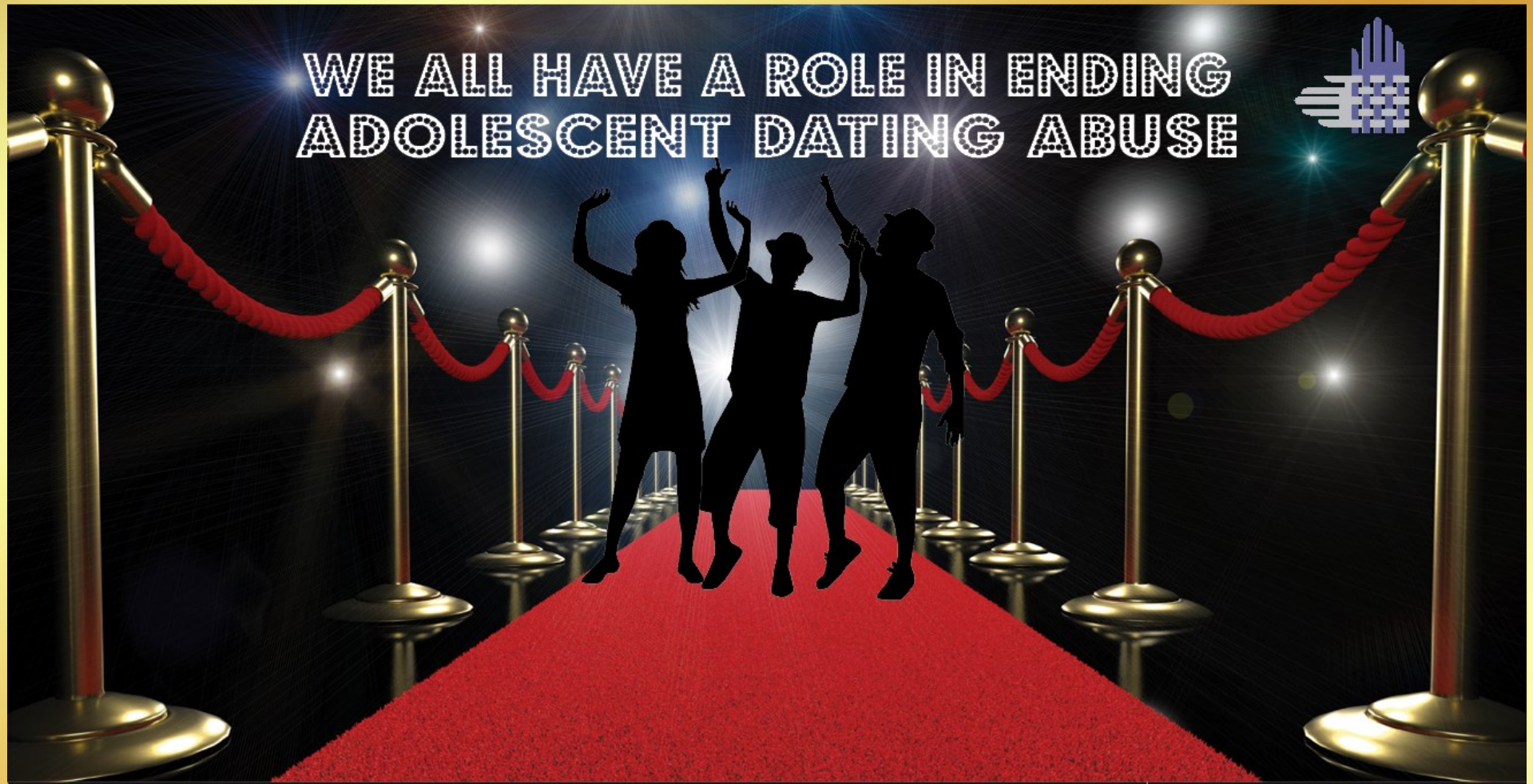


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WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN ENDING
ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE



Elected
officials

Educators

Advocates

Students

Counselors

Community
Members

Parents

School
Boards

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Our Approach

This year, the Partnership invites you to come together in service of a common goal: encouraging education leaders to implement policies on adolescent dating abuse. After working side-by-side with Berkeley Media Studies Group and youth-focused organizations all throughout the state, we have come up with an exciting plan to engage educators to get in touch with you and encourage protective factors that encourage healthy relationships and reduce adolescent dating abuse.

We'd love to see newspapers all across California reporting on the real need for youth to access tools that lead to respectful, supportive, trusting relationships. Coordinated messaging is important—and at the same time, a variety of messengers need to customize these themes to reach each of our key audiences. Please use the talking points below to develop op-eds, letters to the editor, blog posts, and pitches to reporters for in-depth pieces. Remember: together we're stronger—so just imagine the statewide impact we can have when we're all calling for policies on adolescent dating abuse.

The Need for School Policies on Adolescent Dating Abuse

Talking Points

Establish the Problem: What's Wrong?

- One in four adolescents reports verbal, emotional, physical or sexual dating abuse each year.^[1]
- Students getting Ds & Fs are three times more likely to report being in abusive relationships.^[2]

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships. <http://1.usa.gov/1u3fOmf>.

[2] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009). Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement. Atlanta, GA: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Need for School Policies on Adolescent Dating Abuse (continued)

- Research has shown that nearly half of students who experience dating violence have reported that some of the abuse took place on school grounds.^[3]
- Teens in abusive relationships feel isolated, unsafe, and may not have time to spend on their schoolwork.

Why Does It Matter?

- Abusive relationships don't just impact students experiencing violence—it makes an entire campus unsafe. Even witnessing abuse that takes place on campus is associated with diminished attendance and academic performance.^[4] This is truly a campus-wide issue.
- There are potential long-term effects for teens in abusive relationships. It can affect their plans for college and their career—this negatively impacts our economy.
- When students feel like their voice is diminished by an abusive partner, it takes away from campus culture. Every student should feel like they can contribute to and represent their school in some way.

Introduce the Solution: School Policies Addressing Adolescent Dating Abuse [Frame: Imagine What's Possible]

- Policies on adolescent dating abuse can create an atmosphere that won't tolerate abusive relationships—and instead, promote healthy relationships.
- Schools that adopt these policies send a clear message that student well-being is a priority.
- Policies on adolescent dating abuse can be part of a comprehensive anti-violence plan for schools, where bullying is also addressed.
- When students are connected to their schools and take on leadership opportunities, their protection against multiple forms of violence increases.

[3] Molidor, C and Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*. 4(2): 180-194.

[4] Eaton, DK, Davis, KS, Barrios, L, et al. (2007). Associations of dating violence victimization with lifetime participation, co-occurrence, and early initiation of risk behaviors among U.S. high school students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 22: 585–602.

The Need for School Policies on Adolescent Dating Abuse (continued)

- Policies that support students in abusive relationships early decrease the risks of the consequences of abuse. This can protect against long-term, damaging consequences beyond high school.
 - Prevention efforts in school work. Futures Without Violence, a national organization, launched the Start Strong Project to address adolescent dating abuse in middle school.
 - “Two sites reported the following short-term benefits:
 - ⇒ Less acceptance of teen dating violence
 - ⇒ More positive attitudes towards gender equality
 - ⇒ More parent-child communication about relationships
 - ⇒ More support and satisfaction in their romantic relationships
 - All sites reported these lasting benefits:
 - ⇒ Lower acceptance of teen dating violence
 - ⇒ Better attitudes towards gender equality”^[5]

What We Can Do Together to Make this Solution a Reality

- Together, we can prevent adolescent dating abuse. We need educators, parents, students, counselors, school boards, advocates, and community members involved.
- These are solutions we can start to implement now. Creating a culture of healthy relationships and skills is possible on campuses across California. These types of skills are an important part of social-emotional learning process, which all schools are required to incorporate.
- Schools are an ideal place to do this work. A majority of young people spend 8 hours per day there. It’s a place where they’re learning life lessons—and often outside the classroom. Educators can take this opportunity to create spaces for healthy relationship education.

[5] Prevention Works. (2015) Retrieved from <http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/why-middle-school-matters/prevention-works/>.

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Writing a Compelling Pitch to Reporters

A great media pitch is short, customized to the reporter and links to additional information. Before approaching a reporter, search local news sites for key words that relate to your topic (a search for “adolescent dating abuse” and “teen dating violence” should be sufficient). When articles show up, take note of the authors and their contact information. At this point, you should have sufficient information to approach these reporters with a pitch. Please note that the length should be ~200 words (or less).

Hi, I’m [name] from [organization].

I read your article on adolescent dating abuse, and thought you may be interested in discussing a story about [insert idea—the work you’re doing with youth in schools]. This is important because [explain why it’s newsworthy—example: February is Teen DV Month, and advocates all over the nation are drawing attention to this issue, which affects one in four U.S. adolescents each year^[1]].

We believe that schools have a responsibility to keep students safe in an environment conducive to learning. When students don’t feel safe, their learning experience suffers: students getting Ds & Fs are three times more likely to report being in abusive relationships.^[2] Policies that support students in abusive relationships early decrease the risks of the consequences of abuse. This can protect against long-term, damaging consequences beyond high school.

We’re part of a statewide conversation about middle and high school policies on adolescent dating abuse, and I’d love to see if there’s a way we can illuminate this topic in our community. I can offer interviews with our organization, which is doing great work in high schools. And we might be able to connect you with students and educators who have seen (and participated in) the impact of our work.

Let me know what you think. In the meantime, feel free to take a look at a joint [policy brief](#) on this topic, co-written by the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence and the California School Boards Association. Feel free to contact me with any questions: [Insert phone number and email address]. I look forward to hearing from you!

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships. <http://1.usa.gov/1u3fOmf>.

[2] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009). Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement. Atlanta, GA: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Writing a Powerful Op-Ed

To write a strong op-ed, start by getting specific about what you would like to achieve and who is best poised to make that happen. If you are joining the Partnership this February and encouraging middle school and high school policies on adolescent dating abuse—great! We are most interested in reaching education leaders. You can reach them directly by sending pieces to education journals. Another excellent option is submitting an op-ed to your local newspaper, which will reach a broad audience and likely include readers who can influence education leaders.

Here are some education journals you can reach out to:

Publication	Editor	Contact
School Administrator	Jay P. Goldman	magazine@aasa.org
American School Board Journal	Kathleen Vail	kvail@nsba.org
EdCal Newspaper	London Roberts	lroberts@acsa.org
Leadership Magazine	Susan Davis	sdavis@acsa.org
California School News	Devin Crosby	dcrosby@csba.org
Education Week	Virginia B. Edwards	ewcommentary@epe.org
Our Children (PTA newsletter)	Kevin Chappell	info@pta.org
EdSource	Smita Patel	spatel@edsourc.org

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Writing a Powerful Op-Ed (Continued)

After establishing the problem (for example: Teens in abusive relationships feel isolated, unsafe, and may not have time to spend on their schoolwork.) and prevalence (example: Research has shown that nearly half of students who experience dating violence have reported that some of the abuse took place on school grounds.^[1]), you must motivate people to care about adolescent dating abuse. An effective way of doing this is to attach the issue to widely-held values that coincide with the ones you're presenting:

- Students should be set up for success academically and in relationships
- Schools have responsibility for ensuring that students feel safe
- Investing in youth now will set our entire community up to be strong and healthy

Secondly, it's important to offer a concrete solution in your op-ed. This one is simple: middle schools and high schools should set up policies that address adolescent dating abuse, so that enduring support systems and healthy relationship education is part of a comprehensive safety plan. School board members are the decision-makers we ultimately want to influence, so asking public newspaper readers to contact their school boards would be most helpful. For education journals, you can frame the conversation to say that school board members are equipped to make this change. Prevention advocates can offer themselves as a helpful resource to getting that conversation started.

Lastly, underscore the solution by providing illustrations of how students have responded to prevention and intervention work that you or your organization has done. How has school climate changed as a result?

Now it's time to develop your op-ed. Berkeley Media Studies Group's Message Development Worksheet is a great tool to help you structure your thoughts. As always, feel free to contact Jessica Merrill, Communications & Development Manager, with any questions. She can be reached at (916) 444-8165 x118 or Jessica@cpedv.org.

[1] Molidor, C and Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*. 4(2): 180-194.

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Did Your Community Secure a Proclamation? Write a Press Release!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Insert Date]

Media Contact: [Insert Name, title, phone number and email]

[City/County] Proclaims February Teen DV Month
[Subtitle]

[LOCATION]—February is Teen DV Month, a time where the entire nation recognizes the staggering prevalence of adolescent dating abuse, as well as the damaging effects it has on youth and communities. It's also a time to renew our commitment to preventing adolescent dating abuse. [City/County] showed its dedication to local youth by passing a resolution declaring February Teen DV Month, affirming that healthy relationships are the foundation for a strong and healthy community.

[Insert fact or statistic from talking points—please see talking points on page 2.]

[Quote from you or your organization]

[Provide an example or illustration of your work to prevent adolescent dating abuse. This could be a survivor story or your organization's programmatic work.]

[Quote from teen or community member]

[Insert ways that your organization will continue to address this issue and/or ways the public can get involved.]

[Insert organizational boilerplate]

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