

expect RESPECT SUPPORT GROUPS:

**DEVELOPING A MODEL OF CHANGE FOR
REDUCING DATING VIOLENCE
PERPETRATION AMONG AT-RISK YOUTH**

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Objectives

- Introduce the Expect Respect program
- Describe a school-based support group model for high-risk youth to prevent dating violence perpetration and victimization
- Share results of a pilot study
 - examine pre-to-post changes
 - test the Expect Respect theoretical model with structural equation modeling
- Identify empirically-based strategies for prevention programming with at-risk youth

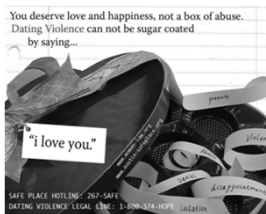
Background: Dating Violence

- Dating violence involves emotional, digital, physical and sexual abuse of a dating partner
- Wide range of prevalence rates for victimization and perpetration have been reported
 - Estimated 10-30% of adolescents report victimization



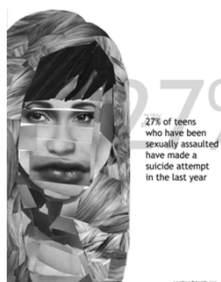
Looks Like:

- Insults, name-calling, put downs
- Jealous and controlling behavior
- Isolation of partner from friends/family
- Use of technology to harass or intimidate
- Threats to hurt self or others
- Hitting, choking, kicking, restraining
- Forced or coerced sexual activity
- Birth control sabotage



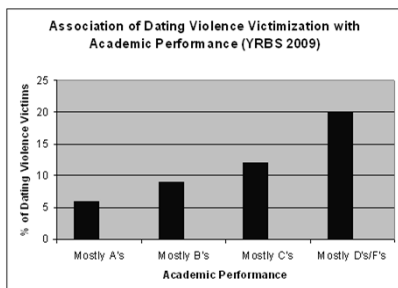
Impact on Health and Mental Health

- Victimization associated with
 - Substance abuse, unhealthy weight control behaviors, & suicide (Silverman et al., 2001)
 - Depression, anxiety
- Strong link between dating violence & sexual coercion
 - Increased sexual risk behaviors; STI's and unwanted pregnancies



Impact on Academics

(YRBS, 2009)



Dating Violence Prevention

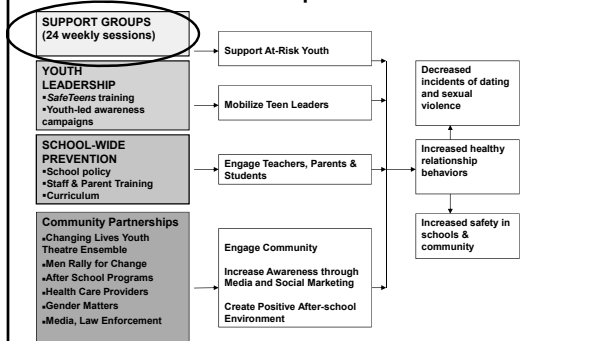
Take an ecological approach

- Begin early
- Focus on positive messages
- Provide significant contact
- Engage youth in active learning process
- Build skills for healthy relationships
- Design culturally relevant programming
- Provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for youth

Sources: Flood, 2005-2006; Kerig, Ball, & Rosenbluth, 2006; Meyer & Stein, 2004; Nation et al., 2003; Thornton et al., 2002; Schewe, 2002.

Tailor prevention program to the needs of youth: For at-risk youth selected in addition to (or in place of) universal primary prevention approaches may be needed (Eaton et al., 2007; Whitaker et al., 2006)

Expect Respect – Promoting Healthy Teen Relationships



expect RESPECT Support Vulnerable Youth

- For youth involved in or exposed to violence or abuse at home, in peer & dating relationships, in the community (O'Keefe, 1997, 1998; Wolfe et al., 2001; Pepler et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2008))
- 24, weekly support groups
- Middle and high schools
- Boys' & girls' groups
- Curriculum-based
- Goals:
 - decrease victimization and perpetration
 - Increase healthy relationship skills



Support Groups Provide

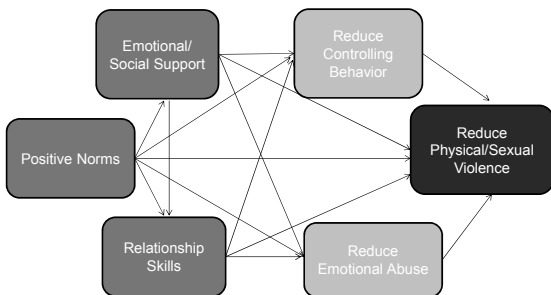


- Access to services
- Caring adult & peer support
- Opportunity to learn and practice new skills
- Norms that promote equality, giving and getting respect
- (Ball, Rosenbluth, & Aoki, 2008)

24-Session Curriculum

- Developing group skills (1 – 5)
 - Communication, empathy, assertiveness
- Choosing equality and respect (6 – 10)
 - Defining abuse, respect, and the appropriate use of power
- Recognizing abusive relationships (11 – 15)
 - Warning signs; impact of violence
- Learning skills for healthy relationships (16-20)
 - Handling anger, jealousy, conflict resolution, boundaries, consent, ending a relationship
- Getting the message out (21 – 24)
 - Mixed gender discussion

Conceptual Model for Dating Behavior Change



Group: Like A Family But Better

Boys

- "You respect each other and hear each other out."
- "You can go ahead and be real. When you have a problem you can express it."
- "This is a male bonding group."

Girls

- "Before I came to this group I never really expressed my emotions."
- "Group is like a family except better because you can trust each other."

Group: Learning How to Make Relationships Work

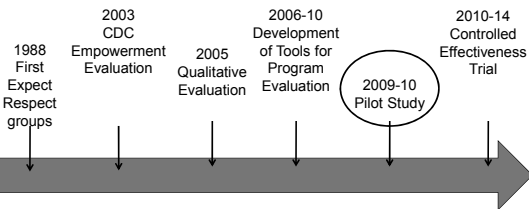
It basically taught me to recognize girls' feelings and express my feelings more to females. (boy)

It helps you to communicate, to get your point across instead of yelling or shouting or doing any kind of verbal or physical abuse. (boy)

It gave me the courage to stand up for myself. (girl)

Ball, B., Kerig, P., & Rosenbluth, B. (2009). "Like a family but better because you can actually trust each other:" The Expect Respect dating violence prevention program with at-risk youth. *Health Promotion Practice*

Evaluation of Expect Respect Support Groups - Timeline



Pilot Study 2009-2010

Preliminary program evaluation

- No control group

Goals

1. Describe pre-to-post changes

- Do ERSR participants change significantly in relationship norms, feelings of insecurity in relationships, and dating behaviors?

2. Test model of dating behavior change

- Do positive relationship norms and emotional/social support (reduction in feeling insecure in relationships) predict a decrease in controlling behaviors and a decrease in perpetration of emotional abuse and physical violence/sexual coercion?

Measures

Norms

- Acceptance of physical dating violence perpetrated either by a boy or a girl – 8 items
- Foshee, V., et al., (1998). An evaluation of SafeDates, an adolescent dating violence prevention program.
 - *It is OK for a boy to hit his girlfriend if she did something to make him mad.*
 - *Boys sometimes deserve to be hit by the girls they date.*
 - *It is OK for a boy to hit his girlfriend if she insulted him in front of friends.*
- $\alpha = .88$

Feelings

- Feelings of Insecurity in Relationships – 3 items
- Adapted from: Purdie, V. & Downey, G. (2001). Rejection sensitivity and adolescent girls' vulnerability to relationship-centered difficulties.
 - *I worried they would cheat on me or betray me.*
 - *I felt upset when they did things that didn't include me.*
 - *I worried that they really liked someone else better than me.*
- $\alpha = .70$

Measures continued

Behaviors

- Reported on behaviors in dating relationships in 3 months prior to the assessment
- Controlling behaviors (3)
 - *I tried to keep them from spending time with other people.*
 - *I made them describe what they were doing and where they were.*
 - $\alpha = .75$
- Emotional/verbal abuse (3)
 - *I made nasty comments about them to others.*
 - *I made fun of them in front of others.*
 - $\alpha = .62$



Measures continued



- Physical violence (5 items) & sexual violence (5 items) perpetration were combined
 - *I hit them with a fist or a hard object.*
 - *I scratched or slapped them.*
 - *I grabbed or touched their private parts without their consent.*
 - *I forced them to kiss me.*
- $\alpha = .80$
- Adapted from: S.L. Martin (2007) Peer Sexual Harassment
- Wolfe, D. A., et al. (2001). Development and validation of the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory. *Psychological Assessment*, 13, 277-293.

Participants

- At-risk students in urban area who have experienced or perpetrated at least one form of violence: domestic violence, child abuse, peer violence, dating violence, and/or community violence
 - 37 groups in 25 schools
 - N=363 pre-tests
- Included only students who answered questions about a dating relationship from the past 3 months at pre-test and who attended more than 1 group session.
 - N=197 pre-tests
 - N=160 post-tests
- Attrition due to high student mobility (>30%), poor attendance, removal to a disciplinary program and dropping out of group.

Participants

Gender	Boys	Girls		
	N=127 64%	N= 70 36%		
Grade Level	Middle School	High School		
	N=104 53%	N=93 47%		
Race/Ethnicity	African American	Hispanic	White	Other
	N=44 22%	N=121 61%	N=18 9%	N=14 7%

Method

- Assessments administered
 - Baseline (intake)
 - Completion (next to last group session)
- Missing data
 - Pre-test data contained less than 2% missingness
 - Post-test data contained 42% missingness mostly because of attrition
 - Missingness
 - not significantly associated with gender, ethnicity, grade level or other variables in the model
 - associated with attendance, as expected
 - Consistent with Graham's (2009) recommendations for working with missing data, analyses used multiple imputation (10 datasets) and included attendance in the missing data model to reduce bias.

Analysis

- Pre-to-Post changes
 - Continuous variables: derived latent mean change scores using a two-wave latent growth curve model and tested for significant pre-to-post change
 - Categorical variable (Physical Dating Abuse/Sexual Coercion): dichotomized the variable and tested whether or not percentages at pretest and posttest were significantly different (Wald test)
- Behavior change model (path model)
 - Structural equation modeling to examine the pathways between acceptance of dating abuse, feelings of insecurity, controlling behaviors, emotional abuse perpetration, and physical violence/ sexual coercion

Results: Descriptive

- Attendance – range of 2-24 sessions, $M = 12.32$, $SD = 6.25$;
 - 53% low attenders (2-12 sessions, $M = 7.09$)
 - 47% high attenders (13-24 sessions, $M = 18.18$)
- Prior dating violence victimization assessed at baseline (lifetime):

	Physical dating violence victimization	Emotional dating violence victimization	Physical & Emotional victimization
Boys	N=22 17%	N=17 13%	N=6 5%
Girls	N=14 20%	N=28 40%	N=9 13%

Results: Mean Change (Pre to Post)

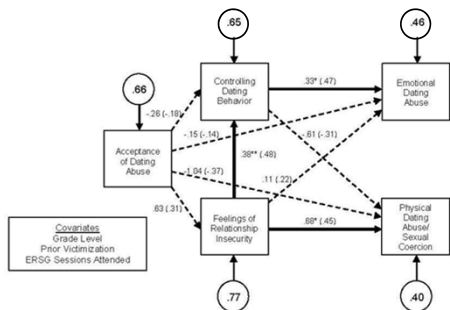
	Females			Males		
	Pre	Post	Δ	Pre	Post	Δ
Acceptance of Dating Abuse	.333	.300	-.033	.487	.449	-.038
Relationship Insecurity	1.557	.901	-.656***	1.000	1.161	.161
Controlling Behavior Perpetration	.681	.395	-.286	.735	.446	-.289*
Emotional Dating Abuse Perpetration	.438	.241	-.197*	.310	.215	-.095

Results: Percentage Change (Pre to Post) for Physical Dating Abuse/ Sexual Coercion

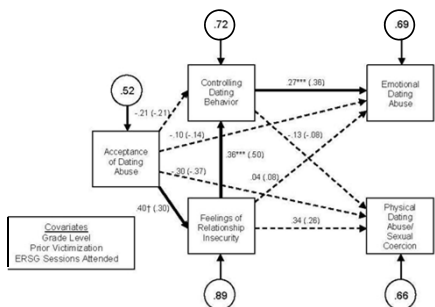
	Females			Males		
	Pre	Post	Δ	Pre	Post	Δ
Physical Dating Abuse/Sexual Coercion	34%	6%	28%*	24%	24%	0%

* Wald test significant at p < .05

Results: Change Model for Girls



Results: Change Model for Boys



Discussion: Outcomes

- Evidence for positive changes associated with the support groups from pre to post test
 - Boys: decrease in controlling behaviors
 - Girls: decreases in insecurity in relationships, emotional abuse and physical/sexual violence perpetration
- Need for a rigorous and controlled evaluation



Discussion: Strategies for Prevention

- Pre-to-post changes in norms were not observed
 - No clear link between norm changes at the individual level and behavioral changes
 - Only for boys an association between decreased acceptance of dating violence and decreased feelings of insecurity
- Norm changes may occur at the group level (group norm)
- Norm changes may occur more slowly, or not be captured in measures

Discussion: Strategies for Prevention with At-risk Youth

- Changes in how participants feel about their relationships (insecurity) are significantly related to behavior changes
 - Feeling insecure in relationships may be result of abusive current or past relationships, insecure attachments, low self-esteem
- Need to address emotional needs of at-risk youth and to provide opportunities for supportive relationships
 - Supportive group environment
 - Caring adult
 - Positive role model
 - Intensive & ongoing programming



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