximately 2,000 presentations to over 100 different schools, businesses, agencies, or organizations. At Sojourner House, we recognize young people as whole people who experience trauma and healing in unique, real ways. We also realize that young people who witness or experience domestic abuse or intimate partner violence often carry that trauma and the psychological effects of that violence for the rest of their lives. The statistics are staggering. According to the Dating Abuse Statistics provided by Love Is Respect, “one in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner.” Furthermore, “one in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt” by a partner. The psychological repercussions of domestic abuse can shape the mental health, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being of children well into adulthood. Educating our youth about unhealthy relationships and domestic violence acts as an intervening step in young people’s lives and promotes a healthier well-being.

A Providence high school created specifically to meet the needs of young parents invited Sojourner House to work with a group of students who had experienced intimate partner violence in 2015. During one session entitled “IT’S NOT MY FAULT: A view into our past and how it has defined my definitions of self-respect, future goals and sexuality”, a part of Sojourner House’s Teen Dating Violence Prevention Curriculum, students spoke candidly about their past relationships. “I’ve seen this kind of stuff happen with my mom from the time I was a kid,” remarked one student as we examined some common tactics of abuse. Another young woman replied, “It really does impact the way I have relationships. My boyfriend too, except he saw it too growing up, and now he acts that way too.” As students related to one another on how their pasts have shaped their current relationships, it became incredibly apparent how profoundly the cycle of abuse manifests itself in the lives of too many young people. As this cycle continues, relationship violence becomes increasingly normalized.

Domestic violence often occurs in a cycle, affecting communities inter-generationally. At Sojourner House, our greatest objective for
our prevention programs is to hinder the cycle of violence from taking place in the future. We want young people, as well as adults, to access our prevention programs because our opportunities to disrupt future incidences of domestic violence increase significantly if we can meet people at earlier stages of life. Sojourner House is in the business of imagining better futures for our youth and our communities. We recognize domestic violence as a public health issue, and consequently view our educational work as a safeguard that collaborates with communities to heal from violence, and to promote safety.

Many of the programs that Sojourner House provides to the Rhode Island community are in fact intervention services; we provide individual advocacy, emergency shelter, youth advocacy, immigration advocacy, LGBTQ advocacy, men’s advocacy, and sexual health advocacy as components of our direct services. However, the power of our prevention services rests in the way that our Dating Violence Prevention and Community Education Program seeks to eradicate domestic abuse and intimate partner violence through an understanding and interrogation of societal root causes like patriarchy, misogyny, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other systemic forms of oppression.

Our organization has the competitive advantage of consistently being at the forefront of innovative programming in domestic violence activism. Founded in 1976, Sojourner House was one of the first domestic violence agencies founded in the state of Rhode Island, is the first

“It really does impact the way I have relationships. My boyfriend too, except he saw it too growing up, and now he acts that way too.”
program in Rhode Island to offer specialized services in Spanish for Lantinx victims of domestic violence with the Latina Advocacy Program, is the first and only domestic violence agency in Rhode Island to conduct Rapid HIV Testing and to host a Men’s Advocacy Program, and is the first and only domestic violence agency in the state to offer specialized services to LGBTQ populations. Sojourner House advocates bring original and inventive strategies to our direct services and our educational projects, guaranteeing our clients new, thoughtful, and valuable work.

References:

Promoting Healthy Relationships: Highlights from Futures Without Violence’s youth dating violence prevention programs

- **ThatsNotCool.com wins a Webby!** In May 2016, That’s Not Cool, Futures Without Violence’s national teen dating violence prevention initiative that empowers youth to speak up and take action against digital dating abuse, was awarded a Webby for our re-launched campaign website winning for the best in the charitable organization/nonprofit category.

- **Coaching Boys Into Men: It works.** Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) promotes healthy ideas of gender, masculinity, and relationships by capitalizing on important relationships in boys’ lives. CBIM was cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the only program to meet their evidence threshold to be recommended for mobilizing men as allies.

- **Audrie & Daisy Film: Take Action!** Audrie & Daisy is the shocking story of two high school girls who were sexually assaulted by classmates and exploited by devastating social media exposure that followed. The film was picked up by Netflix earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival, and is set to release on the platform this coming September. In preparation for the September release, FUTURES is proud to partner with the filmmakers on the development of the educational materials in association with the documentary, inclusive of the official Discussion Guide, Lesson Plans for educators, web site resources for parents, educators and administrators, coaches, health professionals, and law enforcement.
The Rosebud Sioux Tribe’s Defending Childhood Initiative aims to reduce and prevent children’s exposure to violence across the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Central South Dakota. While their early efforts focused on increasing public awareness and offering direct services for youth and families affected by trauma, more recently their approach shifted to develop a Sicangu Youth Council. By harnessing youth voices and perspectives, this youth empowerment mentoring program promotes youth as critical decision makers in violence prevention and healing strategies. Participating youth set priority areas around health and justice which has included visiting several historic sites across the U.S. of significance to their Tribe. As a result of one such trip, the youth are now organizing an effort to repatriate their ancestors’ remains to their home in Rosebud from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania where hundreds of Sioux children were forced to attend from 1879 through 1918. This organizing effort began when members of the Sicangu Youth Council visited the school last year and realized that something had to be done. With the support of their Tribal Council and numerous other Tribes also affected, the youth have made national headlines as they seek justice for their relatives, living and past.

“Our ancestors are no longer considered objects of research; they will no longer be considered road side attractions. These children were people; they were sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, future war chiefs, future mothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, and care takers of this land.”


The Rosebud Sioux Tribe’s Defending Childhood Initiative, Wakanyeja Ta Wiconi Ki Awayang Kuwapi, is a collaborative effort of roughly 36 organizations designed to prevent children’s exposure to violence, reduce its negative impact, and increase public awareness. The Initiative reaches all of the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, which is made up of 20 different communities spanning 1,442 square miles in South Central South Dakota. Futures Without Violence in partnership with Native Streams provides technical assistance and support to this community.

References:
Every two years, this Conference brings together people from across the fields of gender based violence and advocacy, health care practice and policy to share promising practices and research that are supporting the healing of communities and preventing violence. The conference joins the nation’s leading medical, public health and gender based violence experts, including students from across the U.S. and internationally.

Look out for the Conference Call for Abstracts later this fall to feature your work in the Conference program!

Visit www.nchdv.org for more information.

We hope to see you next year in San Francisco September 26-28, 2017!
About the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence:

For more than two decades, the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence has supported health care practitioners, administrators and systems, domestic violence experts, survivors, and policy makers at all levels as they improve health care’s response to domestic violence. A project of Futures Without Violence, and funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Center supports leaders in the field through groundbreaking model professional, education and response programs, cutting edge advocacy and sophisticated technical assistance. The Health Resource Center offers a wealth of free, culturally responsive materials that are appropriate for a wide variety of health professions and settings.