

padvn PRESBYTERIANS AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK

September 2009

Dear Friends,

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN) provides this annual packet to assist your congregation as it seeks to address relationship violence in all of its forms. If you are not in a position to use this material, please pass it along to your pastor or youth group leader.

Our 2009 packet focuses on Teen Dating Violence. Dating violence crosses all racial, social, economic and religious lines. Yes, it happens to the teens who sit in our church pews. While parents are the first defense in making sure that their children understand healthy relationships, studies have shown that teens need to hear that message from a variety of persons and groups who have their best interests in mind. What better place than in our congregations.

Since 2001, PADVN has produced a packet for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. During those years, we have covered a number of topics: domestic violence 101, children who witness the violence, men's involvement in the movement, elder abuse, tough issues that arise in congregations, education, and advocacy. All of these resources can be found on the PADVN web site, www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn.

Among the resources in this year's packet, you will find an article on the inappropriate use of texting and cell phones, a letter from a father to his children on the gift of their sexuality, a youth activity on dating violence for youth group leaders, a lesson plan for a session on teen dating violence from *Anguished Hearts*, a covenantal contract for teens, their families and youth group leaders to sign around the issue of dating and sexuality, suggested resources for teens on dating violence, the teen power and control and equality wheels, a dating "Bill of Rights," a bulletin insert on dating violence, and sermon suggestions using October's lectionary readings to address issues of relationship violence.

As always, PADVN is available to help you as you engage your congregation or presbytery around these issues. If you have received this packet and are not a member of PADVN, please consider joining our network to stay connected and to show your continued support for this important emphasis in the life of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Sincerely, Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN)

**PADVN is one of the 10 Networks of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)
100 Witherspoon Street, Room 3228 ~ Louisville, KY 40202-1396
1-888-728-7228 ext. 5800 susan.stack@pcusa.org
www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn**

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Teens and Dating Violence

While dating, domestic and sexual violence affect women regardless of their age, teens and young women are especially vulnerable. Women age 16 to 24 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault,¹ and people age 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.² Add to that the 15.5 million U.S. children who live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year³ and you have a huge number of young people in this country whose lives are affected – sometimes shaped – by violence.

Prevalence of Violence

- Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of *physical, emotional or verbal abuse* from a dating partner – a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth.⁴
- Nationwide, nearly one in ten high-school students (8.9 percent) has been *hit, slapped or physically hurt* on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.⁵
- Nearly one in three *sexually active* adolescent girls in ninth to twelfth grade (31.5 percent) report ever experiencing *physical or sexual violence* from dating partners.⁶
- One in four teen girls *in a relationship* (26 percent) says she has been threatened with violence or experienced verbal abuse, and 13 percent say they were physically hurt or hit.⁷
- One in three teens reports *knowing a friend or peer* who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by a partner, and 45 percent of girls know a friend or peer who has been pressured into having either intercourse or oral sex.⁸
- One in five tweens – age 11 to 14 – say their friends are victims of dating violence and nearly half who are in relationships know friends who are verbally abused. Two in five of the youngest tweens, ages 11 and 12, report that their friends are victims of verbal abuse in relationships.⁹

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence

- Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting to lose weight), engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.¹⁰
- The one in five female public high school students in a Massachusetts study who reported ever experiencing physical or sexual violence from a dating partner were four to six times more likely than their non-abused peers to have been pregnant, and eight to nine times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.¹¹
- Compared with nonabused girls, those who experienced both physical and sexual dating violence are three times more likely to have been tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV, and more than twice as likely to report an STD diagnosis.¹²

Emerging Issues

- One in four teens in a relationship say they have been called names, harassed or put down by their partner through cellphones and texting.¹³
- One in five teen girls and one in ten younger teen girls (13 to 16) have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves. Even more teen girls, 37 percent, have sent or posted sexually suggestive text, email or IM (instant messages).¹⁴
- More than half of teen girls (51 percent) say pressure from a guy is a reason girls send sexy messages or images, while only 18 percent of teen boys say pressure from a girl is a reason. Twelve percent of teen girls who *have* sent sexually suggestive messages or images say they felt “pressured” to do so.¹⁵

¹ Rand, Michael. 2008. *Criminal Victimization, 2007*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>.

² Baum, Katrina, Catalano, Shannan, Rand, Michael and Rose, Kristina. 2009. *Stalking Victimization in the United States*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/svus.pdf>.

³ McDonald, R, Jouriles, E, Ramisetty-Mikler, S, et al. 2006. Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner-Violent Families. *Journal of Family Psychology* 20(1): 137-142.

⁴ Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at <http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf>.

⁵ Grunbaum JA, Kann L, Kinchen S, et al. 2004. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance --- United States, 2003. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 53(SS02);1-96. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5302a1.htm>.

⁶ Decker M, Silverman J, Raj A. 2005. Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. *Pediatrics*. 116: 272-276.

⁷ Liz Claiborne Inc. 2005. Omnibuzz® Topline Findings-Teen Relationship Abuse Research. Teenage Research Unlimited. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/surveyresults.htm>.

⁸ Liz Claiborne Inc. 2005. Omnibuzz® Topline Findings-Teen Relationship Abuse Research. Teenage Research Unlimited. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/surveyresults.htm>.

⁹ Tween and Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study, Teenage Research Unlimited for Liz Claiborne Inc. and the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline. February 2008. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/pdf/Tween%20Dating%20Abuse%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

¹⁰ Silverman, J, Raj A, et al. 2001. Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. *JAMA*. 286:572-579. Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/286/5/572>.

¹¹ Silverman, J, Raj A, et al. 2001. Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. *JAMA*. 286:572-579. Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/286/5/572>.

¹² Decker M, Silverman J, Raj A. 2005. Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. *Pediatrics*. 116: 272-276.

¹³ Liz Claiborne and TRU. 2007. Tech Abuse in Teen Relationships Study. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/pdf/06-208%20Tech%20Relationship%20Abuse%20TPL.pdf>.

¹⁴ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com. 2008. Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults. Available at http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech_Summary.pdf.

¹⁵ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com. 2008. Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults. Available at http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech_Summary.pdf.

A Father's Letter to his Teenage Children on the Gift of Their Sexuality

By the Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Frederick

My dearest children,

I remember the day that your mother and I brought you home from the hospital shortly after you were born. For both of you we ritualized the event by bathing you and singing to you during that first evening home, thanking God for your well being and admiring the beauty and wonder of your tiny bodies. That evening as we bathed you, I was mindful of the words of the psalmist, "It was you (O God) who formed my inward parts; you knit me in my mother's womb. I am fearfully and wonderfully made." With the whole of your lives before you that evening it was easy for us both to see and celebrate that you were a blessing and a perfect gift from God. We have raised you to love yourselves both for who you are today and who you are becoming. We have taught you to recognize that you are a unique and precious child of God and that nothing can take away the love God has for you.

We have also raised you both to have respect for others and honor the presence of Christ in your neighbor, and we have seen how you demonstrated that ability not only with each other but with others you come in contact with. Now as you approach your dating years as young teens, I want to call your attention once again to the sacredness of your bodies and your identities as children of God. The body you have now is the same little one that took its' first breath the morning you were born, and it is the same old and tired body, that will one day, (God willing) at a ripe old age, take its last breath on this earth. Because your body is created by God, it is a sacred gift and deserves your best attention and care. Your mother and I have taught you by example the importance of regular exercise and maintaining healthiness by developing good eating habits and a balanced lifestyle.

I have once again watched in amazement as your bodies have begun to change and mature into the sure and steady process of becoming the adults you will one day be. And again the words are in my heart, "you are fearfully and wonderfully made." Under the best of circumstances it is a slow and sometimes painful process to learn to understand what it means to love who you are for yourselves. At times you will think yourselves beneath friends who appear to have it all together in your own eyes. At other times you will chafe under the glaring look of peers or the hurtful remarks they make. Along the way there will be people who will, sometimes willfully, and at other times unintentionally, hurt you. Keep reminding yourself of your value that those who love you have recognized in you. One of the biggest lessons you face is learning how to honestly love yourself. Happiness in life is dependant upon that truth. Keep your mind focused on maintaining your self respect. You do not have control over the words and actions of others but you do have control of those of your own and how you respond to others.

Remember that sometimes evil comes packaged in a handsome or pretty face; someone who will have absolutely no regard for you and who may seek to do you harm. When you encounter such a person and realize it, turn the other way and protect yourself. When the words or actions of others hurt you, learn to listen to your own heart and mind and keep reminding yourself how much you are loved by your parents, yourself and God. And remember to balance your respect for yourselves with your respect for others. Do not let someone else force you to act in a way that compromises the sacredness of who you are. And of equal importance, do not try to coerce someone else to compromise their sacredness, either. You have observed in the relationship that your mother and I have for each other, that we share a lot of joy in being together. You have also seen, upon occasion, that even in a loving and respectful marriage, we sometimes hurt or anger each other. Such is the complexity of human relationships, but you also know how we are both mindful of each other's feelings and seek to honor and respect each other in our daily lives. Do not settle for any relationship that doesn't have these key elements of love mutually demonstrated every day.

I wish that you both could learn from the experiences, the trials and errors that your mother and I have had growing up as teenagers. But that is not something that can be passed on by word of mouth. The intimacy that comes in relationships always brings with it a degree of both joy and sorrow. Always remember that sex is a sacred gift from God that expresses the whole of who you are. When it is carelessly entered into with someone else, it leads to feeling an emptiness and sorrow that haunts you as you continue to long to discover its elusive and real purpose. Sex is, at its best, the most intimate and sacred expression of yourself which combines your whole being with the one person to whom you have devoted your life. Strive for nothing less, and let love for your own self and sacredness lead you to the person to whom God is calling you.

My love and prayers will be with you always,

Daddy

Teen/Young Adult Sexuality Covenant

By the Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Frederick

Because I have been created in the image of God and because God has blessed me with daily gifts of health and well being throughout my life to grow into mature adulthood, and because through Christ our Lord, I am called to the spiritual maturity of Christian discipleship;

I therefore pledge to:

- Acknowledge that my physical and spiritual well being is intricately tied together into the whole of my identity.
- Because of the sacredness of my sexuality, I vow to state clearly my boundaries of intimacy when involved in a dating relationship. When someone else pushes those boundaries or seeks to violate the sacredness of my own sexuality through teasing, discounting or pushing me to do something that I am not comfortable with, I promise to restate those boundaries and defend myself.
- Acknowledge and celebrate that the sexuality of other human beings is also a sacred gift and one that I must respect as part of the wholeness of that person. I vow to respect the sexuality of my friends and dating partners by honoring their dignity as a person, by refraining from putdowns or innuendos that diminish their worth, and by respecting the boundaries of my dating partner.
- Be attentive to the comments and concerns my friends raise about dating relationships, by being a good listener and by helping my friends connect with helpful adults that can address their issues. Knowing when to refer to an adult allows me to be a positive and supportive presence with my peers.
- Acknowledge and celebrate that my own sexuality as a male or female Christian is a sacred gift from God and that the full expression of that sacred gift is to be shared intimately only within the context of a mature loving and deeply committed relationship- ideally, marriage.
- Acknowledge that if I am in a situation with other friends or on a date where my sexual identity and integrity, or that of another person in my presence, is in any way compromised by the actions or coercions of those with whom I am with, then I will take appropriate measures to protect myself or to defend the integrity of another by removing myself from the offending parties and limiting contact with them; or in extreme cases by seeking help from a parent, another adult or a police officer if needed. And I will have an agreed upon strategic plan with my parent that I can call on at any time.

Signature of Youth _____

Signature of Parent _____

Signature of Youth Leader or Pastor _____

Sexting, Texting, and Cell Phones – A Bigger Problem Than We Think

By the Rev. Bonnie M. Orth

As I was preparing to take my youth group on their annual mission trip, I was reading some of the “rules” that we would obey. One of the major rules reads, “No cell phones will be used during our mission trip, except during travel to and from our destination and one hour per evening, after activities, to call home.” You would have thought that I had just sentenced these twelve young disciples to life in prison in solitary confinement. I only have to watch my own two teenagers who never have a hand that does not hold a cell phone or idle fingers that are not texting to understand how important the cell phone has become for youth in today’s society. However, teens are not just using cell phones to make voice calls. The majority of teens are texting and there are many who are doing a relatively new phenomenon, sexting.

According to Wikipedia, Text messaging, or texting is a colloquial term referring to the “exchange of brief written messages between mobile phones, over cellular networks.” There are more than 1,000 abbreviations used in texting; yes, I printed them out to try to better understand communicating with my teens. Check them out so that you know what they mean.

Sexting is defined as: “the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones.” In a study called, “Sex and Tech” done by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Cosmo Girl, statistics are presented that should cause all parents to stop and take notice. The study found that at least one in five teens (22% of girls and 18% of boys) say they have electronically sent nude or seminude images of themselves. And 39% of teens have sent sexually suggestive text messages or emails to someone. The study also found that what teens are doing electronically also affects what they do face-to-face, offline. More than a third (38%) of teens say that exchanging sexy content makes dating or hooking up more likely, and nearly one third of teens (29%) believe those exchanging sexy content are “expected” to date or hook up.

Why are teen girls so eager to pose for scandalous photos? To please guys. An overwhelming 85% of teen girls say that sending sexy photos or messages keeps a guy’s attention. Three-fourths of girls aged 13 to 16 (76%) say that sending sexy images is a “sexy present” for a boyfriend. Two thirds of teen girls (66%) who have sent sexually suggestive content say that they did it to be “fun or flirtatious.” The study continued that many teens don’t seem to understand that sending anything over the cell phone or Internet makes it public. The study confirmed that when sexy content is sent, it is not likely to remain private. More than one in five teen guys (22%) admits to having shared sexually suggestive messages that they received which had been intended to be private. And 39% of boys and 38% of girls have had sexy messages shared with them.

What can you do? Talk to your kids about sexting, texting and cell phones. Research texting if you are not familiar with it. Review some of the abbreviations so that you can be knowledgeable when your kids talk to you. Talk to your kids about what they are doing with their cell phones, and when they are online, and know who they are communicating with. The use of cell phones, as well as being online on the computer, is a privilege and comes with responsibilities. Parents need to establish rules up front and to frequently monitor that the rules are being followed.

It is important for your teens to understand that messages or pictures that they send on their cell phones or on the internet are definitely not private or anonymous. They also need to know that other people may forward their pictures and/or messages to people they do not know. No teen wants to think that their relationship might end, but they do need to understand that sexting puts them at risk and that others can access their information that was supposed to be private. Once these photos and messages are out in cyberspace, others, including schools administrators and employers, may view them and use them to make decisions about future employment and placement. It is critical that youth understand the potential short and long-term consequences of their actions.

It is not snooping to check out your teen's MySpace, Facebook and other online profiles from time to time. This is public information that others are looking at, so you can look, too. Make sure you are clear with your teen about what you consider appropriate cyberspace behavior, including what language is unacceptable and what is and will not be allowed online. Be a nag! Remind them often, to reinforce that you are monitoring them because you care about them.

For those of us who consider ourselves barely functional on the computer, it is important to realize that technology continues to move on at an incredible pace. Take the time to educate yourselves about texting, sexting and cell phones. Get involved and talk to your kids about what is happening. After discussing this issue with your kids, consider using the following Parent and Teen Contract for Cell Phone Use.

Parents and Teens Contract: Cell Phone Use

I know that having a cell phone to use is a privilege. I respect that my parents love me and want to keep me safe. My parents respect that I am becoming a young adult and want the privilege of having the use of a cell phone. With that in mind, we agree:

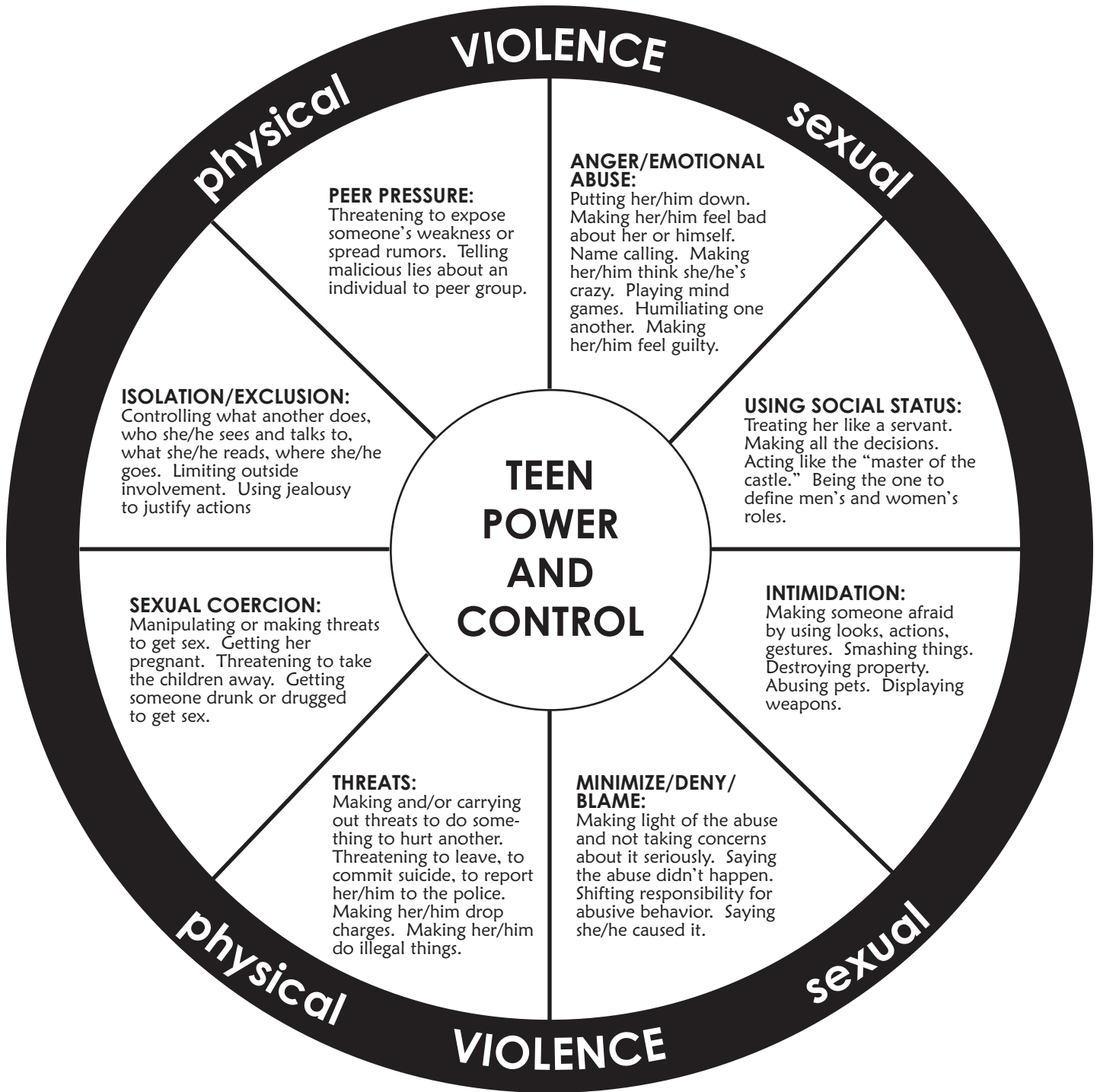
1. I will remember what usage is allowed with our cell phone plan and I will not go over the limits of that usage. This includes number of minutes, text message limits and/or _____.
2. I know that I am required to contribute to the cost of my cell phone. My contribution is: _____.
3. My cell phone must be turned off at this time _____ each night. It is my responsibility to be sure the cell phone is being recharged each night.
4. I agree that if I am unable to keep up with my responsibilities, the use of my cell phone can be taken away from me. This can happen even if I have contributed to the cost of the cell phone plan.
5. I will not use my cell phone to take pictures of nudity, violence or other un-allowed instances.
6. I will not use my cell phone to call anyone for malicious purposes. (bullying, crank calling, etc.)
7. I will not use my cell phone while driving.
8. I will limit the number of people that have my cell phone number.
9. I will limit the amount of time I am on the phone. These limitations are: _____.
10. I will not use my cell phone during school hours, to make calls, to text, or to take pictures.
11. I will not assume that anything that I post or send is going to remain private.
12. I will not give in to the pressure to do something that makes me uncomfortable in cyber space.

The consequences for not following through with these limits on my cell phone use are:

_____.

Signed: _____

TEEN POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Produced and distributed by:

Developed from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.4134

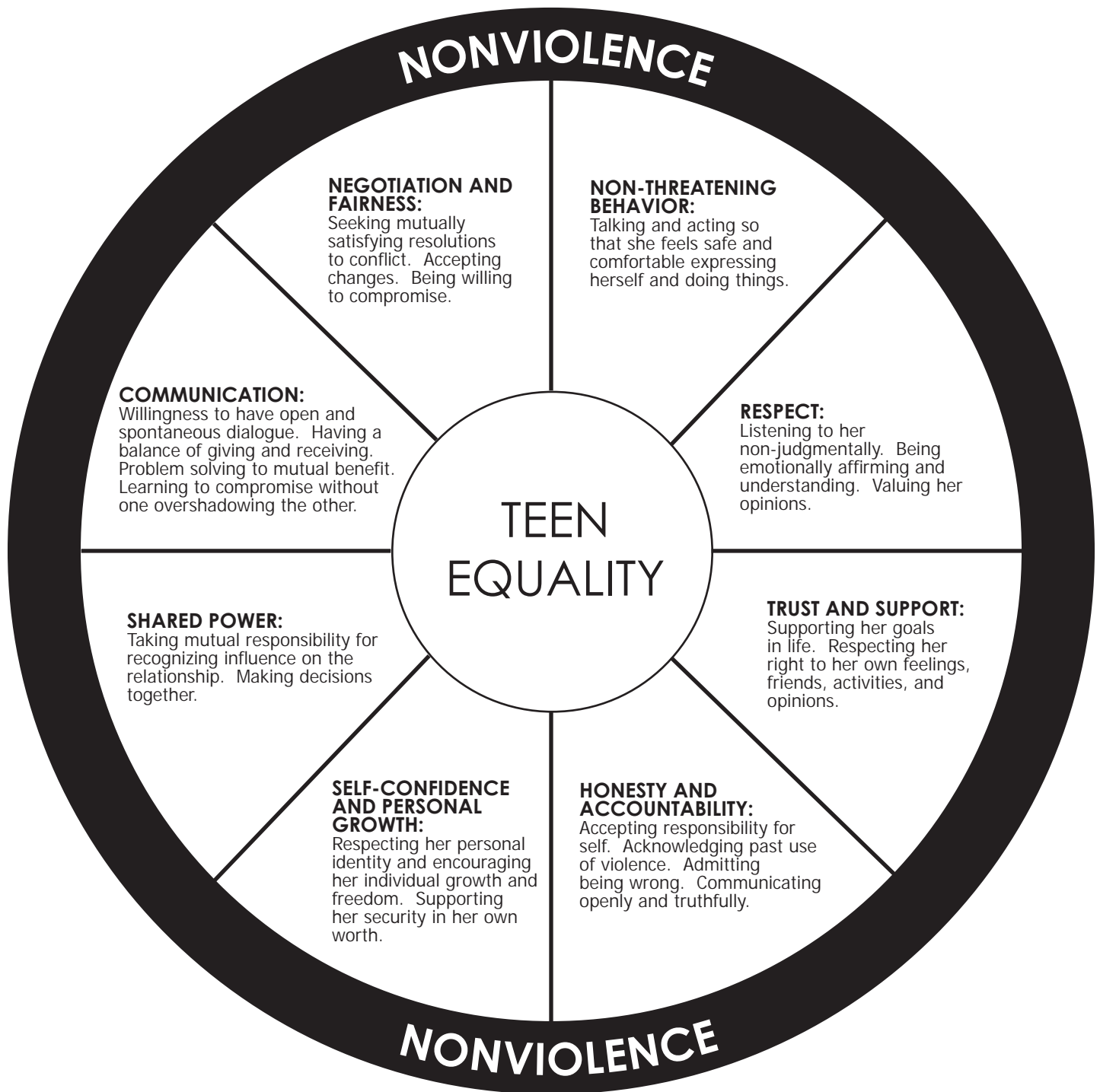


NATIONAL CENTER
on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy

4612 Shoal Creek Blvd. • Austin, Texas 78756
512.407.9020 (phone and fax) • www.ncdsv.org

Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network: <http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn.htm>

EQUALITY WHEEL FOR TEENS



The Dating Bill of Rights

In a relationship:

- ✚ I have a right to my own, separate identity.**
- ✚ I have a right to have my own friends and hobbies.**
- ✚ I have a right to speak my mind, even if it means disagreeing with my partner.**
- ✚ I have a right to change my mind.**
- ✚ I have a right to express my feelings.**
- ✚ I have a right to decide where I go and what I do on a date.**
- ✚ I have a right to refuse to do anything that makes me uncomfortable.**
- ✚ I have a right to pursue my dreams.**
- ✚ I have a right to live without fear of my partner.**
- ✚ I have a right to end the relationship at any time.**

From: *Understanding and Preventing Dating Violence: A Guide for Teens and Parents*. Prevent Child Abuse America Publications (2005).

Dating Violence Resource Sheet for Teens

If you are in immediate danger, CALL 911.

Hotlines:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline | 1-866-331-9474 TTY 1-866-331-8453 |
| National Domestic Violence Hotline | 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) TTY 1-800-787-3224 |
| National Runaway Switchboard | 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929) 1-800-621-4000 |
| National Center for Victims of Crime | 1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255) TTY 1-800-211-7996 |

Websites:

| | |
|---|--|
| National Youth Violence Prevention | www.safeyouth.org |
| National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline | www.loveisrespect.org |
| National Center for Victims of Crime | www.ncvc.org |
| Love Doesn't Have to Hurt Teens | www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen |
| Teen Relationships; You Deserve a Healthy Relationship | www.teenrelationships.org |

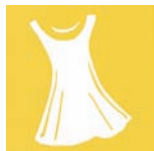
Local Resources:

Contact the domestic violence program in your state or local community for more information.



Acting to Prevent Dating Violence

Deana's Educational Theater



the
yellow
dress

The Yellow Dress is a dramatic one-woman play based on the stories of young women who were victims of dating violence. This carefully constructed program follows the progression of an abusive relationship and stimulates thought-provoking discussions about relationships — a topic important to every young person's life. Audiences are clearly moved by the story of a young woman who tells us of her relationship — that begins as young love, full of passion and promise and ends in tragedy.

Major Learning Points:

- ◆ Identify types of abuse and recognize the early warning signs
- ◆ Learning how to help friends/family members who are victims or perpetrators of abuse
- ◆ Understand the important role that bystanders play in prevention and in establishing cultural norms
- ◆ Discuss reporting options and local resources

About the Play:

In **The Yellow Dress**, we meet Anna and become immersed in the story of her relationship with her boyfriend, Rick. Speaking directly to the audience, in an intimate and honest monologue, Anna describes the different types of abuse she experiences at his hand. By following the course of her relationship, we are exposed to the effect that verbal abuse, jealousy, possessiveness and physical assault have on the victims of dating violence. Anna tells us how Rick romances and then isolates her, portraying the cycle of abuse. Ultimately, we see the devastation that occurs when someone doesn't understand how to safely leave an abusive relationship.

Post Performance:

An interactive after-show discussion features the trained actor/educator who helps to reinforce the educational points of the play with the students. School and community resources are introduced at this time.

Additional Information:

Deana's Educational Theater offers several educational workshops and training options, for students, parents, and school personnel. The workshops are fun and engaging and can be tailored to the needs of your community. **The Yellow Dress** script is also available through our Limited Performance Rights and Artist in Residence Program. For more information about **The Yellow Dress** or any of our performances and programs contact us at:

p: 339.203.4837

or email booking@deanaseducationaltheater.org

3 Lincoln St.
Suite C
Wakefield MA
01880

www.acttoprevent.org

p. 339-203-4837

Grades:
9-12

**Audience
Size:**
300

A Grandma's Situation

By the Rev. Diane C. Smalley

As I was rushing to find seats in a very crowded fellowship hall, I heard a child's voice behind me softly, but urgently calling, "Grandma, grandma ... grandma ... grandma!"

For a moment I was distracted by the voice, but quickly composed myself, and eagerly looked around the room for three vacant seats. But the child's voice, which seemed close, erringly close, startled me because I knew I was moving too fast for that same voice to be so close. But, there was that whisper again, "Grandma, grandma ... grandma ... grandma!"

As feelings of irritation surfaced, I remember thinking, "Why doesn't that woman answer that child?" Annoyed by the child's whispered urgency, I stopped in my tracks so fast that the two children following me ... almost tripped over each other. Trying to catch them, I nearly fell into the lap of a very large, and equally shocked man. Reality hit me; I was the woman who did not answer the child. The children, frantically trying to keep up with my pace, were new additions to my family. The soft voice was my teary eyed nine-year old. I was "grandma."

Days earlier, I had become the permanent guardian of one minor male child and share the guardianship of a female child with my daughter. Two children, a boy just reaching his teenage years and a girl who was barely nine years old, were now living with my daughter and me. The two children, born in the late '80s and early '90s, were about to take me, my silver hair, my "just got on e-mail recently" lifestyle on a journey that prepared me to learn to Text quickly, and become so technologically savvy that I would eventually Twitter and have the skills to change my photo on Facebook often. Oh, yeah!

I have learned to monitor BET, learned to go to movies that teenage girls love, learned to listen very intently to rap ... until I could hear the words and then reprove the artists, learned that I had to swoon over Maxwell as much as I had over Marvin Gaye, learned that Beyonce may not do for me what Aretha did, but Beyonce does for my teenage granddaughter what Aretha did for me, learned to love band concerts in high school auditoriums with high school sounds and smells, learned to not panic at the price of jeans with holes in them, learned that I would probably be the oldest "mom" at parent/teacher conferences, learned that my teenage grandson (who is now 20) would surf the internet for porn sites without parental controls, learned that my teenage daughter's poses in pictures on Myspace bordered on dangerous and deadly, but that merely deleting her Myspace site, without conversation and agreement, was even more dangerous and deadly, learned that my granddaughter (who is now 16) did not esteem herself smart and pretty and worthy, but did complete applications to model on the internet ... and that I would have to confront the man who called her to set up an interview, but above all, I learned that I had to be constantly present in their young lives in ways that I had forgotten, or never knew how to be, and would have to learn.

My granddaughter helped me write this article, and offered suggestions and generally made sure that I told the truth without sharing too much information. How did we learn to relate to

each other in ways that my daughter and I never have? My granddaughter has learned to trust that I will not judge her, that I expect her to make mistakes, that I may make mistakes, too, that I understand her need to change the color of her nail polish every other day, that I get it when she wears lipstick that shines, smells and tastes like fruit; that I am interested in her life, her gifts, her dreams, her aspirations, that I am a child of the '60s who is willing to learn from a child of the '90s.

Dating Shouldn't Hurt

What is dating violence?

Dating violence happens when one partner in a dating relationship is abused or mistreated.

- It can occur in opposite-sex and same-sex relationships.
- It knows all ages, economic statuses, races, and ethnicities.
- It can take place at any point in the dating relationship beginning, middle, or end.
- It can be a pattern of abusive behavior that is repeated and often escalates over time or it can be a single act of violence.
- It can include physical, emotional, mental, or verbal abuse.
- It involves about one in three high school students.
- It is reported to include 20 percent of dating couples.

It is NOT a positive relationship when

- . . . you are subject to verbal abuse by being belittled or mocked; or your opinion is not valued; or you are afraid to share your thoughts, feelings, or concerns; or your date swears at you.
- . . . you are pressured to have sex or to do something you don't want to do; or your "no" is ignored; or sex is expected as payment for a date.
- . . . you are threatened or made to feel uncomfortable.
- . . . you are slapped, pushed, kicked, or punched.
- . . . your date has temper tantrums or is extremely possessive or jealous; or you are blamed for your date's problems.
- . . . you, your family, and your friends are treated with disrespect or you are isolated from family and friends.

If you are experiencing some form of violence: seek help . . . end the relationship . . . avoid being alone with the abuser . . . take time to heal.

You need time to heal spiritually and emotionally. There are many people who can listen, give advice, and support your decisions. **You are not alone.**

Talk to someone you trust

Confide in your parents, a sister or brother, a close friend, a youth leader, your minister, your teacher, your coach, a doctor, a counselor, staff at a local shelter for abused women, or a crisis line counselor.

Remember

You are important and have an inherent right to be treated justly. You are a wonderful, unique creation of God. You are deserving of love. God wills for all of God's creation to know abundant life.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); lines 29-32

Helping a friend who is being abused?

Don't ignore the signs of abuse; Listen; Be supportive; Allow your friend to lean on you; Offer to go with your friend for help.

Often the most important things we can say to others are "I'm sorry," "I care about you," "I love you," "How can I help?" and "I will support you."

Additional Resources

Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network. www.pcusa.org/pnewalpadvn. Call 1-888-728-7228, x5800 for assistance in locating help through this network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE.

National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-621-4000.

Love Doesn't Have to Hurt Teens Web site at www.apa.org/pl/pollteen.

Anguished Hearts: Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, 2004. PDS #70-270-03-025. To order call 1-800-524-2612.

Turn Mourning into Dancing: A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence. Approved by the 213th General Assembly, 2001. PDS #OGA-01-018. To order call 1-800-524-2612.

Produced by the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, a Ministry of the General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202. Portions adapted from "Dating Shouldn't Hurt" by the United Church of Canada, 2004. Used with permission.



Using the Lectionary to Address Issues of Abuse in Relationships

October 2009 – Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By the Rev. Nancy K. Troy

During October, congregants will be hearing a great deal about abuse since it is a recognized national month of awareness. It is a good time to incorporate these issues into sermons or into other pieces during the worship service – an illustration, prayer of confession, pastoral prayer, etc. Even a mention of intimate violence will send the message to victims that they are not alone and that this is a place to find safety and healing. Both victims and perpetrators of violence need to hear words that confront the violence and that both can find healing in their place of worship.

The following scriptures, with some suggestions for introducing intimate violence and healthy relationships, are part of the lectionary readings for October:

October 4 - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 10: 2-16

In the Gospel reading, we are confronted by a very difficult text on divorce. If this text is seen out of its cultural context, the preacher will add a stumbling block to some victims, who for the sake of their safety and the safety of their children, must leave a violent relationship. The covenant of marriage is broken by violence, not divorce. During biblical times, neither women nor children had rights. If a man divorced his wife, she was left without any security or legal recourse. The prohibition of divorce and remarriage will need to be interpreted in a pastoral way since so many people sitting in the pews have, are, or will struggle with this issue. By not avoiding this scripture, and by exegeting the passage skillfully, the preacher can deliver pastoral care and show congregants how to interpret scripture using historical critical methodology. *See additional suggestions following the lectionary overviews.*

October 11 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Psalm 22: 1-15

This is probably the best known Psalm of lament. Most will recognize the plea, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and can think of a time in their lives or the lives of their community when they have experienced the silence of God. The lament is spoken by a person who is faithful (verses 3, 9, 10), but who does not see God’s intervention into their situation. The preacher might list a number of situations where their congregants might have felt the utter absence of God, including abuse in any form. In walking with victims of violence, they will often talk about the silence or absence of God, but affirm their faith and trust in God, exactly like the psalmist. A caution here is making sure that listeners do not leave with the unhelpful idea that suffering is their “cross to bear.”

October 18 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Presbyterian Sunday Emphasis)

Mark 10: 35-45

Poor James and John, the sons of Zebedee... What were they thinking? Here we have the brothers jockeying to be in the place of power, prime examples of Mark’s portrayal of the disciples just not getting it! Jesus turns that request into his radical vision of mutuality and

servanthood. While listeners may judge these two harshly, particularly in view of what Jesus has in front of him as he enters Jerusalem, we can all confess to covenerating the best, most powerful, place at some time in our lives. There's something pretty heady about having power and control. One of the best examples of the misuse of power and control is how the perpetrator of abuse views his or her relationship with a partner. The tactics used to maintain control over another are anything but Jesus' vision of servanthood that should define all our relationships. See the Power and Control Wheel at www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn/congregation. The two "wheels" included in this packet, the Teen Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel, can be very helpful in making references to dating violence and/or healthy teen relationships.

October 25th – 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 10: 46-52

In this very short story of Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus, whom we are told is "a blind beggar," we see once again how Jesus listened to the voice of the most vulnerable. Those around the man tried their best to silence him, but Jesus stopped, engaged the man in conversation, and healed the man of his blindness. This man was an outsider as many victims feel themselves to be. Often they sit in our pews, silent and afraid to speak out about what they are experiencing from the person they thought loved them. Others may break the silence and share their pain but are not believed and like Bartimaeus are sternly ordered to be quiet. Are we, like the crowd trying to stop Bartimaeus, afraid or unable to bear the shouts of pain? Do we urge the victim to keep quiet...it can't be happening...you must be doing something...it's a private matter? Who are we in the story? Are we the bystanders? Are we willing to call to the outsider as Jesus did over and over along the way? What is it like to be the outsider?

As You Prepare the Sermon

- ✚ Remember that as you speak openly about abusive situations, there are those sitting in your pews who have experienced, are experiencing or who have a personal connection with someone who is being abused. You might be surprised at how young boys and girls report violence in their relationships. It is always good to have someone in the back of the sanctuary who can slip out and check with someone if they leave. "Are you OK?" "May I help?" These questions are not obtrusive and can often begin a process of healing.
- ✚ Teens new at negotiating dating relationships often are flattered by the very behaviors that their partner uses to control them, behaviors such as isolating them from friends, acting jealously, or threatening to hurt themselves if the partner decides to end the relationship.
- ✚ It may be very uncomfortable to do an entire sermon on abuse. Start slowly by incorporating language into prayers, making announcements about activities during the October Domestic Violence Awareness Month, using a bulletin insert, or asking someone from a community organization to do a minute for mission. Any reference will be noticed by those who need to hear a healing word from their congregation.
- ✚ Familiarize yourself with the dynamics of abuse and the Dos and Don'ts of responding to victims and perpetrators. Begin by going to the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network's website, www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn. Your local crisis center will offer educational events, and will be happy to see a clergy person supportive of their efforts.

- ✚ As you prepare your sermon, see the scripture through the lens of a person who is abused. Examine carefully the context of the reading and challenge those sections that might be misinterpreted to validate violence, child abuse or the subordination of women.
- ✚ Theology can be a road block or a resource. Pay particular attention to how suffering and forgiveness are interpreted.
- ✚ There are many resources that can help. The PADVN website has some sample sermons that can give you ideas of how others have preached about abuse. The new commentary, *Feasting on the Word* (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville Kentucky) is an excellent resource that looks at each lectionary reading through four lenses: theological, pastoral, exegetical, and homiletical.
- ✚ Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune, FaithTrust Institute Founder and Senior Analyst, reminds preachers to keep in mind the three audiences who will be listening to their sermon: (1) victims/survivors, (2) perpetrators, and (3) bystanders. Ask yourself, “What will that young girl who got shoved aside on last night’s date hear in your words?” “Will that young man rethink his actions because of something he hears today?” “Will that best friend be willing to challenge what she/he hears about a date that went wrong?”
- ✚ Even though you are being urged to use October to lift these issues up, “one shot” sermons about any topic seldom raise the level of awareness to change minds and behaviors. Help your congregation make a long-term plan for becoming a safe sanctuary, a place where truth is spoken and where troubled relationships are transformed.

Youth group activity regarding dating violence

By Joan Fenton

Youth leaders should plan to speak about dating relationships as an every other year event, because teens will be ageing in and out of the program. The message about equality in relationships needs to be heard often by our youth who may observe abuse at home as well as within the larger culture. Young women experience controlling and abusive situations at levels approaching that which is found within adult relationships.

To begin, divide the group into two parts, with equal numbers of males and females in each section. Give both sides a large piece of paper or white board and a marker. On one paper write “A Good Man Is...”, and on the other, “A Good Woman Is... .” Each group has five minutes to finish their list of attributes. Bring the two groups back together, compare lists and ask a few questions. Is there anything on either list that they disagree with? Why? Anything that causes concern? Are there any words or phrases that they think should pertain to both men and women? For example, if the word “strong” is written on the male side only, should women also be strong?

Next, hand out the questions that are listed below. Tell them to answer each question on their paper with either a Yes, No or Sometimes. If youth are not in a relationship, they may answer as if the questions are being directed to someone they know who might be in a controlling relationship. All answers will be kept private and are for the teens’ personal use.

- * Is your partner jealous or possessive?
- * Does your partner dislike your friends?
- * Does your partner not want you to have friends?
- * Does your partner have a “quick temper”?
- * Does your partner have a rigid idea of gender roles?
- * Does your partner try to control you or make all the decisions?
- * Do you worry about how your partner will react to the things you do or say?
- * Do you get a lot of negative verbal teasing from your partner?
- * Are you comfortable with your partner’s “playful” slaps and shoves?
- * Does your partner’s behavior change if he/she drinks or uses drugs?
- * Does your partner pressure you to use alcohol or drugs or to have sex?
- * Do you feel it is your responsibility to make the relationship work?
- * Are you afraid to end the relationship?
- * Do you believe your partner will not accept breaking up?

- * Does your partner blame you when he/she mistreats you?
- * Has your partner ever threatened to hurt your pets?
- * Does your partner try to control, pressure or embarrass you through your social networks, IM, cell phone calls or texting?

After everyone has finished answering the list of questions, ask them to look over their answers. If they answered “yes” or “sometimes” to any of the questions, either they or their friends are in a controlling/abusive relationship. Allow time for discussion.

At this time, return to the lists of attributes that were made. Ask the youth: Where do we get the ideas of what men and women should be? Some suggestions may include:

1. Observing parents and other adults in their relationships.
2. Movies, TV & other media.
3. Observing older teens and young adults.
4. Observing what their friends believe and do.
5. Observing adult mentors, coaches, teachers, etc.

Do they feel that in our culture men may be given more status and sometimes more value than women? When and where do we see men being more independent and more aggressive than women? (Examples may include TV, movies, music videos, advertisements) Why? Also in our personal lives – at home, in school, in the community, men are encouraged to be aggressive and dominant.

In the media listed above, how are women seen? (Often, they are portrayed as dependent, passive and objects of sexual conquest). Do your youth see that boys are conditioned to take on specific traits, just as girls are encouraged to take on other traits? What happens to them if they appear to have some traits of the opposite sex? A put-down for a boy would be hearing, “You throw like a girl!” Does this statement show a lack of respect for girls?

Move on to abuser and victim profiles. Girls who are abused and boys who are abusive – what do they look like? They both come from all racial/ethnic backgrounds, all income levels, all religions, and are from large cities, small towns and rural areas. We can't predict who will be a victim or an abuser, but over 95% of abusers are male. Youthful male victims mostly suffer from verbal abuse, and are not usually victims of physical abuse.

Ask your youth to list what tactics abusive partners employ. Be sure to include words such as:

1. Power and control
2. Verbal and/or physical attacks
3. Jealousy and possessiveness

4. Blaming victim for abuse
5. Denial of abuse
6. Entitlement to exercise control in relationship

Provide second handout to youth called “Love is – Love isn’t”. Explain that there are certain words that are labeled as “love” when they are not love at all.

Ask for comments on what love is and isn’t. Do these words fit with what they see love being for them?

There is an excellent chance each young person in your youth group knows someone who is either a victim or an abuser. If they see a friend in an abusive relationship and remain silent, what happens? Their silence helps the abusive teen feel empowered to continue to abuse. Likewise the victim becomes more isolated and believes the abuse is normal and justified. So, what can they do? Will they feel comfortable in remaining close to the abusive friend, while stating that abuse is wrong and it needs to end? Will they be able to offer words of care, concern and support to a victim? Will they tell their teenage friend that she is not causing the abuse and doesn’t deserve it? Will they stand by victims and abusers as they try to make changes? Will they make necessary changes in their own lives if they recognize that they are in an unhealthy relationship? Will they seek out a trusted adult to talk with about their problem?

Finally, what are we called to do as followers of Jesus Christ? As we seek to be faithful to Him, we come to realize that all our relationships are to be based on mutual respect and caring. We are meant to be treated lovingly. We are made in God’s image and are deserving of love. Dating and marriage should not contain control and violence. We are all called to be peacemakers. This process starts in how we treat those closest to us, by giving and receiving respect and love.

As you complete this activity with your youth, give them time to share questions or concerns. Some youth may choose to speak confidentially with you in the future about a troubling relationship. Plan to bring up the topic of dating relationships with your youth group again and again, training new youth leaders in this process.

Youth who hear statements about respectful relationships are much less likely to be involved in abusive situations than those who don’t. Parents usually don’t think their teens are involved in abuse, don’t, as a rule, discuss it with their teens, and even if they do, teens usually do not act on their advice. You are on the front line in the prevention of dating violence and may be providing the only opportunity for this sort of conversation. Break the silence – dating shouldn’t hurt!

For more information and ideas to encourage healthy relationships between parents, teens and dating partners, go online to giverespect.org, an initiative of the Family Violence Prevention Fund. Other helpful information for teens may be found at the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474, loveisrespect.org, and the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Hotline Network: 1-800-656-4673, rainn.org.

Statistics On Dating Violence¹

- 25% of eighth and ninth grade male and female students reported being victims of nonsexual dating violence, and 8% had been victims of sexual dating violence.
- 32% of college students report having been a victim of nonsexual dating violence.
- Over half of a representative sample of more than 1,000 women at an urban university reported experiencing some form of unwanted sex. Most described the perpetrator as either a casual date (12%) or a steady dating partner (43%).
- Women are six times more likely than men to experience dating violence.
- During adulthood nearly one in three women experience at least one physical assault by a partner (from *Turn Mourning into Dancing!* policy statement).

For Further Study and Resources

Love Doesn't Have to Hurt Teens is a Web site created by the American Psychological Association about dating violence and healthy dating relationships.
www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen/homepage.html

Teen Voices is an alternative media voice that challenges pop culture's stereotypes of teen girls and women.
www.teenvoices.com

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. New York: Puffin Books, 2001. The main character, Melinda, shares her story of experiencing date rape, being rejected by peers, and finally finding her voice and holding the offender accountable. Parents who have children ages twelve and up may want to review and share the book with their youth.

KEEPING IT REAL! is a Christian sexuality curriculum for African American youth. It was developed by the Black Church Initiative of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, a group with which the PC(USA) has a formal relationship. For more information and to order, contact the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice by phone at (202) 628-7700, or see www.rcrc.org/bci/keeping.html.

Love—All That and More: A Resource on Healthy Relationships for Youth and Young Adults, by FaithTrust Institute, Seattle, WA, 2001. To order, call (206) 634-1903 or go to www.faithtrustinstitute.org. Most presbytery resource centers have this curriculum available for borrowing. Or call Women's Ministries at (888) 728-7228, ext. 5382 and ask to borrow the resource.

Questions for Bible Study

Read 2 Samuel 13:1–22, the story of the rape of Tamar. Discuss these questions in your group.

- What does this passage say about relationships?
- What can we learn from this passage about God?
- How can this passage speak to us in our time about community response to dating violence?



Numbers to Know

National Domestic Violence Hotline
(800) 799-SAFE

The National Runaway Switchboard
(800) 621-4000
This network is intended for teens who have left home and need help.

The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)
(800) 656-HOPE

1. From the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA, www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/datviol.htm.

The publisher gives permission to duplicate this page from *Anguished Hearts*. Copyright 2003, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



What Are You Doing?!: Dating Violence

When Dating Gets Dangerous

Dating and dating violence might at first seem like a topic that should be geared more toward youth and young adults. However, it is increasingly common for men and women to stay single well into their thirties or forties, possibly never marrying. Moreover, with the loss of a long-term relationship men and women may find themselves on the dating scene after a hiatus of many years. Addressing the subject of dating violence is relevant for everyone, whether they relate this information to their own past or present experiences or the dating experiences of their children and other loved ones.

Keep in mind that one or more members of your group might have experienced dating violence either as the violated or the violator. Allow for the sharing of personal experiences, but understand that not everyone can or will want to relate personal stories. Remind members to honor the privacy of others; they should not share personal information about someone else without permission from that person or taking sufficient steps to protect that person's identity. While some members might be tempted to share their children's dating stories (youth who might be in Sunday school down the hall!), remind them that their children's privacy should be respected as well, unless children have given their parents permission to relate those experiences.

As in any discussion about interpersonal violence, provide the list of community (and church) resources that people can use to find help. Domestic violence hot lines are not just for those who are experiencing spousal abuse; the **National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE** is designed for anyone who experiences abuse in a relationship.

Materials and Resources You Will Need

- ✓ Bibles
- ✓ copies of reproducible pages "Date Lines" for each participant
- ✓ newsprint, felt-tipped markers
- ✓ pencils or pens, tape
- ✓ referral list of community resources (see Introduction)

Warming Up

Discuss Case Studies

(copies of "Date Lines")
 Dating can bring to mind excitement and fun, and at the same time anxiety and worry. Some anxieties—Will I like this new person? Will he/she like me? Are we compatible? Am I in love?—are perfectly normal and a natural part of the process. What is not normal and

never acceptable is violence or abuse within a dating relationship.

Ask the participants to gather in clusters of four to six people. Hand out copies of "Date Lines" and invite the participants to discuss the case studies. Each group could take one case study, or you might prefer that each group discuss all of the case studies.

Ask participants to share their ideas. Write them on newsprint compiling two different lists. Tape the lists to the wall. Then ask the group as a whole to come up with a one-sentence definition of a healthy dating relationship and a one-sentence definition of an abusive dating relationship. Notice that dating violence is not limited to physical abuse; dating violence can also include sexual assault, emotional and verbal abuse, and harm to property and pets.

Grappling with the Issues

Qualify Relationships

(copies of "Date Lines," newsprint, felt-tipped markers, tape)
 Defining healthy relationships and abusive relationships is important in determining what factors increase the likelihood of dating violence. Have participants turn to What Do You Expect? in "Date Lines." Ask participants to work individually to brainstorm words or phrases to complete each of these sentences:

- A healthy relationship contains . . .
- An abusive relationship contains . . .

Answers might include (but are not limited to these):

| Healthy Relationship | Abusive Relationship |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mutuality | Violence |
| Fun | Fear |
| Good Communication | Silence |
| Balance of Power | Imbalance of Power |
| Respect for Self and Other Person | Lack of Self-Worth |
| Trust | Need to Control Someone Else |
| Some Time Apart from Each Other | Isolating Person from Friends, Etc. |

