

Youth Activities

Outreach and Education Ideas



Create a Clothesline of Decorated T-shirts



Have a table where students can come and decorate a t-shirt or a cardboard cut-out in the shape of a t-shirt. Then, hang them on a clothesline or on multiple clotheslines throughout the school. If you want to use real t-shirts, you can hold an old t-shirt drive where students, teachers and staff donate old t-shirts or ask for donations from the community.

Potential prompts for the activity could be:

- How has violence or harassment impacted you?
- How do you see a world without dating or sexual violence?
- What does it look like to be a survivor?
- What does a healthy relationship look like?

Create a Pathway to a Violence-free School

This activity can be done using a green carpet, yellow brick road, or other type of pathway. Include road signs or components of the road where necessary steps to achieving a violence-free school are written or symbolized. On a poster or banner placed at the end of the pathway, students could write their thoughts on what their school would be like if it were completely free of violence and harassment.

Statistical/Informational Signs

Using butcher paper or poster board, make large signs that highlight statistics and information related to dating and sexual violence, then post the signs around the school. Focus on including information that is especially relevant to the age group you are targeting and have other students think of creative, appropriate ways to make the signs eye-catching.

Smaller versions can be produced by hand or on a computer to distribute or to hang in places where space is more limited (e.g., bathroom stalls). Please see the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Resource List found in this document for recent statistics on dating violence and sexual assault.

Critiquing Mass Media Messages

Critique messages found on TV, radio, magazines, movies, billboards and other advertisements. Initiate discussion on how these messages may or may not reflect the principles of equality, respect, dignity and non-violence. Have participants bring in their own examples, or provide examples for them.

Here are some examples of what to look for and discuss:

- Examples of power and control such as women being in inferior positions to men
- Examples of the objectification of women or men
- Examples that support myths about dating or sexual violence (e.g., victim blaming, "She was playing hard to get," or "He shouldn't have made her mad")
- Examples that enforce rigid gender roles



Art, Poetry, Essay or Song Lyric Contest

This section includes guidelines for a contest that can be organized by teachers, student organizations or community members. This is an opportunity for creative expression through which students may share concerns, their stories and personal safety tips using graphic art, song lyrics, essays, poetry, button or bookmark designs. Possible themes include dating violence, gender respect, words can hurt, personal boundaries, bystander intervention and rigid gender expectations or assumptions.

Speak Up. Speak Out: Flirting vs. Sexual harassment

Depending on the type of contest you choose to organize, prepare registration forms for the entrants detailing all specifications for their entry. Teachers can help students identify areas of the school policy, or student code of conduct, that could also be highlighted on the poster to affirm student rights. Judges for the contest can be prominent members of your community, including the school principal, superintendent, or the executive director of the local rape crisis center or domestic violence service center.

If you do not have a budget that allows you to purchase prizes for the contest, ask local businesses if they would be willing to donate a prize. For example, local restaurants might offer gift certificates or movie theaters might offer a few free movie passes.

Getting the Word Out

It is best to target your audiences with age-appropriate letters and flyers. In addition to targeting schools, local newspapers, community newsletters and local youth organizations may help you get the word out. Make the deadline for entries early enough to allow time to judge materials.

Releases

It is best to provide and collect parental release forms; these documents will allow you to keep all art and written entries for future use and will allow you to announce and recognize the artists publicly, if desired. In the release, include information about how materials might be used.

Recognition/Distribution

Besides using local newsletters, newspapers, or magazines, the entries could also be reprinted in youth organization newsletters and in your program's future publications. Graphic designs could be used for buttons, bookmarks, mouse pads, agency calendars, school book covers or banners. Remember, both the students and the schools deserve recognition. Groups such as Partners In Education and school parent networks may also help with recognition activities.

Peer Education Organization

Start a peer education club or organization. Gather a group of committed teens who want to spread awareness about sexual and dating violence, and who desire to make their school and community healthy and safe. Call the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) to find out more about the Texas PEACE Project (Peer Educators Acting for Change and Equality). The Texas PEACE Project is targeted to junior high and high school students and is designed to develop leadership and prevention skills around issues of school safety such as sexual harassment, dating violence and sexual assault. TAASA provides support to teams that are newly forming, training young people through the annual Youth Summit and subsequent regional trainings. Youth leaders and adult allies are encouraged to attend.

To find out more about the program, or to see if a PEACE Project is already active in your community, please visit the Texas PEACE Project website at www.taasa.org/tpp/ or contact TAASA at 512-474-7190.

