

Coalition Chronicles

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End Domestic Abuse WI
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From End Abuse Director,
Patti Seger

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There is no rule book that says that physical and sexual violence only happens after someone turns 18. When I was 15, I did not tell anyone about it when it happened to me. I felt like it was my fault. I thought I did something wrong. I felt shame. I was scared. I didn't tell my parents, my sisters, or my friends at school. And I buried the experience deep down inside of me, hoping it would never escape and that no one would ever know. Those were the thoughts of my 15-year old self and I don't think they were (or are) unique.



We know from conversations with them that abuse, coercion, sexual and physical violence all happen to teens; one in three to be exact. We also know that teens are very unlikely to talk about what happened, just as I didn't. If teens divulge, they are likely to tell a peer or a friend rather than an adult. So, if we want young people to know what to do if they've been a victim of violence, our best strategy is to make sure they are surrounded by other teens who know that violent relationships are not ok, who can support their friend and help them seek safety in whatever way feels best for them.

This Coalition Chronicles examines teen dating violence and healthy relationships, and emphasizes the importance of strengthening connections to build strong youth. At End Domestic Abuse WI, we are committed to preventing physical and sexual violence so that humans of any age can live their lives with dignity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti Seger".

End Abuse Focus: End Violence in Teen Relationships

Erica Motz, End Abuse Teen Dating Violence Prevention Assistant

Since receiving Verizon’s HopeLine grant in September 2014, we at End Abuse have increased our focus on initiatives to combat violence in teen relationships. Teenagers may not be the age group that typically comes to mind when we picture violent relationships, but we know that one in three teens has been a part of a violent relationship, and these patterns don’t stop when teens grow up. In fact, violent behavior typically *begins* between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Therefore, the most vital time to teach healthy relationship skills for life is when youth begin to enter dating relationships—if not earlier.

The numbers of teens experiencing dating violence is striking, but another, perhaps more vital number, leaves an equally strong impression on us: only

81% of parents don’t think teen dating violence is an issue.

one third of teens who experience dating violence will ever tell somebody. When they do tell a parent, they deserve to be heard. Just as we adults need to teach our youth about healthy

relationship behavior and model healthy relationships for them, we must also be available and compassionate listeners. 81% of parents don’t think teen dating violence is an issue and 58% can’t identify signs that their child may be in an abusive relationship. These statistics are reflected in comments from Wisconsin teens who serve on our Teen Council (more information on

58% of parents can’t identify signs that their child may be in an abusive relationship.

page three). They voiced concerns, shared by their peers, about burdening adults with questions about or experiences with dating violence. Additionally, they noted that adults don’t see teen dating violence as a problem,

thinking that it’s something teens should handle on their own, or claim that they’ve “been teens too” and dismiss teens’ problems without really listening.

In this issue of the Chronicles, we share resources and ideas on how to support teens and how to recognize signs of abuse. We also highlight some of the teen dating violence prevention initiatives that WI communities have engaged in over the past several years, and focus on the work we and our partners are doing now, which includes the *Growing Roots* grant and the work of its recipients; the Teen Council and its September retreat; and the upcoming Summit on Healthy Teen Relationships. We also showcase local programs and initiatives, and feature teen/youth voices both as survivors and as organizers and activists in the intervention and prevention of violence.

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average.

End Abuse’s work to prevent teen dating violence focuses on teaching models for healthy relationships, supporting policy that protects teens in abusive relationships, assisting community leaders’ prevention efforts, and empowering teens to be advocates within their own schools and communities.

Statistics and facts in boxes throughout this publication are taken from loveisrespect.org.

Wisconsin's Teen Council

End Abuse REACH Coordinator Danny Ho and Children and Youth Prevention and Outreach Coordinator Cody Warner have brought together the Teen Council with the support of a Verizon HopeLine Grant. The Teen Council began in 2014 when Danny and Cody connected with domestic abuse programs across the state that were already working with teen groups. They asked each group a set of questions and found that overall teens felt that they were not prepared to help a friend in an abusive relationship and that adults often tended to minimize or invalidate their dating violence experiences.

There were seven groups in the northern half and seven in the southern half of Wisconsin, so they formed the Northern and Southern Teen Councils. The two Councils met from September 11-13 in Trego, WI for the Teen Council Retreat. The retreat was meant for both councils to meet one another and network, share resources, and work on projects for the 2016 Teen Summit. They enjoyed hiking together and formed stronger bonds between each other and the work to prevent teen dating violence. In the evening the teens met to discuss themes they thought would be relevant for teens throughout the state. These themes were then taken to the Teen Summit Planning Committee, which selected *Together We Will* as the theme for the 2016 Teen Summit.

In the coming months the North and South Teen Councils will each have an opportunity to review proposals for Teen Summit workshops. Reviewing proposals will be a great learning experience, on an administrative level. The other half of their meeting time will be invested in discussing root causes of oppression, and different intersections of violence.

The Teen Council is excited that with continued funding through the Verizon HopeLine Grant they will be able to carry on their work in 2016. The Teen Council will expand to reach more teens, potentially

beginning a statewide Teen Zine, creating a third Teen Council, and assuming leadership roles as coalition board members. Both councils are passionate about the work that they do and excited to continue in collaboration with End Abuse. They hope to improve accessibility, providing opportunities to other groups that previously may not have had the resources to be involved with the Teen Council.



Back Row L to R: Nicholes McCann, Brianna Ortiz, Mikayla Kelz, Courtney Scholl, Angalee Powless, Stephanie Ortiz
Front Row L to R: Wanda McCann-Smith, Cody Warner, Devin (in stroller)

From November 2014 through March 2015, End Abuse REACH Coordinator Danny Ho and Children and Youth Prevention and Outreach Coordinator Cody Warner traveled around the state meeting with teen dating violence prevention groups, and then with the Teen Council, to gather peer perspective discussion ideas for the Teen Summit. Read some of the ideas they came up with on page 4.

WI Summit on Teen Dating & Sexual Violence

The Teen Summit will be held April 4-6, 2016 at the Kalahari Resort and Waterpark in the Wisconsin Dells. The Summit offers keynote presentations, 28+ workshops, youth performances, and the opportunity for teens to share their knowledge, skills, and talents with each other. We anticipate 425+ participants from all over of Wisconsin.

The first Summit on Teen Dating and Sexual Violence was held in April 2008. Its goal was to bring together a diverse, multi-disciplinary audience to help formulate state and local responses to the growing problem of teen dating and sexual violence. Spearheaded by the Department of Children and Families, collaborative partners included End Domestic Abuse WI, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and numerous youth-serving agency co-sponsors.

The Summit, held every two years, is increasingly developed, organized and led by teens. The number and variety of workshop offerings has grown, and attendance has increased from 280 in 2008 to more than 400 in 2014.

The 2016 Together We Will... Summit on Healthy Teen Relationships promises to:

- Raise awareness about teen dating abuse and sexual assault and connect the issue to the lives of teens throughout Wisconsin.
- Bring together hundreds of youth and adult allies who care deeply about the issues of teen dating violence and sexual assault.
- Explore ways to work together to prevent violence before it begins *and* address it in safe and effective ways when it occurs.
- Discuss important issues facing today's youth including sex trafficking, how technology impacts safety, and what teens need to feel supported by the adults in their lives.
- Showcase youth programs in Wisconsin already working to end dating abuse, sexual assault and coercion.

Registration will open in mid-January. Please stay in touch by liking us on [facebook](#). Updates will be posted regularly!

Peer Perspectives: Challenging Conversations

WI teen dating violence (TDV) prevention groups and members of the Teen Council came up with ideas for peer perspective discussions at the Teen Summit. One focus of these conversations was to identify where participants encountered **challenges when engaging other teens or adults in conversations or actions to address TDV**. See a few themes and challenges below.

In conversations with peers...

Relationship Education...

"Playful" harassment/Not understanding dynamics of healthy relationships/Abusers don't know they're being abusive

Sex & Intimacy...

Interpret sex as love/Teens having unrealistic expectations about love/Teens asking each other how far they've gotten sexually

Red Flags and Control Tactics...

Partner becomes obsessed/Always texting/Partner threatens with suicide to stay in the relationships/Investment in relationship is strong and sometimes leads to isolation

In conversations with adults...

Adults just don't understand...

Adults perceive teens not caring about anything/Adults viewing the abuse as teenage drama/ Conflict resolution skills at all levels are poor

Communicating with Adults...

Teens want adults to be supportive not negative/Teens afraid of the consequences/ Teens do not want to burden their parents

LGBTQ relationships...

Teens scared of being disowned, threatened, or abused by parent/ Teen's relationship seen as a phase if with same sex partner/ Teens haven't come out to parents and don't know what to do

Growing Roots: Connecting Generations in Youth-Serving Anti-Violence Programs

In early 2015, End Abuse announced the Growing Roots initiative to connect generations of youth and elders, in youth and youth-serving domestic violence and sexual assault programs in Wisconsin. The initiative provided mini-grants for spring and summer 2015 projects that aimed to empower youth through connections with their elders, and through projects that were culturally-specific or served underserved communities (communities of color, LGB communities, trans communities, non-gender binary communities, and intersections of these communities).

The five projects that were funded began their work in May 2015. In addition to a final report, each project provided photo and text updates throughout the summer and fall. While all of the projects placed gardening at the center of their activities, each project unfolded uniquely. This Chronicles issue includes highlights shared by each of the projects:

- Growing Relationships with the Elderly, Teens Against Abusive Relationships Club, at Stepping Stones (Medford)
- Improving our Serenity Garden, at Safe Haven (Shawano)
- Hmong Ua Liaj Ua Teb Youth Project, at the Hmong American Women's Association (Milwaukee)
- Our Parents, Our Heroes, at CAP Services (Stevens Point)
- Simple Concepts: Gardening and its Gifts, at Fresh Start Learning (Milwaukee)

Simple Concepts: Gardening and its Gifts, Milwaukee

Hi, my name is Destiny Yarbrough and I am 15 years old. I was in partnership with Youth in Action and also Peace Action adults. Over the summer I helped in building a new community garden and it was pretty cool. It was cool because I learned how to work with tools and also learn the components of a real garden. I really enjoyed myself and they taught me how to bar-b-que as well. We cooked hot dogs and had chips and juice. One of my fondest memories was when Jeffery Kroll and I were digging up soil for the garden beds and he was really funny and he played some really good tunes. If I could do it again I [would], it was a very pleasurable time, with some very nice adults.



Photos from Fresh Start Learning

Growing Relationships with the Elderly, Medford

Our project was to grow a garden at a local assisted living house called Our House. The first day we went there we started by picking out weeds that were in the garden beds. We also filled the garden beds with a mixture of fresh soil and the soil that was already in there. The next time we came back we put mulch around two trees and painted the flower beds bright orange, which I think livened up the environment. The third time we returned to Our House, it was time to plant the flowers and vegetables. We planted different colored marigolds, with onions scattered around in all four of the garden beds. Two of the garden beds were filled with multiple kinds of vegetables only. While we were planting a few elders came outside to watch, we got to socialize with them, and they said they were very excited to eat the vegetables. The next time we visited, we painted rocks with the elderly and listened to their stories. The rocks were placed outside by the gardens.

Overall our group felt that this project was beneficial for us and the citizens at Our House. It's good that our group could do something to benefit the community, especially the elderly. The feedback we have gotten from Our House has also been positive. They were thankful for a group of teens with a can-do attitude.

- Mikayla Kelz



"I thought it was a great experience. I enjoyed helping at the nursing home and painting rocks. I learned a lot and heard a lot of stories."

- Daisy Hahn



"This project is definitely the highlight of my summer...I believe that it truly is the little things in life that make people happy. Even if one person at Our House woke up, looked outside, and smiled, I know that this project was a success."

- Mikayla Kelz



"I am really glad to have this wonderful opportunity to make a difference in my community. This project emphasized hard work, and the payoff was great...we hope [it] had a positive effect on the residents, and [it] definitely has had a positive effect on my life."

- Richard Colwell

Ua Liaj Ua Teb Youth Project, Milwaukee

The “Growing Roots” project was my first experience collaborating and connecting with the Hmong elderly by working together to build a small garden. I’ve learned a lot from building and maintaining the garden with the Hmong elders. They taught me the different types of plants and seeds to plant, how to plant them and conserve these plants so they can hold up to harsh weather.

Most important, they taught me what these plants are used for, either for medicine or cooking. I not only got closer to the Hmong elders by learning from them, but I also got closer to them by hearing their personal stories of living and reminiscing about the time they farmed back in their homeland, Laos. Although it was only a small garden that we worked on, it was still a lot of work. Younger generations like mine should stay grounded in our roots and remember where our families came from.

- Chee Lor



Teens and elders working in the garden at Ua Liaj Ua Teb Youth Project in Milwaukee

Our Parents, Our Heroes, Stevens Point

Youth group activities included story-telling dinners with the women's group, a visit to the Hmong Veterans Memorial, sewing traditional clothing to prepare for the November Hmong New Year Celebration, and organizing a Hmong Awareness Day at their schools, on which they wore Hmong clothing and organized all the social studies teachers to teach Hmong history. Below is an excerpt of the statement that the students wrote to their teachers.

- Chai Moua

Hmong means to be free. The Hmong people have suffered pain over the past decades and still suffer today. Before settling in Laos, we lived in China. The Chinese didn't like our culture and language, and they drove us out of our homeland. Years later, Laos became our homeland. In 1955, the Hmong people helped the Americans fight to stop Communists in the Vietnam War. The Americans promised to help us through the war, to make our way to America, and to make sure our land wasn't taken away from us. In 1962, the Vietnamese invaded our villages and we lost everything, including more than 300,000 lives. 2015 marks the Hmong people's 40th year in America. The Hmong people came to the US to seek freedom, have a better life, and find peace. The first amendment states that we have freedom of religion, and yet we are judged by what we practice. We would like to bring awareness that Hmong people still seek acceptance and acknowledgment for their help and hard work. Yet there is no acceptance because our culture, skin and language is different. The change that we all look for does not start with those beyond us; it starts with us.

Growing Relationships with the Elderly, Shawano

We got together many times, so although many of the teens in the Fighting Against Abusive Relationships Club (FAAR) have never been victims of dating abuse or family abuse, they have now heard more stories. They asked the elders about their lives and how they got to where they were now. After our project was finished, they did admit that it was harder than they had thought it would be. When asked what part of it was harder, they said, "Just approaching the people in general, asking them more questions without offending them." Some of the teens thought the gardening was a bit more work than they had expected, but they also said they had never had to do anything like it before at home. So it was a learning experience for them.

When asking the participating elders what they had gotten out of this project, it was amazing [to see] the smiles that came out of it. Some said they could see the teens had more on their mind and wanted to ask more questions, but at the same time they were not sure how much they wanted to share about their lives. They had fears related to trust and confidentiality, even though they knew the teens had signed agreements with the shelter. Talking to a complete young stranger for a short time is nothing like sharing with your advocate or someone else you completely trust.

We took time to enjoy some social gatherings at times this summer. Whether members of the FAAR group, moms or elders, sometimes just sitting and enjoying the quiet, or talking about nothing but the weather is a great way to get to know each other, or to reflect on what you have and how far you have come in life.

- Kandi Krueger



Teen Dating Violence and Restraining Orders

In 2013, Ann Brickson, former End Abuse Children and Youth Program Coordinator, spoke with advocates from Wisconsin domestic abuse programs to better understand whether and how restraining orders (ROs) were actually being used to protect minors. The resulting document was developed by Ann Brickson and Tess Meuer, End Abuse Director of Justice Systems, and included in End Abuse's Legal Manual. It summarized those discussions, offering practical information on the potential benefits and unintended consequences of ROs for minors, whether and how they worked in Wisconsin counties and tribes, and specifically how willing courts were to grant ROs for minors. The excerpt below primarily discusses ROs for teens in abusive dating relationships.

Wisconsin law allows for two types of restraining orders (ROs) for minors:

Harassment (Wis. Stat. Sec. 813.125) and Child Abuse (Wis. Stat. Sec. 813.122). While these orders offer the potential to increase safety for children and youth, throughout Wisconsin ROs for minors are often more difficult to obtain and are accompanied by more complications and unintended consequences than ROs for adults. Courts may be more likely to grant harassment restraining orders for teens in abusive dating relationships, and they can be more effective in these situations.

Minors are developmentally vulnerable.

Young people cannot exercise independent control over their lives as adults can. They cannot move or change schools on their own, they have limited access to transportation, they may not have their own money and they don't have the legal privileges of adults. Although they can file ROs on their own, few can navigate the legal system by themselves. They may have difficulty understanding and coping with the process of requesting or obtaining a RO. Consequently, minors usually must reveal abuse or harassment to an adult and rely on adults during and long after the RO process. They are vulnerable to adults who may not be sufficiently protective or who may not have their best interests at heart.

Considerations Regarding Restraining Orders for Teen Dating Abuse

ROs for teen dating abuse are usually Harassment Restraining Orders. HROs are more likely to be granted when the respondent is an adult and more difficult to obtain when the respondent is a minor. Even when granted, success in implementing a RO by or for a minor may depend on the following considerations:

- Although minors may petition for ROs on their own, they nearly always need adult help to do it. If granted, they will need an adult ally to help them implement the protections the RO provides.
- If a teen victim does not want a RO filed on their behalf, they may sneak around and violate the order. This secrecy increases danger. ROs sought by parents or guardians to limit contact with a dating partner of whom they disapprove are likely to alienate the teen they seek to protect.
- Teens may not trust adults or adult systems, and so may not view restraining orders as useful or relevant for protecting themselves from abuse or harassment.
- Schools often lack the capacity to carry out the provisions of a RO.

Conditions for Filing a Harassment Restraining Order

- A harassment RO can be filed by minor victims or the parents, step-parents, or legal guardians of victims.
- One of the following types of abuse must occur in order to file a harassment RO: physical harm or threat of physical harm, repeated harassment, sexual contact, stalking, or child abuse.

Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.

One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.

Questions to Consider

- What is the desired outcome? Can this be accomplished in any other way? Are there safe and effective informal protection strategies that could be employed instead of a RO?
- What history or trends exist regarding restraining orders in similar situations in the same jurisdiction? This information should inform the decision and can help the parties involved anticipate how this particular petition will be received.
- Does there appear to be sufficient tangible corroborating evidence? Can more be obtained? Is the petitioner prepared for the likelihood that without corroborating evidence, the petition may be denied? Is the petitioner prepared for the negative consequences, including retaliation by the respondent, if the petition is denied?
- Does the minor have a competent, caring adult ally who will support them? Is this person truly acting in the minor's best interest? Is this person someone the minor fully trusts and has chosen to support them?
- How will appearing in court affect the minor? What if they have to testify? How will this affect them, and what might be the impact of a poor performance?
- When seeking a RO for a minor in a dangerous dating relationship, does the victim want a restraining order? Is there any ambivalence or resistance on their part? Do they understand the terms of a RO, and are they likely to continue to abide by these terms?

We hope this summary is helpful for weighing the pros and cons and knowing what questions to ask when assisting teens and considering a RO to protect a minor.

Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and further domestic violence.

The severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.

Policy to Prevent Teen Dating Violence in Schools

Tony Gibart, End Abuse Policy Development Director

Public policy advocacy is one of the main ways End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin works to prevent and eliminate domestic violence. A bill that is now pending in the state legislature (LRB-3688) would promote school-based education and response policies to prevent teen dating violence. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "at least 19 states have laws that urge or require school boards to develop curriculum on teen dating violence." End Abuse thinks Wisconsin should follow this lead and pass LRB-3688 to address and prevent violence in teen dating relationships. The steps we take now will give the next generation of Wisconsinites the opportunity live free from domestic violence as they grow.

LRB-3688 would include lessons about dating violence and healthy relationships for students in sixth through twelfth grades. The classroom discussions would include information about recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationships, resources for students, and how to help a friend who may be in an abusive relationship. Schools should also ensure that administrators and personnel receive training and have plans in place to respond appropriately to students who are engaging in or being affected by dating violence. Research shows that students who attend schools that have proactive policies related to teen dating violence are less likely to experience abuse. We are committed to seeing these changes enacted to prevent abuse to young people now and to create a more peaceful future as the next generation moves into adulthood.

Teen Coordinated Community Response Teams

Sara Krall, End Domestic Abuse WI

Since their inception in the mid-1980s, Wisconsin Coordinated Community Response (CCR) teams have brought together key players in community systems to identify and address gaps in their ability to respond to victims and to hold perpetrators accountable. Wisconsin uses an innovative approach to supporting domestic violence, sexual assault, and dual issue CCRs: for over a decade, the Wisconsin Department of Justice has made funding available for teams to receive intensive technical assistance from consultants who provide topical expertise, facilitation and guidance to enhance community responses and drive long-lasting sustainable change. Additionally, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault are among the few state coalitions in the country that have staff positions entirely dedicated to supporting community-level collaborations.

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average.

Many CCR teams began by focusing their collaborative efforts on the legal system. However, because many victims do not want to use the legal system, CCRs often include representation from schools, human services, mental health and other health care providers, aging and disability service organizations, neighborhood centers, faith communities, culturally-specific service organizations, and many other groups. A CCR must go beyond the legal system to create a safety net that ensures that even the most marginalized victims are heard and respected when they reach out for support and seek justice in their community.

Among female victims of intimate partner violence, 94% of those age 16-19 and 70% of those age 20-24 were victimized by a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend.

Some communities in the state have developed CCRs to focus specifically on gaps in their response to teen dating violence. Despite the legal protections that are in place for teens who experience intimate partner violence, teen dating violence cases are rarely seen in the legal system. The first Teen CCR in Wisconsin was developed in Winnebago County in 2009. An advocate who recognized the need for innovative responses to teen victims of intimate partner violence surveyed teens to learn about needs that were not sufficiently being met. The survey findings led the Teen CCR to focus their efforts on educating professionals such as school liaison officers, juvenile intake workers, and various teen group leaders. This approach acknowledges that those who already interact with teens regularly are in the best position to recognize and appropriately respond to teens who may be experiencing relationship violence. It's a great example of a CCR responding to the voices of community youth.

College students are not equipped to deal with dating abuse – 57% say it is difficult to identify and 58% say they don't know how to help someone who's experiencing it.

Read more about the Winnebago County CCR on page 12.

Winnebago County Teen CCR

Mindy Collado, Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Oshkosh, WI

The Winnebago County Teen CCR Team has been extremely busy in the last four years. In the summer of 2012 we held focus groups with teens in a variety of settings. For example, we visited a Girl Scout camp, a Boys & Girls Club, a church youth group, and a local high school during summer school session. Our goal was to obtain answers to questions about teen dating violence that were specific to Winnebago County. From these focus groups we learned that parents, usually mothers, are the ones that teens go to most often for advice or discussion of relationship issues. After learning this, our Teen CCR committee created a brochure for parents.

In 2013, after we had saturated the community with our brochures, we moved our focus from getting information into parents' hands, to getting high schools involved. We sent letters, offered ideas to promote awareness, divided up a contact list, followed up with those contacts and gave presentations on teen dating violence to pretty much every high school in the county.

In 2014, we decided to switch our focus from high school to middle school youth. We knew we wanted to keep the schools involved but we also wanted to teach younger teens what makes a relationship healthy.

Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18.

So, we came up with the idea to ask all eighth grade homerooms to participate in a contest in which they described for us what a healthy relationship should be. The theme was "Truth is. . ." (popular on Facebook at the time). We did not have 100% participation, but we did have better participation than we had expected. We held a silhouette decorating contest and received silhouettes from all over the county. On January 27, 2015 we encouraged the community to come to a panel presentation on teen dating violence, which also served as the voting opportunity for the silhouette contest. The panel consisted of our teen advocate, a SANE nurse, a survivor of teen dating violence, and a school liaison officer. The emcee for the event was an Oshkosh police detective who works with youth in our community and is a member of Teen CCR.

We are already actively planning for the 2016 Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. We plan to again host a silhouette contest with a free community presentation. We are also planning our second event for the community, which will be a presentation on gang violence.

Although there have been bumps along the way, for the most part our community is very supportive of the work we are doing with and for teens! If I had to name one struggle it would be about getting parents and schools to recognize that youth are dating at younger ages. Originally, the Teen CCR wanted to focus on prevention with sixth- and seventh-grade students: our community was a little hesitant to accept and acknowledge that those students are dating, so we compromised and offered eighth-grade student involvement.

As a mother, as a lifetime member of this community, and as an advocate working with youth for the past 15 years, it is my belief that if we truly want to do prevention work we need to focus our efforts on fifth- and sixth-grade students. A more macro approach would be to make teaching healthy relationships mandatory in schools, and I hope that this does happen before my nine year-old son enters middle school. I would love to see healthy relationship curricula in grades five through eight in all schools in the state of Wisconsin. We, as a society, cannot expect children to know what we do not teach them! Because I work with families, I understand (as do many other professionals who serve youth) that families do not always teach healthy relationships at home. Many parents do not know what a healthy relationship is like, perhaps because they themselves are in abusive relationships, or because they have problems with substance use, for example. How can we expect youth or young adults to enter and stay in healthy relationships if they have never been exposed to them? I think the key to breaking the cycle of abuse starts with teaching our youth healthy relationships.

Young Adult Support Group

Caitlyn Roskowsinski

Caitlyn Roskowsinski is the Child and Youth Services Coordinator at Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence Inc. in River Falls, WI. Turningpoint is one of eight programs in Wisconsin that operates a text helpline. See page 15 for the full list.

From the time that I started in my position as Child and Youth Services Coordinator at Turningpoint in River Falls, I recognized the gap in services for young adults involved in dating violence. I wanted to start a support group similar to the adult group that has been successful at Turningpoint for many years, but I had trouble finding resources. I researched teen groups throughout the state and nationally, and found very few resources for teen dating violence support groups.

I was meeting with students one-on-one in the schools in our service area, and while many expressed interest in a support group, there were never enough at one time to establish a formal group. An opportunity presented itself when a high profile teen client expressed interest in talking to other young women who had experienced dating violence. She knew other teens who could benefit from a support group, and she was instrumental in

establishing the group's beginning membership. Since young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence, I named the support group "Young Adult Support Group."

Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

Because I could find no existing curriculum, I began by brainstorming topics with the group and put together a "lesson plan" based on their feedback. Topics we have covered include healthy versus unhealthy relationships, the cycle of violence, safety and social media, forgiveness and moving on, and self-care. One member of the Young Adult Support Group said, "I look forward to Wednesday every week. I love how accepted I feel. The activities we do are extremely helpful and I love how I can really open up." We typically have a topic that we focus on each week and the girls share their experiences with that topic. The dual purpose is for members to offer support to one another and to exercise critical thinking skills regarding healthy relationships and their ability to identify unhealthy characteristics.

The group is advertised mostly through word of mouth, but flyers have been distributed to other organizations in our community, in public places, and in schools. Turningpoint is excited to provide this service given the need in our community, and I know there are victims in other counties who would benefit from a Young Adult Support Group. To anyone interested in starting a support group for victims of teen dating violence, I would recommend utilizing the schools in your area as much as possible for advertising. Particularly in the counseling offices, counselors and teachers work with students who are in unhealthy and abusive relationships and can offer the support group as a resource. The key to working with teens and young women is to not get discouraged! Some nights I have seven girls and others I have none, but it's important to them to know that the support group is available when they need it. I feel confident that the group serves a very meaningful purpose and I am proud to offer this service in our community.

TDV Resources and Tools for Discussion

Videos

Lovestruck is a three-part documentary series created by Hannelore Gomes. In the series, Gomes conducts interviews with advocates, victims, and reformed perpetrators of domestic violence. The interviews have a focus on Latinx* and black communities, immigrant victims, and teen/child victims. We recommend the entire series, but you can skip to 1:30 in Episode 1, 2:20 in Episode 2, and 6:05 in Episode 3 for testimony from a teen survivor of dating violence. Be aware that the series contains graphic verbal descriptions of violence. Links to each episode:

[Episode 1](#) [Episode 2](#) [Episode 3](#)

Choose Respect is a video created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which spotlights teen dating violence survivors talking about abusive relationships they've experienced. Though the video is somewhat outdated and the content focuses on heterosexual relationships, it may be useful for teens and adults who are unsure of some of the warning signs of a violent relationship. We also recognize that it may not be as easy to get help or leave as the video suggests.

Though not all perpetrators of domestic violence are men, they do comprise the majority of perpetrators. In this 7-minute [excerpt from the video Tough Guide](#), Jackson Katz explains some of the forces that pressure young men and boys to adopt so-called masculine traits of violence and control that may eventually lead to abusive behavior in relationships.

This 5-minute video from Break the Cycle, [Teens Talk About Dating Violence](#), features teenagers sharing their experiences and advice relating to teen dating violence.

Mary J Blige's music video for her song, [Whole Damn Year](#), displays the lyrics to the song, a powerful testament to the difficult process of healing from abuse.

The #ThatsNotLove campaign from One Love points out controlling behaviors that can be wrongly excused as love. This [one-minute video](#) shares warning signs of what might be said by an abuser who is in control of their partner's real and digital life.



Image taken from National Latin@ Network: A Project of Casa De Esperanza website at <http://nationallatinonetwork.org/en-blog/> on November 11, 2015

Safety and Social Media

The National Network to End Domestic Violence teamed up with Facebook to create [Privacy and Safety on Facebook: A Guide for Survivors](#), which lays out basic and more advanced privacy and safety features of Facebook to help survivors maximize privacy or document an abusers' online harassment. The guide includes safety tips and options for when someone is misusing the site to harass, monitor, threaten, or stalk someone else.

End Revenge Porn has created an [Online Removal Guide](#) for removing images posted non-consensually on a number of web/social media platforms.

* The "x" makes Latino, a masculine identifier, gender-neutral. It also moves beyond Latin@ – which has been used in the past to include both masculine and feminine identities – to encompass genders outside of that limiting man-woman binary. Latinx, pronounced "La-teen-ex," includes the numerous people of Latin American descent whose gender identities fluctuate along different points of the spectrum, from agender or nonbinary to gender non-conforming, genderqueer and genderfluid.

TDV Resources and Tools for Discussion continued

Safety Apps

Safety apps for smartphones can be a useful tool for both survivors and advocates. There are apps for healthy relationship information, apps for conducting lethality assessments of abusers, apps for creating a safety plan, apps that can discreetly send an emergency signal to a chosen contact or contacts, and more. Thankfully, the National Network to End Domestic Violence has created a few guides to help users determine which app would be most useful to them:

[Simple Questions to Determine What Kind of App You Need](#)

[Considerations for Victims and Survivors Choosing a Safety App](#)

[List of Apps for Survivors, Advocates, and Others](#)

Texting Helplines

When visiting a shelter or talking on the phone about an abusive relationship is not an option—for whatever reason—it may be possible to access a texting helpline. There are a number of texting helplines operating within the state of Wisconsin and nationally:

Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) of Dane County

Advocates of Ozaukee County

People Against a Violent Environment (PAVE) of Beaver Dam

Violence Intervention Project of Kewaunee County

TimeOut Shelter of Rusk County

The Center for Suicide Awareness of Kaukauna

Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence of Pierce and St. Croix Counties

Advocates for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Abuse in Langlade County

Loveisrespect (a project of Break the Cycle and the National Domestic Violence Hotline)

“HOPE” to 20121

262-891-7262

920-344-0123

920-837-2424

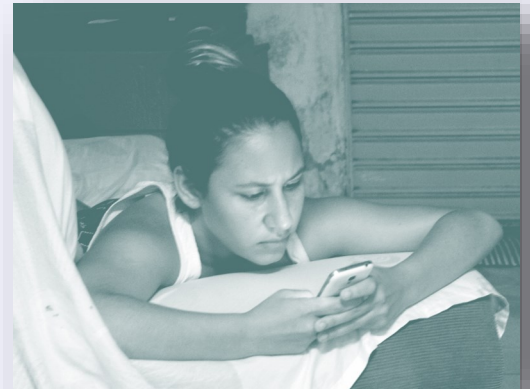
715-532-6976

“Hopeline” to 741741

715-425-6908

715-209-4609

“LOVEIS” to 22522



One in three (36%) dating college students has given a dating partner their computer, email or social network passwords and these students are more likely to experience digital dating abuse.



If you cannot safely use your cell phone to access a texting helpline or any other phone-based services, take a look at some [Tips from LoveisRespect](#) for alternative ways to access services.

The content for this issue was developed by Erica Motz and Colleen Cox. Thanks to all of the Growing Roots Project participants and members of the Teen Council for sharing their experiences, and to Mindy Collado, Sara Krall, and tony Gibart and Caitlyn Roskowsinski for their contributions.

TDV Resources and Tools for Discussion continued

Safe Dates, a program offered by Milwaukee's Diverse and Resilient, helps LGBT young people recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, and equips them with skills and resources to respond to dating violence in their lives or those of their friends.

Thinking Under the Influence Because of the pressures of anti-gay and anti-transgender discrimination, LGBT young people in Wisconsin begin drinking at a younger age and engage in more binge drinking than their heterosexual peers. This alcohol-reduction program offered by Milwaukee's Diverse and Resilient, teaches LGBT youth about the mechanics of alcohol on the body and brain and gives them strategies to deal with social situations where alcohol is present. The program also teaches young people about how the entire LGBT community is affected by alcohol.

Half of Us Young people are especially at risk for mental health issues, with half of college students reporting that they have been stressed to a point where they couldn't function during the past year. The impact of mental illness is so devastating that suicide is the third leading cause of death among all people ages 15-24. This website is designed to initiate a public dialogue to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues and connect students to the appropriate resources to get help.

Talk About It This website offers tips for parents to reduce the risk factors for teens experiencing dating violence, and for recognizing if a teen's relationship is becoming abusive.

How to Be in a Romantic Relationship In this web comic Emily V. Gordon and Ana Hinojosa say the first, most important step is taking care of yourself.

Reading Guide Stacked Books compiled a reading guide for young adult literature with themes relating to teen dating violence. Exploring this difficult topic through fiction can be a good way to start discussion with friends, children, or students in real life.



Imaged captured from <http://www.rookiemag.com/2015/10/how-to-be-in-a-romantic-relationship/>

List of Weblinks in this Issue

Dating Violence Stats & Facts (*in boxes throughout publication*) <http://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/dating-violence-statistics/>
2016 Teen Summit FB Page (*Page 4*) <https://www.facebook.com/TeenSummitWI>

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Lovestruck videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJBOfu0BrQ> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KZpabNns4I>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVqsQcPiZF8>

Choose Respect Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8e0UGTAKkU>

Excerpt from Tough Guise <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exzMPT4nGI>

Whole Damn Year Mary J Blige video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3oN20GI8xA>

That's Not Love Controlling Behaviors video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JYyHa03x-U>

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NNEDV simple questions to determine what kind of app you need: <http://techsafety.org/blog/2015/9/4/3-simple-questions-to-determine-which-safety-app-is-right-for-you>

NNEDV Considerations for Victims and Survivors Choosing a Safety App: <http://techsafety.org/choosingapps/>

NNEDV List of Apps for Survivors, Advocates, and Others: <http://techsafety.org/appsafetycenter>

LoveisRespect alternative ways to access services <http://www.loveisrespect.org/content/tips-for-safely-reaching-out-for-support/>

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Diverse and Resilient, Safe Dates <http://www.diverseandresilient.org/work/partner-community-violence/safe-dates/>

Diverse and Resilient, Under the Influence <http://www.diverseandresilient.org/work/substance-use/thinking-under-the-influence/>

Half of Us <http://www.halfofus.com/>

Talk About It http://www.stepupspokeout.org/parents/talk_about_it

Rookie Comic: <http://www.rookiemag.com/2015/10/how-to-be-in-a-romantic-relationship/>

Stacked Books Reading Guide: <http://stackedbooks.org/2014/02/teen-dating-violence-awareness-month.html>



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