

Speak Up. Speak Out. Speak Now!

A manual to speaking about the importance of addressing teen dating violence and Break the Cycle's work

Break the Cycle

Empowering Youth to End
Domestic Violence

888.988.TEEN

volunteer@breakthecycle.org

www.breakthecycle.org | www.thesafespace.org

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Introduction

Welcome to Speak Up. Speak Out. Speak Now!

This manual and accompanying slideshow will train you to speak out about Break the Cycle's mission to end domestic and dating violence.

The goal is to help you raise awareness in your local community and gather support for this important issue.

Thank you for downloading this toolkit. If you have any questions as you are learning the information, please contact us at: volunteer@breakthecycle.org.



Talking Points



Use these talking points to prepare for and guide your presentation. Read over the pages, filling in your own opinions and ideas where space is given. This process will help you design and deliver a presentation that is comfortable for you and your audience.

After completing the questionnaire, the notes will be a guide when speaking against domestic and dating violence in your community. Feel free to fill the pages with your own words and ideas.

You know your community better than anyone else—brainstorm and be creative!

Talking Points

Youth & Domestic and Dating Violence

1. Introduce yourself:

How did you learn about Break the Cycle?

Why are you volunteering for Break the Cycle?

2. What is domestic and dating violence?

Domestic violence is defined as violence or physical abuse toward your spouse or domestic partner. Domestic violence can be verbal, mental, physical and sexual. Dating violence is abuse that occurs between two non-married, intimate partners.

3. Why does Break the Cycle focus on teens?

Domestic Violence (also known as DV) does not discriminate. It affects all races, religions, culture, genders, and ages. As teens form their very first relationships, they often face unique challenges that adults do not.

Unaware of their legal rights, teens might not trust police or the adults around them. Teens often feel pressure to follow the crowd; "If my friends are dating, I should too." Teens often have limited access to money, shelter and transportation, which might be necessary to escape the abusive partner. If a teen is being abused by their partner, it can be difficult to avoid because they might attend the same school or live in the same neighborhood.

Talking Points

Break the Cycle

1. What is Break the Cycle?

Break the Cycle is a trusted resource teens can turn to for advice and help no matter what the situation.

Break the Cycle is a non-profit organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and empower youth (ages 12- 24) to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

2. What are Break the Cycle's programs?

Visit www.breakthecycle.org and www.thesafespace.org to gather the most recent information about our current programs.

3. What am I doing to help Break the Cycle?

Why do you enjoy speaking out against domestic violence?

What have I helped accomplish through volunteering?

Talking Points

What Can We Do About Domestic & Dating Violence?



Brainstorm ideas with your presentation group of how you can stop dating violence in your community. We've provided some ideas to get you started. Think of your own and add them to the list below.

Have fun and be creative!

1. *Talk about it.*
2. *Plan activities to raise community awareness.*
3. *Research state and local policy.*
4. *Volunteer with a local domestic violence organization.*
5. *Donate!*
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

For more information, please visit www.breakthecycle.org.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following pages are filled with frequently asked questions that may come up during your presentation. Some answers have been filled in but others are left blank for you to research on your own.



Read through the FAQ's and write down some of your own thoughts! If there are questions you cannot answer, please contact volunteer@breakthecycle.org for added help

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Mission - History - Programs

Q. What is Break the Cycle?

A: Founded in LA in 1996, Break the Cycle is a non-profit organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and empower youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

We provide young people, ages 12 to 24, with law-based prevention & intervention domestic violence (DV) services. To better protect young people nationwide, we expanded operations to include a public policy office in Washington, DC in January 2004.

Q. What does Break the Cycle do?

A: Break the Cycle takes action against abuse before it starts by reaching young people as they are forming their first relationships through free, comprehensive programs that engage, educate and empower youth.

- **Engage** – Through youth activism, Break the Cycle engages and trains young people to raise awareness about dating violence in their community. These programs foster youth leadership in the movement to end domestic violence. Supported by Break the Cycle to develop and implement youth-led, youth-driven projects, our peer leaders prevent abuse by spreading life-saving information through peer-to-peer communication. We are expanding the reach of our peer leader efforts by creating teen-action toolkits that will mobilize youth to take action against domestic violence in their communities nationwide.
- **Educate** – Our interactive prevention program teaches youth about domestic and dating abuse, healthy relationships and their legal rights and responsibilities. We increase awareness through public education campaigns and community outreach. Break the Cycle also trains teachers, attorneys, social workers, doctors, law enforcement officers and others to recognize unique challenges young victims face and how to intervene with sensitivity, confidence and appropriate referrals. Through our *Ending Violence* DVD Project, Break the Cycle is expanding our classroom-based program into a classroom-friendly learning tool and curriculum with which teachers and other service-providers can reach thousands more young people nationwide.
- **Empower** – Break the Cycle has helped thousands of young victims build safe, nonviolent lives through free legal services, safety-planning, crisis intervention, referrals and information. In January 2007, we launched thesafespace.org to connect isolated young victims to a support network, bringing the resources directly to those in need. As a national technical assistance provider and policy advocate, we partner with schools, courts, community organizations, government agencies and others to identify and combat barriers teen victims face. Through these efforts, we work toward systemic change to ensure young people can access the help and resources needed to maintain healthy lives and keep their families safe.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why Teens?

Q. Why does Break the Cycle focus on teens?

A: Break the Cycle tries to reach teens as they form their first relationships – when patterns of abuse can start. In addition to typical barriers adult DV victims face, teens experience unique challenges. Bolded below are just *some* of the problems teens face in abusive relationships:

Teens forming their **first relationships** do not always know what a positive romance looks like. They are **unaware of their legal rights** and might not **trust** police or the adults around them. Since they spend a lot of time with friends, there is the added **pressure to follow the crowd**: *If everyone else is dating, I should be too*. If a teen is being abused by their partner, it can be very difficult to avoid that partner because they probably **attend the same school** or live in the same neighborhood. Also, many adults do not take teen relationships seriously, making getting help even more difficult for teens. Break the Cycle is a trusted resource teens can turn to for advice and help no matter what the situation.

Q. Are there really teen victims of domestic violence?

A: Sadly, as many as **1 in 3 teens experience abuse** in a romantic relationship (Teen Research Unlimited, February 2005). **43% of the students** who have participated in our education program report **hearing about, seeing or experiencing DV**, either personally or among friends or family. Even if you haven't heard about it, there's a chance this very serious issue is affecting someone you know or care about.

Q. How does domestic violence affect me? What impact does it have on my community?

A: _____

Economic Effects

60% of employed domestic violence victims report having been **reprimanded at work for behaviors related to the abuse** and as many as **53%** report having lost their jobs because of abuse (U.S. General Accounting Office, "Domestic Violence Prevalence and Implications for Employment among Welfare Recipients," November 1998).

Domestic violence costs the community anywhere **from \$150 million to \$67 billion annually**, including medical expenses, lost wages, lowered worker productivity, property damage, emergency shelter costs & mental health treatment. (Kaiser Family Foundation, Women's Health Data Book: A Profile of Women's Health in the US, Third Edition).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Health & Social Effects



Teenage girls who have witnessed violence are **two to three times more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, i.e. smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders and unsafe sex.** Teen girls who have experienced violence firsthand were also more likely to take these health risks (Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, November 2001).

Teen girls who have witnessed violence are **two to four times more likely** than those with no exposure to violence to have **sex at an early age, have intercourse with strangers, have multiple sex partners or test positive for a sexually transmitted disease** (Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, November 2001).

Helping Someone Who is Being Abused

Q. What should I do if I think that someone I know is being abused?

A: The most important thing is to remain supportive, to understand how difficult the situation is, and to encourage that person to seek help. Call Break the Cycle (888-988-TEEN) if you think we can help. We provide legal information and referrals to organizations that serve your local area or age group.

Brainstorm more ways to be supportive:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Public Policy - Take Action

Q: How can I find out more about local domestic violence legislation, and how can I help impact policy changes?

1. Write a letter to your local Councilmember advocating more funding for domestic violence programs.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



Q: What are other ways to take action in my community?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Startling Statistics

Here are just a few of the many statistics about domestic and dating violence. Read them over to prepare yourself to give a knowledgeable presentation. Important words or phrases have been bolded for your convenience.

Remember that these are not the only statistics on the issue of violence so continue to research! Look at our sources and visit www.breakthecycle.org for current numbers.



Startling Statistics

Domestic Violence

Each year, approximately **2.3 million** people in the United States are **raped and/or physically assaulted** by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.¹

A woman is more likely to be injured, raped or killed by a current or former partner than by any other person.²

At least **37% of female patients** and **17% of all patients** treated in hospital emergency departments for **violence related injuries** were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.³

Teen Dating Violence

One in three teenagers report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their dating partner.¹

Girls and women between the ages of **16 and 24 are the most vulnerable** to domestic violence, experiencing the highest per capita rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence.²

One-third of teens report experiencing some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including **verbal and emotional abuse**.³

Devastation of Dating Violence

Research indicates a **direct correlation** between youth **victimization**, **mental** health problems and **delinquent** behavior.¹ 92% of female offenders report being victims of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse before entering the juvenile justice system.

Adolescent victims of dating violence are more likely to engage in **high-risk behaviors**, including **substance abuse**, unhealthy weight control, **sexual risk behavior**, pregnancy and **suicidal behavior**.²

Between one-quarter and one-half of homeless women and children became homeless because of abuse.³

The Economic Impact of Relationship Violence

60% of employed domestic violence victims report having been **reprimanded at work** for behaviors related to abuse and as many as 53% report having lost their jobs because of abuse.¹ Domestic Violence costs the community anywhere from \$150 million to \$67 billion annually because of **medical expenses**, **lost wages**, lowered worker **productivity**, property **damage**, emergency shelter costs and mental health **treatment**.¹²

Startling Statistics

Sources

Domestic Violence

1. National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence
2. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999." October 2001.
3. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments." July 1997.

Teen Dating Violence

1. Teen Research Unlimited, February 2005
2. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999." October 2001.
3. Carolyn Tucker Halpern, Ph.D. et al., "Dating Violence against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286 (October 2001) 572.

Devastation of Dating Violence

1. Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications. 2003. National Institute of Justice. Washington, DC.
2. Jay G. Silverman, Ph.D. et al., "Dating Violence against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy and Suicidality." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. October 2001. Timothy A Roberts, MD, LCDR and Jonathan Klein, MD, MPH, "Intimate Partner Abuse and High Risk Behavior in Adolescents." *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. April 2003.
3. National Coalition for the Homeless. (1999, accessed 2001, October 29). Domestic Violence and Homelessness.

Devastation of Dating Violence

1. U.S. General Accounting Office, "Domestic Violence Prevalence and Implications for Employment among Welfare Recipients," November 1998.
2. Kaiser Family Foundation, Women's Health Data Book: A Profile of Women's Health in the United States, Third Edition.

How to Secure a Presentation



Use the following templates or create your own to contact local organizations, clubs and groups you can speak to about domestic and dating violence. You can contact local shelters, scout troops or PTAs. If you are near a college campus, Greek groups and student organizations are great places to speak. Don't limit yourself to these contacts. You know your community better than anyone else so **brainstorm!**

Once you have found a group to contact, call or write a letter to establish communication. We have included a sample phone script and letter. You can use these or modify them to make your own. Just be sure to include why you want to speak to this particular group and how the organization can schedule a presentation with you.

How to Secure a Presentation

Sample Phone Script

Hi my name is _____ (your name) and I am calling on behalf of a Los Angeles based non-profit organization called Break the Cycle. Break the Cycle engages, educates and empowers youth (between 12–24) through preventative education and legal services, helping youth build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

I understand that _____ (organization) holds regular meetings. I would really enjoy the opportunity to give a presentation about domestic and dating violence to the group so we can discuss how this problem affects our community and what we can do to stop it.

This presentation is a great way to raise awareness and inform _____ (organization) about a major problem affecting 1 out of 3 teens today.

If you would like more information about Break the Cycle, visit www.breakthecycle.org. If you would like to set up a presentation with me, you can call _____ (phone number) or email me at _____ (email). Thank you for your time.

How to Secure a Presentation

Sample Letter

Hello _____(name or organization),

I am writing on behalf of Break the Cycle, a non-profit organization whose mission is to engage, educate and empower youth ages 12-24 to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

With domestic and dating violence affecting 1 in 3 teens, the problem cannot be ignored. I would like to speak with _____(organization) about how this problem affects our community and what we can do to stop it.

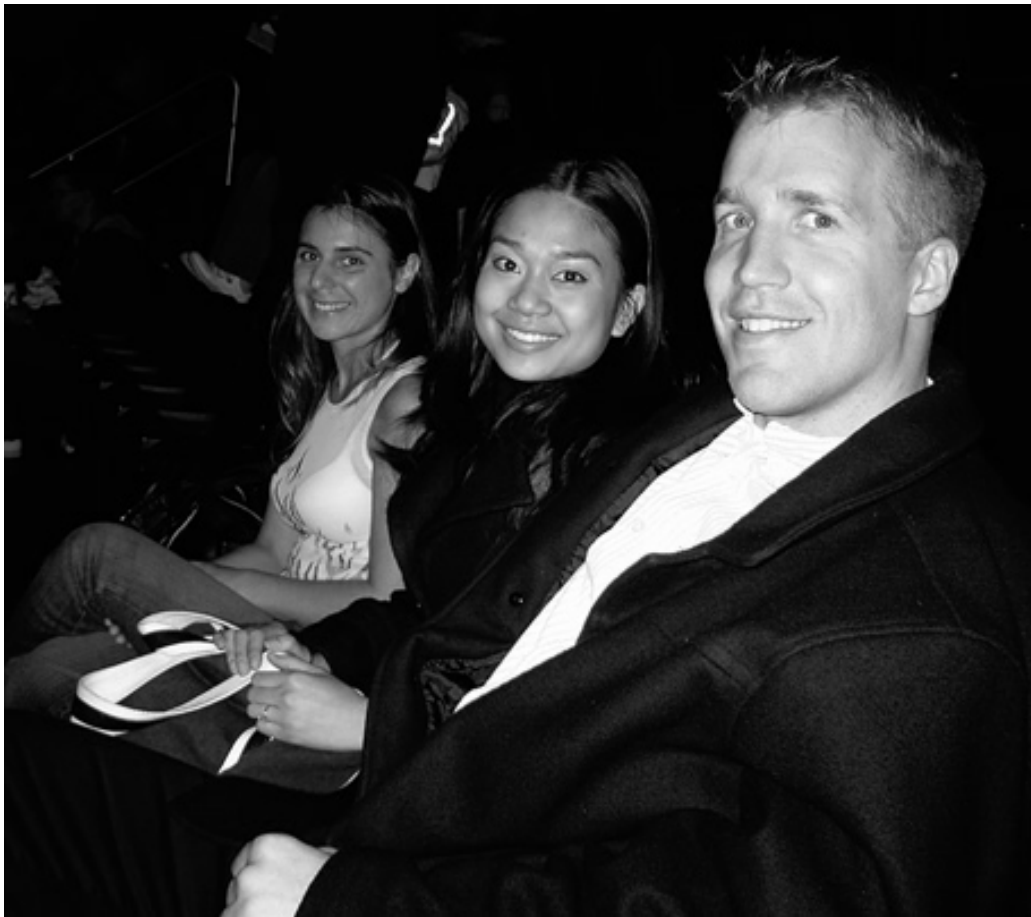
If you would like more information about Break the Cycle, visit www.breakthecycle.org. If you would like to set up a presentation with me, call _____(phone) or email me at _____(email).

Best,
_____(name)

Presentation Materials

The following pages offer quick facts about domestic and dating violence, ideas on how to prevent it and ways to learn more. These pages are intended to be copied front and back and then distributed to your presentation audience.

These handouts summarize the presentation and build support for Break the Cycle.



Problem: Domestic & Dating Violence

1 in 3 teens experience abuse in a romantic relationship.

40% of girls, ages 14 to 17, know someone their age who has been hit by a boyfriend.

Teens experience dating abuse at a higher rate than any other age group. Teens are often unaware of what is healthy or unhealthy in a relationship. They face unique obstacles including confusion about their legal rights, distrust of adults and lack of money, shelter or transportation.

Solution: Educate Youth to Break the Cycle

There is hope.

Domestic violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned if we teach youth to create healthy relationships and break the cycle of violence.

Help is available.

Break the Cycle provides preventive education, free and confidential legal services and peer leadership opportunities to youth. We give them tools they need to create safe and healthy relationships.



Help Break the Cycle of Violence

I will make a donation to help end domestic and dating violence

Circle Choices: By - Check Credit Card For - \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other: _____

Name: _____

Card #: _____

Company: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____

Circle:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Visa American Express

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Discover Master Card

What is Break the Cycle?

Mission

Break the Cycle engages, educates and empowers youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

History

Headquartered in LA, we are a national nonprofit that offers law-based preventive domestic violence services *exclusively* to teens.

Accomplishments

Since 1996, Break the Cycle has educated over 150,000 teens and helped more than 4,000 youth transition from violence to safety.

Proven Results

A study by the CDC and RAND Corporation proved Break the Cycle's programs successfully educate teens about domestic violence and decrease tolerance of abusive behavior.

How Can I Help?

Speak Up. Speak Out. Speak Now!

Raise awareness about teen dating violence. Encourage teachers and youth leaders in your communities or congregations to address dating violence. Break the Cycle has a curriculum and video to guide you in speaking to youth. It is available at www.breakthecycle.org/curriculum.html.

Host a fundraiser (bake sale, yard sale, auction, luncheon, car wash) and donate the proceeds to Break the Cycle or another domestic violence organization.

Support local and federal funding for domestic violence programs in your community. Call or send a letter to your representatives.



Engage. Educate. Empower.

✓ I want to become involved with Break the Cycle

My company wants to partner with Break the Cycle.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

- I want to volunteer with Break the Cycle.
- Please send me information about upcoming programs and events.
- I want to fundraise for Break the Cycle.
- Please send me information about domestic and dating violence.

Report Back to Break the Cycle

Speak Up. Speak Out. Speak Now!

The report will inform Break the Cycle about the demographics in your group, how the presentation went and donations or further requests.

Presentation to Adults:

Date of Presentation: _____ Audience Group: _____

Presenter: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Location of presentation: _____

of Presentations: _____ Total # of Audience Members: _____

% Audience Male: _____ % Audience Female: _____

Background/Profession of Audience Members (teachers, lawyers, social workers, students):

Additional Comments:

Please **return this form** along with any donations and requests for more information to:

Break the Cycle
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