

For additional information

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Instructions

National Awareness Week and Toolkit Use

By using this Toolkit you are about to become an active participant in the prevention of teen dating violence!

Although the Toolkit can be effectively used anytime, it will have optimum effect if used during **National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week**, which has been recognized by members of Congress and is supported in a United States Senate Resolution as a week of national and community-wide awareness and educational activities designed to reduce the high incidence of violent teenage dating behaviors currently occurring in every state, community and territory.

High schools will use the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Toolkits to hold discussions and develop activities that: 1) Educate the community and school population, and involve them in prevention, and 2) Coincide with classroom curriculum while also addressing components of teen dating violence.

The Toolkits and National Awareness and Prevention Week are described next.

Toolkit Materials

“Dating and Violence Should Never Be A Couple” DVD

Each Toolkit contains a Teen Dating Violence Awareness DVD. The DVD features teens, representative of various U. S. regions and cultures, simply talking about their personal experiences with teen dating violence.

“Prevention Recommendations” Book

This book was largely influenced by teens! It contains prevention recommendations, warning signs and facts, as well as words, phrases and definitions, targeted at nine key groups deemed critical to teen dating violence prevention: teens, parents, school personnel, mental health professionals and school counselors, health care professionals, judges and court personnel, victim attorneys and prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and domestic violence organizations.

“Teacher’s Guide”

The “Teacher’s Guide” gives teachers suggestions for classroom projects and discussions that not only coincide with the specific subjects being taught in the various classes but, at the same time, address components of teen dating violence and prevention.

Awareness Week Slogan Posters

Each Toolkit contains two National Awareness Week posters. The two-sided poster features the official Awareness Week slogan, which was developed by teenagers: “Dating and Violence Should Never Be a Couple.” One side is in English, while the reverse side is in Spanish. You should place these posters in an area where students are most likely to see them.

Emergency Wallet Cards

Every Toolkit contains 200 credit card-sized wallet-cards. The card’s front contains the national emergency hot-line, while the back provides a blank area for teens to write their local emergency information. You should make these 200 wallet-cards easily accessible for those students who are interested in obtaining one.

“Materials Reproduction Disc”

This disc contains reproducible versions of the Toolkit’s “Facts,” “Warning Signs,” “Prevention Recommendations,” and “Teacher’s Guide.” The reproducible format allows high schools the ability to easily distribute this valuable information during both Awareness Week planning and Awareness Week events (discussed below).

“Attention Educators” Card

This informational document was created by a law school fellow concerning teen dating violence and Title IX concerns. It is intended to assist high schools to organize an effective response to teen dating violence incidents, and therefore may be extremely helpful if circulated among your high school’s staff.

Awareness Week Planning and Events

Pre-Awareness Week Preparation

When you receive your Toolkit, hold a teacher’s/staff planning meeting. Using the “Materials Reproduction Disc” make copies of the materials that will most help you plan Awareness Week events, and distribute them to your staff before or during the scheduled pre-Awareness Week planning staff meeting. For instance, giving your teachers a copy of the “Teacher’s Guide” will help them to pre-plan an Awareness Week discussion or project in their classroom. Distributing the “Facts” and “Warning Signs” will not only help educate school personnel on the seriousness of teen dating violence, but should also influence their support of National Awareness Week participation.

If possible, bring in a local teen dating violence prevention expert or representative from your local domestic violence organization to educate the high school staff about the issue, the facts and warning signs, and acceptable prevention strategies, as well as any Title IX legal considerations you feel the staff should be aware of. That person may also help you plan and organize your high school’s various Awareness Week activities. For instance, the “Teacher’s Guide” contains classroom projects that suggest bringing in a local abuse-prevention expert. Also, the Kickoff Event described later, under “Day One,” suggests inviting a teen dating violence spokesperson to speak to Kickoff Event attendees. In that way, you might find ways to utilize the person for several of your school’s Awareness Week needs!

Prepare/train your school counselors, in the likelihood that a student may come to them for guidance and assistance during (and after) National Awareness Week – as increasing awareness may cause a student to realize they need help. If your school counselors aren’t trained to respond to teen dating violence, you might want to ask for assistance from a qualified counselor or mental health professional in your community. Maybe they would agree to maintain a presence at your high school during National Awareness Week. If so, you should provide them with a room or office that will ensure the student’s privacy and confidentiality.

In January, send out invitations to your student body, school personnel, parents/parent organizations, school counselors and mental health professionals, health care professionals, judges and court personnel, attorneys and prosecutors, local law enforcement and School Resource Officers, domestic violence/teen dating violence organizations, and community leaders, to an ‘Awareness Week Kickoff-Event’ at your school for “Day One” (described next) of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week.

DAY ONE – NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Kickoff Event

Show the Toolkit's thirty-one minute DVD to your invited community representatives and guests, high school personnel and the student body. The DVD, produced by an Emmy Award winning film production-company, simply shows teenagers talking about their actual experiences with teen dating violence: what they witnessed or heard, what happened to them, what happened to their friends or siblings, how the controlling behaviors and violence impacted them and others, and what advice they would give to others in their situation. The DVD will educate those in attendance on the reality of teen dating violence – creating the energy necessary to develop effective prevention strategies.

Using the Toolkit's "Materials Reproduction Disc," duplicate the "Facts," "Warning Signs," and "Prevention Recommendations" for your Kickoff Event's invited guests. Have the students hand them out to their corresponding attendees, or place them on a table at the entrance to the auditorium where the DVD is being shown so attendees can take a copy of the recommendations addressing them, as well as those of additional interest. For instance, the parents in attendance may also be interested in reading the prevention recommendations for teens and for school personnel!

If you prefer, invite a local teen dating violence prevention legal expert or organization to address Kickoff Event attendees concerning the issues illustrated in the DVD.

DAY ONE THROUGH FOUR – NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Utilizing the "Teacher's Guide" suggestions for classroom discussions and activities, every classroom teacher should dedicate at least one class day during National Awareness Week to discussions or projects that address teen dating violence. For instance, one of the classroom projects for a math class suggests the teacher assists students to create an anonymous student body survey, with questions concerning students' dating beliefs and behaviors; then help the class compile the data to determine the likelihood that a student in their school will be a victim of teen dating violence; and, finally, submit their findings to the school newspaper! A "Teacher's Guide" suggestion under "Government/Citizenship Class" recommends students use the "Warning Signs" to create a mock trial of a teen dating violence case, where students research and apply your appropriate state statutes when they role-play the victim, perpetrator, judge...and jury!

DAY FIVE – NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Using the Toolkit's "Materials Reproduction Disc," duplicate the Prevention Recommendations and encourage your students to disseminate them to the individuals/ businesses/organizations in your community whom they address (e.g. the school's PTA leadership; police departments; courthouses and judicial chambers; pediatricians/doctors/psychologists offices; prosecutor's and attorneys offices; and local domestic violence organization offices) as well to all the students and school personnel who weren't at your Kickoff Event. In that way, teens come to know the members of their community who hold a stake in helping them to prevent teen dating violence, and the community members have an opportunity to meet their community's teenagers and better understand the issues they need help with!

Ongoing Prevention Efforts

Your participation in National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week will ensure that your high school staff, student population, community members, organizations and community leaders become aware of the serious problems associated with teen dating violence. But it is up to all of you to ensure prevention efforts move forward in your community and high school after the National Awareness Week concludes.

We hope you will utilize the 'awareness' education you've received through your participation, and steer that energy toward forming collaborative community efforts dedicated to maintaining the National Awareness Week's messages and lessons. Please help our nation's teenagers now, so they will grow into healthy, happy adults by creating effective prevention strategies and policies in your school, community and state!