

**Advocacy for Victims of
Teen Dating Violence**

Sandy Davidson

This project is supported by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K047 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in any of this program are those of the author(s)/presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

**Advocacy:
A movement toward justice**

Justice requires:

1. *The truth be told*
2. *To the extent possible, the harm repaired*
3. *That unjust conditions be eradicated*

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Some Truths about Those who Cause Harm and the Impact

- Backbone of our communities (women) is weakened
- Not living tribal teachings/ values
- Lose sense of safety and stability
- Risks for future generations
- Those who cause harm lose sense of pride and self worth

3

Similarities of Domestic Violence and Teen Dating Violence

- A person who exercises a *pattern* of coercive control
 - in a partner relationship
 - punctuated by one or more acts of intimidating, physical violence, sexual assault, or credible threat of physical violence
 - Shows little regard for the safety and well-being of children

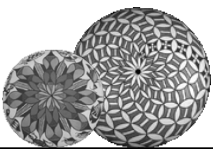
This pattern of control and intimidation may be predominantly psychological, emotional, or sexual in nature or may rely primarily on the use of physical violence.

4

Impact of Harm

Impact varies;

- By the level of violence
- By the degree of exposure, and
- The presence of other risk and protective factors



5

Historical Context and Harm Caused in Indian Country

<p>Pre-Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Women generally viewed as sacred ■ Violence against women was extremely rare 	<p>Early Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The beginning of the loss of culture (beliefs, values, customs and language) ■ The change of status of Native women and children
---	---

6

Survivors of Teen Dating Violence Learn:

- Victims are to blame for the violence
- Anger causes violence
- Use of violence is justified to impose one's will or to resolve conflict
- Those who cause harm do not experience consequences for their actions
- Boys/men should be in control - girls and women should submit
- Women are weak, incompetent, stupid or violent

7

Characteristics of Someone who Causes Harm

- Authoritarian
- Under involved, neglectful, irresponsible
- Undermining
- Self-centered
- Manipulative
- Ability to perform under observation

8

Advocacy to Undo the Harm

- Gives teens their best chance of surviving the dating abuse
- Helps them remain resilient to its effects
- Strengthens relationship between the survivor and the intervening agencies
- Increases a teen's chances of escaping the abuse safely

9

Who Responds and How?
continued

Incident of Battering

Parents Grandparents Aunties, Uncles Siblings Children Relatives

Questions for the advocate

**How do family and community respond?
Are responses helpful or hurtful?
What responses would help strengthen
teen resiliency?**

10

Responses That Hurt:

- Disbelief
- Ignoring
- Discounting
- Making fun
- Minimizing the harm
- Believing the perpetrator

11

Responses That Help:

- Believe that a boyfriend is capable of harming his girlfriend
- Help teens unlearn violence
- Give teen survivor the message that she is worthy of respect
- Reframe the experience of violence and abuse
- Tell survivor the abuse is not their fault and there is nothing wrong with them
- Respect the wishes of a teen victim who is going through dating violence

12

Who Responds and How?

```

graph TD
    A[Incident of Battering] --> B[Social Services]
    A --> C[Spiritual Community]
    A --> D[Advocates]
    A --> E[Schools]
    A --> F[Law Enforcement]
    A --> G[Courts]
    
```

Questions for the advocate

How do systems respond?
How can responses be improved?
What responses would help strengthen surviving teen's resiliency?

13

Youth Accessible Language

- Use clear language
- Avoid or explain conceptual words used
- Explain acronyms
- Use examples to explain complex information
- Avoid "jargon"
- Use easy to read design features
- Make your website, handouts, and agency easy to navigate

Advocacy to Restore Tribal Values

<p><i>Tribal Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Matriarchal ■ Tribal (personal power & "belonging", good of all) ■ Whole (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) ■ Competence and mastery ■ Virtue (respect for all living things) ■ Humility/value of sharing 	<p><i>Mainstream Values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Patriarchal ■ Individual (responsible for self) ■ Separateness (fragmented, specialized) ■ "Winning" and/or competitiveness ■ Dominance/Affluence
--	---

15

Advocacy to Repair the Harm

To the extent possible - *unjust conditions be eradicated*

- Think “tribally”
 - What will benefit everyone in your community?
- Continue to educate and organize community to respond in helpful ways
- Restore values that honor all our relationships
- Holistic
- Create codes, policies, responses that honor women and children

16

Strategies for Long-term Change...

- Advocacy to change policy and practice – that centralize survivor’s safety and offender accountability
- Advocacy to create interventions/ strategies that account for the continuum of offender’s violence and the impact on safety for the young victim

17

Multi-disciplinary Teams

- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
 - Depending on the community, may include representatives from local advocacy program, law enforcement, ICWA health/medical facility, prosecutors, probation, etc.
- Coordinated Community Response (CCR’ s) or other multi-disciplinary teams
 - Any group of concerned community members working to improve responses to victims

18

Community Organizing/ Community Advocacy

Advocacy work to reverse the destructive social norms adapted from mainstream culture that support and perpetuate violence

Changing attitudes, beliefs, and *responses* within tribal nations and society as a whole

19

Social Norms: A Comparison

Mainstream	Tribal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Colonizers came with societal values based on individualism and greed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ with the purpose of extracting all resources possible to serve a few individuals ■ Social constructs created to maintain and keep these values intact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tribal values of reciprocity, generosity, and community are in direct opposition to individuality and greed

20

Individual Advocacy

- Keep the focus on the offender
- Educate and raise awareness with survivor/family/community
- Provide information so teen survivor can make informed decisions
- Help navigate systems that intervene

21

What Teens Need to Hear:
From family, community, systems

- It's okay to be scared, angry, ashamed...
(or however youth is feeling right now)...
- You did nothing wrong.
- Thank you for telling me.
- I/we will do everything I/we can to keep you safe so this doesn't happen again.

22

Sandy Davidson
Sandy@PraxisInternational.org

This project is supported by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K047 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in any of this program are those of the author(s)/presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.
