

**Maricopa Association of Governments  
Youth Empowerment Project  
2008 Focus Group Notes**

**Date: 11/4/08**

**Group: Scottsdale Mayor's Youth Council**

Number of Students: 40

Ethnicity: one Black, one Hispanic, three Asian, 35 White

Gender: 20 male, 20 female

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: put downs, hitting, jealousy, male on female, female on male

Signs of

- healthy relationships: communication, respect, trust, happiness
- when to use caution in a relationship: changes in behavior to please, miscommunication, arguing a lot, needy, obsession, not talking about the relationship with others, stop talking to friends
- unhealthy relationships: overused body parts, trips to the hospital, physical abuse, sexual abuse, inappropriate touching, fear, control, sudden change of values

Important to know about healthy relationships: communication, maturity, take time, space, trust, avoid co-dependency, be yourself, balance of time, set aside time, boundaries

Where do teens learn about healthy relationships: older siblings, parents, friends, experience, media (bad TV shows)

Best way to talk to teens: TV commercial, approach on their comfort level, start basic – get more involved, teens talking to teens, little discussions – make point count, text messages, social networking sites – link, t-shirts, video ad

How to get teens involved: teens to develop site, AZ Teen magazine ad or article, ongoing teen advisory group

Want to see on Web of Friends: tips on how to get out of unhealthy relationship, survey to determine if in an abusive relationship, advice from personal experiences, public page or blog, success story for motivation, be one of premier sites on Google, organizations to help

**Date: 11/5/08**

**Group: Suns Diamondback Academy- first class**

Number of Students: 18

Ethnicity: four Black, 14 Hispanic

Gender: six males, 12 females

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: hitting, put downs

Signs of

- healthy relationships: honesty, trust, physical signs like laughing, dedication, getting along, humor
- of when to use caution in a relationship: insecurity, scared, threats, jealousy, lots of arguing, lying, disrespect

- unhealthy relationships: abusive, physical abuse, mental abuse, bruises, emotional abuse, not being genuine, put downs, consistent arguments over dumb things, being hypocritical

Important to know about healthy relationships: have good self-esteem, don't be used in relationships, value yourself

Where do teens learn about healthy relationships: experience, parents, friends, religion, culture, not TV

Best way to talk to teens/get them involved: experience, close to teen, school, library

What do you think needs to be done: show video

**Date: 11/5/08**

**Group: Suns Diamondback Academy- second class**

Number of Students: 18

Ethnicity: two White, 16 Hispanic

Gender: nine males and nine females

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: hitting, common

Signs of

- healthy relationships: being positive, not arguing, giving compliments, communicating, accept differences
- of when to use caution in a relationship: jealousy, not talking, talking breaks from the relationship
- unhealthy relationships: no trust, jealousy, mad, overprotective, possessive, criticizing, hitting, physical abuse

Important to know about healthy relationships: communication, balance of time, respecting ideas

Where do teens learn about healthy relationships: parents, friends, TV, magazines, school

Best way to talk to teens/get them involved: radio, MySpace, internet, library, community center, school counselor, teens talking to teens, survivors tell stories, big event w/ speakers

Want to see on Web of Friends: testimonials, services/assistance – roadmap

What would you say to an abuser: get help, consider the impact of generational domestic violence, confident, counseling,

What do you think needs to be done: help abuser and victim, people don't realize their relationship is abusive, give definitions, referrals, street team to put flyers on doors

**Date: 11/20/08**

**Group: Coronado High School – Student Government Class**

Number of Students: 19

Ethnicity: four White, one Black, 10 Hispanic, 4 Native American

Gender: one male and 18 females

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: hitting, control

Signs of

- healthy relationships: respect, good communication, trust, "in love", comfortable, no pressure, happiness, time for yourself

- of when to use caution in a relationship: beginning to lose communication between one another, fear of disappointment, small arguments that get bigger (escalate), stop hanging out with friends more, change in appearance, not enough alone time, clingy, overprotected, change in personality, disrespectful comments
- unhealthy relationships: makeup to cover bruises, verbal/physical abuse, taking control over another, overly jealous, sudden change in personality, put downs, arguing, depression, isolation

Important to know about healthy relationships: not getting serious at a young age, know boundaries & when to put your foot down, know what is unhealthy, reason first, talk to people for help (communication with parents),

Where do teens learn about healthy relationships: through example, friends, parents, teachers, TV shows (Full House, 7th Heaven, Family Matters)

Best way to talk to teens: Knowledge from testimonials, internet, skits/plays, schools, interactive presentations, know your limit & “when to get out”

Want to see on Web of Friends: Cosmo-like quiz (are you being controlled, too controlling), help to educate from both perspectives (abuser & victim)

What would you say to an abuser: ask about motivation, need intervention, educate to recognize own behavior, negative impact and changes to their relationships with others, impact on others, put abuser in the shoes of those being abused, assessment for services either through anger management/other form of help

**Date: 11/24/08**

**Group: Avondale Youth Commission**

Number of Students: seven

Ethnicity: two Black, two Hispanic, three White

Gender: Four male and three female

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: verbal, physical, mental and emotional abuse

Signs of

- healthy relationships: smiling, laughing, like to be around each other, each person has their own as well as shared friends, supportive of one another, not invasive, honesty, good communication, loving, not controlling, not arguing a lot, personal space, happy together, willing to make sacrifices for each other (talked about needing to make sacrifices that don't compromise values), happiness, freedom
- of when to use caution in a relationship: always know where they're going or who they're talking to, put downs, clingy, controlling, ordering, making decisions all the time, fighting, suspicious, intrudes on privacy, history of bad relationships, domineering, possessive, paranoid, severe unhappiness, violence (clarified this to be play fighting)
- unhealthy relationships: physical abuse, control over another person, hurtful, discouraging, overbearing/intrusive, manipulative, black eye, crying all the time, broken body parts, verbal or physical abuse, talk behind each other's back, always critical, no personal space, no freedom, unsupportive

Next Steps: form school clubs, Gender Night, hotline, TV ads, identify victims and provide intervention through police, raise awareness, identify reasons for the abuse

Other: Focus on informing adults, ask the parents to get involved, talk to a counselor, tell your friends, talk to the abuser

**Date:** 12/4/08

**Group:** Boys & Girls Club Teen Council

Number of Students: 12

Ethnicity: three Black, seven Hispanic, two White

Gender: Eight males and four females

Age Range: 14-21

What is teen dating violence: physical (slapping), mental (put downs, name calling)

Signs of

- healthy relationships: good communication, trust, kindness, loyalty, happiness, unconditional love, attention, both partners are happy, faithful, no lying
- of when to use caution in a relationship: arguing, cheating, no communication, no trust, overprotective, start abusing privileges that you get from one another (talked about this in terms of physical intimacy), always fighting, being awfully mean – ignoring and causing partner to cry
- unhealthy relationships: physical abuse, tormenting, mental abuse, verbal abuse – name calling, bad communication, disrespect, aggression, lies, put downs, not being trusted, not staying faithful, always fighting

Next Steps: teens talking to teens one-on-one, teens sharing real life/personal experiences, create teen chat room, approach schools to help raise awareness, provide workshops at teen leadership conferences - Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, TV ads, text messages, newspapers/magazines (particularly Spanish media), discuss generational impact, put page on MySpace, quiz to identify abusive relationships, develop curriculum for schools and community organizations

What would you say to an abuser: get help or don't be in a relationship

To end dating violence: talk about it, mentors, therapy/counseling, raise awareness