

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

Teen Dating Violence Initiatives in Military Communities: Rapid Literature Review

Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team

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Executive Summary

This rapid literature review was conducted by the Technical Assistance (TA) team at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse) in response to a request from a faculty member at Uniformed Services University. The findings address research related to teen dating violence (TDV) awareness and prevention, campaigns and initiatives related to TDV within civilian and military communities, as well as programs and resources available to build awareness and combat TDV.

Teen dating violence (TDV) is defined as a pattern of behavior that includes physical, emotional, or sexual violence within a dating relationship, and includes stalking (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). A recent national study found that eight percent of teens experienced a form of TDV in their teenage relationship (Kann et al., 2018). Factors have been identified that put individuals at risk for perpetrating TDV, although many of the same risk factors are also applicable for victimization (Niolon et al., 2017). Supporting the development of healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships has the potential to reduce the occurrence of TDV and prevent its harmful and long-lasting effects (Niolon, 2017). Since TDV impacts both males and females, prevention efforts may be more effective if they include content for both sexes (Vagi, 2015).

This report provides the following elements:

- a synthesis of the literature, including a definition of teen dating violence, risk and protective factors, signs and symptoms, and health consequences;
- a brief description of TDV prevention strategies;
- a brief description of identified military and national TDV initiatives;
- a list of TDV prevention programs; and
- additional resources, such as websites and guides for TDV awareness and prevention.

Please note that this rapid literature review provides a preliminary examination of the research and initiatives identified as of the request date. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive review of the literature, nor are the resources and programs provided endorsed by the Clearinghouse. Further, due to the lack of research available, the Clearinghouse cannot state whether or not the initiatives conducted in military communities have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness.

Introduction

The Technical Assistance (TA) team at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse) conducted a brief, rapid literature review on the topic of

TDV and identified initiatives and prevention programs available in military communities and at the national level. Research examining TDV was identified by searching peer-reviewed journal articles with an emphasis placed on research published between 2015 and 2020. Search queries included various combinations of the following terms: *teen dating violence, teen dating violence prevention, intimate partner violence, adolescents, prevention initiatives, campaigns, awareness; and military, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force.*

Background

Teen dating violence (TDV) is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a pattern of behavior that includes physical, emotional, or sexual violence within an intimate relationship, and includes stalking (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). TDV typically occurs among individuals between the ages of 13 to 19 years old. Abuse can happen in person or electronically (e.g., texting, social media, other online applications) and is found in heterosexual relationships as well as in relationships among sexual minority populations (Niolon et al., 2017). Girls and boys are both victims and perpetrators of TDV; however, female adolescents report more physical and sexual victimization than male adolescents. (Black, Hawley, Hofer & Barnett, 2017; Vagi, Olsen, Basile, & Vivolo-Kantor, 2015). TDV is not usually an isolated event; most victims of physical or sexual TDV report more than one incident (Vagi et al., 2015). In a 2017 national survey of high school students, eight percent reported physical violence and seven percent reported they experienced sexual violence from a dating partner in the 12 months before the survey (Kann et al., 2018).

Risk Factors

There are identified factors that put individuals at risk for perpetrating TDV, although many of the same risk factors are also applicable for victimization (Niolon et al., 2017). These include, but are not limited to:

- Demographic factors such as age (i.e., adolescence and young adulthood) low income, low educational attainment, and unemployment;
- Childhood history factors such as exposure to violence between parents, experiencing poor parenting, and experiencing child abuse and neglect, including sexual violence;
- Individual factors such as stress, anxiety, and antisocial personality traits;
- Attitudinal risk factors, such as attitudes condoning violence in relationships and belief in strict gender roles;
- Behavioral risk factors such as prior perpetration and victimization of TDV or other forms of aggression (e.g., bullying and peer violence, a history of substance abuse, a history of delinquency, and hostile communication styles);

- Relationship-level factors such as hostility or conflict in the relationship, separation or ending of the relationship (e.g., break-ups), aversive family communication and relationships, and having friends who perpetrate or experience TDV.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are associated with lower chances of perpetrating or being a victim of TDV (Niolon et al., 2017). These include:

- High empathy, good grades, high verbal IQ, a positive relationship with one's mother, and attachment to school;
- Environmental factors such as fewer physical locations in which alcoholic beverages are available for purchase, community norms that are intolerant of TDV, increased economic opportunity, and housing security.

Signs and Symptoms

Dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time. The following behaviors are identified as warning signs or “red flags” for abuse in a teen relationship (Hertzog, Harpel, & Rowley, 2016):

- Checking a partner's cell phone, email, or social media without permission
- Constantly putting partner down, name-calling
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Explosive temper
- Isolating partner from family or friends
- Making false accusations
- Mood swings
- Physically hurting partner
- Possessiveness
- Telling partner what to do
- Pressuring or forcing partner to have sex

Health Consequences

TDV is associated with many poor health outcomes (Miller, 2017; Niolon et al., 2017; Vagi et al., 2015). These include:

- Increased likelihood of participating in sexual risk behaviors (e.g., not using condoms and multiple sexual partners), unintended pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections
- Injuries
- Poor academic performance
- Anxiety, depression and suicide ideation
- Substance abuse
- Disordered eating

- Low self-esteem
- Future intimate partner violence victimization

TDV Prevention Strategies

Supporting the development of healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships has the potential to reduce the occurrence of TDV and prevent its harmful and long-lasting effects on individuals, their families, and their communities (Niolon et al., 2017). Male and female adolescents are both impacted by TDV. Prevention efforts may be more effective if they include content for both sexes (Vagi et al., 2015).

The CDC has identified evidence-based prevention strategies based to help states and communities prevent intimate partner violence, support survivors, and lessen the short and long-term harms of intimate partner violence, including TDV (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.).

These strategies include:

- Teach safe and healthy relationship skills.
- Engage influential adults and peers.
- Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence.
- Create protective environments.
- Strengthen economic supports for families.
- Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms.

Detailed information about each strategy, such as rationale, approaches, potential outcomes, and evidence is available from the CDC's Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>

TDV Initiatives and Programs

Military Community Initiatives

Department of Defense

- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month Toolkit**
 - This toolkit, available from Military OneSource, provides articles, posters, a fact sheet, fliers, and links to additional resources related to TDV.

- <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/child-abuse-and-domestic-abuse/teen-dating-violence-awareness-and-prevention-month-tool-kit>

Army

- **Aberdeen Proving Ground Teen Dating Violence Information Session**
 - Area teens learned how to recognize signs of unhealthy dating behaviors during an information session hosted by the Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program in February 2019. Attendees received bags containing information about safe dating, healthy relationships, and cyber dating.
 - <http://apgnews.com/community-news/teens-learn-signs-of-dating-violence/>
- **Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter: Teen Sessions**
 - This year, the Army Family Advocacy Program's Victim Advocacy Program in Hawaii partnered with Child Youth Services to provide sessions to help teens learn relationship skills, communication strategies, and anger management. Interested middle school and high school students could sign up to participate in a session held at an installation teen center on two specified dates in the month of February.
 - <https://hawaii.armymwr.com/promos/whats-fapening-teen-dating-violence-awareness-month>
- **Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Observance of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**
 - In honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February 2019, the installation participated in activities such as "Wear Orange" day at the three main JBSA locations, an information table at JBSA-Lackland, and a program titled "In Their Shoes" at JBSA-Randolph.
 - <https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/1741030/activities-at-jbsa-in-february-focus-on-preventing-dating-violence/>

Marine Corps

- **Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow**
 - Behavioral Health hosted engaging and educational events for local teens and tweens to include an art contest, self-defense classes, an art night, and a bowling night.
 - <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/360555/teen-dating-violence-prevention-and-awareness>

- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month MARADMIN Number: 038/15**
 - A Marine Administrative Message signed in January 2015 recognized Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and highlighted the Marine Corps Family Advocacy Program aim to “drive teen dating violence from our bases, stations and the surrounding areas.”
 - <https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/896939/2015-teen-dating-violence-awareness-month/>

Navy

- **Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month Resources**
 - CNIC recognizes Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and provides a definition of TDV, a list of warning signs, ways for individuals to help others and to get help for themselves, and resources to learn more.
 - https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/counseling-advocacy-and-prevention/family_advocacy/teen-dating-violence-awareness.html
- **Joint Base Anacostia-Bowling Military & Family Support Center Campaign**
 - Joint Base Anacostia-Bowling recognized Teen Dating Violence Awareness month in their February 2020 Military & Family Support Center newsletter. The installation also held a “Dodge Dating Violence” dodge ball game, an identified day to wear orange to show support for TDV awareness and how to share on social media, and shared how individuals can reach a Military & Family Support Center victim advocate to learn more about TDV.

Air Force

- **Dyess Air Force Base TDV Awareness Events**
 - Dyess Air Force Base hosted multiple events throughout the month of February 2020 to raise awareness for TDV. Events included a one-hour group discussion at the Youth Center with the Family Advocacy Program that focused on the issues teens face when dating. Additionally, a 90-minute group discussion was offered to provide parents with information about TDV to help keep their teens informed.
 - <https://www.resilience.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2082374/teen-dating-violence-awareness/>
- **Eglin Air Force Base Youth Center Training Sessions**
 - Teen Dating Violence Prevention Awareness Month training sessions were held at the Youth Center every Wednesday in the month of February at

Eglin Air Force Base. Each session had a different focus to include an introduction to TDV, base speakers, a presentation from a local sheriff's office, and a self-defense class taught by an installation squadron.

- <https://www.eglin.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2075468/events-planned-for-teen-dating-violence-prevention-awareness-month/>

Nationwide Initiatives

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM)

- February is recognized as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in the United States. Many organizations create and share toolkits with resources and social media campaigns to engage communities, especially youth, in a discussion about healthy relationships.
 - Love is Respect 2020 TDVAM Campaign:
 - <https://www.loveisrespect.org/teendvmonth/>
 - Break the Cycle 2020 TDVAM Campaign:
 - <https://www.breakthecycle.org/teenDVmonth>

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Programs

Programs Placed on the Continuum of Evidence

The TA team conducted a search on the Continuum of Evidence (Continuum) for programs that address teen dating violence and building healthy relationships in teens. The search was not limited by sector or placement. The results are reflective of programs addressing the topic of interest, delivered in different contexts (e.g., community and school), with varying levels of evidence (e.g., promising, unclear-). The six programs described below, are listed in order of placement on the Continuum. Programs marked with an asterisk (*) denote military use.

To read more about the Continuum, placement levels, or to conduct a search of programs reviewed by the Clearinghouse, please visit www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu.

- **Expect Respect**
 - Expect Respect, a school- or community-based, TDV prevention program, is designed to enhance healthy conflict resolution skills, build safe and positive relationships, and prevent dating and peer abuse and violence.
 - Placement Level: Promising
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2870

- **Wise Guys**
 - Wise Guys, a community-based program targeted at adolescent males, is designed to increase knowledge about sexual activity, foster positive attitudes toward women and relationships, promote safer sexual behaviors, and prevent teen pregnancy.
 - Placement Level: Unclear +
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2839

- **Connected Kids: Safe, Strong, Secure (Connected Kids)**
 - Connected Kids: Safe, Strong, Secure, a clinical-based violence prevention curriculum, is designed to provide clinicians with materials to address violence-related topics as part of routine child health care.
 - Placement Level: Unclear Ø
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2691

- **DATE SAFE Project***
 - DATE SAFE Project, a community-based program, is designed to teach participants about safe and healthy relationships, consensual sexual intimacy, sexual assault, and how to support survivors of assault.
 - Placement Level: Unclear Ø
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2966

- **Teens on Target (TNT)**
 - Teens on Target (TNT), a school- and community-based, violence-prevention program, is designed to raise awareness of the root causes of violence and teach violence prevention.
 - Placement Level: Unclear Ø
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_671

- **Ending Violence**
 - Ending Violence, a school- and community-based program, is designed to empower participants to prevent and end abusive relationships, create healthy relationships, and understand how the legal system can help victims of domestic violence.
 - Placement Level: Unclear -
 - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_2453

Programs Not Placed on the Continuum of Evidence

The TA team next conducted a rapid review of publicly available online sources to include TDV programs not yet placed on the Continuum. Multiple prevention programs were identified. Therefore, the programs listed below were narrowed to include only programs highlighted by the CDC and the Children's Safety Network (CSN). The TA team also provided information on Coaching Boys Into Men as this program was noted to be of interest by the requestor for this rapid literature review.

Please be aware that these programs have not been evaluated by, nor are the programs endorsed by, the Clearinghouse. Should you find this or another program that fits your needs not currently placed on the Continuum, the Clearinghouse is happy to assist you by offering a thorough review of the program's evidence base, at no cost to military affiliated partners.

Programs Highlighted by the CDC

- **Dating Matters**

- Dating Matters focuses on teaching youth 11 to 14 years old healthy relationship skills before they start dating and reducing behaviors that increase the risk for dating violence, such as substance abuse and sexual risk-taking. The program includes prevention strategies for individuals, peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods.
- https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/datingmatters/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Fdatingmatters%2Findex.html

Programs Highlighted by the CSN

- **Ending Violence**

- Developed by Break the Cycle, the Ending Violence curriculum is delivered in three sessions for middle and high school students. The program aims to teach teens how to prevent and safely end abusive relationships, understand their legal rights and responsibilities, and create a framework for building healthy relationships in the future.
- http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/ending_violence.page

- **Fourth R Programs**

- The Fourth R Programs curriculum consists of four separate programs, each targeting a specific age group or setting. The programs contain classroom lessons with a thematic approach to reduce risk behaviors including violence and bullying, unsafe sexual behavior, and substance use.

Each of the Fourth R Programs focuses on relationship goals and challenges that influence decision-making.

- <https://youthrelationships.org/fourth-r-programs>
- **Healthy Relationships Plus Program (HRPP)**
 - The Healthy Relationships Plus Program (HRPP), a non-classroom setting program from the Fourth R Programs suite of programs, targets the prevention of violence through the promotion of positive, healthy relationships. Intended for small groups, HRRP also includes a focus on mental health and suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol use.
 - <https://youthrelationships.org/hrpp>
- **Safe Dates**
 - Safe Dates educates youth and adolescents on how to identify and prevent dating violence. Through ten sessions, students learn and discuss the causes of dating violence, how to help a friend in an abusive relationship, common gender stereotypes regarding dating violence, and prevention techniques.
 - <https://www.hazelden.org/web/public/safedates.page>
- **Shifting Boundaries**
 - The Shifting Boundaries program, geared toward middle school students, uses a multi-level approach to dating violence prevention programming focusing on knowledge, attitudes, intended behavior, current behavior, and emotional safety of youth participants.
 - <https://www.wcwoonline.org/images/stories/projects/datingviolence/ShiftingBoundariesFall2018.pdf>

Other Programs of Interest

- **Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM)**
 - Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) is a prevention program that trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills.
 - <https://www.coachescorner.org/>

Online Resources

Websites

- **Break the Cycle**

- Break the Cycle strives to inspire and support young people to build healthy relationships and create a culture without abuse. The website provides links to educational information, trainings, capacity building support, legal services, and policy and legislative information to promote advocacy efforts.
- <https://www.breakthecycle.org/>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Preventing Teen Dating Violence**
 - This website provides definitions, data, and resources to prevent teen dating violence. Links to infographics, a prevention program, and a technical package is also available.
 - http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendating_violence.html.
- **Children’s Safety Network (CSN), Teen Dating Violence**
 - CSN provides training, technical assistance, and resources on injury and violence prevention planning, programs, and evidence-based practices to state and jurisdiction health departments and health and safety services and systems. This website includes a list of publications, resource guides, webinars, and additional resource links on the topic of teen dating violence.
 - <https://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/injury-topics/teen-dating-violence>
- **Love is Respect**
 - Love is Respect, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, empowers youth to prevent and end dating abuse. Free and confidential phone, live chat, and texting services are available all day, every day, to offer support, information and advocacy to young people who have questions or concerns about dating relationships. The program also provides information and support to concerned friends and family members, teachers, counselors, service providers and members of law enforcement.
 - <http://www.loveisrespect.org>
- **Veto Violence**
 - Available from the CDC, Veto Violence provides tools, trainings, and prevention information related to violence, including TDV.
 - <http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/>

Fact Sheets and Guides

- **Teen Dating Violence Prevention Fact Sheet**

- This fact sheet, available from the CDC, provides TDV definitions, and shares the prevalence and consequences of TDV. Prevention strategies and information for where to get help is also listed on the fact sheet.
- https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv/TDV-factsheet_2020.pdf
- **Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices**
 - Developed and made available by the CDC, this technical package describes evidence-based strategies and approaches for preventing intimate partner violence (IPV), including TDV.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>
- **Teen Dating Abuse: 2018 Resource Guide**
 - Made available by the CSN, this resource guide provides links to organizations, programs, publications, and resources focused on preventing teen dating abuse.
 - <https://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/sites/childrensafetynetwork.org/files/Teen%20Dating%20Abuse%20Resource%20Guide%202018.pdf>

Additional Assistance

The TA specialists at the Clearinghouse are happy to assist you. We provide support to professionals as they examine and make informed decisions about which programs fit specific situations and are worth the investment. Whether it is connecting you with the resources and tools to conduct a needs assessment in your community, suggesting the best evidence-based program or practice for your situation, or developing an evaluation plan, our team of experts is a call or email away.

Please visit our website at www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu or call 1-877-382-9185 to speak with a TA specialist.

Suggested Citation

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