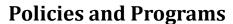# Creating Safe School Communities Free of Teen Dating Violence

Teenagers are learning about forming relationships within many different settings including the school environment. It is critical not only to give students individual skills for creating positive relationships, but also to shape their experiences by creating a safe, empowering school wide culture that reinforces the importance of building relationships built on respect.

Prevention

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- Incorporate lesson plans addressing TDV and related issues such as healthy relationships and bystander intervention.
- Teach students how to recognize the signs that tell them whether they are at risk of entering an abusive relationship or are already involved in one, and how to intervene safely and effectively when they know of something going on with their peers.
- Model respectful behavior.
- Create a school environment where responsibility, safety, and respect for all regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation are promoted.

"Creating safe and orderly schools is about commitment and community will. Accomplishing such a goal requires families, schools, and community leaders to articulate the quality of the educational environment they want to provide for youth and to collaboratively develop the strategies that will produce the desired results. Achieving this objective requires school and community leaders to assess where they are, plan where they want to be, implement a series of comprehensive strategies to bridge the difference, and evaluate their progress."[1]

Policies and Programs

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- Set clear policies about reporting teen dating abuse or violence of any kind. (i.e. documentation, protocol, etc.)
- Implement awareness education for students and parents about TDV.
- Provide counseling services for affected students.
- Enforce protective and restraining orders and use "Stay-Away Agreements" (School-based alternatives to protective orders. See example on pg. 15 of source.)[2]
- Hold staff trainings on how to recognize signs of teen dating violence and how to intervene.
- Identify local community resources and make these available to students in a safe, accessible place.
- Find creative ways to make the school community aware of policies.

References

[1]"Creating safe and drug-free schools." (n.d.). http://1.usa.gov/1Fi4yJn; [2]"Model policy and guidance for incidents involving dating violence." (n.d.). http://bit.ly/1F1JMfk; "Teen Dating Violence: Information for Teachers." (n.d.) http://bit.ly/17tcqZB; Teen Dating Violence Prevention." (n.d.) http://bit.ly/1FHc7pb; "A Guide to Addressing Dating Violence in Texas Schools." (2007). http://bit.ly/1G3CvIq

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