

SECOND EDITION

Safe DATES



An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum



SCOPE AND SEQUENCE



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Introduction to *Safe Dates*

What Is *Safe Dates*?

The *Safe Dates* program is a dating abuse prevention program consisting of five components:

- a ten-session dating abuse curriculum
- a play about dating abuse
- a poster contest
- parent materials, including a letter, newsletter, and the Families for Safe Dates program
- an evaluation questionnaire

All the materials needed to implement the program are included in the *Safe Dates* manual and CD-ROM.

What Are the Goals of *Safe Dates*?

The goals of this program are to

- raise students' awareness of what constitutes healthy and abusive dating relationships
- raise students' awareness of dating abuse and its causes and consequences
- equip students with the skills and resources to help themselves or friends in abusive dating relationships
- equip students with the skills to develop healthy dating relationships, including positive communication, anger management, and conflict resolution

Who Is the Intended Audience?

Safe Dates can be used as a dating abuse prevention tool for both male and female middle and high school students. *Safe Dates* would fit well within a health education, family life skills, or general life skills curriculum.

Because dating abuse is often tied to the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, you may want to consider using *Safe Dates* in conjunction with drug and alcohol prevention programs, as well as any other general violence prevention programs.

A school counselor could offer *Safe Dates* as part of a support group or counseling/education program, or it could be used in afterschool, community youth enrichment (such as YMCA or Girl Scouts), and faith-based youth programs.

Safe Dates could also be used as an intervention tool at domestic abuse or crisis centers, in juvenile diversion programs, and with victim support groups.

Is *Safe Dates* a Research-based Program?

Safe Dates is a research-based program with strong, long-term outcomes. It has been identified as a model program in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) as well as many other federal- and foundation-funded publications.

Safe Dates was the subject of substantial formative research in fourteen public schools in North Carolina using a rigorous experimental design. The program was found to be effective in preventing dating abuse perpetration and victimization among teens already involved in dating abuse. Adolescents participating in the program, as compared with those who did not, also reported less acceptance of dating abuse, less of a tendency to gender stereotype, and a greater awareness of community services for dating abuse.

Researchers studied the same group of students four years after implementation and found that students who participated in the *Safe Dates* program reported 56 percent to 92 percent less physical, serious physical, and sexual dating violence victimization and perpetration than teens who did not participate in *Safe Dates*. The program has been found to be equally effective for males and females and for minority and non-minority adolescents.

***Safe Dates* Main Components**

The following is a brief description of each component of the *Safe Dates* program.

Ten-Session Curriculum

The *Safe Dates* curriculum is a ten-session program that deals with attitudes and behaviors associated with dating abuse and violence. Each session is approximately fifty minutes in length. *Safe Dates* is designed to fit various schedule formats (e.g., daily or weekly programs). Reproducible student handouts are included on a CD-ROM for easy reproduction.

If you do not have time to complete all ten sessions, the curriculum also has suggestions for a six-session or four-session program. It is important to realize, however, that the fidelity of the product and accompanying outcomes are best maintained by completing all ten sessions.

Session 1: Defining Caring Relationships. Through a bingo game and class discussions, students are introduced to the *Safe Dates* program and they consider how they would like to be treated in dating relationships.

Session 2: Defining Dating Abuse. Through the discussion of scenarios and the review of statistics, students clearly define what dating abuse is.

Session 3: Why Do People Abuse? Through large- and small-group discussions and the review of scenarios, students identify the causes and consequences of dating abuse.

Session 4: How to Help Friends. Through a decision-making exercise, a dramatic reading, and the introduction of the “Friend’s Wheel,” students learn why it is difficult to leave abusive relationships and how to help a friend in an abusive relationship.

Session 5: Helping Friends. Through stories and role-playing, students practice skills for helping friends who are victims of abuse or confronting friends who are abusive partners.

Session 6: Overcoming Gender Stereotypes. Through a writing exercise, small-group discussions, and scenarios, students learn about gender stereotypes and how these stereotypes can affect dating relationships.

Session 7: How We Feel, How We Deal. Through the use of a feelings diary and a discussion of “hot buttons,” students learn how to recognize and effectively handle their anger, so it doesn’t lead to abusive behavior.

Session 8: Equal Power through Communication. Students learn the four SAFE skills for effective communication and practice these skills in a variety of role-plays.

Session 9: Preventing Dating Sexual Abuse. Through taking a quiz, analysis of scenarios, and a discussion with peers, students learn about the issue of dating sexual abuse and how to prevent it from happening.

Session 10: Reviewing the *Safe Dates* Program. Through discussion, evaluation, and a poster contest, students will review the *Safe Dates* program.

Dating Abuse Play

As part of your *Safe Dates* program, you may want to present this forty-five-minute play about dating abuse and violence, which was written by high school drama students. Before presenting the play, consider sharing local statistics on the prevalence of teen dating abuse.

Following the performance, have the actors lead discussions, preferably in small groups, with the audience about the issues presented in the play.

Consider presenting this play as a schoolwide assembly, as part of your school's drama program, or at other school or community events. You do not need professional actors. Enlist the help of your school's drama department or put on the play with your own students.

Poster Contest

Hosting a poster contest is a great way to reinforce the concepts learned in the curriculum. Instructions for the poster contest are included with the session 10 outline in the manual. Posters about dating abuse prevention can be displayed in school hallways or other community buildings such as libraries, city hall, and shopping malls. Students could also use their posters when giving presentations to various school or community groups.

Parent Materials

As in every strong prevention effort, it is important to get your students' parents or guardians involved in your *Safe Dates* program. A letter informing caregivers of the *Safe Dates* program is located on the CD-ROM, as is a two-page education newsletter that you can send to parents and guardians or keep on hand, in case you need to talk to a caregiver about this issue. Consider mailing the letter and newsletter together.

For those teachers and families who choose to dig deeper into the issue of adolescent dating abuse, Families for Safe Dates is a comprehensive, research-based program included on the CD-ROM. Families for Safe Dates includes six booklets that contain background information and activities for caregivers and teens to do together as they learn about different topics regarding adolescent dating abuse.

Why Is It Important to Teach about Dating Abuse?

Anyone can be a victim of abuse in dating relationships: girls and boys; whites, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians; students born in rich neighborhoods and students born in poor neighborhoods; people that come from abusive homes and people who do not; people who have dated a lot and people who have just begun dating. Children as young as twelve years old can become involved in abusive dating relationships.

Dating abuse is a very real issue for many students:

- In the United States, approximately 12 percent of heterosexual high school boys and girls report having been physically victimized by a dating partner in the previous year. This percentage is as high as 40 percent in some areas of the country.¹
- Approximately 13 percent of gay adolescent girls and 9 percent of gay adolescent boys report having been physically victimized by a dating partner in the previous year.²

- Victimization from psychological dating abuse is even higher, with approximately 29 percent of heterosexual high school students and 20 percent of gay high school students reporting having been psychologically abused by a date in the previous year.³
- Dating abuse is beginning as early as the sixth grade.⁴
- Adults who use violence with their dating partners often begin doing so during adolescence, with the first episode typically occurring by age fifteen.⁵
- Young women between the ages of fourteen and seventeen represent 38 percent of those victimized by date rape.⁶
- Rapes by acquaintances account for 60 percent of all rapes reported to rape crisis centers.⁷
- Both girls and boys are victims of dating abuse, though girls receive more severe injuries from dating abuse than boys.⁸
- Both girls and boys are perpetrators of dating abuse, though girls tend to use less severe forms of dating abuse than boys.⁹
- Abuse almost always recurs in a relationship. It doesn't just go away.
- Most abuse gets more severe over time.
- The consequences of being a victim of dating abuse for both boys and girls include depression, cigarette smoking, and suicide attempts. Additional consequences for girls are marijuana use, illicit substance use, and antisocial behavior; an additional consequence for boys is suicide ideation.¹⁰

Notes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007," *Surveillance Summaries, MMWR 2008*; 57 (No. SS-4). V. A. Foshee and R. Matthew, "Adolescent Dating Abuse Perpetration: A Review of Findings, Methodological Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression*, ed. Daniel Flannery, Alexander Vazsonyi, and I. Waldman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

2. C. T. Halpern, M. L. Young, M. W. Waller, S. L. Martin, and L. L. Kupper, "Prevalence of Partner Violence in Same-Sex Romantic and Sexual Relationships in a National Sample of Adolescents," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35, no. 2 (2004): 124–31.

3. Halpern et al., "Prevalence of Partner Violence." Carolyn Tucker Halpern, Selene G. Oslak, Mary L. Young, Sandra L. Martin, and Lawrence L. Kupper, "Partner Violence among Adolescents in Opposite-Sex Romantic Relationships: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health," *American Journal of Public Health* 91, no. 10 (October 2001).

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 5. J. Henton, R. Cate, J. Koval, S. Lloyd, and S. Christopher, "Romance and Violence in Dating Relationships," *Journal of Family Issues* 4, no. 3 (1983): 467–82.
 6. Robin Warshaw, *I Never Called It Rape: The MS. Report on Recognizing, Fighting and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).
 7. Carol Sousa, "The Dating Violence Intervention Project," in *Dating Violence: Young Women in Danger*, ed. Barrie Levy (Englewood, N.J.: Seal Press, 1998).
 8. J. Archer, "Sex Differences in Aggression between Heterosexual Partners: A Meta-analytic Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 126 (2000): 651–80.
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 10. A. Brown, E. Cosgrave, E. Killackey, R. Purcell, J. Buckby, and A. Yung, "The Longitudinal Association of Adolescent Dating Violence with Psychiatric Disorders and Functioning," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2008), DOI:10.1177/0886260508327700. D. M. Ackard, M. E. Eisenberg, and D. Neumark-Sztainer, "Long-term Impact of Adolescent Dating Violence on the Behavioral and Psychological Health of Male and Female Youth," *Journal of Pediatrics* 151 (2007): 476–81. T. A. Roberts, J. D. Klein, and S. Fisher, "Longitudinal Effect of Intimate Partner Abuse on High-Risk Behavior among Adolescents," *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine* 157 (2003): 875–81.

Curriculum Scope and Sequence

SESSION 1: DEFINING CARING RELATIONSHIPS	SESSION 2: DEFINING DATING ABUSE	SESSION 3: WHY DO PEOPLE ABUSE?	SESSION 4: HOW TO HELP FRIENDS	SESSION 5: HELPING FRIENDS
<i>By the end of this session, students will be able to do the following:</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the qualities that are most important to them in a dating relationship • identify actions that are caring and supportive • describe how they want to be treated by a dating partner • describe how they want to treat a dating partner • understand that they can and should choose how they'll be treated in a dating relationship • understand that they can and should choose how they'll treat a dating partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify harmful dating behaviors • define physically and emotionally abusive behaviors • identify physical and emotional abuse in dating relationships • be more likely to identify abusive behaviors as abusive • be more aware of their susceptibility to dating abuse • be more likely to reject abuse as normal in dating relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the controlling and manipulative functions of dating abuse • identify abusive behaviors as abusive • choose not to believe common misperceptions of why dating abuse happens • understand that dating abuse is a serious matter • understand that abuse is not the victim's fault • describe the serious short- and long-term consequences of abusive relationships • identify the warning signs that a person is a victim of abuse or is an abusive partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize the complexity of the decision to leave an abusive relationship and the many different opinions about when one should leave • recognize the difficulty and fear that a friend in an abusive relationship may have in reaching out for help • describe a variety of ways to support a friend who is a victim of dating abuse • describe the community resources available for teens in abusive dating relationships • seek help if they're victims of abuse or are abusive partners in a dating relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify red flags that indicate their friend might be an abusive partner or a victim of dating abuse • feel more comfortable confronting a friend who is abusive in a dating relationship • understand how to support a friend in an abusive relationship

Curriculum Scope and Sequence

SESSION 6: OVERCOMING GENDER STEREOTYPES	SESSION 7: HOW WE FEEL, HOW WE DEAL	SESSION 8: EQUAL POWER THROUGH COMMUNICATION	SESSION 9: PREVENTING DATING SEXUAL ABUSE	SESSION 10: REVIEWING THE SAFE DATES PROGRAM
<i>By the end of this session, students will be able to do the following:</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that they and other people hold specific images of dating relationships • describe how the images people hold influence their interactions in a dating relationship • identify the harmful consequences of gender stereotyping • explain the role that gender stereotyping plays in dating relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express their feelings or emotions in various ways • understand the importance of acknowledging and communicating their feelings • identify situations that trigger their anger • identify physiological and psychological cues that they're angry • identify a variety of nonviolent ways to respond to anger • understand that they have a choice in how to respond to anger • increasingly use nonviolent responses to anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the four SAFE communication skills for resolving conflict • demonstrate the use of the four SAFE communication skills • describe some nonviolent responses when a dating partner doesn't communicate in a way that is fair and equal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that victims of dating sexual abuse are never to blame • understand that rape is always unacceptable • understand and interpret "no" cues correctly • know how to protect themselves in a potential rape situation • state their sexual boundaries clearly to their dating partner • describe dating tips to decrease their chances of being a victim of sexual assault or an abusive partner • identify date rape drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain what they learned while participating in <i>Safe Dates</i>



Meeting National Academic Standards with *Safe Dates*

Using *Safe Dates* will help you meet the following national academic standards:

Health Education Standards: (Sixth–Eighth Grade)

- Describe the influence of culture on health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.
- Describe how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Analyze how messages from media influence health behaviors.
- Analyze the influence of technology on personal and family health.
- Explain how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Access valid health information from home, school, and community.
- Describe situations that may require professional health services.
- Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills that avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate effective conflict management or resolution strategies.
- Demonstrate how to ask for assistance to enhance the health of self and others.
- Identify circumstances that can help or hinder healthy decision making.
- Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.
- Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
- Demonstrate behaviors that avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.
- State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.
- Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
- Identify ways that health messages and communication techniques can be altered for different audiences.

Health Education Standards: (Ninth–Twelfth Grade)

- Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.
- Analyze how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.
- Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.
- Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Use resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.
- Determine when professional health services may be required.
- Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.
- Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.
- Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.
- Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
- Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
- Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
- Demonstrate a variety of behaviors that avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.
- Use accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.
- Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
- Adapt health messages and communication techniques to specific target audience.