

1. What is teen dating violence?

- a. Dating violence is a type of intimate partner violence. It occurs between two people in a close relationship. The nature of dating violence can be physical, emotional, or sexual.
 - i. Examples Include:
 - 1. **Physical**—Pinching, hitting, shoving or kicking a partner
 - 2. **Emotional**—Threatening a partner or harming his or her sense of self-worth, name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping him/her away from friends and family.
 - 3. **Sexual**—Coercing or forcing a partner to engage in a sex act when he or she does not or cannot consent.
 - ii. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Dating violence often starts with teasing and name calling. These behaviors are often thought to be a “normal” part of a relationship. But these behaviors can lead to more serious violence like physical assault and rape.

2. Why is teen dating violence a public health problem?

- a. Dating violence is a serious problem in the United States. Many teens do not report it because they are afraid to tell friends and family.
 - i. 72% of 8th and 9th graders reportedly “date” (according to a non-CDC study)
 - ii. A CDC study found about 10% of students in a nationwide survey report being physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months

3. Who is at risk for teen dating violence?

- a. CDC studies show that people who harm their dating partners are more depressed and are more aggressive than peers. Other risk factors for using dating violence include:
 - i. Low Academic Achievement
 - ii. Low Self-Esteem
 - iii. Emotional dependence/neediness
 - iv. Emotional Issues
 - v. Youth / Age Differences between Partners
 - vi. Drug and Alcohol Use
 - vii. Belief it is Acceptable to Use Violence to Resolve a Conflict
 - viii. Behavioral Problems
 - ix. Previous Experience with Violence

4. How can we prevent teen dating violence?

- a. The ultimate goal is to stop dating violence before it starts. Strategies that promote healthy and respectful relationships are vital. During the preteen and teen years, young people are learning about relationships with potential dating partners. This is an ideal time to promote healthy relationships and prevent patterns of dating violence that can last into adulthood. Prevention programs change the attitudes and behaviors linked with dating violence. A number of helpful resources are provided in our new online training, *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*.

5. Tell me about *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*. What is it?

- a. *Dating Matters* will focus on helping educators, youth leaders, and others working with teens understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with teen dating violence, as well as the importance of promoting healthy relationships.

It provides user-friendly access to myriad school health education offerings available resources on teen dating violence prevention based on [National Health Education Standards](#) and CDC's [Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula](#).

Dating Matters does not promote or endorse a specific teen dating violence prevention curriculum. Instead, the online training is designed to help educators and schools understand the issue and select appropriate teen dating violence education curricula while also improving the delivery of health education.

6. How did you come up with the idea of an online training?

- a. The free, online training was created in response to requests from educators in more than 25 states who were beginning to integrate teen dating violence prevention education into middle and high school curriculums (State Laws on Teen Dating Violence have been passed in FL, GA, IL, NE, NJ, OH, RI, TN, TX, VA, WA and are currently being considered in CA and MD).

As many of these educators know, the academic success of America's youth is strongly linked with their health. But without staff training on teen dating violence and where to go for resources, educators are often unable understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with teen dating violence or their role in promoting healthy relationships.

7. What does CDC hope to achieve with this training?

- a. Dating violence can happen to any teen at any time and have a negative effect on health throughout life. Teens who are victims are more likely to do poorly in school or engage in unhealthy behaviors, like drug and alcohol use.

However, early efforts to promote healthy, respectful dating relationships are more likely to prevent dating violence before the problem begins. Prevention efforts in adolescence have the potential to positively influence attitudes and behaviors toward dating violence in adulthood and reduce the incidence of intimate partner violence in these later years.

8. What is the course like? What will users experience?

- a. *Dating Matters Dating Matters* is a 60-minute, web-based training designed to help educators, youth-serving organizations, and others working with teens understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with teen dating violence. The training also will highlight the importance of promoting healthy relationships.

The training takes provides an interactive experience based in a school setting. Participants will find themselves navigating the training through virtual school hallways, classrooms, and interactions with students. A teacher's whiteboard will present information in a user-friendly way and provide navigation, help, and resources for use throughout the course.

9. Why is CDC launching this training with Liz Claiborne?

- a. In 2006, the first-ever National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week was held, reflecting a new nationwide initiative to increase public awareness and education of the prevalence of teen dating violence among our nation's teens. In 2007, 2008, and 2009 a number of senators again joined in sponsoring resolutions calling for the first week in February to be designated "National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week." Throughout February 2010, the CDC will join leaders from around the country, including Liz Claiborne Inc., to recognize the importance of preventing teen dating violence by launching *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention*.

Like CDC, Liz Claiborne Inc., is interested in helping all teens live their lives to the fullest. *Dating Matters* is **one** part of larger efforts to ensure that every teen in the country has the education and resources available to maintain healthy relationships, free from abuse and violence.

10. What is the training based on? Where did the content come from?

- a. Faced with the problem of teen dating violence, many educational professionals realize they need (and want) to learn more about effective tools — ones that help them identify and recognize the warning signs. Educators also want to be able to offer youth effective guidance about how to get out of or prevent these types of negative dating situations.

Based on this need, *Dating Matters* was designed with primary prevention in mind, using evidenced-based material from the following sources: violence-related articles from peer-reviewed journals of behavioral, scientific, and medical literature that have been recently published; original research from conferences; government data and reports; the [National Health Education Standards](#) and CDC's [Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula](#); and interviews with practitioners and educators. A full listing of all resources used for the course can be found by visiting the course's resource center.

11. Why is it important to teach teens about healthy relationships?

- a. It is important to begin to teach youth about safe and respectful intimate relationships early – before they begin to date. Early efforts to promote healthy, respectful dating relationships are more likely to prevent dating violence before the problem begins.

It is also known that the prevalence of partner violence increases with age, specifically, among young adults as compared with adolescents. Prevention efforts in adolescence have the potential to positively influence attitudes and behaviors toward dating violence in adulthood and reduce the incidence of intimate partner violence in these later years.

12. Why does *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention* focus primarily on educators?

- a. Youth are our future. Our today and tomorrow. And they sometimes spend more hours with educators – the school administrators, teachers, and coaches, than they do with their own parents. This is a lot of responsibility and it is also an amazing opportunity. Creating, influencing, and fostering teen dating violence prevention efforts gives us the opportunity to make a positive impact both today and years from now.

13. Teachers already face great demands on their time. Why should they spend an hour or more on this training?

- a. We recognize the limited free time teachers have available to them and the limited resources schools have to offer them toward training.

Therefore, we've designed this dynamic training to be easy to access: educators can find it online and free of charge. Educators can also earn continuing education credits while learning about the warning signs of teen dating violence and the importance of healthy relationships. Should educators find the 60-minute training will not fit into their

schedule, they can take advantage of the training's resource center. The center provides information on evidence-based resources and other tools, including hotlines, for free.

14. How can I add my course, curriculum, or program to the resource center?

- a. The resource center is comprised of a comprehensive array of materials and information to help those working with youth lead the discussion around teen dating violence prevention. We have carefully considered the types of resources needed by educators and youth-serving organizations, without providing an overwhelming number of options to people who visit the center.

15. I understand this training is geared toward “tweens” (ages 11-14). Isn't this age group too young for dating?

- a. Studies (non-CDC) show many youth between 12 and 15 have reported dating or being in romantic relationships, sometimes with older partners.

16. Why would you design this online training for educators instead of parents?

- a. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, high school students spend an average of six hours in school each day during the school year. In some cases, this is more time than a teen may spend interacting with his or her parents. Even though the primary role of an educator is to teach academics, educators also may be trusted adults in whom students can confide. Some students may share concerns they have about unhealthy behaviors in their own or a friend's relationship. Furthermore, research shows dating violence frequently takes place in schools. Studies show 42% to 87% of dating violence takes place in a school building or on school grounds. Therefore, a teacher might also have the opportunity to observe interactions between dating partners that other adults, like parents, might not see.

17. Are teachers and schools the best audience for this training? Should they be involved in teen dating violence prevention?

- a. Schools by themselves cannot—and should not be expected to—solve the nation's most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. However, schools provide a good base for many agencies to work together to maintain the well-being of teens.

If educators are knowledgeable about dating violence and are prepared to talk about it openly with students, they can teach students about the importance of healthy

relationships. This could help prevent teen dating violence from occurring. Teachers also can be resources for students so that they can get needed help when they have relationship problems. Educators also can bring together administrators and other educators to create an active, unified school community focused on promoting healthy and respectful relationships.

18. Does this training discuss sex or sexuality?

- a. The training does not teach about sex and is not designed for sexual education purposes. Dating violence can involve physical violence, emotional violence and sexual violence by a partner (e.g., some teens may be forced or pressured by a partner to engage in sexual activity when they do not or cannot consent). The training is designed to provide a better understanding of the fact that dating violence is not just about physical violence; it can also involve sexual violence.

19. Why didn't you create training on teen dating violence prevention specifically for health educators or schools nurses and counselors?

- a. CDC's Dating Matters is designed to help state and local education agencies and schools recognize the importance of teen dating violence prevention. The effort depends on help from all types of educators – classroom teachers, coaches, school nurses and counselors - within a school system to promote healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence.

20. Does CDC think a training for educators is going to prevent Teen Dating Violence?

- a. Teens often come to educators in confidence — to discuss academic issues or share problems. Educators are not alone when it comes to intervening and preventing teen dating violence. It is a *community's* responsibility to make sure that respectful relationships — no violence — occur inside classrooms and schools.

Most of our children remember what we've taught them and make healthy choices. But how can teens protect themselves from something like dating abuse if they don't know all the facts? And how can adults teach their children about this if they don't know all the facts? So it is up to all of us – parents, educators, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, and community organizations – to include dating violence in those important parent-to-child discussions, using teachable moments and every opportunity to talk with our children.

21. Where can I learn more about teen dating violence prevention?

- a. **Choose Respect Initiative**
www.chooserespect.org
- b. **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- c. **National Sexual Assault Hotline**
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- d. **National Sexual Violence Resource Center**
www.nsvrc.org
- e. **National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline**
1-866-331-9474 | 1-866-331-8453 TTY
www.loveisrespect.org
- f. **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)**
www.ncadv.org
- g. **CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division of Adolescent & School Health**
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/injury/index.htm