



Healthy Attitudes Focus Groups Final Report

Ohio Department of Health

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the Ohio Sexual Assault Task Force (OSATF) conducted focus groups, public hearings, and discussions among its members resulting in the report “A Call to Action: Ending Sexual Assault in Ohio.” One important finding in this report was that inaccurate public perceptions about sexual assault continue to harm victims and promote a culture that supports sexually violent behavior.¹ It recommended that a plan be enacted to educate the public that sexual assault is both a preventable public health problem and a human rights issue. The plan involved the development of public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the realities, impact, and prevention of sexual assault. The plan further specified that the campaign be directed at the population that could have the greatest impact in reducing incidents of sexual assault—youths and males in particular ages 12 through 14. The purpose of the proposed Health Attitudes Focus Groups was to carry out this plan of action recommended in the 2002 report.

To this end, focus groups were held in five targeted regions around Ohio. In each region, two focus groups were conducted in an urban area and two were conducted in a small town/rural area. Within each area, one of the focus groups consisted of all boys between the ages of 12 through 14 and the other focus group consisted of both boys and girls in this age range. Material covered in the focus groups included questions pertaining to gender roles and gender role formation, attitudes about healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors, and ideas regarding the development of programs aimed at this age group to promote healthy relationship behaviors. The following provides a brief overview of the general findings of the focus groups.

A. How 12- to 14-year-olds think males should treat females and how females should treat males

- *With regard to how boys should act toward girls, almost all of the focus group participants provided responses that indicated they valued healthy relationship behaviors. Responses included: be nice, kind, polite, be respectful, be honest and trustworthy and listen and communicate.*
- *Responses given for how girls should act towards boys were very similar to the ones given for how boys should act towards girls with two exceptions. Participants tended not to include communication in how girls should treat boys but they did add that girls should not be obsessive.*
- *One theme that was consistently present in all groups with regard to how girls should treat boys was the idea that girls should not be obsessive or oppressive.*

B. How ideas about gender are formed

- *For almost all groups, parents were the primary source participants named as the individuals who most influenced their ideas about relationships, followed by siblings and friends.*

¹ “A Call to Action: Ending Sexual Assault in Ohio,” December 2002, page 11.

- *Although parents were cited as being most influential regarding relationships, when asked who they would talk to if they had questions about how to treat a person that they were seeing/dating, for all groups, participants were most likely to ask advice from friends.*
- *When asked about the girls and women they respected overwhelmingly, participants from all groups said they respected their mothers and grandmothers.*
- *Similar to the types of girls and women participants respected, parents and grandparents (this time fathers and grandfathers) were the primary men participants said they respected.*

C. Opinions about abuse and control in relationships

- *The level of awareness and understanding regarding boy-girl relationship issues was low among the 12-14 year olds who participated in the focus groups.*
- *The vast majority of focus group participants provided responses that were aligned with healthy attitudes regarding relationships issues.*
- *Most males felt that hitting a girl is not appropriate, although there were a few individuals who felt that it can be justified in certain situations.*
- *In general, focus group participants felt that girls had a right to make their own decisions and did not have to do everything a boy told her to do.*
- *There appears to be a fine line between participants' opinions regarding male leadership and control. Participants felt that girls like leadership qualities in their boyfriends but these discussions often merged with discussions about making sure their girlfriends did not get into trouble (more controlling behavior).*
- *The all-male groups tended to show a little more hyper masculinity than mixed groups. They were more likely to talk about violence in a positive way.*
- *Control and knowledge about their girlfriend's whereabouts was considered important by some males because they felt that they should protect their girlfriend and make sure that she was okay.*
- *At these ages we are seeing the beginnings of good girl/bad girl differentiation. Some participants felt that "bad" girls can be treated differently than "good" girls. Bad girls dressed in short skirts/shorts or wore tight fitting clothing. One could treat "bad" girls more poorly than "good" girls.*
- *All-male groups were more likely to feel that the control/power survey items regarding pressuring a girl to "make out" were tantamount to rape.*

- *Small town/rural males were a little more likely to report unhealthy attitudes on survey items than urban males.*

D. Do males between 12 and 14 see abuse as a problem?

- *Bra snapping and patting a girl's behind are common occurrences according to the participants, and many felt that these behaviors were okay under certain circumstances.*
- *Few participants felt that there were a lot of abusive behaviors at their schools. Most mention that their school's teachers and administrators would not allow such behavior.*
- *When asked what things they would like to change about boy-girl relationships, many participants said that gossiping and being mean to someone were the biggest problems.*

E. How can youth be part of the solution?

- *Participants would be more likely to intervene in an abusive situation as the situation became more serious. Arguing or name calling were not seen as serious as physically hitting or pushing a girl and participants thought they would be less likely to intervene if they observed couples engaging in only verbal abuse.*
- *Participants felt they would be more likely to intervene if the boy or girl involved was someone they knew.*
- *Most of the participants would not take it seriously if they saw a female yelling at or pushing her boyfriend.*
- *Most of the participants felt that verbally and physically abusive behaviors were hard to stop.*
- *The most prevalent suggestion to stop abuse was just tell the abuser that the behavior was inappropriate.*

F. Programming and messaging participants would find effective or influential

- *The most frequent suggestion for programming promoting healthy relationships was to have a person come into the schools, or have a program at the school where students could learn how to cope with relationships and deal with problems that emerge in relationships.*
- *Some of the participants felt that just bringing in a speaker was sufficient while others thought that the message would be more effective if a program was embedded in a class, such as a life skills or health class.*

- *Several participants mentioned that they had a section on relationships and healthy behaviors in their life skills/health class. However, many admitted that they did not pay it much attention.*
- *There were also varied opinions regarding who should preside over such a program. Many participants preferred a celebrity (particularly sports figures), but also, many suggested that a person close to their age who had more experience with relationships would be preferable to an adult.*
- *Many participants mentioned that almost everyone their age interacts on MySpace or Facebook. Although participants did not describe how healthy attitude programming could be carried out via these websites, they tended to think that people their age might develop and share attitudes about relationships through these media.*

G. Choose Respect Program

- *The most consistent response across all focus groups was that participants would never go to a website to read about healthy relationships.*
- *The second consistent response across focus groups was that participants, and other students, would not pay attention to posters.*
- *Making the Choose Respect Program more related to reality was one suggestion for improvement.*

RESULTS

The following report presents the findings of 20 focus groups of youths between the ages of 12 and 14 conducted throughout Ohio. The focus group discussions were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcriptions were then analyzed with the purpose of identifying general patterns and themes (e.g., “trends”) in participants’ responses across the focus groups. The findings presented here are those trends that emerged from discussions regarding gender roles, unhealthy relationship behaviors, and programs aimed at decreasing unhealthy relationship behaviors in young male teens.

Although the analysis sought to identify areas of consensus in attitudes and opinions that spanned all or most of the focus groups, some trends that were identified were stronger than others. Thus, three categories were developed in order to indicate the strength of a particular trend:

Strong Trend—recurring theme across most focus groups

Moderate Trend—recurring theme across many of the focus groups

Slight Trend—several participants agreed across at least half of the focus groups

Discussion themes that were generally confined to a small number of focus group participants or that emerged in just a few focus groups are presented as the opinions of individuals or several participants.

Two types of group-specific trends also will be discussed: 1) differences between mixed-gender groups and all-male groups and 2) differences between urban groups and small town/rural groups. It should be noted, however, that there were very few differences between mixed-gender and all-male focus groups or urban and small town/rural groups.

A. How 12- to 14-year-olds think males should treat females and how females should treat males

Participants were asked to write down on note cards how they think a boy should act towards someone he likes or is dating and how they think a girl should act towards someone she likes or is dating. They were told not to put their names on the note cards and, that, although we would discuss the responses in the group, we would not identify which individual wrote any specific response. The responses on the note cards were combined into general themes.

With regard to how boys should act toward girls, almost all of the focus group participants provided responses that indicated they valued healthy relationship behaviors. Behaviors reported most often were:

Boys should treat girls well—e.g., be nice, respectful, honest

- Be nice, kind, polite – be courteous, buy her things, hold the door
- Be respectful – don't tease, don't push her to do things (sexual or otherwise), don't be violent or mean, treat her like you would want to be treated
- Be honest and trustworthy – don't cheat on her, tell her the truth, don't start lies about her, be yourself with her
- Listen and communicate – have a real conversation, text her, don't interrupt when she talks, don't blow her off, show you are interested

Responses given for how girls should act towards boys were very similar to the ones given for how boys should act towards girls. Additionally, many of the same general behaviors were mentioned across all types of focus groups:

Boys should be treated in a similar manner as girls

- Be nice, kind, caring – show him he is important, put him first
- Be respectful – do things he likes to do, listen to him, don't embarrass him
- Be honest and trustworthy – don't cheat on him, don't flirt with other guys, tell him the truth, be yourself, stick to what you say

However, one difference did emerge. Participants stressed that girls should not be too obsessive with their boyfriends:

- Don't be obsessive – give him space, let him hang with his friends, don't call all the time, don't boss him around, don't be "all over him" around his friends

Obsession was a strong theme that emerged consistently across focus groups with regard to how girls should treat boys. The idea was that girls should not be obsessive or oppressive. Some comments to illustrate this sentiment included:

Girls should not be obsessive or oppressive

"She should give him some space."

"Don't follow him everywhere."

"Don't smother him."

"Don't always be around him; he has his own life and friends."

Specific examples of how girls and boys should treat each other differed

It is interesting to note that, although participants provided quite similar general responses for how they thought girls and boys should act toward someone they like or are dating, some of the specific examples provided differed. For example, participants felt that both girls and boys should be “nice” and “kind,” although for boys this appears to mean buying a girl things and holding the door, whereas for girls it means showing the boy he is important and comes first.

Some differences between types of focus groups

Although similar characteristics were provided across all focus groups, there were differences between focus groups with regard to the frequencies with which specific characteristics were mentioned. For example, among the mixed groups, “respectful” tended to be the most often cited characteristic participants thought girls should have, whereas among the all-male groups, “kind,” “caring,” and “nice” tended to be the most valued female characteristics. Participants in the urban, all-male groups also cited “honesty” more often than “respectful.” Additionally, being “supportive” was mentioned much more prominently among the all-male groups. In these groups, participants gave a number of examples of how girls could support their guys (e.g., going to their games, helping them with homework, talking to him when he has a problem, and putting him first).

B. How ideas about gender are formed

After discussing the note card responses, participants were asked where their ideas for how they thought boys and girls should act towards someone they like or are dating came from. They were also asked who they would talk to if they had questions about how to treat someone they were seeing/dating. Finally with regard to gender ideas, participants were asked what types of men and women they respect, and what characteristics these people embody that they respect.

For ideas about relationships, friends and family are the primary source

For almost all groups, parents were the primary source participants named as the individuals who most influenced their ideas about relationships, followed by siblings and friends. Girls most often named mothers and sisters whereas boys cited fathers and brothers. The participants in the all-male groups seemed to put slightly more weight on friends influencing their ideas about relationships and how to treat people than the mixed groups. Following family and friends, life experiences and observations of others were the next most prominent sources cited. Participants also stated that they believed TV shows and movies were influential in forming ideas about relationships, followed by music (although many participants noted that they thought some music provided negative ideas about relationships), and magazines.

When participants have questions, they turn to friends first

Although parents were cited as being most influential regarding relationships, when asked who they would talk to if they had questions about how to treat a person that they were seeing/dating, for all groups, participants were mostly likely to ask advice from friends. Brothers and sisters were next, followed by parents and then the internet. A few participants stated that they might seek the advice of a counselor or from their church.

One interesting difference that emerged between the mixed-gender groups and the all-male groups is that the mixed-gender participants were more likely to seek advice from their parents than those in the all-male groups. According to one participant in an all-male group, he does not talk with his parents about relationships,

“Because parents don’t really ‘get it’.”

Mothers and grandmothers are highly respected women, especially for their kindness and helpfulness

When asked about the girls and women they respect and why they respect them, overwhelmingly, participants from all groups said they respected their mothers and grandmothers. Participants respect these women for setting a good example, taking care of them, and being respectful and kind to others. Girls (and a few boys) also stated that they respected older sisters who helped them and gave them advice and support. In general, participants respected girls who were kind and helpful to others and who were good listeners. Participants also stated that they respected women for their accomplishments and leadership. Oprah Winfrey was named in almost half the groups as a woman who has accomplished much in her life and has used her success to help others. Other prominent women named included Angelina Jolie and Hillary Clinton. Teachers were also cited as women participants respected.

There were a few notable differences between the urban and small town/rural responses and between the mixed and all-male group responses. First, among the all-male groups, and particularly the small town/rural groups, participants made it clear that they did **not** respect girls who were “sluts” or girls they thought would cheat on their boyfriends.

Participants from the all-male, small town/rural groups said they would respect girls who let them have time with their friends and who were not “girly girls.” Participants in the all-male groups, both urban and small town/rural, thought girls should be independent. Across all groups, participants said they respected girls who took an interest in the things their boyfriends liked and girls who were understanding and good listeners. Other respected qualities for girls included being polite, kind, believing in themselves, and respecting themselves and others. Being trustworthy was also important, and again, participants reiterated that they did not respect girls who were “sluts” or “whores.”

Additionally, when asked how a girl should act and what she should do if she wants a boy to respect her, the all-male groups gave less insightful answers than the mixed-gender groups. As one respondent in one of the urban, all-male groups commented,

“I don’t really think about this stuff too much.”

When asked what types of boys and men participants respect and why, responses were similar to the types of girls and women participants respected, parents and grandparents. This time fathers and grandfathers were the primary men participants said they respected. Father and grandfathers were respected for working hard, taking care of the family, and for setting a good example. Again, older siblings (brothers this time) were respected for being good role models and for helping. For male participants in all groups, sports figures were the next most often cited type of men they respected (e.g., Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Dwyane Wade). Although football stars were commonly named, athletes from numerous other sports were also cited as men participants respected for their accomplishments and persistence. Participants also cited leaders (e.g., Barack Obama and John McCain), soldiers, and doctors or surgeons as men whom they respected. Some characteristics for men participants respected included men who are trustworthy, smart and successful. One participant stated he respected:

Fathers and grandfathers are highly respected men, especially for being hard working and helpful

“Guys who stick up for you.”

When asked how a boy should act and what he should do if he wants a girl to respect him, participants across all groups seemed to have the same ideas. Being honest and treating her well were at the top of the list, followed by being yourself and listening/talking to her. Participants also thought that doing things she liked to do and not making her do things she did not want to do were important. Finally, participants thought that being polite, caring, and trusting her were important qualities for a guy to have.

C. Opinions about abuse and control in relationships

Focus group participants were asked to read and record how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of items. The items were then organized into four overall themes. They were as follows:

Gender role items

- *In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions.*
- *Girls should have the same opportunities as guys.*
- *It is all right for a girl to ask a guy out.*

Expectation items

- *Girls often say they don't want to mess around, but they really do.*
- *Guys should always try to go all the way when they are out with a girl.*
- *Girls like guys who take charge.*

Control/power items

- *If a girl doesn't want to kiss her boyfriend she shouldn't have to.*
- *It is important for a guy to show other guys he can keep his girlfriend in line.*
- *If a guy tries to make out with a girl and the girl says "no", the guy should not continue to push her to make out anyway.*
- *It is okay for a guy to want to know where his girlfriend is and who she is with when they are not together.*

Abuse items

- *If a girl messes around with a guy one time, she can't refuse the next time.*
- *There are times when it is okay to hit someone you are dating.*
- *Threatening to break up with someone is a good way to keep them from doing things you don't like.*
- *Sometimes a guy needs to get a little forceful with his girlfriend to keep her in line.*

Once the participants completed the survey, the moderator collected the forms and began discussing the participants' opinions regarding the items. The moderator did not ask them to provide their personal opinions but instead asked a set of questions aimed at why they might think someone would agree with a particular item and why someone would not agree with the item.

Several **strong trends** emerged across all focus groups during the discussion regarding the expectation, control/power, and abuse items.

Awareness and understanding regarding boy-girl relationship issues was low

The level of awareness and understanding regarding boy-girl relationship issues was low among the 12-14 year olds who participated in the focus groups. Most of the participants did not appear to have much experience with boy-girl relationships and were often initially confused by more serious relationship issues such as the term "going all the way." These participants did eventually understand the conversation but it often took a little time for them to catch up to the more aware and experienced youth. In addition, 12-14 years olds who participated in the focus groups often had difficulty expressing their thoughts. They could talk about an item but were unable to clarify their response.

The vast majority of focus group participants provided responses that were aligned with healthy attitudes regarding relationship issues. Only a few males responded in ways that could be construed as supporting abusive or controlling attitudes towards females. When unhealthy attitudes emerged they tended to be in the all-male focus groups and only espoused by one or two males. Most groups did not have any males who responded with these types of attitudes, although several participants did say things that indicated support for unhealthy behaviors in specific situations (more detail will be presented below).

In addition, survey responses for all of the items were overwhelmingly in the “healthy attitude” range. For example, almost all of the participants felt that females should have the same opportunities as males (83.5%) and that it was never okay to hit a girlfriend (92.2%).² The vast majority of participants thought that you should not threaten to break up with someone just to get your own way (84.7%), that when a girl says no the guy should not try to push her into anything (85.4%), and a guy should never be a little forceful to keep his girlfriend in line (79.5%). Not as many, but still a majority of participants felt that males should not always try to “go all the way when they are out with a girl” (60.8%) and that it is not important for a guy to show other guys he can keep his girlfriend in line (67.2%). Saying this, however, there were a few participants who responded with unhealthy relationship attitudes on most of the items, and a considerable minority on a few such as trying to go all the way and keeping showing other males that they can keep their girlfriends in line.

Healthy attitudes were expressed across all types of relationship behaviors

The neutral category was also chosen for some of the items, potentially indicating that participants may not have wanted to respond with an unhealthy attitude but still could not bring themselves to report agreement with the item. The items with the largest percentages of neutral responses were: “Girls like guys who take charge” (59.7%), “When a girl messes around once she can’t refuse next time” (26.6%), and “Girls say they don’t want to mess around when they really do” (41.4%). However, it should be noted here that “messaging around” was often defined as cheating instead of sexual behaviors such as kissing. In addition, the items, “It is okay to want to know where your girlfriend is all the time” (31.6%) and “Guys should always try to go all the way” (28.5%) also had a large minority of participants providing a neutral response.

² Percentages presented here and throughout the report refer only to the percentages of focus group participants who gave responses to the questionnaire. Please note that these participants do not represent a random sample of students and, therefore, they can not be interpreted as being representative of 12- to 14-year olds in Ohio.

Most males felt that hitting a girl is not appropriate, although there were a few individuals who felt that it can be justified in certain situations. The overwhelming attitude of males from both the mixed-gender groups and the all-male groups was that hitting a girl under any circumstances was a bad thing, as the following comments illustrate.

“Because it is disrespectful and men are using their physical strength over a woman.”

“You shouldn’t turn to violence to solve things.”

A boy should never hit a girl

However, there was a slight trend such that several participants across many of the focus groups felt that it was alright to “play hit” as long as it was not in anger. Additionally, a “flirty hit” was considered acceptable by many of the participants. Some males disagreed, however. Several worried that males have a “shorter fuse” and would get angry if hit, even playfully or that sometimes people hit out of anger even though they say they are playing.

A few participants felt that it was okay for a female to hit a male but not enough to deem it a trend across focus groups. However, it is important to note that several males mentioned that it may be difficult for a male not to hit a female if she hit him first. Although they agreed that the male should not hit a female, they felt he might not be able to control himself. As one male participant explained,

“It’s not good if a female puts her hand on a guy, but maybe even though he knows he shouldn’t hit her back, sometimes he probably will.”

No matter who hits who first, males thought that they would get “into trouble” if they hit a girl.

Participants were also asked, whose problem is it when the girl is being hit by her boyfriend? There was no consistency regarding whether it was the male’s or female’s problem. Many participants felt it was the female’s problem since she was getting hit. Others felt it was the male’s problem because he has “anger management issues.” Several participants mentioned that it was both individual’s problem.

Girls have a right to make their own decisions

In general, focus group participants felt that girls had a right to make their own decisions and did not have to do everything a boy told her to do. There was a strong trend across most of the focus groups when discussing the expectation and control questions that girls had a right to make their own choices and decisions. Most participants felt that controlling everything the girls does was an unhealthy attitude.

A common theme that emerged across focus groups was that both parties should talk things out when they did not agree.

“Ask her to stop; talk to her and see why she is acting the way she is. Talk to her about it and try to get her to change or to act a different way.”

Several moderate trends also emerged during the discussions regarding expectations, control, and abuse.

There is confusion regarding what are leadership behaviors and what are controlling behaviors

There appears to be a fine line between participants’ opinions regarding male leadership and control. The vague line between leadership and control was evident during several different discussions. First, participating teens did not think that they would hurt a girl over a disagreement. However, comprising a slight trend, several participants felt that girls did not like weak guys; instead, they wanted guys who were leaders like quarterbacks. In many instances (across several focus groups), males talked about the need to defend themselves and protect their girlfriends.

In addition, several male participants thought that the male made the decisions and that girls went along with them to make their boyfriends happy. As one participant stated,

“Boys make the choices and decisions more often than the girl does. They pick what to do. They choose where to go every time.”

Yet, there was a lot of ambiguity regarding what it meant to take charge and to be a leader. As one male responded:

“A guy that is tough won’t stand back from anything. Good leadership skills.”

This blur between leadership and control was much more evident in the all-male groups than the mixed-gender groups. Participants in all-male groups were more likely to feel that they should be in charge, solve the problems, and keep their girlfriend in line.

“Because men are supposed to be the stronger vessel in the relationship and should be in charge.”

The all-male groups tended to show a little more hyper masculinity than mixed groups. They were more likely to talk about violence in a positive way. In general, across all types of questions, during discussions in mixed-gender groups there was much more of an attitude that boyfriends

Males talk a little stronger when females are not present

and girlfriends should talk out their disagreements and the girls should be able to make their own choices and that boys should always be respectful of girls. Although these attitudes also were conveyed in the all-male groups, these groups were more likely to express attitudes that supported a stronger hyper masculinity orientation. This became particularly evident during the discussions regarding what they should do when they see other couples fighting (discussed in Section E).

This trend was very evident when reviewing the survey results. For example, for the item “If a girl messes around with a guy once she can’t refuse the next time,” more males disagreed with this statement from the mixed groups than from the all-male groups (71.1% vs. 50.0%). Responses to the items, “Guys should always try to go all the way when they are out with a girl,” and “Sometimes a guy needs to be a little more forceful with his girlfriend to keep her in line” raised more concern, however. Responses to both items revealed that more males from all-male groups were less likely to disagree and more likely to give a neutral or agreement response.

In addition to the moderate trends, there were also several **slight trends** that emerged that should be taken into account when working with males regarding development of programs aimed at this age group.

Girls need to be protected

Control and knowledge about their girlfriend’s whereabouts was considered important by some males because they felt that they should protect their girlfriend and make sure that she was okay. Male participants worried that their girlfriends might get themselves in a “bad situation” or be with the “wrong” people so they should know where they were.

Slight indications that some girls can be treated differently than others

At these ages we are seeing the beginnings of good girl/bad girl differentiation. Bad girls can be treated differently than good girls. The general trend in conversations regarding control and abusive relationships in many of the focus groups was an expression of respectful attitudes towards girls and an indication that most males felt that girls should not be forced to do anything they don’t want to do. However, one of the slight trends that emerged in several of the focus groups was that some girls can’t be faithful or that they really want to “mess around” even if they pretend they do not—not all girls, but some types of girls.

“Depends on the girl, but they say things to test you and see how aggressive you are and what you want to do.”

When referring to these types of girls participants talked about how they dressed, such as wearing short skirts or tight-fitting clothing. In

addition to clothing, who girls hang out with was also pertinent. If girls hang out with the wrong crowd they could be seen as a “slut.”

“Because there are certain girls that do and some that don’t, it all comes down to the type of people you hang out with.”

This slight theme could also be seen during the conversations regarding knowing where one’s girlfriend was all the time. The opinion was expressed that a boyfriend needed to be sure that his girlfriend was not with the wrong type of people.

However, some males felt that most of the girls they knew were alright, and that being a “bad girl” was more likely to occur in upper grade levels such as in high school.

All-male groups were more likely to feel that the control/power issues items regarding pressuring a girl to “make out” were tantamount to rape. In general, males felt that the girl had rights and the boys should not force her to do anything she does not want to.

Forcing a girl to do things she doesn’t want to is not a good thing

“It is her choice not his; he shouldn’t make her do anything she doesn’t want to do.”

Although all-male groups were also likely to feel that it is the girl’s choice, they were much more likely to think that pressuring or forcing a girl to make-out when she says no could be rape.

“Because it would be pushing it too far and could be considered rape.”

Small town/rural males were a little more likely to report unhealthy attitudes on survey items than urban males. Although few differences were found between males from small town/rural areas and those from urban areas in the focus group discussions, we did indentify some rural/urban differences in the responses to the survey items. Namely, small town/rural males were a little more likely to think that girls say they don’t want to mess around when they really do (34.6% vs. 23.1%). They were also a little less likely to agree that girls don’t have to kiss their boyfriends if they don’t want to (87.3% vs. 90.6%), and that if a girl says no the guy should not try to push her (82.1% vs. 90.4%). These differences tended to be slight and the differences between the two groups tended to be most prominent in the neutral response category. However, a neutral response may indicate that males do not want to report what they know are unhealthy responses but could not bring themselves to disagree with the items.

Small town/rural males were slightly more likely to have unhealthy attitudes

D. Do males between 12 and 14 see abuse as a problem?

Participants were asked several questions regarding their awareness of abuse and whether or not they saw it as a problem.

The series of items began with a question asking if behaviors such as “bra snapping” and “patting the behind of a girl” were abusive and if they felt that abusive behaviors were a problem. Following this discussion, students were asked what they would change about boy-girl relationships at their school. Below are some of the findings that were identified from the discussion of these items.

Inappropriate touching was acknowledged as common in schools

Bra snapping and patting a girl’s behind are common occurrences according to the participants. When asked about these types of behaviors, participants acknowledged that they exist by giggling and nodding their heads. Although the female participants expressed a dislike of these behaviors, most males tended to think these behaviors were alright if you knew the girl and it was done in fun.

Abusive behaviors were not perceived as a problem at their schools

Few participants felt that there were a lot of abusive behaviors at their schools. As for more serious abuse, several participants did say that they knew someone who had been in some type of abusive relationship but most felt that abusive behaviors were not common in their schools and were not a problem. Many of the participants reported that abusive behaviors were not tolerated in their school and therefore were not prevalent. If there were problems in their school, they tended to be verbal abuse rather than physical abuse.

Several participants did say that hitting and slapping were problems at school, or that on occasion kids got together and did things they shouldn’t, but it was not serious.

“I believe that when people get together in groups bad things like that happen. When you are walking through the halls people will do anything to get a few laughs.”

Not taking relationships seriously and gossiping were behaviors that they find especially problematic

When asked what things they would like to change about boy-girl relationships many participants said that gossiping and being mean to someone were the biggest problems. In addition, many participants felt that having relationships at their age was problematic. They thought that some boys were “*players*” and treated girls poorly. They wanted others to be more mature and take dating and relationships more seriously.

“Don’t go out with someone just to have a girlfriend, make sure you actually like them.”

Others felt that kids their age were just too young to have boy-girl relationships and that any acts such as kissing or holding hands should be avoided.

E. How can youth be part of the solution

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding what they should do if do if they saw any of the following behaviors:

- Someone yelling at his girlfriend/boyfriend.
- A boy putting his girlfriend down or making fun of her.
- A boy pushing his girlfriend or being threatening towards her.
- A girl pushing her boyfriend or being threatening towards him.

In addition to the above “bystander” questions, participants were asked to provide ideas on how to stop abusive behaviors. Below are the trends and findings that emerged from these discussions.

Participants would be more likely to intervene as a situation becomes more serious

Participants would be more likely to intervene in a situation as the situation became more serious. Most of the participants felt that they should not get involved if the couple was just arguing. They were more likely to walk away feeling it was none of their business. However, if there was any sign of physical abuse, participants were more likely to say they would get involved, either by getting an adult to intervene or by trying to stop the physical fighting themselves.

“If it is an argument, let it go, but if it gets physical that’s when you step in.”

Participants in the all-male group were a little more likely to say they would physically stop any fighting by pushing the boy away from the girl or “beating the guy up.” Although many males did say that they would step in and stop any physical abuse, they were also likely to add that it may depend on if the boy was bigger than them. In these cases they thought it was more appropriate to bring in an adult.

Participants felt they would be more likely to intervene if the boy or girl involved was someone they knew. Conversely, they would be more likely to ignore the situation if they did not know the individuals involved. As one participant explained,

“If it is someone you know, you should probably stop it but if it is a complete stranger, no.”

Participants were more likely to intervene if they know one of the couple

Various actions participants thought that they would take to intervene are:

- pulling the person they knew away and telling them to back off,
- talking to the person they knew after the fight and telling her that it was not right for her boyfriend to treat her in that way, and
- just telling the couple to stop yelling; that it is inappropriate.

Female abuse of males is not taken seriously

Most of the participants would not take it seriously if they saw a female yelling at or pushing her boyfriend. Participants tended to feel that the boy could take care of himself.

Abusive behaviors are difficult to stop

Most of the participants felt that verbally and physically abusive behaviors were hard to stop. Participants believed that suspensions and expulsions did not work to stop these behaviors.

The most prevalent suggestion to stop abuse was just tell the person that the behavior was inappropriate. It was common for participants to think that saying something to a person would make the person realize that their behavior was not appropriate.

“Anything that adds a third person point of view and gets the person to stop and think about what they are doing.”

Several participants thought that if a lot of kids were against a behavior and stood up to stop it, they could stop the behavior, but they felt most kids could not stop it themselves.

Telling the person their actions are inappropriate was the most common intervention strategy

A few participants thought it best for someone being abused to “just walk away” and everything would be alright.

Other suggestions were to involve parents, or school adults such as counselors or hall monitors who are tasked with stopping abusive behaviors. However, others felt that adults and parents were ineffective because kids won’t listen to them. Several participants in each focus group suggested having a program or class at school that would focus on abuse.

F. Programming and messaging participants would find effective or influential

Focus group participants had varied ideas on what types of programming and messaging would be most influential when promoting healthy relationship behaviors.

In-school programs were seen as most effective

The most frequent suggestion was to have a person come into the schools, or have a program at the school where students could learn how to cope with relationships and deal with problems that emerge in relationships. Although some participants suggested after-school programs or programs at churches or other youth oriented programs, the general consensus was that young teens would not go to any programs outside of school unless they were required to or had a very good incentive to attend. A few other students suggested putting the message out on the internet, TV, or radio.

Some of the participants felt that just bringing in a speaker was sufficient whereas others thought that the message would be more effective if a program was embedded in a class, such

Embed programming into curriculum

as a life skills or health class. Comments against a speaker tended to be that assemblies were not very effective because kids were so excited to get out of class that they did not pay any attention to the speakers.

Some schools already have programs

Several participants mentioned that they had a section on relationships and healthy behaviors in their life skills/health class. However, several of the participants who mentioned that they had such a class also reported that they did not pay very much attention to that section. Several other participants also mentioned that their school had a “relationship” after-school program that students had to attend if they were caught kissing in the hallways. Several students suggested starting a club where boys could get together and promote healthy relationships such as the peer mediation program.

There were also varied opinions regarding who should preside over such a program. Although some participants felt that a teacher or counselor would be effective, most did not agree.

Speakers who understand youth or are celebrities were seen as most influential

“Wouldn’t have a teacher do it because they don’t know what kids our age are thinking and want to know.”

Suggested adults to present the information included celebrities including Coach Jim Tressel, athletes such as LeBron James, or a famous activist such as Al Gore or Oprah Winfrey. The most often mentioned type of person whom participants thought would be effective, however, is an older youth, such as someone from the high school. College students were considered to be too old, but someone younger that they respected and had experience in relationships was more likely to be listened to than adults.

The final question asked participants what types of activities they thought should be included in any program promoting healthy relationship behaviors. Participants came up with all types of suggestions, but there was very little consensus across focus groups. Suggested activities included:

- videos/movies that show individuals who have been through unhealthy relationships,
- playing video games,
- tee shirts, and
- websites – especially finding a way to incorporate MySpace and Facebook.

One student suggested having a big event with games and in between they could talk about the program. Another student suggested having activities that showed kids what it would be like to be in an unhealthy relationship.

“Like the drunk driving activity were you try to do things through special glasses that distort vision.”

Presentations were also thought to be effective if they were coupled with discussion time and other interesting activities.

G. Choose Respect Program

Participants provided a little more consensus in their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the Choose Respect Program.

Participants would not visit Choose Respect website

The most consistent response across all focus groups was that they would never go to a website to read about healthy relationships. Even when prompted with suggestions such as “What if it was linked to MySpace or Facebook?” participants still felt they were unlikely to visit unless they knew someone that needed help—but even then it would be unlikely. Although participants said they generally liked to take quizzes, they would not go to the Choose Respect Program website to take the little quizzes or tests because the subject area was of little interest to them—it just didn’t apply to their lives.

Participants did give some suggestions on how to increase the likelihood that young teens would go to the website to view the Choose Respect materials. They thought that if the website was advertised on TV or articles in magazines it might entice them to visit the site. Others thought adding more games may be effective.

“At our school we had this website called coolmath.com. We go on there all the time. They go to the lemonade game, lunar lander, and we really got into that.”

Choose Respect Posters would be ignored

The second consistent response across focus groups was that participants, and other students, would not pay attention to the posters. Many of the participants liked the colors and the ideas promoted on posters but most felt that they would not read the posters if they were put up in their schools. In fact, several participants thought that the students would tear the posters down. Most participants mentioned that there were so many posters up at their school that they just did not read them. It was just another poster on respect.

“Posters are everywhere. We don’t look at them anymore.”

Participants felt that the posters were interesting and that the

tag line was a good one. Others felt that the words were hard to read and the scenario messages were confusing.

“This one says ‘she made me mad so I pushed her’—I think if they stopped reading after that they might get the wrong idea, so make it more obvious that it is a bad behavior.”

Making the Choose Respect Program more related to reality was one suggestion for improvement. The only suggestions that participants had to improve the program was to better promote it to teens or to tell real stories of people who had “*turned their lives around.*”

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Programming to promote healthy relationship behaviors should be integrated into school curriculum or during the school day where youth can be directed in terms of activities.

Participants thought that they would simply not go to programs outside of school. Also, integrated curriculums are best because program leaders would have more time to present and talk about different relationship issues.

B. Program leaders should be male.

As noted previously, one of the strong themes that emerged is that males talked more strongly about boy-girl relationships when females were not in the room. When females were not in the room, males were more likely to use stronger language and respond with slightly more unhealthy relationship opinions. Hence, it would probably more effective if programming was led by a male so that these opinions could be discussed more thoroughly and openly.

C. Bringing in high school males to talk to the younger teens would be more effective than general adults from the school or community.

As we mentioned in the discussion of programming, participants tended to respect their older brothers and role models a few years older than themselves. Programming may be more readily accepted from the “older more experienced male” but one that is not so much older that he doesn’t understand what young teens are faced with.

D. Any programming aimed at promoting healthy relationships must deal with cheating and the good girl/bad girl issue.

Cheating was a very important issue for focus group youth. They felt they needed to know where their girlfriend was to make sure she was not cheating on them. In addition, youth are also beginning to distinguish between good and bad girls and some felt that one does not need to treat both similarly.

E. Programs promoting healthy relationship behaviors must be aligned with the level of awareness and degree of importance that youth have for the subject.

Because many of the participants did not have experience in a relationship or had not seen any types of abusive relationship behaviors, they tended to think that this issue did not apply to them. Any program promoting healthy behaviors must also show these youth how it relates to them and why these topics are important.

F. Developing clubs where healthy relationships are promoted is a good way for youth to stand together to combat unhealthy relationship behaviors.

Clubs whose members are focused on stopping relationship abuse may be more effective because the club members could talk to individuals as a group so that they are not individually vulnerable. In addition, as was mentioned previously, participants are more likely to intervene in an abusive situation if they know at least one of the individuals in a couple. Clubs would be beneficial in that club members would know more people than a single individual.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DESIGN

Twenty focus groups were held in five targeted regions around Ohio. In each region, two focus groups were conducted in an urban and a rural area. One focus group consisted of all boys between the ages of 12 through 14 and the other focus group consisted of both boys and girls in this age range. The regions were:

- Northwest rural and Toledo
- Northeast rural and Cleveland
- Central rural and Columbus
- Southeast rural and Athens
- Southwest rural and Cincinnati

The following narrative provides an overview of the focus group procedures and the protocols and forms that were used during the focus groups. The protocols and forms included a:

- Parental Consent Form
- Participant Assent Form
- Focus Group Recruitment Screener
- Focus Group Moderator Guide
- Focus Group Questionnaire

A. Development of Protocols and Forms

All protocols and forms were developed in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Strategic Research Group (SRG) Project Teams. During the project kick-off meeting, potential topics for the focus group were discussed, as well as the screening recruitment protocol and consent forms. All of these forms were submitted to the ODH Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval at the beginning of June 2008. SRG received a list of concerns from the IRB at ODH. Based on these concerns, additional revisions were made to the focus group protocols and forms which were reviewed and approved by the IRB on June 23, 2008. The current versions of each protocol and form are included under the section titled Protocols and Forms.

B. Recruitment

Recruiting a representative sample of the target population is one of the most important tasks in any focus group project. SRG strived ensure a representative sample by randomly sampling potential participants from each of the targeted areas.

The first task was to identify potential boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 14 that lived in the specified areas. SRG researchers believed that it was very important to minimize the likelihood that boys and girls in the same focus groups would know each other and maximize the extent to which the children recruited attended different schools. We believed this was important in order to maintain the confidentiality of the children.

Although we asked the focus group participants to sign a confidentiality statement, there is always the potential for focus group participants to tell others afterward what other focus group participants said. Likewise, focus group participants may perceive the potential for this to occur and, thus, restrict their input. Ultimately, we wanted each focus group participant to feel comfortable talking about their attitudes and beliefs regarding these sensitive issues. In addition, it was important that we minimized the extent to which peer pressure influenced a child's responses and how much they contributed to the discussion. Consequently, we thought that using naturally occurring friendship groups, children who knew each through a specific organization, or working through the schools to recruit children would not be advisable. Taking this into consideration, SRG used the American Student List of Mineola, New York, to identify households with children between 12 and 14 in the target areas.

American Student List maintains a national database of individuals collected through memberships, subscriptions and other information. They provided a list of households that potentially included a child between 12 and 14 in the study areas. SRG recruiters then called these households to talk to parents/guardians about allowing their child to participate in the study. SRG has used this method for recruiting focus groups on many occasions and we have found that we are better able to recruit a diverse group of participants in this manner.

All households with potential participants were contacted by trained focus group recruiters who have experience in focus group recruitment. Recruitment was conducted at the SRG survey unit and a supervisor was on hand at all times to answer questions and to assure that all quality control procedures were being adhered to during recruitment.

Recruitment was a two-stage process. First, the recruiter spoke to a parent/guardian to explain why they were calling and to give them basic information about the study. If the parent/guardian was willing to allow their child to participate, SRG then mailed them a packet of information (or referred them to a website, based on their preference of communication), which included a cover letter explaining the material they were receiving, the parental consent and child assent forms, and some examples of the types of questions that would be asked during the focus group. Also during this initial call, the recruiter asked permission to call back in a few days, once the information packet had been received to get verbal confirmation that the child would be participating and to answer any questions the parent/guardian and child may have had about the study. At that time, the SRG recruiter verified that the child wanted to participate in the study. If SRG had not received the consent form by the day of the focus group, the parent/guardian was asked to sign a copy at the focus group location, prior to the start of the focus group.

Although focus groups generally include 10 to 12 participants, smaller numbers are more appropriate for focus groups with youths. Six to eight participants are ideal for this age group. SRG used several strategies to ensure participation of six to eight subjects per focus group. First, given the potential for no-shows, our strategy included oversampling subjects for each focus group. Second, SRG sent a packet to all parents/guardians of participating children containing directions and a map to the focus group facility, consent form, and confirmation letter stressing the importance of

participation and asking them to notify us if they had a change in plans. Third, given that most participants needed transportation to the focus group location, we offered an incentive to both the parent/guardian and their child. Specifically, participants received \$30 cash and their parent/guardian was given a \$10 gas card to cover the expense of bringing their child to the focus group location.

C. Conducting Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted in well-known public buildings that were centrally located such as public libraries. Public libraries were the first choice because they generally have meeting rooms, are centrally located, most families know where they are or can easily find them, the participants will feel comfortable and safe in this setting, and they are convenient places for other family members to spend time while the boys and girls were participating in the focus group. Further, because participants may attend different schools, public libraries offer a neutral environment.

The following table provides the focus group locations and dates.

Region	Locations for urban (1) and rural (2) groups	Dates
Central	1) Strategic Research Group (Columbus) 2) Public Library of Mt. Vernon and Knox County	1) July 19, 2008 2) July 19, 2008
Northwest	1) Lima Family YMCA 2) Toledo-Lucas County Public Library	1) August 2, 2008 2) August 9, 2008
Northeast	1) Wayne County Public Library (Wooster) 2) Cleveland Public Library	1) August 9, 2008 2) August 16, 2008
Southwest	1) Highland County District Library (Hillsboro) 2) Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County	1) August 16, 2008 2) September 13, 2008
Southeast	1) Athens Public Library 2) Washington County Public Library (Marietta)	1) August 2, 2008 2) August 23, 2008

The all-boy and the mixed-gender focus groups in a specific area (small town/rural or urban) were held on the same day at the same location. The SRG research team conducted one focus group at 10am and the other at 1pm on Saturdays. SRG audio-taped all focus group sessions.

The all-boy focus groups were moderated by a male SRG focus group moderator while the mixed-gender focus groups were moderated by both a male and female SRG moderator. It was very important for children to feel that the moderator was supportive and that their privacy was maintained. A moderator of the same gender would facilitate this feeling.

The focus group itself lasted about 1.5 hours but an additional 15-20 minutes prior to beginning the focus groups was dedicated to talking to the parent/guardians who brought their child for the focus group. Donuts or cookies and drinks were provided for the families while the researchers provided the parents/guardians and children information about the focus group and answered all questions. Then the parent/guardian was asked to sign the **Parental Consent Form** if they had not already done so before leaving the focus group room.

Once parents/guardians and other family members left the focus group room, the SRG moderator provided participants with an Assent Form and reviewed the group norms and procedures with the participants. The moderator then reviewed all of the norms and the **Participant Assent Form** and ask the participants to sign that they understood and would maintain the confidentiality of others in the group. This procedure was intended to help the children to feel comfortable that others would maintain their privacy and to facilitate candid responses.

Following the discussion of the group norms and signing the Participant Assent Form, the moderator began the focus group. At this point it was extremely important for the moderator to make the participants feel comfortable and convey that their opinions were valued and accepted. Participants were told that it was okay to disagree or have different opinions and that everyone's opinions were valued.

There were two issues in particular that arose and were addressed during the focus group. First, one or two dominant children can control the flow of information and make less dominant children feel uncomfortable providing their opinions. Second, shy children may not feel comfortable in this type of environment. Consequently, the amount of control and support provided by the moderator was paramount in facilitating a good focus group regardless of the age group. This is one of the reasons that SRG moderators went through the group norms—so that all participants were aware of their responsibilities. In addition, SRG moderators constantly monitored the interaction and tried to ensure sure that all children had an opportunity to respond and that all participants were respectful of each other's responses.

APPENDIX B: PROTOCOLS AND FORMS

Moderator Guide

PARENTS/GUARDIANS ONLY

(10 minutes)

Thank you for bringing your sons (and daughters) to the focus group. Before we begin, we would like to take a few minutes to discuss the focus group with you and to answer any questions you may have.

First, the objective of the focus group is to understand how young people think about individuals of the opposite sex and how they develop these ideas. This information will be used to help the Ohio Department of Health to encourage respectful behaviors towards others.

The focus group will consist of questions about gender roles (the behaviors, attitudes, and activities that they expect from males and females), cultural influences (such as television, video games, music, family, peers), and ideas about healthy relationships and the appropriate way to treat the people you like. We will also talk about behaviors that young people feel are unhealthy. Your child does not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer. Each child will receive \$30 for participating in the focus group and you will receive a \$10 gas card.

We will be audio-taping this session. We will transcribe the audio tapes and then destroy the tape. We are conducting 20 focus groups for this study. We will not report any child's name and we will not tell anyone what your child said (including you). However, in the rare event that your child tells us something that involves a mandatory report to authorities, such as a specific incident involving a young person being hurt or in danger, we will let you know and provide everyone with appropriate referral information.

Are there any questions?

Your child cannot participate unless I have your signed consent form. I do not have a signed consent form for:

List names and pass out consent forms

The focus group will last about 1.5 hours. Your child will be ready to be picked up at _____. If there is any problem my cell phone number is _____. Also, can you please write down the number where you can be reached in case something comes up and we need to contact you.

PARTICIPANTS ONLY

Introduction

(10 minutes)

1. Introduce Facilitators

2. Pass out Assent Forms

3. Review Assent Forms

a. Purpose of Discussion Group

The objective of the focus group is to understand how young people think about relationships and how to treat people that we like. We will discuss what we expect from others and where these ideas come from. Finally, we will be talking about healthy and unhealthy behaviors and getting your ideas on ways to encourage healthy relationships.

b. Confidentiality

Everything you say today is confidential and private.

We will not use your name when talking about what was said during the focus groups.

We will not tell your parents, your teachers, or anyone else what you said when answering any of our questions.

We are not here to talk about specific personal stories. We want to be sure that you know that we will be giving you contact information in case you or anyone you know needs help around any of the issues we will be discussing. Also, if you inform us about a specific incident where we feel someone may be hurt or in danger, such as a relationship where abuse is going on, there's a chance we may have to report it. You can always call [given referrals/phone numbers] for help if you want to stay anonymous.

It is very important that we do not talk to anyone about what someone said in this room. You should not leave this room and say "Jason said that" It is very important that everyone here feels comfortable telling us how they feel and what they think. We need to agree that everything that is said here stays here and after leaving the focus group you do not discuss what a particular person said.

Is this clear? Are there any questions?

c. Purpose of Audio Taping

We will be audio taping and taking notes. The audio tape will be destroyed after it has been transcribed (someone listens to the tape and types out everyone's responses). At no time will anyone's name be included in the typed responses.

Group Self Introduction

(5 minutes)

Name _____

What is your favorite thing to do when you are not in school?

Group Norms

(7-10 minutes)

As we said, in this focus group we are going to talk about your beliefs and attitudes about dating behaviors and appropriate interactions with someone you like. Let's begin by developing some guidelines or rules for the discussions we will have in this focus group.

First write a guideline or rule for our Success Stew on this card.

Now we will get up and tell everyone our rule and tape it to our Stew Pot.

HAVE ONE OF THE TEENS GET UP ONE BY ONE AND TELL EVERYONE THEIR RULE. IT IS OK FOR DUPLICATES. Say-THAT JUST MEANS IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT RULE.

THE MODERATOR WILL INSURE THE GROUP AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES BY WAITING UNTIL THEY HAVE MENTIONED THE ONES AND ASKING THEM...WHAT ABOUT _____ ? SHOULD WE MAKE UP A GUIDELINE ABOUT THAT?

- Be honest. Give us your true feelings
- There are no right or wrong answers and it is not necessary for everyone to agree. We are not here to tell anyone that they are wrong, we are here to understand how each of you thinks about the topic.
- No personal stories.
- Speak one at a time.
- Share the floor—we need to hear from everyone.
- Listen to others while they have the floor.
- Keep answers short—Try to avoid long stories.
- Casual group conversation: If you agree/disagree with something that is said, say so. It is OK to comment or expand on other's comments.
- We have a lot to cover. We will need to move ahead sometimes so we may have to stop the conversation and say it's time to move on.

Are there any questions?

If you agree to uphold these guidelines please sign the poster on the wall.

Discussion Areas

Section A: Gender Roles

(30 minutes)

A1. First, we want to make sure that we are all talking about the same types of relationships. What are some types of relationships we might have with someone we like:

NOTE: THEY SHOULD COME UP WITH TERMS LIKE:
HANGING OUT,
DATING,
CRUSH

HAVE ONE OF THE TEENS WRITE THE TERMS ON POSTER PAPER AND LEAVE UP FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE FOCUS GROUP.

Great, so we are talking about all of these types of relationships. REPEAT THEM TO THE GROUP

BREAK MIXED-GENDER GROUP APART FOR THE REST OF SECTION A

A2. Now, I am going to hand each of you a card. Don't put your name on the card. All I want you to do is write down three words or phrases that describe how a guy **should act or behave towards** the person he likes or is dating. COLLECT CARDS

READ EACH ENTRY AND ASK AFTER EACH ONE:

Now, someone wrote down _____.

Can you give me any examples of what a guy could do to act like this?

A3. Now, I want you to write down three words or phrases that describe how a girl should act towards the person she likes or is dating. COLLECT CARDS

READ EACH ENTRY AND ASK AFTER EACH ONE:

Now, someone wrote down _____.

Can you give me any examples of what a girl could do to act like this?

A4. There are many different ways that people expect boys and girls should act towards people they like.

- a. When you think about how you expect boys and girls to act towards people they like, where do you think those ideas come from?

TRY TO GET SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

A5. Tell me about the girls/women you respect. What do they do that makes you respect them? Why do you respect them?

- a. If a girl wants a boy to respect her, how should she act? What should she do?

A6. Tell me about the boys/men you respect. What do they do that makes you respect them? Why do you respect them?

b. If a boy wants girls to respect him, how should he act?

A7. Who would you talk to if you have questions about how to treat a person that you are seeing/dating?

PASS OUT SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE. TELL THEM NOT TO PUT THEIR NAME ON THE SURVEY, BUT THAT YOU WILL BE COLLECTING THEM.

A8. Now, I would like you to read each statement and circle how much you agree or disagree with each. You can strongly agree with it, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Please keep in mind that we want to know how each of you personally feels, not how you think everyone else will respond. Because these are your personal feelings you cannot give a wrong answer. Also, we will not identify which person gave a particular answer.

GIVE QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO MODERATOR.

BREAK FOR A FEW MINUTES

FEMALE INTERVIEWER CAN LEAVE HERE FOR ALL MALE GROUP

Now let's talk about the questions on the survey. Let's not talk about what you personally think about each of the questions but I would like to talk about some reasons you think **OTHER** people might agree or disagree with some of these statements.

A9. Take statements one by one:

Group 1: Expectation Questions

1. *Girls like guys who take charge.*
2. *Girls often say they don't want to mess around, but they really do.*

Let's pretend that we agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would agree with this statement?

- a. How does a guy take charge?
- b. When a girl does not behave in the way her boyfriend thinks she should, what could he do?
- c. What could she do?

Now let's pretend that we DO NOT agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would disagree with this statement?

- a. When a girl does not behave in the way her boyfriend thinks she should, what could he do?
- b. What could she do?

Group 2: Control/Power Items

- 1. It is important for a guy to show other guys he can keep his girlfriend in line.*
- 2. If a guy tries to make out with a girl and the girl says “no”, the guy should not continue to push her to make out anyway. And if a girl doesn’t want to kiss her boyfriend she shouldn’t have to.*
- 3. It’s okay for a guy to want to know where his girlfriend is and who she is with when they are not together. [In discussion flip to ask the same for girls.]*

Let’s pretend that we agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would agree with this statement?

- a. How important is it for girls to do everything a boyfriend wants them to do?
- b. FOR THE FINAL QUESTION: It’s okay for a guy to want to know where his girlfriend is and who she is with when they are not together. What about the other way around?

Let’s pretend that we DO NOT agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would disagree with this statement?

- a. How important is it for girls to do everything a boyfriend wants them to do?
- b. FOR THE FINAL QUESTION: It’s okay for a guy to want to know where his girlfriend is and who she is with when they are not together. What about the other way around?

Group 3: Abuse Items

- 1. Sometimes a guy needs to get a little forceful with his girlfriend to keep her in line.*
- 2. Threatening to break up with someone is a good way to keep them from doing things you don’t like.*
- 3. There are times when it is okay to hit someone you are dating.*

Let’s pretend that we agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would agree with this statement?

- a. Are there any circumstances where these types of behaviors are OK? What is OK and what is not OK?
- b. Is this the boy’s problem or the girl’s problem?

Let’s pretend that we DO NOT agree with _____ (READ EACH STATEMENT). What are some reasons we would disagree with this statement?

A10. BYSTANDER QUESTIONS—INCREASE IN INTENSITY

- a. As a bystander, what would you do if you see someone that is yelling at his girlfriend/boyfriend? What should you do?
- b. How about if he was putting her down or making fun of her?
- c. How about if he is pushing his girlfriend or being threatening towards her?

- d. How about if the girlfriend is pushing him or threatening him?
- e. What would you like someone else to do to help you if it happened to you?

MIXED-GENDER GROUP: PUT THEM BACK TOGETHER. START WITH THE GIRLS RESPONSES. PULL OUT 4 OR 5 ONES THAT WILL GENERATE DISCUSSION AND ASK MALES WHAT THEY THINK. THEN DO SAME WITH 4 OR 5 RESPONSES FROM MALES AND ASK FEMALES WHAT THEY THINK.

Section B: Programs and Messages

(30 minutes)

B1. Now, what are types of behaviors you have seen or heard about that are like the ones we have been talking about? What other ones can we come up with?

- a. What about behaviors such as bra snapping and patting the behind of a girl that you know?

B2. Thinking about the things you've heard, seen, and experienced, do you think any of these types of behavior are a problem? Which are problems? Why or why not?

B3. What are some things we can do that would stop these types of things?

B4. What types of things could you say or do that would tell someone that these types of behaviors are not okay?

B5. If you could change anything about guy-girl relationships at your school, what would it be?

FEMALE NOTE TAKER CAN RETURN HERE FOR ALL MALE GROUP

B6. If you were going to create a program for people your age that would stop controlling or abusive dating behavior, what would you do?

- a. Where would the program take place?
- b. Who would have to be the presenter (if one is needed), or be in charge of the program?
- c. What types of activities would you include?

Section C: Choose Respect Program

(10 minutes)

Now we would like to show you some material from the Choose Respect program and get your opinions. PASS OUT PRINTED MATERIALS FOR THEM TO REVIEW

C1. Has anyone seen the program before? (If yes – what did you think?)

C2. What do you like about the material you see here?

- a. What do you think about the line- Respect! Give it! Get it!

C3. What don't you like?

C4. Would you go to a web-site to look at these materials?

C5. What would you change to make the program more interesting to you?

Focus Group Survey

Please read each statement carefully. Place an X in the box that best shows how much you agree or disagree with the statement. If you don't know how you feel or you do not wish to rate a statement, please skip it and move on to the next.

Are you _____ male or _____ female?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Girls should have the same opportunities as guys.					
b. Girls like guys who take charge.					
c. It is important for a guy to show other guys he can keep his girlfriend in line.					
d. If a girl messes around with a guy one time, she can't refuse the next time.					
e. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions.					
f. Girls often say they don't want to mess around but they really do.					
g. It is okay for a guy to want to know where his girlfriend is and who she is with when they are not together.					
h. Threatening to break up with someone is a good way to keep them from doing things you don't like.					
i. If a girl doesn't want to kiss her boyfriend she shouldn't have to.					
j. There are times when it is okay to hit someone you are dating.					
k. It is all right for a girl to ask a guy out.					
l. Guys should always try to go all the way when they are out with a girl.					
m. If a guy tries to make out with a girl and the girl says "no", the guy should NOT continue to push her to make out anyway.					
n. Sometimes a guy needs to get a little forceful with his girlfriend to keep her in line.					