

Innovative Approaches for Working with Youth Victims of Sexual & Dating Violence



Victim Services of
Leeds & Grenville

S.T.A.R. Program

Victim Services of Leeds & Grenville

- Community based victim service organization
- Large geographic rural base with a series of smaller sized communities
- Formal protocols with police, (4 detachments), fire, paramedic services and child protection
- Referrals from community and social services, justice sector, educational facilities, self-referral.



Mission statement and services

- Victim Services of Leeds & Grenville will endeavor to help reduce victim trauma by providing emotional and practical support after a crime or tragedy has occurred. The program will also provide a single point of entry to other programs and services within a victim's community, assisting with navigating the system and thereby helping to reduce a victim's sense of helplessness, confusion, and stress.



Structure and make-up

- 24 hours a day / 7 days a week
- Staff led-volunteer supported model
- Crisis on-scene support, practical assistance, information, emotional support, referrals.





Respond to:

- Sudden death
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Human trafficking
- Hate crimes
- Motor vehicle accident
- Break & Enters / Home Invasion
- Robbery / Theft
- Physical assault, sexual assault, domestic assault
- Stalking & Harassment
- Elder abuse
- Child Abuse
- Fire / Disaster / Tragic Circumstance



Programs & Services

- Crisis Intervention
 - Safety Planning
 - MTS Program
 - VQRP
- Family Court Support Program
 - Volunteer Program
 - HEART Program
 - ICE Program
- Public Education Program
 - STAR Program

New Partnership

- Fall 2011 created a new partnership with a local high school
- Youth victims of crime not being adequately serviced
- Kids struggling, behavioral issues



Enhanced Youth Services

- Access information
- Referrals
- Immediate on-scene assistance
- On-going support



Youth Volunteer Program

- Youth engagement in community events
- Youth connection to community services
- A sense of belonging



LINK Crew

- Grade 12 student leaders supporting small groups of grade 9 students
- Immediate issues with disclosures to group leaders
- Need for specialized training for youth leaders to know how to deal with it properly and take care of themselves in the process



Victim Issues

Well, it's not my friend, it's me.....

I was sexually abused by my uncle when I was 4 years old

I'm here for my friend, they're having some problems

My mom won't let me get counseling but I really need to see someone

My parents were really mad at me for telling. No one likes me now

I've never had any counseling

I tried counseling but it didn't work

86% of all clients served in the first two years have been females



It was my fault for talking with that boy, I knew it would make my boyfriend mad...

Child protection told my parents to watch the kids better and make sure he never had the chance to do it again. He did stop for a while but then it started again. Now my parents blame me for getting him arrested and now I have nowhere to live



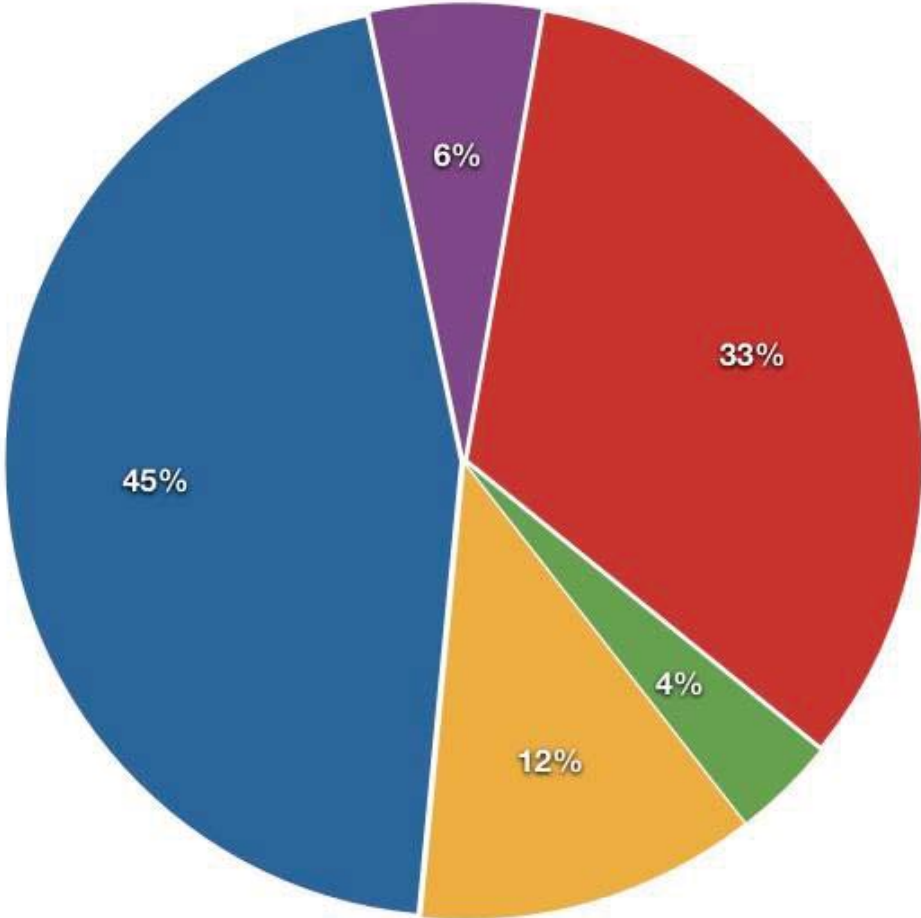
- My step dad freaks out and fights with my mom all the time. He breaks things and hurts my mom



He said that if I loved him I would send him a picture of myself. He said he would break up with me if I didn't send it. Now everyone's seen it. Kids are making fun of me, calling me names. They write stuff on my locker. I don't want to go to school because everyone knows.



LGBT YA 2003-13: LGBT Content



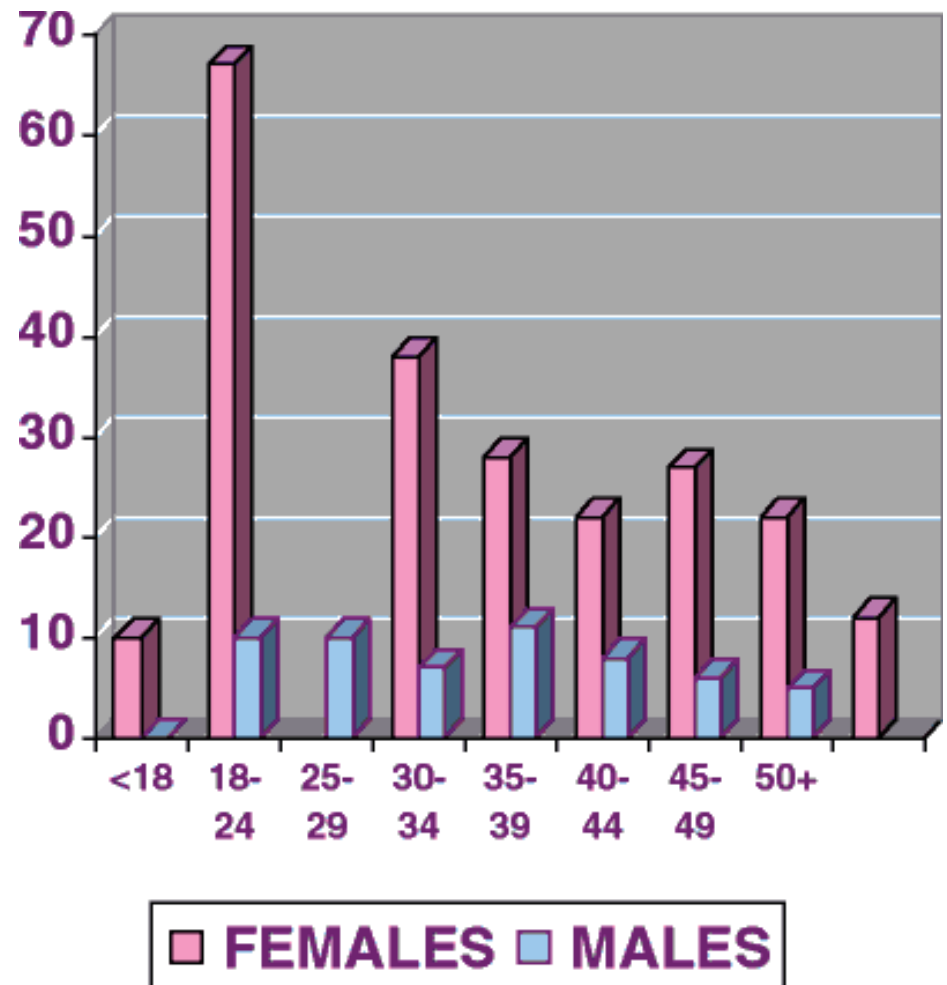
- Cisgender Male Main Character
- Multiple LGBT Main Characters
- Cisgender Female Main Character
- Transgender Main Character
- Issue


Supporting Teens At Risk



Violence and Youth

- Being young is a consistent risk factor for violence against women
- Confusing messages from the media, family and friends
- “many adolescents report distress about how they should behave”



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- “adolescents often have difficulty recognizing physical and sexual abuse as such and may perceive controlling and jealous behaviors as signs of love”
 - studies “indicate that for at least some of the victims, dating violence is considered normative... [and that] in fact, teens, as a general rule, have little dating experience and may not understand that their partner’s behavior is abusive”

On-Scene Response

- Drop in options
- Scheduled appointments
- Kits of information
- Resource pamphlets
- Client-led, trauma informed approach
- *just support*
- Practical assistance
- Emotional support
- Disclosure support and police liaison
- Referrals
- Community services



Trauma Informed Care changes the question from
 “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you”?

Traditional Paradigm	Trauma Informed Paradigm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients are sick, ill or bad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients are hurt and suffering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Client behaviors are immoral and need to be punished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Client behaviors are survival skills developed to live through the trauma but are maladaptive in normal society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients can change and stop immoral destructive behavior if they only had the motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients need support, trust and safety to decrease maladaptive behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manage or eliminate client behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide opportunities for clients to heal from their trauma
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff should come to work every day at their best and perform to leadership’s expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leaders need to create strong organizational culture to combat trauma and stress associated with work with traumatized clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ System of care should be created to minimize short term costs and contain immoral behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ System of care invests in healing trauma, saving money over the long term

Just Support




Did you know...



Among juvenile girls identified by the courts as "delinquent," more than **75%** have been **sexually abused.**

(Calhoun et al, 1993)

- 
- *“we don’t need to know what happened, we just need to know what you want to do about it”*

Family Services Act

- 12 years of age and up can access services without parental knowledge or consent
- Child has control over who sees their file



Barriers to accessing services

- Stigma
- Transportation
- Lack of ability / knowledge to access information needed



- “nearly one in three sexual assault victims never disclose their assault to another person and at least two in three never report the assault to social services or law enforcement”
- Youth are, in fact, least likely to report victimization to law enforcement and a 2005 study by Ashley and Foshee found that only about 1 in 11 episodes of teen dating violence is reported to adults or authorities



Getting help from others

- [youth] are more likely to “seek out adults who are open-minded, trustworthy, and who do not blame the victim”



- Non-judgmental, safe and supportive approach
- Immediate on-scene response to incidences as required
- Expertise in areas of sexual violence, dating violence, court process, police process
- Community partnerships
- Victims can be in control of the services they feel they need and feel supported throughout that process

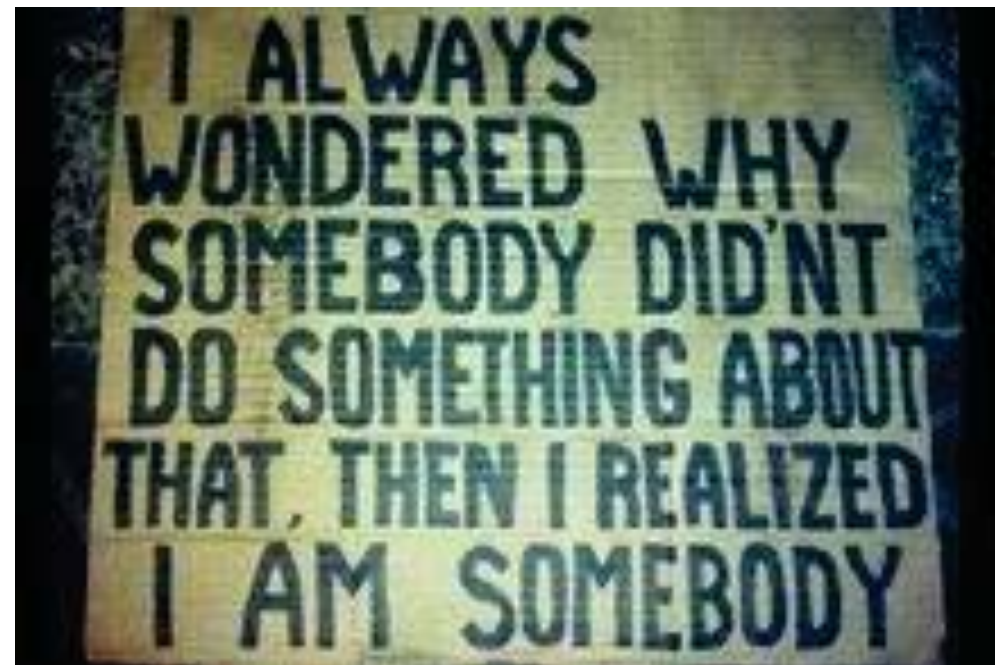




Educational Component

- “adolescence is a critical period in social development, marked by an expansion of peer networks, increased importance of close friendships, and the emergence of romantic relationships”
- Statistics indicate that youth seek out support for victimization issues from other youth first.

- Because youth are most likely to trust and talk to a friend about their experience of victimization, particularly when it had been witnessed by someone, it is also critical that we understand and overcome bystander resistance to intervention
- most adolescents don't know how to give appropriate support to their friends, which may result in victim blaming and/or risky advice



Prevention programs

- “prevention programs need to explore and challenge adolescents’ interpretations of dating violence”
- Programs should build empathy and self-esteem, and teach healthy ways of communicating, addressing conflict and solving problems such as peer pressure

“What was she wearing?”
“**Were they drunk?**”
“He probably deserved it!”
“You should have been more careful.”
“Are you sure that’s what happened?”

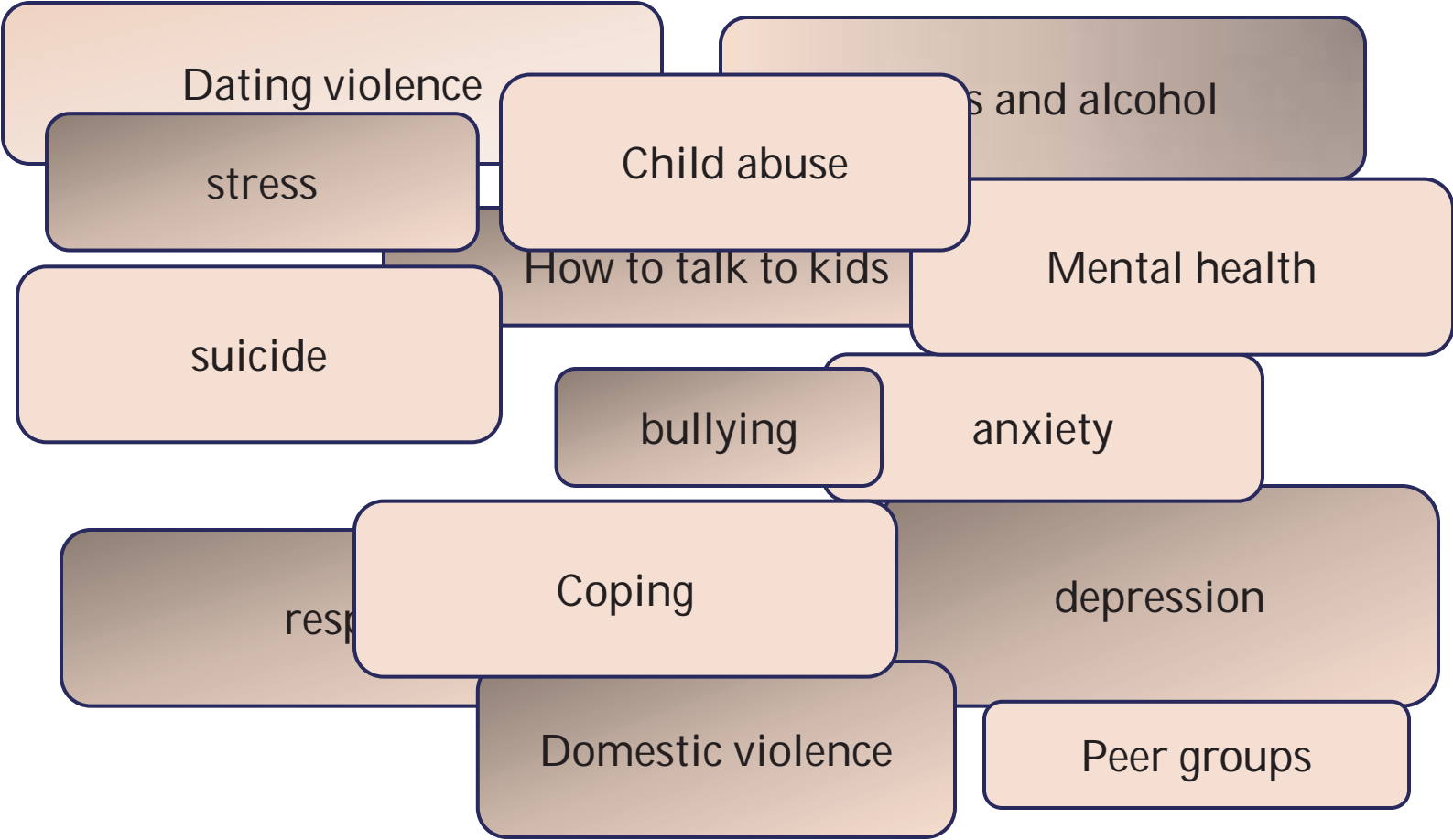


SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS
& PREVENTION MONTH 2013

FRIENDS
DON'T LET FRIENDS
BLAME VICTIMS

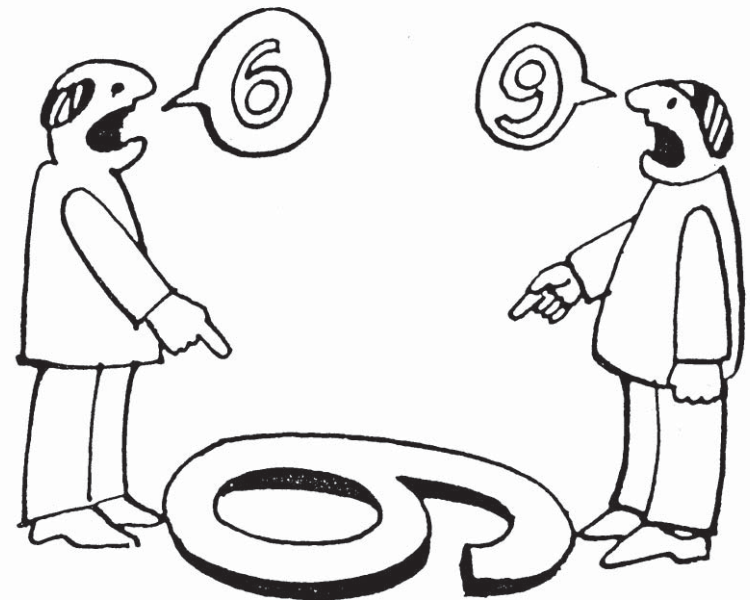
Share the message.
www.facebook.com/NDCAWS

In-Class Instruction



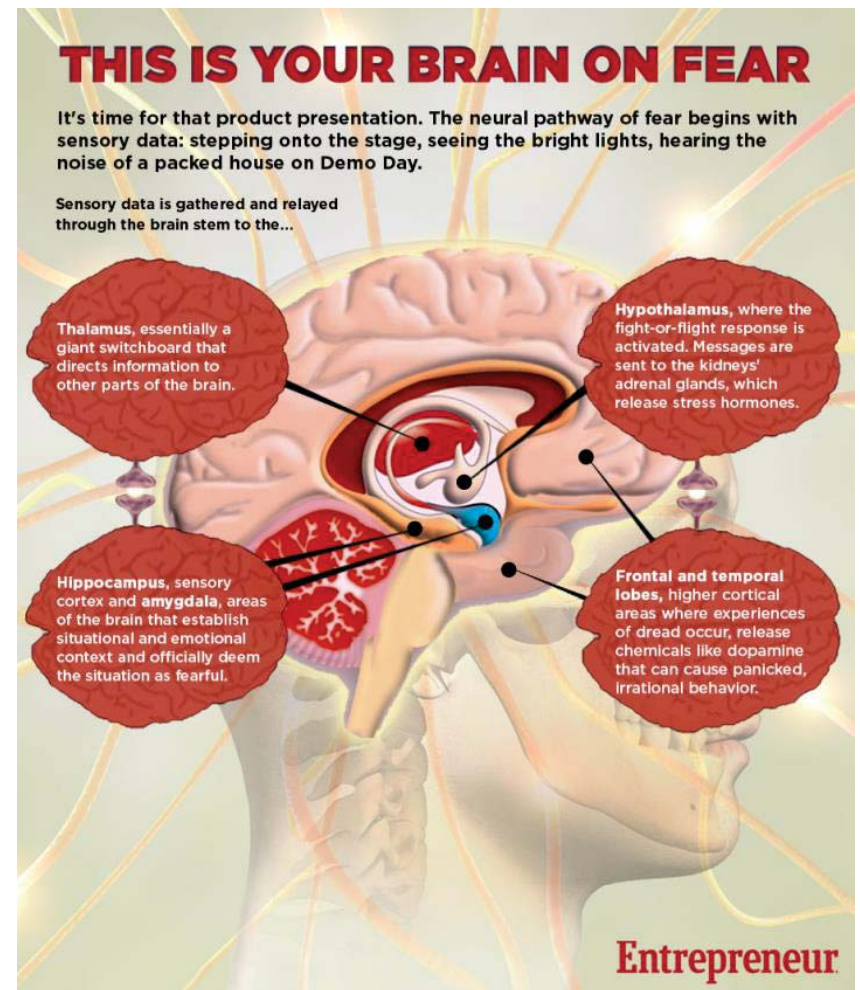
Communication Techniques

- How to talk to peers
- How to listen effectively
- How to support one another
- Knowing when to get help
- Empowerment that peers could help each other when they know how to do it properly
- Bystander intervention
- Preventing victim blaming



Teenage brain

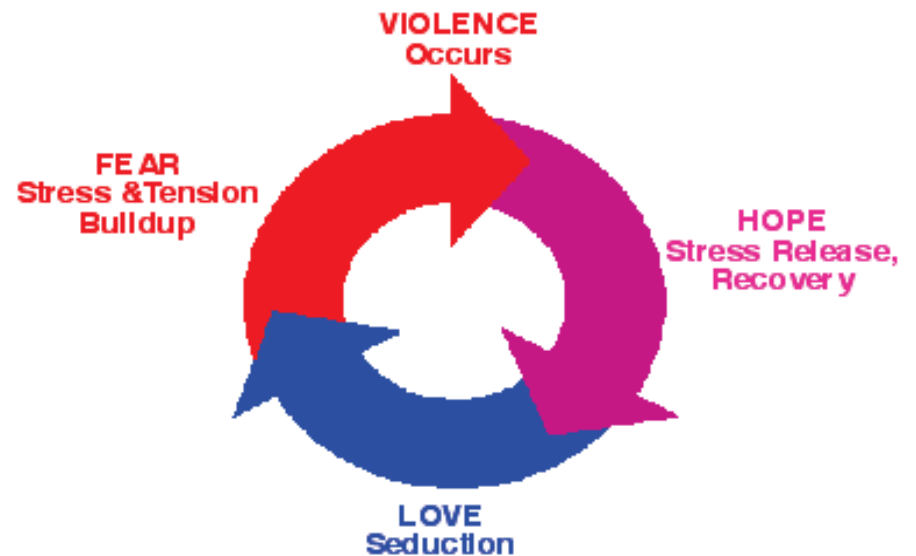
- Normal adolescent development
- Fight, flight and freeze response in relation to traumatic events
- Chronic stress and impact on decision making – ability to learn new things
- What to do about it



Dating Violence

- Indicators that someone might be in an abusive dating relationship
- Personality traits common to abusive individuals
- Cycle of violence
- Why people stay
- How to support someone
- How to tell an abusive relationship from a non-abusive one

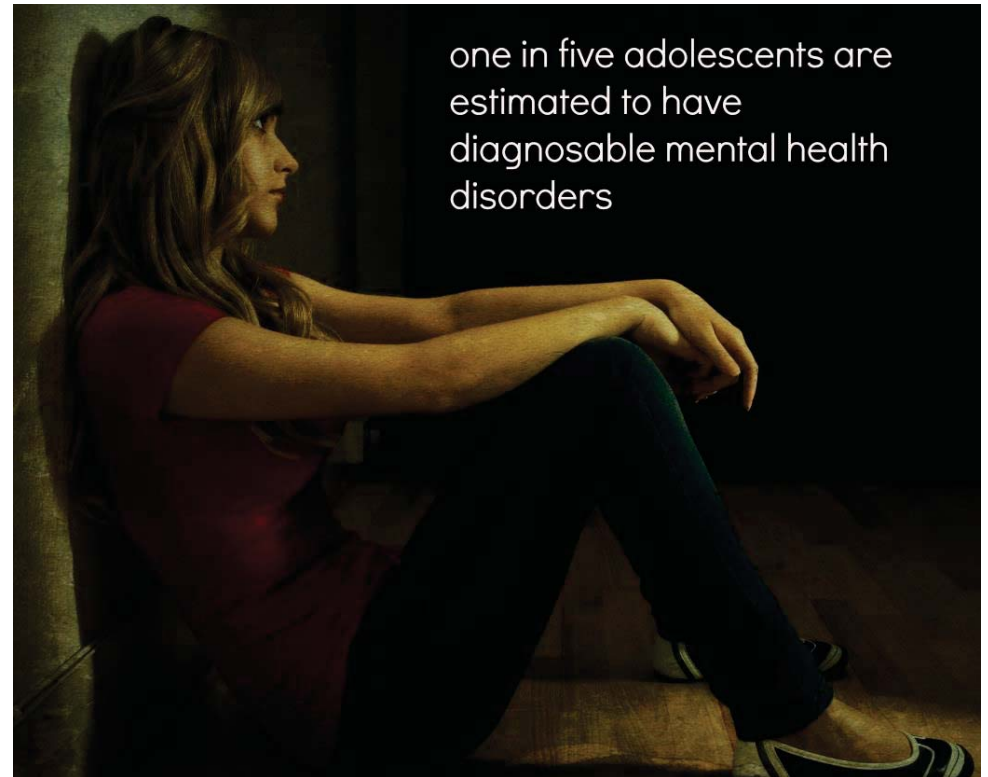
**HOPE, LOVE, and FEAR
are the psychological factors
that perpetuate the Cycle of Violence**



Adapted from "Cycle of Violence" by Dr. Lenore Walker, Denver, Colorado.

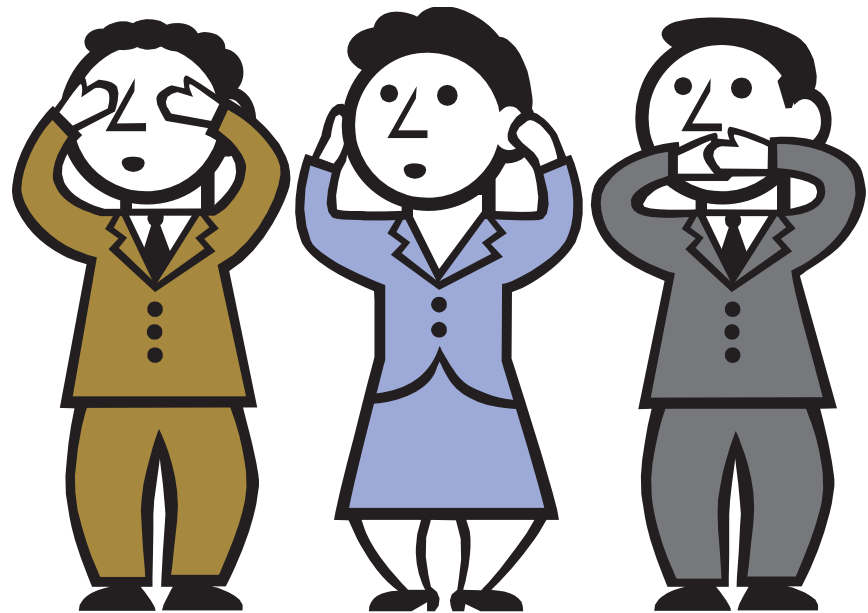
Mental Health

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Suicide
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Eating disorders
- Cutting / self-harm
- Signs / symptoms
- How to help / how to get help



Defense Mechanisms

- What they are
- Behaviors associated with each one
- Why they work
- Opportunity to identify your own defense mechanisms
- Healthy versus unhealthy
- How to learn new ones



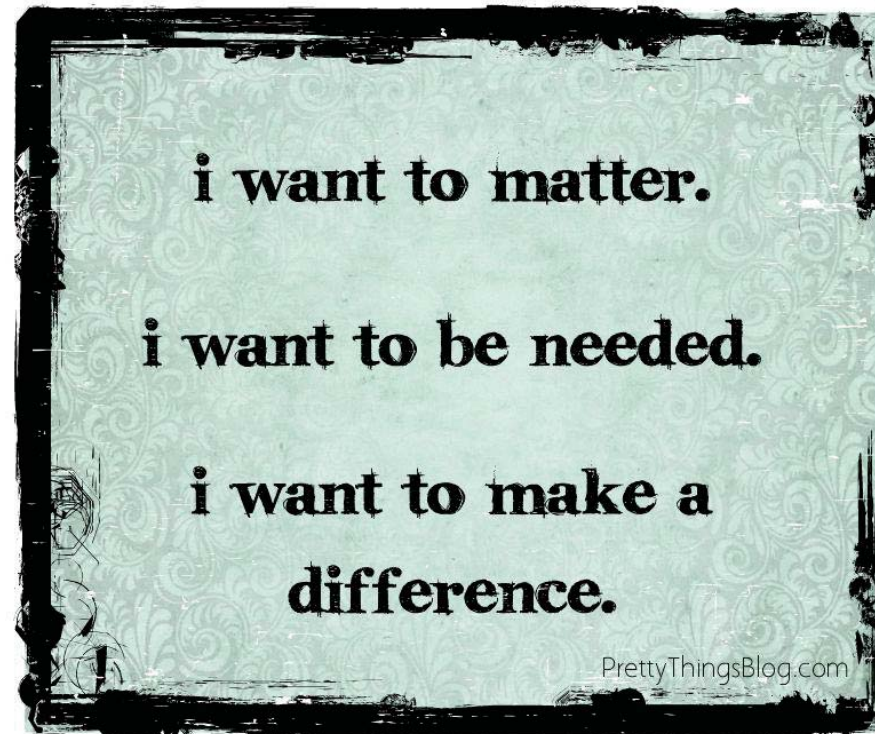
Self-care

- Ways to identify what's stressing you out
- Suggestions on what you can do about it
- Stress management
- Healthy coping
- Why self-care is so important



Youth Volunteering

Youth participation in meaningful activities can enhance feelings of control and autonomy, meaning, and connectedness to one's community, while building resilience and competencies that can support developmental processes



Sense of Community

- “providing opportunities for young people to make and strengthen positive relationships can contribute to social and environmental protective factors”
- “for many youth, involvement in relationships and extracurricular activities outside the home helps promote resilience”



Victim Services Youth Group

- 40 hours volunteering required in order to graduate
- Community events
- Fundraisers
- Mandatory training
- Policies and procedures
- Needing to belong
- Need to be connected



Employment + Emergency Services

- Partnership across sectors
- Collaboration in order to provide enhanced youth based services
- Employment assistance
- Blog posts
- Logo / poster development
- On-going training modules
- Video / multi-media production
- Youth portal for information





Future Direction

- Formal evaluation
- Continued community / cross-sector partnerships
- Changes to intake procedures with community partners to allow for easier access to counseling as needed
- Safety planning in the schools
- Increased awareness
- Engagement and connections
- Outcome measures based on access, safety, healing and justice



Contact Information

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