



Teen Dating Violence: The Facts, Figures and Focusing on Prevention and Education

Advocates Utilize Peer Education, Theatre and Interactive Trainings to Address Teen Dating Violence in Arizona

by Ashley Teitelbaum

The state of our youth looks violent. In 2003, there were 11 boys and girls under the age of 16 arrested for murder in Arizona, 45 for forcible rape, 870 for aggravated assault, 3,778 for simple assault, 173 for sex offenses, two for prostitution and 49 for crimes against family.

Also in 2003, there were 94 young men and women between the ages of 17 and 21 arrested for murder in Arizona, 146 for forcible rape, 1,610 for aggravated assault, 3,718 for simple assault, 253 for sex offenses, 43 for prostitution and 71 for crimes against family.

Just one arrest is one too many. "Youth are a barometer of what is going on in the rest of our culture," said Miriam Dror, a community educator for the Northland Family Help Center in Flagstaff. "And they are exposed to so much at such an early age."

Though the statistics paint a bleak portrait of lost youth, violating each other as carelessly as they toss their dirty clothes onto the floor, there is hope – especially

in the realm of emotional, physical and sexual abuse in teen dating relationships.

There are many advocates, educators and teens working in the trenches to try to save our youth – before they abuse or become abused in dating relationships; change legislation to send the message that dating violence will not be tolerated and assist all victims of dating violence – female, male, heterosexual or homosexual.

"Community education and awareness are our strongest tools in the movement to end violence and all forms of oppression," said Jessica Gush, the community education and volunteer coordinator for The Brewster Center in Tucson. "We have a responsibility to model respectful, equal relationships to young people as they experience their first intimate relationships. We have a responsibility to the future leaders of our communities - the future police officers, judges, doctors, mothers, fathers and neighbors - to expose the current injustices and provide a vision of a non-violent global community where there is justice, equality and safety for all."

Teen Dating Violence in America: Education, Awareness and Advocating for Change

by Ashley Teitelbaum

Teen dating violence is an issue that is at the forefront of the domestic violence movement, with special projects and teen targeted public awareness campaigns popping up across the country. And, it is a much needed effort as 28 percent of high school and college students (female and male) report experiencing abuse in their dating relationships.

"It is important for society – especially teens – to be aware that intimate partner violence can occur in any stage in a person's life," said Vicky Jaffe, the public relations coordinator for the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. "There is a strong need to define that abuse as well, because there is certainly a category of teens who are being abused and don't really know it."

Public awareness and education on teen dating violence is not just a focus of state coalitions and service providers throughout the nation, either. It is also a concern of teens themselves. Many prevention projects and peer education programs in schools throughout the US are being initiated and led by students.

In a recent survey, 26 percent of teenagers said they are very concerned about dating violence and 31 percent said they or a friend experienced dating violence. Almost half of all teens surveyed said they were interested in getting more information about abuse.

Though awareness of the issue and actions on behalf of teen victims have grown over the past decade, there are still many barriers - lack of funding, inadequate legislation

FLAGSTAFF

The P.E.A.C.E. (Prevention, Education and Creative Expression) Project combines education and theatre to illustrate all facets of dating violence. It is comprised of youth from high schools in Flagstaff and facilitated by the Northland Family Help Center and Theatrikos Theatre Company.

"Members receive at least 40 hours of education on issues surrounding family and relationship violence, date/acquaintance rape, basic crisis intervention, non-violent communication, reflective listening and community resources," said Miriam Dror, a community educator for the Northland Family Help Center. "Members then work together on assembling a completely original and unique performance combining various scenes and vignettes. After each performance, the P.E.A.C.E Project members facilitate discussions with the audience regarding the issues presented."

The P.E.A.C.E. Project was established six years ago by the Northland Family Help Center whose mission includes reducing incidences of all forms of family and relationship violence as well as promoting the development of healthy families and individuals in northern Arizona. The project has been highly successful, reaching more than 2,000 people in any given season of performances in high schools, community events, local Native American reservations and juvenile detention centers in Prescott, Phoenix and Tuba City.

See Page 2

"By definition, teenagers are immature, inaccurate duplicators of what they see, which is why their potential is so staggering for domestic violence."

- Presiding Judge William O'Neil of Superior Court of Arizona, Pinal County.

Teen Dating Violence Prevention in Arizona continued

Dror says the “unsung heroes” are the project itself and the teens who are involved.

“It’s not just what they are learning and doing to educate their peers at this time in their lives,” Dror said. “It’s that these teens become culture changers. They embody and live what they learn. They are truly amazing.”

For more information, please call Northland Family Help Center at 928-774-4503 or log on to www.nfhcflag.org.

TUCSON

The Brewster Center Domestic Violence Services, Inc. offers a comprehensive community education program involving trainings and presentations to groups throughout Tucson and Pima County.

“During the past year, we have provided interactive dating violence trainings at many local high schools, including Amphi High School, Howenstein High School, Marana High School, Mountain View High School, Rincon High School and Salpointe Catholic High School,” said Jessica Gush, the community education and volunteer coordinator for The Brewster Center. “At Marana High School, community educators worked with students in the Teen Parent Program to discuss the dynamics of domestic violence, the types of abuse and the services available in Tucson/Pima County.”

Gush added that The Brewster Center also provides trainings to University of Arizona students. Community educators have presented to Alpha Phi Omega, the service fraternity of the University, as well as members of the Women’s Health Advocacy Program - representatives of each of the sororities who are selected to learn necessary skills to provide support and guidance to members of their sororities on issues such as substance abuse, sexual assault and dating violence.

“Our community education activities are designed to increase awareness about domestic violence and dating violence as well as provide participants with the tools and resources to assist survivors and refer them appropriately for services,” Gush said. “Because domestic violence and dating violence are so pervasive, audience members frequently approach our trainers after a presentation and identify themselves as a current survivor or disclose that someone close to them is being victimized. All of our trainers are skilled crisis interventionists and are able to offer options and support.”

The Brewster Center is also collaborating with Our Town Family Center, a nonprofit agency which provides prevention and intervention services to the youth and families of Pima County. The Brewster Center will provide consultation on cross-training and assist in the creation of extensive curricula on youth, dating abuse and domestic violence.

During October 2004, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Brewster Center co-sponsored the Silent Witness National Initiative event at the University of Arizona with the Oasis Center. More than thirty Silent Witnesses (life-size, wooden silhouettes that bear the name and story of a woman killed as a result of domestic violence) were created to remind students, faculty and staff of the 71 domestic violence related deaths that have occurred this year alone.

For more information, please call Jessica Gush at 520-237-8220 or log on to www.thebrewstercenter.org.

PHOENIX

Peer Solutions focuses on “demonstrating respect as the norm” and preventing interpersonal violence for elementary, middle, senior high

and post secondary school students as well as family and community members through a peer education and mentor program.

“We have clubs in several high schools in Tempe and Phoenix as well as middle schools in Tempe,” said Heather Berg of Peer Solutions. “We have a year round curriculum that focuses on issues such as teen suicide, domestic/dating violence, depression, sexual assault and homelessness.”

Each month holds a different focus that often times mirrors national awareness months such as domestic violence in October and eating disorders in February.

“We often have speakers come in and talk to our club members,” Berg said. “Our clubs meet weekly and are facilitated by staff. The middle school clubs are facilitated by high school students who are paid peer educators. We also have monthly community wide meetings to bring everyone together.”

When the focus turns to domestic violence and dating violence, Berg stated that talks include the forms of abuse (emotional, physical and sexual), how to help someone who might be being abused and information on referrals.

Peer Solutions was founded a decade ago, focusing on sexual violence and starting with one club at Tempe High School. The issues addressed have expanded as well as the clubs and club members.

“Each of our four middle schools has about 20 club members,” Berg said. “Tempe High has the largest club with 60 members and the other high schools average around 30 club members. The teens are truly amazing. It’s wonderful to see how empowered and motivated they feel by being a part of the clubs and helping others.”

For more information, please call 602-225-0942 or log on to www.peersolutions.org.

Teen Lifeline - Each year, more than 20,000 teens in Arizona attempt suicide. For some teens, the break-up of a family due to domestic violence and/or enduring or ending an abusive dating relationship can lead them to contemplate or attempt suicide. For these, as well as other troubled youth, solace and help are just a phone call away. Teen Lifeline is a peer counseling hotline that provides assistance seven days a week, 365 days a year.

“There is a unique atmosphere, here, of care and concern for those who call,” said Shyree Mezick, an intern with Teen Lifeline, which receives more than 4,000 calls each year. “We may not be able to solve their problems, but we can listen. And that is so important. These teens may not have anyone else in their lives that can or will truly listen to them. By the end of some calls, I feel like I know more about their lives than the primary people in their lives do.”

Mezick says that seven percent of phone calls received at Teen Lifeline are from teen victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse in dating relationships, with some callers as young as 14-years-old. She stated that those calls come from teens from all walks of life – different ethnic backgrounds, genders and sexual orientation – and various experiences with abuse.

“Our primary role is to listen to them and ensure that they are safe in their environment,” Mezick said. “We encourage them to talk to a trusted adult about the abuse they are experiencing.”

Mezick stated that some concerns teen victims of dating violence voice about ending the abusive relationship are that they don’t want to be isolated from their friends and/or to be alone (without a dating partner).

“And sometimes they are seeking out some sort of comfort and that relationship, although abusive at times, meets those needs,” Mezick added. “Breaking through that barrier is a big issue. A lot of their problems are so multi-faceted.”

Peer counselors like Mezick receive life skills training in order to help

“It’s easy to talk about feedback questionnaires, but the most telling measurement tool is human experience. When a student says, ‘This is the first time anyone has told me that abuse is not my fault,’ then you know.”

- Heather Berg of Peer Solutions, when asked how to measure success of teen dating violence prevention efforts.

AzCADV Encourages Teens to "Kiss Off" Abusive Dating Relationships

Love is never abusive! You deserve to be happy! "Kiss Off" the abusive relationship! These are the messages the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence (AzCADV) has sent thousands of teens throughout 2003 and 2004 with its "Kiss Off" public awareness campaign.

Funded through a \$100,000 Altria Group awareness grant, the "Kiss Off" campaign was the heart of the coalition's efforts to address the growing gap in teen dating violence awareness and prevention services in Arizona.

"We chose radio as a primary awareness vehicle in order to reach the most teens," said Paula Bates, director of community outreach for AzCADV. "We saturated Maricopa and the surrounding counties, targeting demographically to get the reach and frequency we needed in order to bring the message home."

The spots, which were created in both English and Spanish, aired on Clear Channel and Univision stations such as KISS FM, KLNZ, KHOT and KMOR.

A generous match of 173 percent by Clear Channel Radio, Univision, KLNZ and Paula Bates (prior to her employment at the coalition) ensured success of the campaign.

A business/palm card and lip gloss pot were produced as coordinating collateral materials. The card features warning signs of an abusive relationship (written in age-appropriate jargon), the phone number for Teen Lifeline and AzCADV's web address. The lip gloss pot prominently displays the coalition's web address and Teen Lifeline phone number.

More than 40,000 cards and 10,000 lip gloss pots were distributed to schools, youth organizations, teen hang outs and other businesses that teens frequent.

"This has been a highly successful campaign," said Bates.

Michelle Moorhead, the executive director of Teen Lifeline, agreed, "Each time the radio spots ran, our phone lines lit up."

Teen Lifeline, a peer counseling hotline, continues to experience a six to eight percent increase in calls each month.

"We directly attribute this increase to AzCADV's 'Kiss Off' campaign," said Moorhead.

In addition to the public awareness campaign, the coalition works to prevent teen dating violence by presenting and advocating for its healthy relationship curriculum in schools throughout Arizona. AzCADV views healthy and unhealthy dating relationships education as vital in preventing teens from experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. And they are not alone.

"The Attorney General's Office, Maricopa County Association of Governments and the Governor's Office have all made recommendations that information on healthy relationships be made available to our youth," said Doreen Nicolas, a training coordinator for AzCADV.

AzCADV provides healthy relationships presentations in schools upon request. The coalition also provides technical assistance to service providers who are addressing teen dating violence through prevention education and encourages others to meet with school administrators, peer educators and youth leaders to establish healthy relationships education programs.

"Our kids deserve more," Nicholas said. "We need people to rise to the challenge and give our children consistent information to prepare them for a lifetime of safety and happiness."

For more information, please call 602-279-2900 or log on to www.azcadv.org.

— Teen Dating Violence Prevention in Arizona continued

them serve as volunteers at the hotline. More than 700 adolescents have received this training over the last thirteen years.

Thousands of teens are reached each year through Teen Lifeline's community education programs in middle schools and high schools as well.

Peer counseling is available 3-9 p.m. daily, with the hotline being supervised by a master's level mental health clinician. Teens in Maricopa County can reach the hotline by calling 602-248-TEEN. Those outside Maricopa County but in Arizona can call 800-248-TEEN. For more information, please call 602-248-8337 or log on to www.teenlifeline.org.

YUMA

The **Yuma County Attorney's Office** reaches out to local junior and senior high school students with a week-long education program that is loosely based on a curriculum in "The Breakable Vow," a book by Kathryn Anne Clarke that features a story of a young high school girl who becomes a victim of dating violence and includes information on the types of dating abuse, the cycle of violence and seeking help.

"Our program covers everything from the dynamics of dating and domestic violence and laws to sexual assault and local resources," said Teri Lambert, a domestic violence paralegal with the Yuma County Attorney's Office and facilitator of the education program.

Though ever changing, the base format for the program includes the showing of the film, "The Quiet Storm," on Monday. It is a realistic dramatization of a college couple from the onset of their relationship that includes family dynamics of the abuser and the development of the relationship (use of power and control and eventual escalation to abuse and arrest). On Tuesday, a victim advocate or masters counselor addresses victim issues such as barriers to leaving the relationship, Violence Against Women Act laws, safety planning and local victims services. Batterer dynamics are addressed on Wednesday by a master's counselor. The early signs of abuse are discussed as well as the cycle of abuse. The power and control and non-violence wheels are introduced and explained. The effects of abuse on children are also addressed. Thursday's focus is criminal justice and legal issues. The law is explained – prosecution, no drop policies, misdemeanors, felonies, self defense and more. On Friday, a Yuma Police Department detective from the Sexual Assault Unit specifically addresses sexual assault, sexual harassment and date rape.

"The discussion includes what each of these acts are and the effects and consequences of them," Lambert said. "They explain the different types of date rape drugs that are found in our community. He also brings in the department drug and/or DUI goggles so the class can experience the effects of alcohol/drug use."

Lambert stated that students are provided with a slip of paper so they can write down any questions or comments they may have but are too embarrassed to ask out loud or make a request to discuss something privately with the school counselors.

Lambert says the program, which has received "rave reviews" from teens and educators, is evaluated via an exit survey - a tool that has proven to be very useful for school administrators and the development of the program.

For more information, please call Teri Lambert at 928-329-2260.

AzCADV would like to thank the providers featured in this story for responding to its email solicitation for new and continued teen dating violence prevention projects in Arizona and their collaborative efforts in assisting the coalition in the production of this special dating violence issue. Statistics quoted are from the "Crime in 2003" report, Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Copyright 2004 - Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence. All or any portion of the above article reproduced in another publication must be attributed to Ashley Teitelbaum, writer, and the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Phoenix, AZ.

Did You Know?

One in five adolescent girls will be physically and/or sexually abused in a dating relationship.

- *Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls; Journal of the American Medical Association, 2001.*

Physical aggression occurs in one in three teen dating relationships.

- *Avery-Leaf and Cascardi, "Dating Violence Education," Preventing Violence in Relationships, American Psychological Association.*

Twenty-six percent of pregnant teens reported being physically abused by their boyfriends.

- *A More Hidden Crime: Adolescent Battered Women, The Network News, July/Aug., National Women's Health Network, 1993.*

Nearly 15% of all sexual offenses involving teen perpetrators happen at school or on school property.

- *Focus Adolescent Services - www.focusas.com.*

Physical and sexual abuse against adolescent girls in dating relationships increases the likelihood that the girl will abuse drugs and/or alcohol, develop an eating disorder, consider and/or attempt suicide, engage in risky sexual behavior and/or become pregnant.

- *Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls; Journal of the American Medical Association, 2001.*

Women between the ages of 16 and 24 are nearly three times more vulnerable to intimate partner violence than women in other age groups.

- *U.S. Dept of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics.*

Girls are not the only ones who are abused physically or emotionally in relationships. Boys also experience abuse, especially psychological abuse. Boys are rarely hurt physically in relationships, but when it happens, it is often severe.

- *Love Doesn't Have to Hurt, American Psychological Association, 2004.*

Violence happens in same-sex relationships too. When it does, gay and lesbian teenagers often don't know where to turn for help. If they are not comfortable telling people they are gay, it makes the situation even harder.

- *Love Doesn't Have to Hurt, American Psychological Association, 2004.*

Many studies indicate that as a dating relationship becomes more serious the potential for and nature of violent behavior also escalates.

- *Teen Dating Violence Resource Manual, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1997.*

More than 30 percent of teenagers tell no one at all about being victimized by their dates and 61 percent tell only a friend. Less than three percent of teenagers report a violent incident to an authority figure such as the police, a counselor or a teacher. Forty-two percent of boys and 43 percent of girls said that their abuse occurred in a school building or on school grounds.

- *Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence.*

Speaking of Teen Dating Violence ...

"We need to increase our efforts to prevent domestic violence by reaching out to children living with violence and teaching them about healthy relationships. It is critical in breaking the cycle of this problem. It's the number one crime in our state, and we have to do as much as we can to prevent children from growing up and potentially repeating the abuse in their own lives."

- *Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano on what needs to be done to more effectively address teen dating violence.*

"I believe this is the most difficult issue for victims to come forward on. Many teens believe that their parents will make them break up with the offender and/or not allow them to date anymore. Teens want to be seen as mature enough to handle a relationship on their own. Many teens are not able to label their relationship as violent. They know what dating violence is but it is very hard to say, 'It's happening to me.'"

- *Debbie Okrina, the manager of Children's Counseling and Education for the Houston Area Women's Center in Houston, TX, on the barriers teen victims face in disclosing their abuse.*

"Everything begins with self, understanding who you are as a young woman and all that entails. That spirit of womanhood, such as being a part of a healthy and respectful relationship that will allow you to continue to grow and mature. If your well-being is in constant threat or if you feel a sense of something wrong that is hard to identify, these are signs that need to be acknowledged and taken seriously. Take a stand because it is the right and healthy choice to make and do. Your best defense is to avoid being a victim. Your soul and spirit are precious – protect them."

- *Radmilla Cody, former Miss Navajo Nation and survivor of dating violence, on what advice she would give to young women on relationship abuse.*

"Open dialogue is important when dealing with teens. Often times many of them have never been given the opportunity to have a safe environment to discuss the issues they are dealing with on a daily basis. After each presentation I give to teens, I am amazed at the number of them that identify with the unhealthy characteristics we discussed during our time together. The most alarming thing is the teens either had never considered many controlling behaviors unhealthy, or worse, they have never had a caring adult ask them about their concerns regarding dating violence."

- *Katherine Kennedy, Miss Arizona 2004 and teen advocate, when asked why teen dating violence prevention is so important in Arizona. Kennedy asks that anyone seeking information or a presentation on healthy/unhealthy relationships contact her at MissAZ2004@miss-arizona.org*

"Safety should be your number one concern. You need to be thinking about things like, 'Should I be going out by myself at night?' I would encourage you to file a police report and seek the protection that the courts can give you. And, please know that there are people out there who will support you and help keep you safe."

- *Lori Smith, Glendale Police Department, Glendale, AZ, when asked the message she'd like to send youth in Arizona who have or are ending abusive relationships.*

I don't feel like the justice system has been real helpful in the area of teen dating violence. I don't think the answer is putting offenders in jail. These are all children we are talking about. We need to help them deal with their feelings and understand what a healthy relationship is. I think what would help most is for men and boys to get involved and teach other men that power and control in relationships is unhealthy. I also think as a society we need to change our views on healthy relationships, sex role stereotypes and healthy sexuality.

- *Debbie Okrina, the manager of Children's Counseling and Education for the Houston Area Women's Center in Houston, TX, when asked what more needs to be done to effectively address teen dating violence in America.*

"It is so important to teach our teens how to be an empathetic friend. Often teens go to each other looking for advice. We need to empower them to help each other - encourage them to say 'I believe you, I care about you and I'm worried about you.' and to help their friends find trusted adults they can talk to and resources to help keep them safe."

- *Katherine Kennedy, Miss Arizona 2004 and teen advocate, when asked what advice she would give teens that suspect or know a friend is being abused.*

"One of the things that I was struck by is that some of the young girls in the group were very similar to women in domestic violence situations. They would get a lot of attention from their boyfriends at first and it would seem like they really cared about them. Later, they realized that it was more about power and control than caring. They would mistake things like being told who they could or couldn't talk to as caring, when it is actually about control. One of the girls we worked with didn't realize it until the other girls pointed it out to her. Her boyfriend would tell her she had to sit by the phone at certain times in case he might want to call her and control what she wore. She ended up breaking off the relationship. I think it's all a matter of educating youth on power and control issues, no matter what their age."

- *Lori Smith, Glendale Police Department, Glendale, AZ, on observations she made while counseling girls who come from homes where domestic violence occurs and/or are victims of dating violence.*

and society itself - that advocates face when addressing teen dating violence.

Current national and statewide statistics that are exclusive to teen dating violence are few and far between. Teen dating violence victims and incidents are harder to track than that of adult victims of dating violence or domestic violence as most teens do not seek shelter or file police reports on the abuse.

"We need more research and tools in place to find out how many kids are witnessing abuse and being victimized at home or in relationships," said Barri Rosenbluth, director of school-based services for SafePlace in Austin, TX. "We need to include questions about relationship abuse on all kinds of intake paperwork for kids. It should be standard in counseling and doctors' offices - anywhere there is health screening for kids."

Another obstacle falls in the criminal justice system. Legislation that defines teen dating violence as a crime and makes provisions for protective orders for teen victims is lacking in many states. This can lead teens to believe that the criminal justice system doesn't feel the abuse they are experiencing is "real" or important and that they have no rights to protection simply because of their age.

Finally, there is the thought process of some communities, school districts and youth organizations. Statements such as "That kind of thing doesn't happen here!" or the idea that dating violence prevention doesn't need to be a big priority - as opposed to smoking, alcohol, suicide or teen pregnancy - are common in some states. This can hinder advocates who are attempting to bring education on the issue into the school system.

"Sometimes we feel like we are giving them one message and the rest of society including the media, families and schools are giving them another message," said Debbie Okrina, the manager of children's counseling and education for the Houston Area Women's Center in Houston, TX. "We are often asked to only speak to the girls, but for the most part, it is not the girls who are controlling the relationship. We feel that we have to change the ways that the perpetrators of dating violence think, feel and behave in order to end dating violence."

The following are just a few of the many service providers and organizations that have - and are - breaking down those barriers, paving the way for progress in addressing relationship abuse among the youth of America and pouring their passions into innovative projects.

ARKANSAS

In 2002, there were 63 juveniles arrested for murder, 53 for rape, 78 for crimes against family (abuse of family members), 403 for aggravated assault, 885 for simple assault and 55 for sexual

offenses in the state of Arkansas.

-Arkansas Crime Information Center

The Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ACADV) has recently initiated a dating violence program that includes the development of a manual for dating violence educators/trainers. The manual features information about the project itself as well as the first of four training curriculums that covers such issues as safety planning, the prevalence of teen dating violence in Arkansas, forms of abuse and teen dating violence in the LGBT community. The coalition will also offer continuing workshops and training material in 2005 on healthy relationships, sexual harassment, gender issues and date rape.

The coalition initiated this program at the behest of the 30 shelters and service providers in Arkansas and estimates that the efforts by dating violence educators in schools have already reached thousands of teens.

"And that number will only go up," said Jayne Ann Kita, executive director of the coalition. "Because in our trainings, we talk to the educators about how to get into more schools."

This is a much needed effort, added Kita, "Kids now-a-days are getting involved with the opposite sex younger and younger. They do not have the maturity, experience and knowledge to handle these situations. By giving them information about inappropriate relationships and about healthy relationships we can make a difference."

In addition to the dating violence program, Kita says the coalition is "working on some dating violence legislation for the upcoming session. We hope to enable victims of dating violence to get an order of protection and possibly include dating violence in the domestic violence criminal code."

For more information, please call 501-907-5612.

COLORADO

The Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence is helping teens "Rap it Up" through an education manual geared towards teens that presents "real talk about dating violence."

"Teens ages 11-19 are struggling through one of the most difficult times in a person's life," said Jamie Gladish Running Deer, the children and youth advocacy coordinator for the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "It is not easy to juggle introspection (around changing hormones, developing bodies, emerging sexual identities, developing critical thinking skills and planning for the future) with external realities such as family and peer pressure, surviving and experiencing violence and increasing adult responsibilities. If we can help youth to develop strong, respectful

relationships with their peers (and adults), then we may be able to prevent relationship violence as youth become older teens and then adults."

"Rap it Up!," which is available in English and Spanish, was developed as a response to requests from community and member programs who wanted a resource they could use in school presentations and outreach work with teens. The coalition recognized the need to have something geared directly to youth that explored the dynamics of power and control in dating relationships, warning signs of abuse, resources and peer intervention.

"We wanted to create a resource that included all of those pieces, but did not come off as preachy," Gladish Running Deer said. "We hoped that teens would feel empowered to create change, learn respectful behaviors, unlearn disrespectful and abusive behaviors as well as communicate with one another about what they expect and desire from an intimate relationship."

The manual helps teens create that change by featuring a section entitled "10 Things Teens Can Do to Stop Dating Violence" that includes such actions as starting a peer education group, asking the school library to purchase books on living without violence and creating bulletin boards to raise awareness about dating violence.

In addition to "Rap it Up!," the coalition's Children's Advocacy Committee is focusing on proactive outreach efforts in the community and with member programs working with youth to further develop prevention and intervention strategies related to dating and inter-peer violence.

"We are researching the development of a youth advisory council to CCADV to ensure youth have a forum to give voice to their issues and access to trainings and other resources that support the work of teens in their communities," Gladish Running Deer said. "We intend to hold several focus groups in rural and urban areas to help us determine if youth are interested in participating in this way, how the advisory council will be developed and what some of the initial goals of the council will be. By this time next year, we hope to have identified seven to ten young people (of various gender identities and geographic representation) who are committed to participating in developing and promoting the council, its future projects, goals, philosophy and mission."

For more information, please call 888-778-7091 or log on to www.ccadv.org.

MICHIGAN

The State of Michigan, victim advocates and legislators have made huge strides in stopping relationship abuse among teens. Michigan law changed on April 1, 2002, giving dating violence

victims of any age the same protections under criminal law as domestic violence survivors.

But, as stated in the Dating Violence Youth Education Package, “the power of the law will be multiplied as young people learn how to recognize the warning signs and where to go for help.” It is for that reason that the **Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board** created the package that targets adults who work with high school-age students.

“We are excited about offering this to educators across the state,” said Debi Cain, executive director of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board. “Abusers can change if they choose to change. The earlier we can reach youth, the better our chances of preventing future dating and domestic violence.”

To download the dating violence education package and for more information, please log on to www.michigan.gov/fia.

MINNESOTA

It’s truly one of a kind! *jUbicate!TM, Haz la Diferencia* (Find Yourself, Make a Difference) is the first-of-its-kind Spanish language short film by and for Latino youth. Produced by **Casa de Esperanza** and underwritten by **Verizon Wireless** and **General Mills**, the film centers on a high school classroom where students are discussing healthy and unhealthy relationships. Their responses take the film into four separate stories that present such issues as teen dating violence, gender roles, communication and peer pressure. The film is filled with colorful storytelling as well as Latin/Hip-Hop music, compelling teens to watch, address issues and make a difference.

Amy Sánchez, the director of fund development and communications for Casa de Esperanza in St. Paul, says, “From our perspective, one of the great things about *jUbicate!* is that it was developed by Latino youth - in Spanish. We had youth involved in the entire production of the film including script writing, production, original artwork and music.”

The video also comes with a companion facilitator’s guide that provides ideas for activities and discussion. It is marketed to dating violence educators, state coalitions and the general public.

Casa de Esperanza is also in the final stages of its peer-education pilot program with the Boys and Girls Clubs.

“The teens have used *jUbicate!* as the basis to spin off topics and formulate them into training modules they can use when they go out into the community and teach other Latino youth about non-violence and healthy relationships,” said Sánchez. “Some of the

training modules include sexism, the influence of media, popular culture and music.”

For more information, please call 651-646-5553 or log on to www.casadeesperanza.org.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The www.reachoutnh.com website, a project of the **New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence**, provides information on relationship violence, healthy relationships, victim safety, sexual abuse/harassment, stalking, tips on how to obtain help for a friend, legal issues, a listing of available resources and more. On the site, teens can read stories of others who have experienced dating violence and can take a quiz to assess their own relationships.

The Reach Out New Hampshire website is very important in raising public awareness about the issue of teen dating violence, says Vicky Jaffe, who serves as the public relations coordinator for the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

“With the exception of a few cases that make a splash in the paper, teen dating violence has been pretty well hidden,” Jaffe said. “The website was established as a part of a statewide campaign that was launched in 2002 to address the growing problem of violence among teens. It’s a place where teens can go for information and support.”

The New Hampshire Governor’s Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence created a teen dating violence educators guide as the latest part of the campaign. The guide was distributed to guidance counselors and school nurses who work with teens in schools throughout the state as well as educators at the state’s 14 domestic violence crisis centers.

The website will also host additional information as the coalition launches a sexual assault campaign in April 2005, added Jaffe.

For more information, please call Vicky Jaffe at 603-224-8893 or log on to the website www.reachoutnh.com.

SOUTH CAROLINA

In 2003, there were 863 victims of rape between the ages of 10 and 21 who filed reports with law enforcement in South Carolina. There were 191 boys between the ages of 10 and 21 arrested for rape as well as 46 boys and girls under the age of 20 arrested for murder, 49 for forcible rape, 1734 for aggravated assault and 663 for crimes against family.

– South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

The **South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault** has come up with a new “game plan” for preventing teen dating violence. It will be hosting “Out of

Bounds – A Healthy Relationship Game Plan for the Next Generation” for high school and college youth and educators in February 2005.

“SCCADVASA decided to organize a youth driven conference because of its potential to prevent sexual and dating violence among the group with the highest rate of these crimes – teens,” said Helen Tecklenburg, training coordinator for SCCADVASA. “Our goals are to increase awareness of dating violence, sexual assault and drugs used to facilitate sexual assault; prevent the development of gangs; and promote community activism through projects developed by youth which address dating violence and sexual assault.”

In addition, Tecklenburg stated that the coalition would like to foster the collaboration of schools with resources such as sexual assault centers and domestic violence shelters to promote volunteerism and prevention.

Scheduled workshops at the conference cover topics such as teen dating violence; dating and sexual violence prevention for young men; sexual assault; gang prevention; drug facilitated rape; and stalking and the use of technology in dating violence (use of internet, pagers and cell phones to intimidate and threaten victims).

The conference will also feature a workshop entitled “Shaping Solutions: Let’s Get Active in Our Schools & Communities.”

The coalition will be using educational resources from www.seeitandstopit.org for the conference.

Tecklenburg says she believes “encouraging awareness about dating violence and support among students enables victims to seek help and empowers their peers to recognize warning signs. We hope to remove the stigma of reporting incidents of sexual assault and dating violence.”

For more information, please call Helen Tecklenburg at 800-260-9293 ext. 104.

TEXAS

In 2003 alone, there were more than 18,000 family violence offenders between the ages of 15 and 19. There were 28,000 reported victims between the ages of 10 and 19. Approximately 170 young men and women between the ages of 10 and 19 were arrested for murder and 570 in that same age group arrested for rape. More than 5,000 boys and girls under the age of 19 were arrested for aggravated sexual assault.

– Texas Department of Public Safety, *Uniform Crime Report, Crime in 2003*.

[AUSTIN] - The Expect Respect program at **SafePlace** is preventing dating violence in Texas by helping youth heal from past abuse; raising expectations for equality and respect in relationships; enhancing safety and respect on school campuses; and promoting youth

leadership in violence prevention.

The five components of Expect Respect, which was formed in 1988 at behest of school counselors seeking counseling for girls in abusive relationships, are counseling and support groups; classroom presentations; the SafeTeens leadership program; a school-wide bullying prevention program; and training for school personnel.

“We started with one support group in 1988, then got funding the next year to offer the group in five schools,” said Barri Rosenbluth, director of school-based services for SafePlace. “Word of mouth among the counselors spread and now we facilitate 21 groups per week.”

After the support groups were established, SafePlace added classroom presentations, developing outlines and activities. Two classroom presentations are provided by staff and trained volunteers to middle and high school students on preventing dating violence and sexual harassment.

The SafeTeens leadership program prepares youth to become peer educators and positive role models. SafePlace provides six hours of training to student groups and an adult sponsor. Following the training each group designs its own projects for raising awareness and preventing bullying, sexual harassment and dating violence at school.

Expect Respect’s bullying prevention program involves teachers, administrators, students and parents in creating a safe and respectful school environment. This program has five components that work together on each campus: a leadership team to develop guidelines for responding to bullying and harassment and to coordinate the project’s activities; a school-wide climate and diversity survey; staff training; curriculum for students; and parent education. A primary goal of the program is to support students in becoming “courageous bystanders”-giving them the skills and confidence to speak up or get help when someone is being bullied or harassed.

SafePlace also provides training for school personnel and parent groups at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The goal of these sessions is to help adults recognize, respond to and prevent dating violence, sexual harassment and bullying in school.

Rosenbluth says Expect Respect’s all encompassing program is more effective than simply providing presentations to students alone.

“If you have the presentations and say ‘this is a problem,’ then you have to have somewhere and someone for them to turn to for help,” said Rosenbluth. “You have to be able to help teen victims once they’ve acknowledged that they are being abused. Resources for them are a must.”

SafePlace’s work in elementary schools focuses on bullying and sexual harassment as a means to prevent dating violence later on.

“We want to prevent domestic violence before it happens,” Rosenbluth said. “Kids start their dating relationships in middle school and they already have an idea of how relationships work by the peer relationships they developed in elementary school. If bullying is going on and the adults don’t stop it, and other students don’t intervene, then students learn that bullying behavior must be normal and expected in their peer relationships.”

Rosenbluth added, “In order to change the culture of how people treat each other, we all need to be involved – members of the school districts, parents and teachers. We need to change those underlying conditions that lead to dating violence. We’ve done a lot of responding to domestic violence and dating violence, but we have only just begun to address prevention.”

For more information, please call 512-267-SAFE or log on to www.austin-safeplace.org.

[HOUSTON] – Seven years ago, with only one staff person and a lot of dedication, the **Houston Area Women’s Center (HAWC)** began educating teens on teen dating violence in Houston – the fourth largest city in the U.S.

Since then, the thirst for knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships within the community and the increasing disclosure of teens experiencing abuse led HAWC to seek more funding and expand to one full time educator, two part-time educators and one full time outreach counselor.

“We added the counselor position because many of the teens disclosing that they had already experienced abuse did not have transportation to come to our center,” said Debbie Okrina, the manager of Children’s Counseling and Education for HAWC. “All of our presentations are interactive. We work from the popular education philosophy.”

The educators work mostly in schools, but have also done outreach work in juvenile detention centers, churches, teen shelters and other community agencies.

“I think prevention education is so important because it [dating violence] is dangerous,” Okrina said. “We see so many young people getting hurt and some even losing their lives. We see that it is disrupting many young people’s education as well. When you have to see your abusive ex-partner in class, it is difficult to concentrate and study.”

Though HAWC has expanded its education team, Okrina says, “We feel overwhelmed often.” Much like educators in other cities, the demand often outweighs the funding and staff resources available.

“We cannot begin to meet the need that we see in the Houston area,” added Okrina. “There

are so many teens experiencing dating violence in our community. Many of our teen clients who come in for other issues later disclose that they have also been victims of dating violence. When we go into the schools to talk about these issues many teens disclose that they have been victims and some that they are perpetrators. It is not unusual for us to leave a presentation having had more than half the students report that they had already experienced dating violence.”

In an effort to more effectively address the needs of teens in Houston, Okrina started the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) last year. TAB is mostly made up of teens that have accessed HAWC’s services and are survivors of dating violence and domestic violence, though some teens have joined because they are interested in the cause.

“These are teens that can give us feedback on services to teens, including brochures and handouts that target teens,” Okrina said. “They are currently helping us update our website to make it teen friendly. Some speak publicly, sharing their stories of violence and survival at volunteer trainings, schools and other outreach sites.”

Okrina said TAB has also raised money to buy video equipment to create a domestic/dating violence video especially for teens.

HAWC also addresses violence in the lives of younger children by providing education in elementary and middle schools.

“We call it bullying education, but often times it is really teen dating violence prevention as well,” Okrina said. “At one elementary school, a fifth grade boy who was ‘dating’ a classmate broke her arm. We are starting to realize more and more that prevention must begin with young children.”

Okrina says that HAWC feels its program is very successful in that “we have learned a lot and we are still learning. Our staff members listen to young people and we have great relationships with them. We ask them what they need.”

“We also feel successful in our interventions, like we are really helping people heal from violence,” added Okrina.

For more information on HAWC’s education efforts and teen council, please call 713-528-6798 or log on to www.hawc.org.

[ARLINGTON] – **The Women’s Shelter** provides education to high school students in more than 150 schools through Project D.A.T.E. (Dating Abuse Tendencies Education).

“We take a three-pronged, holistic approach to ending teen dating violence,” said Rebecca Farrow, Director of Educational Services for The Women’s Shelter. “Our three programs are geared towards educators, parents and teens. They are also specialized for students in

Teen Dating Violence Prevention in the U.S. continued ...

alternative high schools and pregnant/parenting students to make information more relevant.”

Project D.A.T.E. is a high school-based program that explores healthy dating relationships and includes information on the forms of abuse; power and control issues; and warning signs of abusive relationships. Parents as Allies is geared toward the parents of pre-teens and teens and includes discussions on dating relationships, warning signs of abusive behavior, parent resources and intervention strategies. Lesson Plans on Dating Violence is designed for teachers and counselors of high school students, focusing on the indicators of abuse, maintaining classroom safety, working with parents, providing referrals and implementing issues of relationship violence into the curriculum.

The Women’s Shelter feels prevention education is vital to teens in today’s society.

“Teen dating violence is a national epidemic that clearly leads to family violence in adulthood,” Farrow said. “That, in turn, can lead to child abuse. We educate teens to intervene if violence exists and break the cycle of multi-generational violence for the future.”

For more information, please call 817-548-0583.

AzCADV would like to thank the state coalitions and service providers for responding to its solicitation for information on teen dating violence prevention efforts in the United States and collaborating with the coalition in creating this special teen dating violence issue.

Statistics provided by Brustin, S., Legal Response to Teen Dating Violence, Family Law Quarterly, vol. 29, no. 2, 331 (Summer 1995) (citing Levy, In Love & In Danger: a teen’s guide to breaking free of an abusive relationship, 1993) and Applied Research & Consulting LLC for Liz Claiborne Inc. Spring 2000.

Copyright 2004 - Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence. All or any portion of the above article reproduced in another publication must be attributed to Ashley Teitelbaum, writer, and the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Phoenix, AZ.

Southern Arizona Resources for For LGBT Youth in Abusive Dating Relationships:

Wingspan Anti-Violence Project
24-hour Crisis Hotline
520-624-0348

Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays
520-575-8660

Our Town Family Center
520-323-1706 (24hrs / se habla español)

Eon
520-620-6245
queervoice@saaf.org

Youth On Their Own
520-293-1136

Wingspan Focuses on Interpersonal and Systematic Violence in the Lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Teens in Southern Arizona

By Ashley Teitelbaum

Shame. Isolation. Threats. Love. All barriers for teens attempting to end abusive relationships. Now add to that the fear of losing the love and support of their families and friends, being kicked out of their homes and possibly suffering humiliation – or worse – at the hands of their peers and society. These are the added pressures and obstacles lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teen victims of dating violence can be faced with when searching their souls to find a way to reach out for help.

“One main barrier for LGBT teens is that they aren’t ‘out’ yet,” said JC Olsen, coordinator of the EON Youth Lounge, a safe hangout space for LGBT youth in Tucson, AZ. “They fear that the natural support system they have – family and friends – will be taken away if they come out.”

LGBT teens also face the fact that while some family members and friends might be (or are) supportive of them being out, they may not want to address an abusive relationship.

“They know that some people believe same-sex relationships will never be healthy,” Olsen added. “That is an added pressure that causes them to feel like it is more important to keep up appearances – for them to make it look like the relationship is healthy. If they recognize the abuse, then they feel they are sending out a larger message that ‘Yes, same-sex relationships aren’t healthy.’ They may want to prove people wrong.”

All of this is a lot of weight for a teen to carry on his or her shoulders – in addition to the emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse he or she is experiencing.

“It’s important that teens have supportive LGBT groups in schools and the community,” said Lori Girshick, coordinator of the Anti-Violence Project for Wingspan, the LGBT community center that facilitates the EON Youth Program. “If there is an active group to be involved in, he or she may feel safer about disclosing the abuse and ignoring the negative messages he or she receives from other places.”

Dating violence is a topic that comes up fairly often in the EON lounge.

“We provide a space that is a friendly and supportive environment for teens to talk about anything – including abuse,” Olsen said. “On another level, we also host events and workshops that focus on communication, respect and healthy sexuality. This feeds into talking about respecting yourself in a relationship.”

Focusing on such topics can help teens spot the warning signs of abusive partners and unhealthy relationships.

“If you are empowered to communicate, you are empowered in your relationship and deciding how it works – all of which is helpful in assessing the health of a relationship,” added Olsen.

In addition to EON’s lounge, its staff provides joint presentations in schools throughout Southern Arizona with members of Wingspan’s Anti-Violence project. They discuss dating violence and LGBT sensitivity.

“We identify and discuss the different levels of violence like emotional abuse and harassment and the systems of violence (domestic violence, dating violence and hate crimes),” Olsen said. “We talk about how everything is connected.”

Another place in the EON Youth Program where teen dating violence issues arise is its Homeless Youth Services.

“LGBT teens have a higher risk of being kicked out or running away,” Olsen said. “Sometimes we see that, when the family structure has been removed, her or she is more dependent on his or her dating partner. This just puts another layer of pressure on that relationship and makes it more difficult for those trying to help if the relationship turns abusive.”

Olsen says that, in these situations, EON tries to help the victim become more self-sufficient so he or she will feel more empowered to end the abusive relationship.

When asked what message EON would like to send LGBT teen victims of dating violence in Southern Arizona, Olsen said, “We want you to know that there are people here in the community and within our program that are supportive and are open and want to listen, understand and help.”

For more information on EON and Wingspan’s Anti-Violence Project, which focuses on hate crimes, domestic violence, community organizing, public education and crisis intervention, please call 520-624-1779 or log on to www.wingspan.org.

AzCADV's Teen Dating Violence Newsletter was written and designed by Ashley Teitelbaum, a community outreach volunteer for the coalition. Teitelbaum has worked in the domestic violence movement since 1996, previously serving as the communications coordinator for the Texas Council on Family Violence and National Domestic Violence Hotline in Austin, TX and as lead training specialist for Phoebe's Home/Twin City Mission in Bryan-College Station, TX. She is also a survivor of teen dating violence.

Many thanks to the service providers, state coalitions and individuals interviewed for this publication.

AzCADV Mission Statement:

To lead, to advocate, to educate, to collaborate, to end domestic violence in Arizona

AzCADV Coordinating Team:

Leah Meyers, Director of Domestic Violence Services
 Becky Martin, Director of Administration
 Dale Wiebusch, Director of Systems Advocacy
 Paula Bates, Director of Community Outreach

AzCADV Staff

Jerlene Benavidez, Administrative Assistant
 Debbie Dixon, Training Coordinator
 Bill Hart, Systems Advocate
 Sandy Navarrete, Systems Advocate
 Doreen Nicholas, Training Coordinator
 Menyon Scott, Training Coordinator
 LaTonia Turner, Administrative Coordinator
 Rose Mary Verdugo, Administrative Assistant
 Lynne Norris, Legal Advocacy Program Coordinator
 Gabriella Santos, Legal Advocate
 Merri Tiseth, Legal Advocate

Committees and Meetings Schedule

Board of Directors meets 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. on the third Friday of each month.

Budget and Finance meets 6 – 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.

Outreach/Development meets 10 a.m. – noon on the third Wednesday of each month.

Health Care Issues - TBA. Please call the coalition for more information.

Legal meets 8 - 9:30 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Legislative meets 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month.

Nominating and Membership meets via phone conference as needed.

Personnel meets as needed.

P.E.E.R.S. meets noon – 2 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

S.H.A.R.E. meets 9 – 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month.

Strategic Planning - TBA. Please call the coalition for more information.

Women of Color meets 9:30 – 11 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month.

Working Together to End Domestic Violence

I want to assist AzCADV in its work to end domestic violence:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail _____

_____ I would like information on applying for membership

_____ I would like information on volunteer/internship opportunities

_____ I would like to donate \$ _____ (check or money order enclosed) Please make checks payable to AzCADV

Please fill out, clip and mail to AzCADV, 100 W. Camelback, Suite 109, Phoenix, Az 85013

AzCADV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Liz Kinsworthy - Tucson
 Crucita Nuanez-Ochoa - Phoenix
 Carl Mangold - Scottsdale
 Lorel Stevens - Phoenix
 Thomas Alongi - Phoenix
 Victoria Wallace - Phoenix
 Yvonne Luna - Flagstaff
 David Bones - Phoenix
 Christy Johnson - Apache Junction
 Theresa Truesdell - Phoenix
 Pamela Moreton - Prescott

AzCADV's phone numbers are not crisis hotlines. If you need immediate assistance, please call 911. If something about your relationship with your partner scares you and you need to talk, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence

100 West Camelback Road, Suite 109
 Phoenix, AZ 85013

AzCADV Legal Advocacy Hotline

800-782-6400 or 602-279-2900
 602-279-7270 - TTY
 Fax: 602-279-2980

www.azcadv.org