Empowering Teens to Overcome Dating Violence

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Introduction

For this project, San Jose State University Students in the ICR program collaborated with interns from the Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative (DVIC) and Probation.

We worked together to create a Teen Dating Violence curriculum, which we will present at 3 schools within the East Side Union High School District. We also will also provide them with access to a Teen Dating Violence brochure template and a Teen Resource binder.
The mission of the Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative is to fill existing gaps in Domestic Violence services in Santa Clara County for both victims and perpetrators. The DVIC provides a diversity of services, including: court support (Juvenile Dependency Court and Family Court), individual therapy, group therapy, accountability classes, and case management.
The Mission of the Santa Clara County Probation Department is to reduce crime and protect the community through prevention, investigation, and supervision services and safe custodial care for adults and juveniles. As an integral part of the justice system, the Department is committed to building partnerships with the community and restoring losses to victims of crime and the public through innovative programs that stress offender accountability and development of competency skills.
Our project seeks to educate teens about Healthy Relationships vs. Unhealthy Relationships within the East Side Union High School District.

We collaborated with 3 schools within the East Side Union School District to get approval to do a Teen Dating Violence presentation for the students.

The schools we will be presenting at include: Yerba Buena High School, Andrew Hill High School, and Overfelt High School.

We will provide them with access to a brochure template about Teen Dating Violence and key resources as well as a detailed resource binder for teens involved in abusive relationships.

We collaborated with Domestic Violence agencies to get the information we needed to create the brochure and resource binder.
The purpose of this project is to serve as an intervention to the lack of awareness of Teen Dating Violence and the resources available in the community for teens, which will empower these adolescents to end the abusive cycles.

- Teen Dating Violence isn’t given as much attention as adult Domestic Violence (Mayes, 2008).
- Teen Dating Violence affects numerous females and male adolescents of all ethnicities and socio-economic statuses.
- Approximately one third of high school students have had experiences with dating violence, which has a negative impact on their overall well-being (Black et al, 2008).
Many teens do not seek help when they have been subjected to abuse by their significant others regardless of their gender (Black et al, 2008).

55% of female teens and 46% of male teens do not tell anyone about the abuse they experience.

The lack of education in schools for teenagers is another cause of Teen Dating Violence (Black et al, 2008).

Many teens tend to mistake jealousy and controlling behaviors as signs of love.
Often, adolescents go to their peers for help.
Their friends may have incorrect beliefs about love and might give dangerous advice, such as for the victim to stay with the abuser (Black et al, 2008).

Victims of Teen Dating Violence are likely to be victimized again by accepting domestic violence in their lives because they do not know what normal and healthy relationships are (Mayes, 2008).
Methods/Process

Teen Dating Violence Brochure

- Collaborated with local Domestic Violence agencies via phone, email, and in person to help inform the content of the brochure.
- Composed the brochure in a manner that applies to any gender, sexual identity, and sexual orientation preference. It includes information on how to get help or how to help someone you know who may be the victim of Teen Dating Violence.
Teen Resource Guide

Collaborated with numerous agencies in the community and put together a binder of resources with detailed information about each of the agencies, programs, and services that are available for teens.

Presentations within the East Side Union School District

Collaborated with DVIC staff, San Jose State University Professors, and 3 high schools to put together curriculum for presentations on Teen Dating Violence.

Set the dates for the last two weeks of April and early May.
Results

- One goal our project has accomplished so far is creating a brochure for teens that informs them about Teen Dating Violence and is written in a manner that applies to any gender, sexual identity, and sexual orientation preference.

- The resource guide satisfies our goal to have a detailed binder of information for teens in unhealthy relationships to get the assistance they need to get out of their abusive relationships. The binder also addresses many other needs that may arise as a result of Teen Dating Violence.
Results

- Our presentations will meet the goal of educating a population of teens in low-income schools.
- Research has shown that low-income schools tend to have higher rates of Teen Dating Violence than higher socio-economic schools.

- The population will benefit from this project because they will have all the information they need to identify if they or someone they know is in an unhealthy relationship. They also have a list of places they can go for help. In addition, we have information about what an abuser can do to get the help he or she needs to stop the abusive cycle.
Originally, the project stemmed from the idea of presenting at one school to discuss Teen Dating Violence.

Once more students got involved, the project was enhanced by adding presentations at two more schools. It was also enriched by the decision to create a Teen Dating Violence brochure and Teen Resource binder for the schools chosen.

The project contributes to the understanding of how collaboration benefits response to family violence because without collaboration this project wouldn’t have reached as many teens as it will presently.
Currently, the way the schools are collaborating is mostly with the criminal justice system and social workers. Other agencies and disciplines need to collaborate with schools because there are so many needs that teens have that are not all being met.

It takes a longer time to get things done when you are collaborating with other agencies but the quality in the end is so much better than if you were to do it alone.

As you collaborate with other disciplines and agencies, you become more aware of gaps in services as well as more creative ways to meet the needs of the population you are serving.
This project increased the collaborative efforts of the Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative because this agency has not collaborated with schools prior to this project. The agency has also not previously collaborated with local DV agencies to create a brochure template until this project came about.

The project increased the collaborative efforts of Probation because this agency has not collaborated with various local DV agencies to create a Teen Resource binder for teens that would be accessible at high schools in the East Side Union School District.
Recommendations

- We recommend that future students continue to update the resource binder because teens have many needs and we may not have covered all of them.

- We recommend that future students add resources for parents of teens in an abusive relationship and parents of abusers, which can be in the form of a brochure or resource binder. A website is another medium that can be used for this information.

- We recommend that someone continue to do presentations in the schools on Teen Dating Violence. The schools appeared to be very interested and one even requested 12 presentations to incoming freshmen.
Recommendations

We recommend that future students get approval to have the brochure and teen resource binder included in all schools within the districts of their choice.

We recommend that future students get approval from the school districts to be able to upload the brochure directly to the schools’ web pages.

We recommend that a website be created for resources for teens that can be linked to the schools homepage allowing students and parents to have quick access to it as opposed to a resource binder.
References
