Safe Dates

What Is the Problem?
United States statistics:
- In 2013, among high school students who dated, 21% of females and 10% of males experienced any form of teen dating violence (TDV) victimization.¹
- Students who experienced both physical and sexual TDV victimization were more likely to report engaging in risky health behaviors than those who experienced one type of TDV or no TDV.²

What Is One Solution?
The aim of the Safe Dates program is to prevent and reduce dating violence (victimization and perpetration) among male and female middle and high school students. The goals are to 1) raise awareness of dating abuse and what constitutes a healthy dating relationship, and 2) equip adolescents with the skills to develop healthy relationships.

Program Components

School Activities⁴⁻⁵
- 10-session dating abuse curriculum
- Theatrical performance on dating abuse
- Poster contest (optional activity)

Community Activities⁴⁻⁵
- Parent materials (brochure & letter)
- Teacher training session
- Services for adolescents in need (e.g., crisis line, support groups)

Evaluation
A randomized controlled trial was conducted with eighth and ninth-grade students at 14 public schools in North Carolina. Schools were randomized into: 1) a treatment group that exposed students to school and community activities, or 2) a control group that exposed students to community activities only. Students were followed over four years.

Evidence of Effectiveness
Post-intervention follow-ups
- 1 month: Treatment schools reported less psychological abuse, sexual violence, and violence perpetrated against their current dating partner compared to controls.
- 2 months and 1, 2, and 3 years: Treatment schools reported less psychological, moderate physical, and sexual dating violence perpetration and less moderate physical dating violence victimization at all four periods compared to controls.
- 4 years: Treatment schools reported less physical and sexual dating violence perpetration and victimization compared to controls.

Publications

1. Vagi, O’Malley Olsen, Basile, Vivolo-Kantor, JAMA Pediatr. 2015 (Published online).