***DATING VIOLENCE***

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According to the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2000), one in three high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship. Forty percent of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 say they know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend. Rapes by acquaintances accounts for 60 percent of all rapes reported to rape crisis centers.

 Since the passing of Ohio Senate House Bill 19 (HB19-3/29/10), all public schools are required to include dating violence in their policies prohibiting harassment, intimidation and bullying. School districts must incorporate dating violence prevention education in the health curriculum for grades 7-12.

As a high school counselor I have seen first hand the affects that toxic, abusive relationships can have on teenagers. I have helped parents deal with suicidal, self-destructing teens due to these emotionally and physically controlling and destructive relationships. Unfortunately many students don’t recognize that they are in these abusive relationships. This is due to lack of education and information. Victims and bystanders are not equipped with the necessary information needed to insure that our school and community are safe. This subject can be isolating and embarrassing since victims is often forced to hide the abuse. Dating abuse can happen to anyone at any age regardless of race or religion, no matter there social status, popularity, or economic background. This type of abuse can be so destructive that it can lead to hospitalization, depression, isolation and even death. We have an obligation to provide a preventative, effective and research based curriculum to address dating violence.

The dating violence unit I have chosen to design will integrate the National Health Education Standards for grades 9-12, and Life Skill standards taken from Marzano and Kendall, Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education, (2000). These life skills standards focus on thinking, reasoning and problem solving, all essential skills when addressing a social problem such as dating violence. The intention of this unit will be to provide definition, awareness, service, prevention and support for all students. As a result of this unit students will be able to identify the difference between caring and abusive relationships, understand causes and consequences, improve communication skills, identify red-flags among peers, learn strategies to develop more positive relationships, and understand they have a supportive and safe place to get further help.

References

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