

Preventing Intimate Partner Violence in Rural Minnesota through Adolescent Healthy Relationship Programming



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Introduction

- **Intimate partner violence**, defined as physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse, **is a serious, preventable public health concern**.¹
- **Rural areas** experience **equal or higher rates of IPV** and have **less access to IPV prevention resources** than urban areas.^{3, 4}
- **IPV incidence is increasing in Minnesota** and has enormous public health and economic impacts.^{5, 6, 7, 8}
- Studies have found the **most efficacious method for primary IPV prevention is healthy relationship programming for adolescents**, which has been shown to decrease IPV incidence by 56 to 92 percent, even four years after the initial program.^{9, 10}

A Serious Public Health Concern

1 in 4
Women and 1
in 10 men

Were survivors of IPV, according to the 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.²

24%
of teen girls
verbally abused

8% physically abused, and 20% sexually assaulted by an intimate partner by age 16.¹¹

↑ risk

IPV survivors have increased risk for depression, anxiety, PTSD suicidal behavior, sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancy.¹²

Project Objectives

- Explore the feasibility and efficacy of healthy relationship programming as a method of IPV primary prevention in rural communities.
- Provide a foundation for future rural healthy relationship curriculum development.
- Generate IPV awareness and advocacy among healthcare providers.

Methods

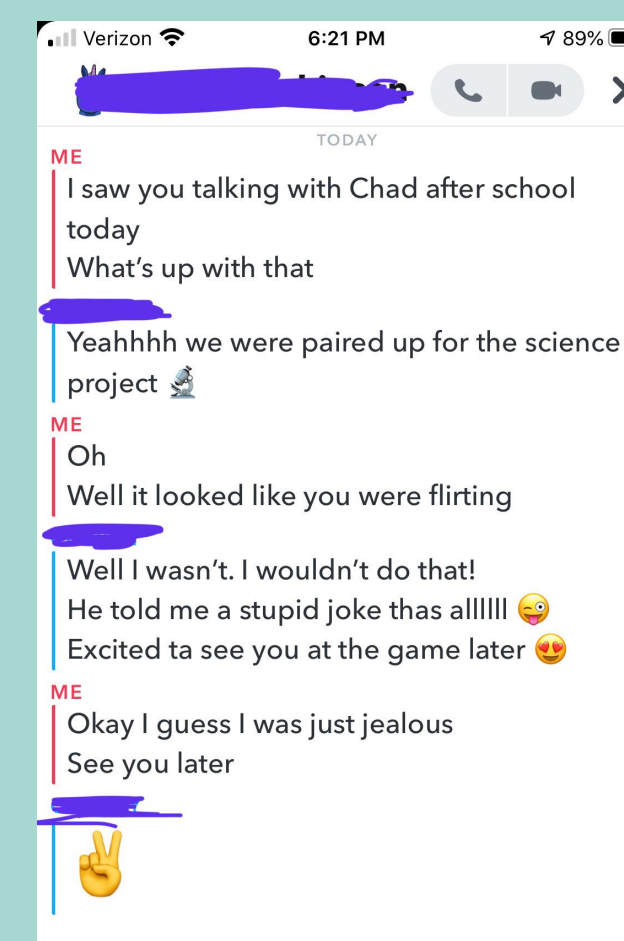
Healthy Relationships Curriculum

Using evidence-based strategies, a three-day healthy relationships curriculum was developed and administered to four different classes of middle schoolers at a public school in a rural county. The diagram below demonstrates what topics were covered and the methods used to teach them.



- R**ecognizing emotions in self and others
- U**nderstanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L**abeling emotions accurately
- E**xpressing emotions appropriately
- R**egulating emotions effectively

The RULER acronym from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence was utilized as a teaching tool as students learned the steps of emotional intelligence.¹³

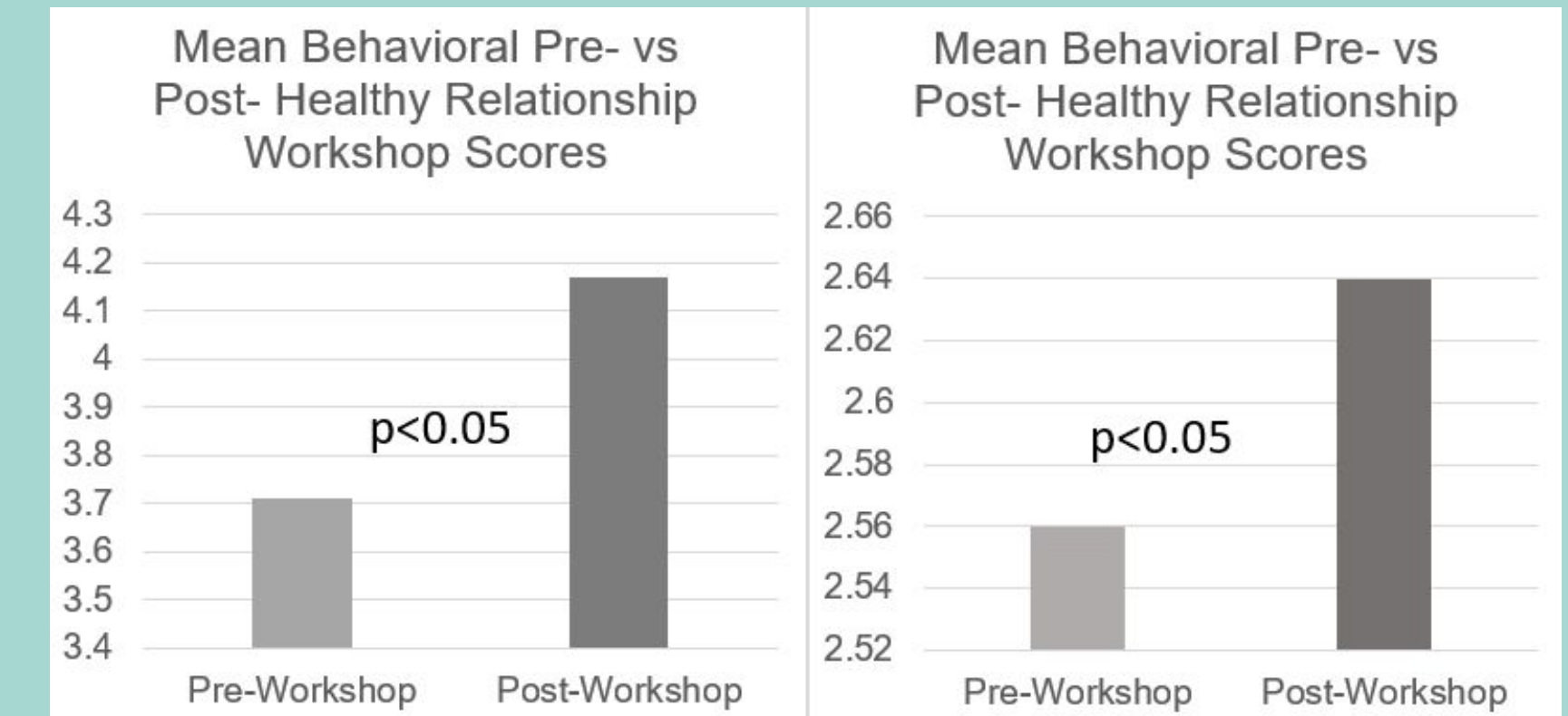


We created Snapchat conversations to use as teaching and discussion points.

Evaluation

Curriculum efficacy was measured with a pre- and post-program survey of behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes relating to IPV.

Evaluation Results



Graph 1: Mean behavioral scores on pre- vs post-healthy relationship workshop survey improved significantly ($p < 0.05$) from 3.71 to 4.17.

Graph 2: Mean attitude scores on pre- vs post-healthy relationship workshop survey improved significantly ($p < 0.05$) from 2.56 to 2.64.

Discussion

- It was shown that our healthy relationship curriculum instilled short-term improvement in behaviors and attitudes surrounding IPV.
- Healthy relationship workshops are feasible and efficacious in rural communities.

Limitations: selection bias, potential short-term nature of results, unclear impact on incidence of IPV in the community

Insights: healthy relationship curriculum best practices must include (1) engaging students with relevant materials; (2) using group-participation activities; (3) developing rapport with students; and (4) extending curriculum to allow adequate review and practice.

Future Directions

1. Follow-up studies by future medical students on the long-term impact of rural healthy relationship programs on IPV incidence and related public health concerns.
2. Public health policy changes to support adolescent healthy relationship programs, as well as survivor support programs.

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