



Partners in Prevention

FROM THE DESK OF THE PREVENTION EDUCATORS

We are so excited to be starting our second year as prevention educators! We began our prevention program last year from the ground up and presented to over 2500 students in our eight county area. We are looking forward to a new year and are proud to announce we were awarded a rape prevention education grant from the Department of Health and Senior Services that allows us the opportunity to present multiple sessions to students. Research has shown that for prevention to be effective information must be presented multiple times. According to the Missouri Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence, “research shows that although these programs are effective in the short term, for a sustained behavior change to take place, there needs to be multiple sessions over a period of time and the groups need to be separated by gender.” We are pleased to announce that our presentations will now include multiple sessions to engage your students and further their understanding of violence prevention. From our experiences last year, students who participated in multiple sessions showed more understanding of the topics presented, were more open and candid, and more comfortable expressing themselves.

It is our hope that we can work together to end youth violence, and we believe that primary prevention is the key. We look forward to having the opportunity to present to your students or community organization.

Sincerely,

Sunshine Gorskey

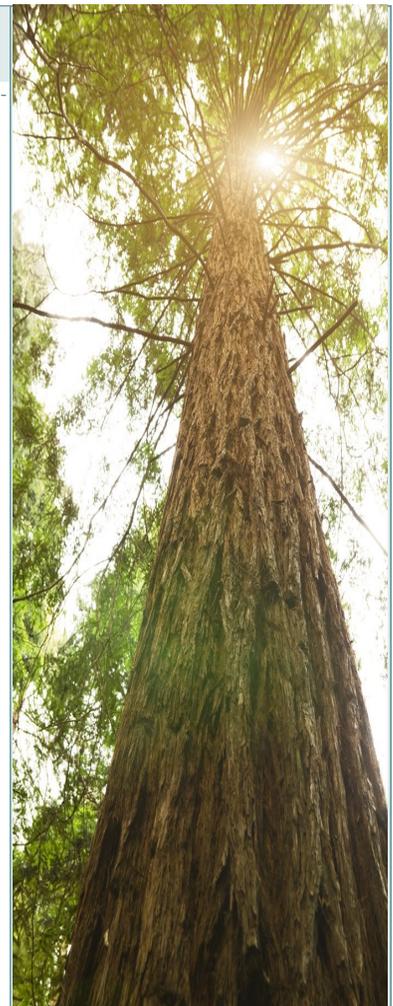
Amber Brignole

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Christos House is pleased to offer our prevention program to area schools and our community-multiple session presentations provided at **no cost**. Our prevention program addresses the important issues that our youth are dealing with everyday, such as bullying, harassment, and healthy and unhealthy relationships. Our goal is to increase youth safety and knowledge regarding various dangers that can harm them in their everyday social settings. We hope to create positive change through education.

We are proud to offer multiple sessions about: Teen Dating Violence, Healthy Relationships, Sexual Harassment, Sexting, Bullying and Cyber Bullying, Bystander Intervention and Sexual Assault prevention. Students will learn facts about these topics and the lasting effects it can have on them or their peers. Through activities and role plays, they will learn intervention strategies and prevention methods to help them overcome obstacles and prevent potentially harmful situations in their social settings.

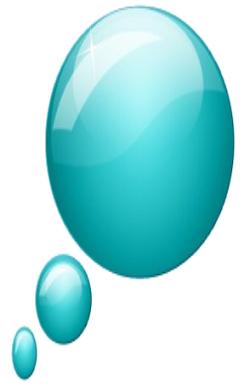
If you are interested in scheduling a presentation or have any questions about our presentations, please call Sunshine or Amber at 417-469-1190.



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WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PREVENTION PROGRAM



We were very pleased to have presented to twelve elementary, middle and high schools, as well as several community presentations in the last school year. The following are comments we received from the schools in our community. Many of the schools are willing to provide a reference and feedback to any other school interested in our prevention program.

“Presenters were well prepared, related well to the students and addressed concerns and questions of the students.”

“The program targets very real issues that the students are faced with (or will at sometime face).”

“Very informative and useful information for the students. It is important for them to receive this information from many different sources and people.”

“Love the follow-up. I will use this data to improve the guidance counseling program here at school. Thank you!”

“Both presenters were very professional, great listeners. It was very evident how much they believe in the programs and how much they care about kids. We’re looking forward to having them come back soon.”

“Audience friendly, not intimidating to students.”

To receive a list of schools willing to provide a reference, please contact Amber or Sunshine.

50% TO 80% OF TEENS REPORT KNOWING SOMEONE INVOLVED IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP.

O’Keefe, M., & Trester, L. (1998). Victims of dating violence among high school students. *Violence Against Women, 4*(2).

EXAMPLES OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

- ◆ Name-calling
- ◆ Embarrassing a partner in the presence of others
- ◆ Creating rumors and/or disclosing secrets
- ◆ Harassing a partner
- ◆ Slapping, punching, kicking, grabbing, pushing, choking and/or restraining a partner
- ◆ Making sexual advances without consent
- ◆ Excessive monitoring or stalking a partner
- ◆ Controlling and/or limiting a partner’s actions and/or beliefs
- ◆ Exploiting a partner

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE: AN OVERVIEW

Teen Dating Violence (TDV) is a pattern of behavior that includes physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse used by one person in an intimate relationship to exert power and control over another person. TDV is generally defined as occurring among individuals between the ages of 13-19 years old. Like intimate partner violence among adults, TDV occurs without respect to age, race, religion, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation.

Many teens are unable to report the warning signs of abuse and say that monitoring someone’s phone usage, controlling who their partner sees or speaks to and extreme jealousy are signs that their partner really loves them. Technology has opened up many more avenues in which to abuse another. Teens are perpetrating teen dating violence and bullying through social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and other networks. Teens are also using cell phones to monitor partner’s behaviors and locations, along with sending offensive and obscene words and images to their partners to peers and the Internet (sexting). Approximately 20% of adolescents say their partners have used the Internet and/or tech devices to spread rumors that cause them emotional harm. In addition, approximately one out of 10 adolescents report threats of physical harm by a partner using tech devices. Because teens struggle with the concept of independence, many forms of TDV with tech devices occur without parents being aware of the abuse.

EXAMPLES OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE USING TECHNOLOGY:

- Monitoring partner’s social network page and excessively calling partner, harassment using texting, postings.
- Sharing explicit words and/or images of partner with others without permission.
- Using verbally abusive language to promote fear or to slander a partner’s image.
- Stalking a partner using phones and/or other tech devices.
- Invading privacy and accessing personal devices and/or property without permission.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY PREVENTION

In the past, prevention efforts focused on risk reduction-focusing on women’s behavior to end domestic and sexual violence. Advocates employed educational strategies such as encouraging women to travel in groups, take self-defense courses and/or avoid drinking. While these are well-meaning ideas, these initial strategies shifted the blame for violence from the perpetrator to the victim. Violence prevention activities have re-focused on changing the behaviors of perpetrators and social attitudes that contribute to an environment in which violence can occur. Prevention activities are now focusing on primary prevention-preventing violence before it occurs rather than dealing with the aftermath of violence. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have developed much of the framework for violence prevention models. According to the CDC, there are three levels of violence prevention:

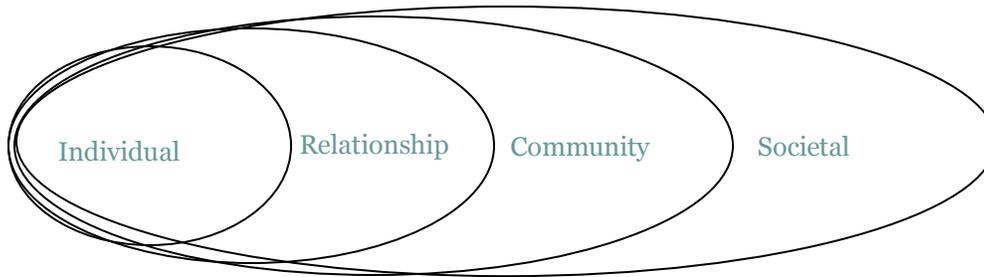
Primary Prevention-activities that take place before the violence has occurred to *prevent* initial perpetration or victimization.

Secondary Prevention-immediate responses after violence has occurred to address the short-term consequences of violence.

Tertiary Prevention-long term responses after violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence. Tertiary prevention also includes the work of batterer intervention programs and sex offender treatment interventions.

Prevention has become a public health issue. By viewing violence prevention as a public health issue, it focuses on the health and well-being of the community rather than an individual. It looks at how to *prevent* disease or injury rather than *treat* disease or injury. That is why primary prevention is so important.

The social ecological model was developed to show multiple factors that contribute to domestic and sexual violence. The model has four levels: individual, relationship, community and societal. An intervention at any level has an effect on each of the other levels. For example, changing an individual’s behavior will have an effect on the relationship, community and societal levels.



At the individual level are the attitudes and beliefs that support violence. These are influenced by a person’s background and experiences.

The relationship level looks at an individual’s peer group and family. These relationships help to shape an individual’s behavior and actions.

At the community level are the schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and churches in an individual’s community and/or social environment.

The societal level includes the larger influences of national media, laws and culture.

The prevention team is working hard to incorporate this model into our program and focus on primary prevention so we can do our best for the individuals and communities we serve. That is why this year, we are offering our presentations on a multiple session basis and collaborating with community agencies to influence policy so we can work together to end violence.

TITLE IX REQUIREMENTS

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. It requires schools to take immediate and effective steps to respond to sexual violence in accordance with its requirements.

Our prevention educators recently attended a meeting with the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence about prevention education and discussed Title IX and how we can assist your school in implementing the requirements. The Christos House prevention educators can work with your school to:

- Train school personnel about violence prevention.
- Assist in implementing a school-based stay away agreement.
- Develop policies to respond to abusive behavior against students.
- Develop a plan to promote school safety.

If you would like more information about assistance with meeting Title IX requirements or if you would like to find out about resources, please contact Christos House prevention educators.



WHAT'S NEW?

The prevention team has been working diligently to develop new ideas to add to our prevention education presentations. Currently, we are working on developing a self-esteem presentation for girls that will explore who teens feel they really are and what is important to them personally. The presentation will also address relational aggression, communication styles, problem solving and body image. Girls will participate through a variety of activities and role plays to further engage them in learning.

We are also working on parent/teen workshops in which teens and their parents can work together to learn about violence prevention.

Risky Relationships, a teen relationship and violence simulation will also be offered this year to interested students. Risky Relationships was developed as a tool to help teens realize the harsh consequences of relationship choices. Groups of four teens will participate in the simulation and learn about the impact of violence in relationships. This is a great way to introduce teens to the serious topic of teen violence and abuse.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

OVERVIEW OF THE GREEN DOT STRATEGY

So, we've all seen the U.S. maps showing red dots pop up to simulate an epidemic spreading until the entire map is red, right? Picture your school map, same red dots popping up everywhere, only the red dots stand for each individual action or inaction of violence. Scary, huh? That is the world our students live in.

Now, picture green dots slowly popping up and eventually displacing all of the red dots completely reversing the violence “epidemic.” The green dots represent every individual choice to promote positive behaviors and counteract the violence.

Yes, it can happen. Yes, it can change. We just have to take the first steps to make it happen. It takes a collaborative effort. We want green dots...

Do you?

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THE GREEN DOT STRATEGY

In June, we attended The Green Dot Strategy, Middle School Bystander Intervention Strategy Pilot conference in Columbia. The Green Dot strategy is a comprehensive approach to violence prevention that uses the power of peer and cultural influence across all levels of the socio-economic model, a framework for understanding the interconnected nature and influence of the individual, relationships, community and society. Informed by the social change theory, this model targets all community members as potential bystanders, and seeks to engage them through awareness, education and skills practice, in proactive behaviors that establish intolerance of violence as the norm. It also promotes reactive interventions in high-risk situations to bring about the ultimate reduction of violence.

We were very excited to attend this training, as this is a brand new strategy. Previously there were only trainings for bystander intervention for high school and college age students. This is an entirely different strategy. The curriculum differences include adjustments for the appropriate developmental level. This curriculum focuses more on the surrounding adults and on bullying behaviors. Since middle schoolers are at the peak stage of peer influence, many strive to conform rather than stand out or stand up against anything against the norm. Green Dot provides ways to stand up “invisibly” so that change can still take place without hurting their “status quo.”

There will be further trainings prior to implementation of this strategy; however, we can answer questions you may have and, since this is a collaborative effort, we would love to invite any of your staff to join us at the final training so that we can work together to place those green dots on your map!

Dr. Dorothy Edwards, author of the Green Dot Prevention Strategy, presented at this training. She holds a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Texas Women's University and is the Executive Director of Green Dot, etc., a center dedicated to effective intervention and prevention of power-based personal violence. Dr. Edwards is currently working with government entities, state coalitions, military, non-profits, community organizations, high schools and colleges from around the globe. For more information about the Green Dot Strategy, please visit: www.livethegreendot.com.

Information provided by the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PREVENTION PROGRAM



We love getting feedback from the students we present to. We never know what kind of impact we have had until we read the comments. Here's what some of the students had to say about our programs:

What they liked best about the program:

"That we were able to be involved and answer questions instead of being lectured."

"The presentation made me aware of how serious teen dating violence really is and now I know the signs of it and if I ever see these signs, I can try to stop it."

"I liked how clearly the speakers explained everything, and how they stopped and listened to what you had to say."

"It gave me confidence to seek action against name calling."

"It helped me decide how to choose a better relationship. Not to stay in an unhealthy one."

"I liked how everything you said was exactly right and how well you related with us and made it fun."

"It made me think a little about certain things I can change in my relationship. It gave me courage to talk to my boyfriend."

About what they learned in our presentations:

"All the warning signs, numbers to call and knowing you guys are here for us."

"To set limits on my relationships and let my partner have her limits."

"It helped me realize what I really want in a relationship."

"I learned that if one person stands up, it makes a difference." -Bullying presentation

"I learned that bullying can be very effective and hurtful to anyone and that it is wrong and we should keep trying to stop it."

"I learned that sexual harassment is not just touching, it's words too."

"I learned that I might need to work on some things about myself."

"Everything. I think that I have found some signs that my boyfriend might soon become controlling/abusive. He has a record for abusiveness."

Comments:

"Thank you for doing what you do. My Mom and I were abused and still struggle to get our life back to this day."

"I have been a part of an abusive relationship and never told anybody. I thought it was my fault. This really helps and I'm glad that I got out of that situation."

"I love learning about this and my Mom thinks it's good for me to learn." Elementary student

"I've been taunted and teased by boys and girls. You really understand me. I don't like being called sexual names."

"You guys teach us so much! I like you guys coming!" Multiple session student

STUDENTS IN VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS

In almost every presentation, we have had someone come forward to share their story. Here are some warning signs that students might be in an abusive relationship.

- Suspicious bruises, scratches or other injuries
- Failing grades
- Loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable
- Alcohol or drug use, noticeable changes in eating or sleeping habits, i.e. sleeping in class
- Depression
- Excuses their dating partner's behavior
- Avoidance of friends and social events
- Loss of self-confidence
- Fearfulness of dating partner

HOW TO HELP

Stay calm. Your reaction may affect how your student responds to the situation.

Create a safe environment. Make sure your student feels safe and comfortable to talk and reassure them that you will not point blame.

Don't rush. Allow your student to express what's going on and don't be offended or upset if they pull away.

Don't blame. Avoid blaming or put-downs about your student's partner. This will only make the teen less likely to tell you about things in the future.

Be there. Thank the teen for opening up to you and tell them that you care about them. Utilize available community resources.

To learn more about talking with teen perpetrators, please contact us.

CHRISTOS HOUSE, INC.

Christos House is a non-profit organization that provides various services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. All services are confidential and provided at no cost.

Our mission is to provide a safe place for victims of domestic violence to escape the abuse and make positive change in a supportive atmosphere.

Christos House operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. We serve the following counties in Missouri: Howell, Oregon, Shannon, Douglas, Ozark, Texas, Carter & Wright.

Our 24 hour hotline:

(800) 611-5853

Office: (417) 469-1190

MEET OUR PREVENTION EDUCATORS

Sunshine Gorskey holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Services from Southwest Baptist University. She previously worked for Christos House as a Prevention Specialist and is pleased to have returned to work in the program again. Sunshine believes that prevention education is the key to end domestic violence and believes it begins with our children and youth.

Amber Brignole received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Criminology from Drury University and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Counseling. She started at Christos House as an intern in the spring of 2010, continued as a volunteer, and then became one of the prevention specialists. As a survivor of a teen dating violence/ domestic abuse relationship, she believes wholeheartedly in the prevention program and its need.

We are willing to present to any group or organization about prevention education. The more awareness we create as a community and individuals, the better world we create for our younger generations. Violence prevention is a health issue, one that everyone should be involved in. We believe through education and awareness we can end the cycle of violence.

Christos House was founded in July of 1982 by a group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to provide services for victims of domestic violence. We have grown to a 36 bed facility with two outreach offices and resale shops to serve the community.

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