



Hello and welcome to the Teen Action Campaign!

We are a group of dedicated and energetic teen organizers and activists determined to put an end to teen-dating violence. To this end, we came together and created the 'See It and Stop It' campaign – a multimedia campaign designed to educate people on the warning signs of dangerous relationships and encourage them to speak up and do something to help their friends, classmates, and neighbors.

What we found was that people recognize relationships that aren't quite healthy, they just don't know what to say about them or when. This campaign is designed to change that. That's because one of the best ways to prevent domestic violence in the future is to squash the beginnings of abuse behavior now – during our teen years, when people are just beginning to shape their attitudes and opinions on what relationships look and feel like.

But great looking posters and TV ads alone won't change peoples' minds. We need people like you, in schools and communities, to take the ideas of the campaign and put them into action.

To help you out, we've created this toolkit – a resource full of information and ideas to help you make the most out of the Teen Action Campaign.

We have included:

- ♦ Information about the issue
- ♦ Our best tips on how to organize in your school and community
- ♦ Examples of events to get you started
- ♦ Posters and brochures to hang up and pass out
- ♦ And tons more info to make a difference around you!

So thanks for being a part of the Teen Action Campaign!

Sincerely,

Teen Action Board

P.S. We've included information about keeping in touch, too. So be sure to let us know what you accomplished at your school – and you might even see it on our Web site, www.seeitandstopit.org.



The Teen Action Board

Just by requesting this toolkit, you're automatically involved with the Teen Action Board – a group of high school students dedicated to preventing relationship violence by organizing people and projects in our schools and communities.

As a Teen Action Board Member, you are expected to:

- Hang up posters in your school (get permission first!)
- Distribute brochures
- Organize at least one project in your school (it's easy – we'll help you)
- Contribute to our Web site – www.seeitandstopit.org (you can do this right at the site)
- Stay in touch and tell us what you're up to

All Teen Action Board Members receive:

Official recognition as a member of the Teen Action Board (looks great on college and job applications)

Access to all campaign materials (more posters, ads for your school newspaper, brochures, copies of the television ads, etc.)

Free training and instructions

Access to the Teen Action Board Network, for times when you need help or support

For more information about the board, check out www.seeitandstopit.org or send an e-mail to tab@teenactioncampaign.org.

Make sure you keep a record of all your activities for the TAB and the number of hours you've spent helping us. Any time you need a recommendation, send in your record and we'll get an official statement out to you pronto.



About the Issue

Teen dating violence (also known as relationship violence) is a common and devastating issue affecting our society and the ones we love every day. It's a huge problem, and it can only be conquered when we all join together to take a stand against teen dating violence in our own lives, as well as all over the world. The problems don't just end with your teenage years; teen dating violence is a precursor to domestic violence. It's time we stop this dangerous cycle from continuing.

You are well on your way to joining the fight against teen dating violence by becoming a part of this campaign.

The main source of all of our information on this issue can be found on our Web site www.seeitandstopit.org. When educating others, it's important to have the information yourself, so check out the Web site, and feel free to use it in your endeavors to raise awareness.

TAC Philosophy

Teen Dating Violence (TDV) is the beginning of Domestic Violence (DV) and Sexual Assault (SA). Fixing these problems now, during the teenage years, will prevent the incidences of DV and SA in the future.

TDV, DV, and SA are EVERYONE'S problem. They affect us all.

Relationship violence continues to be a problem because we are silent about these issues. The responsibility to speak up and say something should not always fall to the victim. Bystanders (friends, parents, teachers, relatives) have the power to stop violence by **SPEAKING UP**.

It is up to everyone to prevent violence by creating a place where violence doesn't even have a chance to start. This means not tolerating and standing up against sexist and derogatory language, jokes, and actions.



What to do with this Toolkit

Now that you have this toolkit, it is your job to learn about the issues that lead to dating violence and to make your school and community aware of them. Check out the issues online at www.seeitandstopit.org. Once you're an expert, your responsibilities are to get the people around you to:

1. Care about relationship violence

You can do this by making people aware of what a big problem relationship violence is. Check out www.seeitandstopit.org and this toolkit for statistics on the issue. People also start to care about the issue when they hear how it happened to a friend, someone they care about, or even a celebrity.

2. Recognize the warning signs of an abusive relationship

We've included posters that illustrate the warning signs of abuse. Hang them up where you'll think they will be noticed. We've left the bottom of the poster blank so you can fill in your own info – it can be a call to action that's relevant to your school (like, "sign our petition to change school policy") or a local resource number or even an announcement about a group meeting you are holding.

3. Know what to say or do when they see abuse

Also included are brochures to hand out that let people know what they can do to help end abuse. You might consider making your own flyers too. An important way to help people learn what to do and say about abuse are to ask them to think about what they would do in specific situations. We've included stories and examples at www.seeitandstopit.org for you to use.

4. Help prevent relationship violence

Along with taking action about abuse when they see the warning signs, it's also important for people to understand that degrading language and jokes contribute to violence and abuse. You might want to start a task force or group at your school that specifically deals with stopping violence before it starts. This group can share their expertise by making short presentations, helping write school policy, and bringing awareness to the issue.

It's a long, complicated list, so pick one and start there!



Stats on Dating and Domestic Violence

- Approximately 1 in 5 female Massachusetts high school students reported being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner (Silverman et al., JAMA, 2001).
- Physical and sexual dating violence among Massachusetts high school girls is associated with increased risk of substance use, unhealthy weight control behaviors, sexual risk behaviors, pregnancy, and suicidal tendencies (Silverman et al., JAMA, 2001).
- One in nine Massachusetts high school students (16.3% of females and 6.4% of males) has had sexual contact against his/her will (Massachusetts DOE, 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey).
- Among adolescents with any history of sexual activity, sexual minority youth (those who have had same-sex sexual contact or describe themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual) were significantly more likely (37% vs. 16%) than their peers to report having experienced sexual contact against their will (Massachusetts DOE, 1999 YRBS).
- In its first year, SafeLink, the Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline, received over 26,900 calls (Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc., 2002).
- According to the Registry of Civil Restraining Orders, at least 43,000 Massachusetts children a year are exposed to reported acts of abuse and violence between family members (Adams, 1995).
- During 1998 and 1999, 5.5% of surveyed women ages 18-59 reported experiencing intimate partner violence in the past year (1998 and 1999 Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2000).
- In 2001, there were 15 intimate partner violence homicides in Massachusetts; 11 were women and 4 were men (Jane Doe Inc., 2001).



Getting Started

Step One: What's the problem?

Brainstorm things you think contribute to abusive behaviors in your school. (See sample brainstorm.) Is it that people don't know about the issue? Has there been an incident at your school? Does your school need a better sexual harassment policy? You know the issues best – make a list! Make sure you don't get ahead of yourself here – you're just trying to make a list of what the problems are.

Step Two: Research, research, and more research

Pick two or three issues from this list. Pick issues that you are excited about working on, or you think are most needed and do some research on these issues. Research doesn't have to mean searching the Internet or scouring the library, but can mean talking to a teacher, conducting a survey of your classmates, or reading up on school policy. In your research, you might find out what other people have done about this issue, or you might find out that your school already has a group that deals with these issues. Research helps you refine your ideas.

Step Three: What to do about it?

Now it's time to narrow that list down even more. With your two or three researched issues, brainstorm some possible solutions to these problems. This is a good exercise to do in a group. Write down every idea, no matter how ridiculous it may seem; it could spark another idea down the line. From this list, pick the solution that gets the most people excited and seems the most achievable. (Don't throw away your list – you may want to return to other ideas once you've completed this one!)

Step Four: Doing it! And making it work.

Depending on what your idea is, you may require different amounts of planning and support from teachers and classmates. Take the time to figure out a plan. The best way is to work backwards from your goal. Be sure to leave enough time to publicize your project. You can never tell people about your plans TOO much. A good rule of thumb is to start publicizing your project (depending on the project) about two weeks ahead of time.



Sample Brainstorm

Question: What are things that contribute to abuse/abusive behaviors/power and control, etc., in our school?

Sexual harassment in hallways – in between classes

Low self-esteem (guys and girls)

People don't care

No one talks about these issues

Don't realize that relationships can be dangerous

No one will speak up!

Too much value placed on having a girlfriend or boyfriend – makes people make bad choices



Sample Research

Potential issues:

- Teachers don't do anything about abuse
- People don't know what abuse is
- People don't know warning signs of abuse

Issue #1 (Teachers don't do anything about abuse):

We spoke to three teachers, the main issues are:

- Teachers don't know what to say/do when they see it
- Too many other things to worry about
- No school policy on harassment

Teacher concern #3 – No school policy on harassment?

Spoke to principal. There IS a school policy on harassment:

- Doesn't require teachers to step in
- It's an old policy
- In order to change this policy, you have to attend a school board meeting and get the issue on the agenda

Issue #2 (People don't know abuse/warning signs):

We conducted a ten-question survey in three gym classes:

- Only 40% of students could list warning signs of a potentially dangerous relationship
- About half of students thought abusive situations were dangerous
- Girls tended to know more warning signs than boys



Sample Solutions

Issue #1 (Teachers don't do anything about abuse):

- Make poster of "things to say" when you see abuse/warning signs. Hang poster in teacher's lounge.
- Have a "teach in" to educate teachers on warning signs/abuse, etc.
- Bring speaker in to talk to whole school.
- Try to change school policy to require teachers to do something when they see harassment.
- Form an "Anti-Violence Task Force" made up of teachers and students. Meet once a month to talk about policies and issues.
- Do an awareness campaign on "What is the school policy on sexual harassment?"
- Give all the teachers a quiz on what the school's policy is.

Idea we picked: Making a poster of "things to say" for the teachers lounge.

Issue #2 (Awareness of abuse/warning signs):

- Make posters and flyers of warning signs to hang around the school and in the bathrooms.
- Have an assembly with a speaker.
- Have an awareness day.
- Hand out ribbons for people to wear in support of our cause.
- Make morning announcements for one week that educate people on the warning signs of abuse.

Idea we picked: Making morning announcements.



Sample Plan

TEACHER'S LOUNGE POSTER PLAN

<i>Task</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Completed by</i>
Get permission to make poster from our advisor		
Get permission to hang poster in teacher's lounge		
Figure out other places to hang poster		
Meet with group of teachers and our advisor to		
Figure out what kind of things to put on the poster		
Make first draft of poster		
Make copies		
Put in each teacher's mailbox		



Working with an Advisor

While you may feel inclined to undertake these projects as a solely student-run operation, it is important to have an adult (preferably a teacher) working with and for you as well. Having a faculty member on your side will help you get through the red tape and protocol much easier. Also, your principal, who will probably have to give final approval for all your projects, will be more likely to allow you to carry out activities he or she knows are already sanctioned by a trusted staff member.

Before asking a teacher or adult to be an advisor for your group, think about what qualities you are looking for in an advisor. Friendly? Businesslike? Hey, as long as you both get along and he/she understands your cause and his/her role in it, whatever. Here's a sample letter you can give to a few teachers/adults and see who takes you up on it.

<name of teacher>,

I'm starting a Teen Dating Violence Awareness group at our school soon, and I'm going to need an advisor. So far I've recruited <names of other students, if there are any> to help me as well. We're planning to organize some simple projects which we hope will raise awareness about this alarming issue and better arm the students here at <name of your school> to prevent teen dating violence among their peers and friends. We wouldn't need that big of a commitment from you, just a few meetings a month and some organizational stuff. For more information about the campaign (it's a national movement, you may have seen the T.V. or print ads), you can go to www.seeitandstopit.org. I really hope you're interested in advising us!

Thanks,

<your name>