

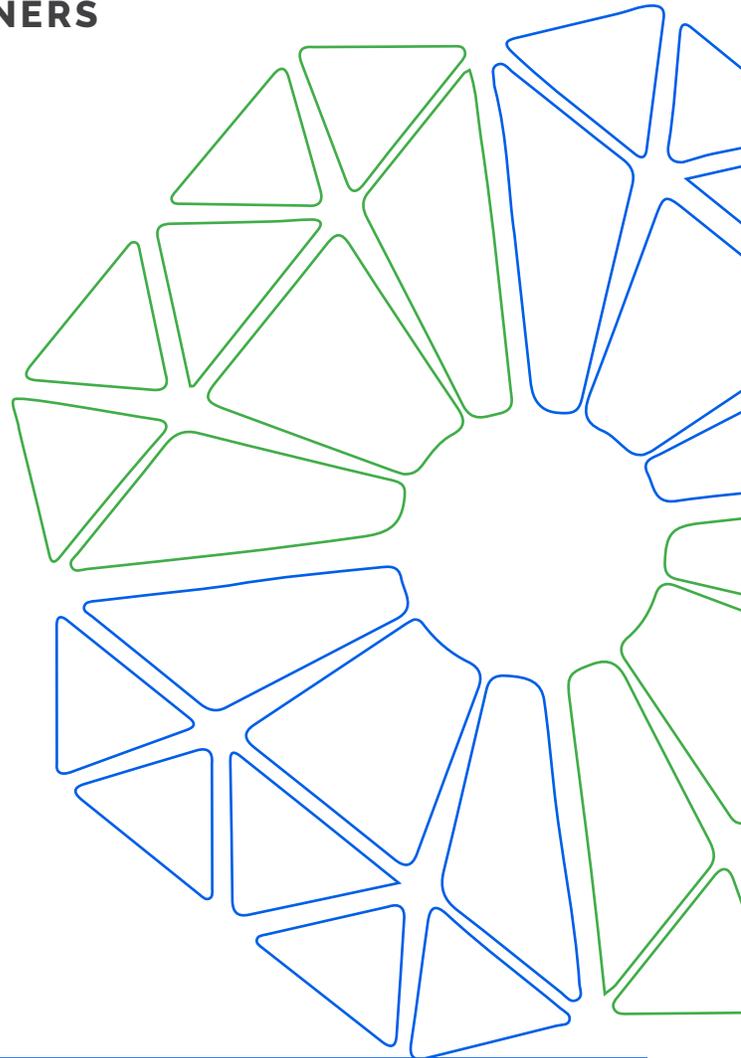


RHY TOOLKIT

A project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

RUNAWAY & HOMELESS YOUTH AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE TOOLKIT

**GUIDANCE AND MATERIALS FOR ADVOCATES AND
PRACTITIONERS**



rhytoolkit.org

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Introduction

In 2006, the Family Violence and Services Act (FVPSA) supported eight states and community-based organizations to design and develop collaborative services. These efforts aimed to promote collaboration between grantees in two related programs: Domestic Violence Programs and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY/DV) Programs. This work launched an incredible effort that resulted in both systems' ongoing investment to work together toward the common goal of helping youth understand and enjoy healthy relationships. As a result of these efforts, The National Resource Center of Domestic Violence (NRCDV) and The Youth Collaboratory (formerly known as MANY) created the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Relationship Violence Toolkit.



This toolkit encourages service providers to understand and recognize the intersections between relationship violence and homelessness as critical to creating meaningful services for youth. It also promotes collaboration between the programs working with youth at risk and local domestic violence programs.

Why is it important for service providers from each field to understand the intersection of runaway and homeless youth and relationship violence?

- Abuse and neglect at home is often the reason that youth end up on the streets.
- Relationship violence is perpetrated and experienced by youth both on the street and in stable housing.
- Together we can create a broader set of resources to help all youth develop the skills to form and sustain healthy and safe relationships and a stronger safety net for youth at risk.

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This Toolkit was developed by and for advocates and practitioners in the runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) fields to help programs better address relationship violence with runaway and homeless youth.



RHY & Relationship Violence



Homeless youth are typically defined as unaccompanied young people in their teens or early twenties who are without family support and are living in shelters, on the streets, in cars or vacant buildings, or are “couch surfing” or living in other unstable circumstances.

The [National Network for Youth](#) estimates that 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness in the US on any given night, and 700,000 of them are minors.

According to [Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America](#) around one in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 and at least one in 30 youth ages 13 to 17 experienced unaccompanied homelessness within a 12-month period.

What leads youth to become runaways or homeless?

Many runaway and homeless youth seeking services have witnessed domestic violence and/or have been victims of relationship violence, maltreatment, or neglect in their homes.



Family dysfunction

According to the 2019 Report to Congress [Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs](#), youth most often cite family conflict as the major reason for their homelessness or episodes of running away. A youth's sexual orientation, sexual activity, school problems, and substance abuse are associated with family discord.

"Aging out"

Aging out of the system means entering society with few resources and numerous challenges, such as lack of self-sufficiency skills, lack of financial resources, mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder, physical health concerns, and greater rates of substance abuse. [See the study](#), *The Experiences of Older Youth in & Aged Out of Foster Care During COVID-19*.

Tragically, some of these young adults will experience homelessness within the first year of leaving foster care, and around 50 percent of these youth will be homeless within the first four years.

Every year around 20,000 youth ages 16 & older transition from foster care to legal emancipation, or "age out" of the system.

Other contributing factors that can cause youth to run away:

- school difficulties
- problematic relations with peers
- relationships with delinquent peers
- teen pregnancy or parenthood
- lack of family acceptance for LGBTQ youth
- behavioral or mental health problems

Many runaway and homeless youth have "multiple histories of trauma"

These histories include: family violence; parental neglect; parental mental illness; childhood sexual and physical abuse; sexual exploitation, rape, sexual assault; survival sex; gang violence; intimate partner violence.

- While sexual violence often is a cause for youth to leave home, it also is a potential consequence of living on the streets, where youth face heightened risks for multiple victimizations of sexual exploitation, rape, and sexual assault after leaving home (NSVRC, 2010).



- Runaway youth consistently report family conflict as a primary reason for leaving the home (National Runaway Safeline, 2018).
- According to [Covenant House](#), one in four youth experiencing homelessness has either been a victim of sex trafficking or has engaged in survival sex.

Sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and the risk of victimization

- LGBTQ youth are more likely to leave home as a result of physical abuse and conflict with family (Choi et al., 2015).
- Substance abuse, depressive symptoms, suicidality are more frequent among gay and lesbian-identified youth than non-LGBTQ youth (Russell & Fish, 2016; Smith et al., 2016).
- LGBTQ youth who are homeless report higher rates of survival sex, substance use, and victimization when compared with non-LGBTQ homeless youth (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, Cauce, 2002).
- Transgender youth are especially at risk of relationship violence. The Urban Institute study, [Technology, Teen Dating Violence and Abuse](#), and Bullying shows that they report the highest rates of physical dating violence (**88.9%**), psychological dating abuse (**58.8%**), cyber dating abuse (**56.3%**), and sexual coercion (**61.1%**).



Relationship Violence

Vulnerable children and youth run from families in which there is dysfunction and conflict – domestic violence, sexual or physical child abuse, addiction – only to find that these same situations play out on the streets and result in further victimization. Relationship violence is a serious preventable public health problem that affects millions of Americans and occurs across the lifespan (Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014). Dating or relationship violence, is a pattern of abusive behaviors used to intentionally exert power and control over an intimate partner. This can include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as other controlling behaviors.



NOTE: Other terms sometimes used interchangeably with relationship violence are domestic violence, intimate partner violence, battering, relationship violence, and family violence, although the latter term is more often used to refer to the range of violence – child abuse, domestic violence, and elder – that can occur within families.

Data from the 2019 CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that: Nearly **1 in 8** female and approximately **1 in 15** male high school students report having experienced physical dating violence in the last year. Adolescents who have run away from home, are homeless, or are unstably housed experience substantially higher rates of dating violence and victimization than their stably housed peers (Lee & Schreck, 2005; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Chen, Thrane, Whitbeck, Johnson, & Hoyt, 2007). Several factors contribute to the high rates of relationship abuse and victimization within the runaway and homeless youth population, including limited access to resources and increased exposure to street culture (Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck, & Cauce, 2001; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999).

Further Reading:

[Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America](#) highlights research related to the specific experiences of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) and face homelessness. This resource points to actionable opportunities to better meet the needs of LGBTQ young people in our collective efforts to end youth homelessness.

[At the Intersections](#): a new in-depth look into homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth. This resource is comprehensive guide for advocates, policy makers, service providers, and funders working to end LGBTQ youth homelessness. Led by the True Colors Fund and [National LGBTQ Task Force](#), the first-of-its-kind online publication highlights innovative approaches to supporting youth experiencing homelessness, provides case studies of replicable and successful models, and offers concrete solutions to ending homelessness among LGBTQ youth.



Intersecting Issues



Digital Abuse and Runaway Homeless Youth

Digital abuse is the use of technology, such as a cell phone or social media, to threaten, intimidate, or harass a current or ex-dating partner. The [Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center](#) released a [study](#) examining the role technology plays in teen dating abuse. Some of the findings include:

- Tampering with a partner's social media account is the most prevalent form of digital abuse. More than one in twelve teens in a relationship (**8.7%**) say their partner used their social networking account without their permission.
- Acts of sexual digital abuse are the second and third most-reported complaints. Approximately **7%** of teenagers say their partner sent them texts and/or emails asking them to engage in unwanted sexual acts. The same percentage says their partner pressured them to send a sexually explicit photo of themselves.
- Digital harassment is a red flag for other abuse. Digital abuse in a relationship rarely happens in isolation: **84%** of the teens who report digital abuse say they were also psychologically abused by their partners, **52%** say they were also physically abused, and **33%** say they were also sexually coerced. Only **4%** of teens in a relationship say the abuse and harassment they experienced was digital alone.



Digital abuse has an impact on youth experiencing homelessness. Society assumes that since people living on the streets are resource-poor and lack access to the digital world. They still have significant access to cell phones and social media. In 2016 the [Digital Connections project](#), conducted a study of 200 homeless youth to look not only at whether homeless populations are using social media, but how they're using it. This research found that up to **90% of respondents** have a profile on a social networking site and over **50%** use social media, either several times a day (**19%**), once a day (**16%**), or every couple of days (**15%**) (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016).



RHY who have access to cell phones use them to contact social services, stay in touch with case managers and social support networks like friends and family, and search for housing and jobs. While these virtual communities can be valuable, they may also provide traffickers with additional opportunities for online recruitment and exploitation of these vulnerable youth. Traffickers sometimes provide RHY or potential young victims or potential victims with cell phones as a means of recruitment, “boyfriending,” or coercion. According to [FYBS’s practical guide for grantees, *Online Recruitment of Youth Via Social Media and the Internet*](#), RHY looking for job opportunities may be recruited into labor trafficking situations when responding to an online job offer or ads.



Assessment for Digital Abuse

[Assessing for Technology Abuse and Privacy Concerns](#) provides service providers with list of questions to help identify digital abuse and develop a safety plan for runaway and homeless youth. The following questions are only meant to quickly assess what might be an issue and not meant to be an exhaustive list of all technology-related safety concerns a youth might face.

Assessing Technology Misuse & Safety:

- Prioritize safety planning: *What are your current safety concerns?*
- Narrow down the possible technology that could be used: *What types of things have happened to make you feel unsafe or cause concern?*
- Gauge the survivor’s knowledge and understanding: *How do you think this is happening?*

These questions open a conversation that will explore and prioritize safety, discusses what types of technology devices or applications could be misused, and how to best safety plan to address their needs and further their knowledge.



Sex Trafficking

This section of the Toolkit will begin an exploration of this issue, including the scope and population, dynamics of sex trafficking and challenges to service delivery.



Youth who run away are at considerable risk of homelessness and victimization, including through sex and labor trafficking. Research shows that youth that run away from home are at greater risk of commercial [sexual exploitation](#) and [labor trafficking](#). The Polaris Project, one of the largest organizations serving trafficking victims, includes RHY among those with “a higher susceptibility to victimization and human trafficking”. Youth who run away are at considerable risk of homelessness and victimization, including through sex and labor trafficking. The [Polaris Project](#), one of the largest organizations serving trafficking victims, includes RHY among those with “a higher susceptibility to victimization and human trafficking.”

As defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

Long before the passage of any anti-trafficking legislation, runaway and homeless youth service providers have been working with young people engaged in and impacted by sex trafficking. Homeless youth are vulnerable to both sex and labor trafficking because they tend to experience a higher rate of the primary risk factors to trafficking: poverty, unemployment, a history of sexual abuse, and a history of mental health issues (Murphy, 2016).



Scientifically credible estimates of the number of young people who have experienced sex trafficking do not exist. The reason for this is that they are considered a “hidden population.” Additionally, even when asked, youth may not acknowledge that they are engaging in these behaviors because they worry about being judged, stigmatized, or arrested.



Despite being classified as victims at the federal level, only 34 states have passed [Safe Harbor Laws](#), many of which vary significantly. Those states that have passed safe harbor legislation have limited the scope of the protections to children that have been commercially sexually exploited (CSEC). More recently, a growing number of states are including non-commercial sex, non-violent crimes in their version of safe harbor for minors (any child under 18) that are trafficking victims.

Assessing for Sex Trafficking

The following [list](#) developed by [Polaris Project](#), contains questions that can be used to assess for potential signs of human trafficking. The assessment questions should be tailored to your program and client's specific needs. Although many of the signs below may be common for undocumented and runaway and homeless youth, they might also be signs of human trafficking. Some runaway and homeless youth may have been forced to engage in commercial sex by a partner, family member, house mother/father, or other controller. Below are sample questions to detect possible signs of sex trafficking:



1. How do you get by? Who do you depend on since you've been away from home/on the street?
2. How did you meet this person(s)/your boyfriend/etc.?
3. Has this person ever pressured you to do something you weren't comfortable doing?
4. Has this person ever pressured you to engage in any sexual acts against your will?
5. Has this person ever taken intimate photos of you and do you know what they were used for? Were these photos ever sent to other people or posted online (Craigslist, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or dating sites)?
6. Have you ever exchanged sex for food, a place to stay or other things you needed?
7. Has this person or someone else ever forced you to engage in commercial sex through online sites, escort services or street prostitution?
8. Are you required to earn a certain amount of money/meet a quota for this person? What would happen if you did not meet this quota?



9. Have you ever been abused (physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, etc.) or threatened by this person?
10. Have you ever witnessed anyone else being abused or threatened by this person?
11. Has this person ever introduced you to hard drugs, prescription medication, etc.?
12. Do you owe a debt to this person or anyone? What would happen if you don't pay this debt back? Where did the debt come from?

General tips to remember while conducting an assessment with a potential victim of trafficking.

- Many victims do not self-identify as “human trafficking victims.”
- Be conscious of the terms you use. Mirroring the language that the potential victim uses can be a helpful first step.
- Try to speak to the potential victim alone or secure an outside interpreter.
- Remember, as with many victims you have to gain their trust in order for victims to share their story.

**NATIONAL
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
HOTLINE**

Need Help or Want to Report a Tip?

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

Call 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733)



A Look at Each Field



While there is a great need for coordinated relationship violence intervention and prevention efforts for youth that have runaway and experience homelessness, RHY and DV/SA service providers often work in silos and are unfamiliar with each other's work. This section of the Toolkit examines the scope of each problem and population served, the types of services provided and technical assistance available to each field.



Programs Serving Runaway & Homeless Youth

Each year, thousands of youth in the U.S. run away from home, are asked to leave their homes, or become homeless. RHY programs provide a range of services to these young people, including street outreach, short-term shelter, and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that in a single night in 2019, **35,038** unaccompanied youth were counted as homeless. The Alliance estimates that over the course of a year, approximately **550,000** unaccompanied youth and young adults up to age 24 experience a homelessness episode of longer than one week. More than half are under the age of 18.

Those working with youth often differentiate between recent runaway, transitionally or episodically homeless, unaccompanied homeless and shelter using youth, and street-dependent youth. Evidence suggests that differences may exist between subtypes of youth that are homeless, and therefore, unique approaches to interventions are utilized in a variety of programs.



RHY programs work to support youth in establishing safe and appropriate living arrangements. While no one should be asked to return to a home in which abuse is the norm, RHY programs may encourage youth to return home when appropriate, or may refer them to a youth shelter or transitional living program.

FYSB funded RHY Programs provide services in four key areas:

- 1. Basic Center Programs** offer crisis intervention and short-term shelter for runaway and homeless youth under the age of 18. Young people can access up to 21 days of shelter care as well as non-residential services, such as counseling to help stabilize the crisis and create a plan for moving forward.
- 2. Transitional Living Programs (TLP) The Maternity Group Home Program (MGH)** supports community-based, adult-supervised, transitional living arrangements for homeless pregnant or parenting young people between the ages of 16 and under 22, as well as their dependent children. MGH grantees are required to provide shelter and supportive services like teaching young people parenting skills as well as child development, family budgeting, health and nutrition, and other skills.
- 3. Street Outreach Programs** link runaway, homeless and street youth with support services. These services include intense individualized engagement, assessments, case management, harm reduction and access to shelter. At the core of the program is a street outreach team that develops relationships with youth. In urban settings, a program might also have a van that travels around the city to various “hot spots” and hands out basic needs items such as clean clothing, blankets, food, or hygiene products.



Street outreach programs may also offer a range of education, survival aid intervention, and prevention services to youth who are at risk of abuse, including survival aid packages and street-based education on the risks associated with sex work and sexual trafficking. Street outreach programs generally offer youth a network of referral resources including shelter, health care, sexual health practices, and HIV/AIDS education.



4. **Information and Referrals** are available to youth who are homeless, have run away, or are at risk of running away or becoming homeless and their families and friends. The [National Runaway Safeline \(NRS\)](#), is a 24/7 national toll free communication system (chat, text, phone) that support youth in crisis, RHY, and their families by connecting them with resources and shelters. The NRS also provides technical support to organizations working with vulnerable youth.



- **Crisis Support**
National Runaway Safeline operates the confidential [1-800-RUNAWAY hotline](#) and [1800RUNAWAY.org](#) online crisis service (live chat, emails, forum) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Crisis staff and volunteers provide empowering, judgment-free support.
- **Home Free**
Offered in partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., the program reunites families by giving youth a free ride home. Home Free also takes some older youth to transitional living facilities.
- **Education and Prevention Resources**
From the [Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#) to informative bookmarks, NRS provides a variety of free, online educational and promotional materials to schools, communities, and direct service providers.

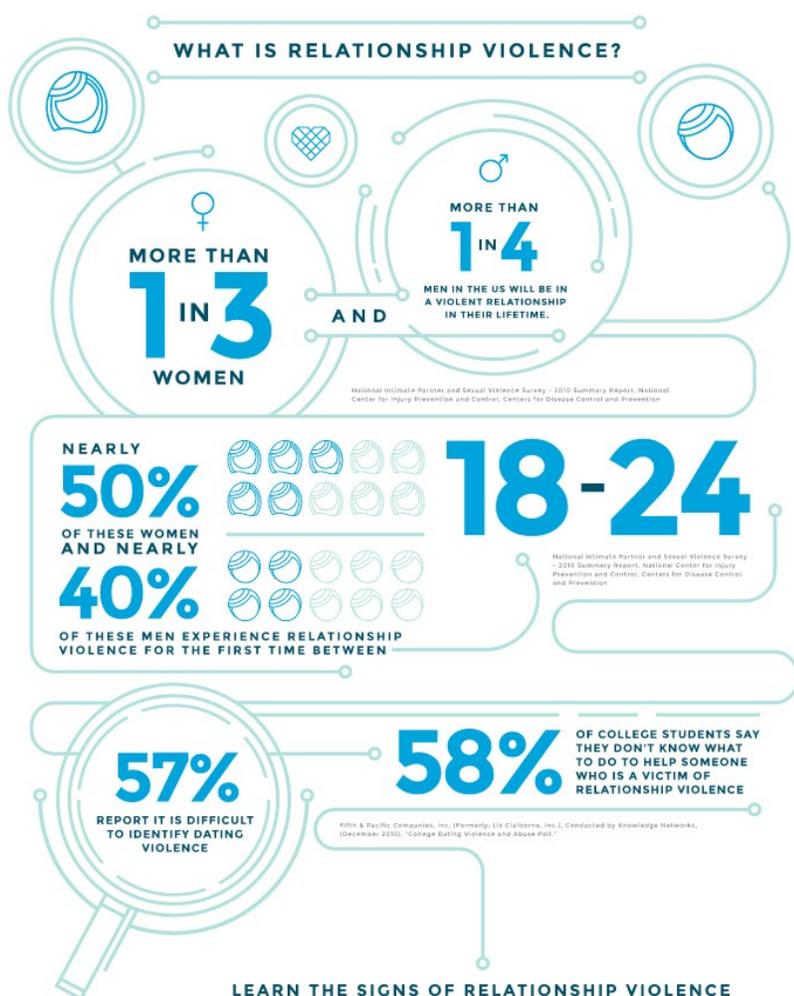


Service providers can contact 1800RUNAWAY to speak to the NRS crisis team to access free resources and technical assistance in a varieties of topics related to RHY.



Programs Serving Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence Victims/Survivors

Dating violence or relationship violence is a pattern of abuse or threat of abuse against teenaged dating partners. Although the dynamics of relationship violence are similar to adult domestic violence, the forms and experience of relationship violence as well as the challenges in seeking and providing services make this issue unique. Domestic violence and relationship violence perpetrators use physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, economic, or technological abuse or any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim.



People of all races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic classes, and religions can be impacted by it. However, such violence has a disproportionate effect on communities of color and other marginalized groups. Economic instability, unsafe housing, neighborhood violence, and lack of safe and stable child care and social support can worsen already difficult situations.

This infographic from [One Love](#) draws upon leading national studies to highlight the scope of violence in intimate relationships:



Since the 1970s, the presence of programs that serve victims of abuse has grown significantly. Through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA), the Family and Youth Services Bureau of HHS awards grants to State agencies, Territories and Indian Tribes for the provision of shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents, and for related services. These funds supplement many already established community-based family violence prevention and services activities. They also allow States and Tribes to expand current service programs and establish additional services in rural and underserved areas, on Native American reservations, and in Alaskan Native Villages.

Dual Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs: Core Services

Domestic violence programs strive to provide comprehensive services to those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault, with services ranging from safe shelter, prevention programs and legal advocacy to meeting a survivor's basic needs like food and childcare.

Services to all victims are provided free of charge, confidential and always focused on safety. Philosophy and practice reflect an [empowerment based](#) or [survivor-centered model](#) of service provision.

The following are core services of dual domestic and sexual violence programs:

- Safe shelter
- 24-hour crisis hotline
- Food and clothing
- Individual and group services for children
- Individual and group counseling
- Support groups for both victims and their children
- Advocacy in a number of key areas, including legal and medical





Although domestic and sexual assault programs provide services to victims/survivors; there are a number of agencies and programming that serve those who cause harm. An example of these services are the Batterer Intervention Programs (BIP). These are programs that people that cause harm attend voluntarily or court ordered.

What Services are Available to RHY experiencing abuse?

Within DV and SA organizations are many services available for RHY experiencing abuse. These services include:

- crisis intervention,
- individual and group counseling,
- relocation assistance,
- mentoring programs,
- safety planning,
- adolescent parenting programs and,
- LBGTO specific programs among others.



Advocates can help youth identify options to keep themselves safe, make choices to improve their situation, and act on their behalf if needed. Anyone can access these services by visiting a local program, by phone, text, and or via chat. Domestic violence outreach and prevention programs also offer violence prevention education services for youth and teens. Some of these programs are peer-led and aim to empower children and youth to recognize and understand healthy relationships.



Finding Common Ground



Although runaway and homeless youth (RHY) agencies and domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) programs share these mutual goals, the use of different language and eligibility criteria that reduce runaway and homeless youth's access to DV/SA services often pose challenges to collaboration between programs. The following sections will examine these issues and offer strategies to enhance collaboration.

Identifying Shared Principles

Despite their different histories, resources, and benchmarks for success, the DV/SA and RHY movements share a number of key principles that can unite both fields under a common cause: enhancing the safety and healing of young people exposed to and surviving violence and abuse. These shared principles include:

Supporting Creative, Committed Partnerships. Both the RHY and DV/SA fields have long histories of working through community partnership and collaboration. These networks, coalitions, and coordinated efforts not only provide support to local programs through shared training and technical assistance, but also support networking and collaboration between systems.

Honoring, Valuing and Involving the Individuals we Serve. RHY and DV/SA programs share the goal of honoring, valuing, and incorporating the lived experiences of the people they serve into their work and adapting responses to address clients' diverse needs.

Creating Justice Through Social Change. Each movement has traditionally supported the individuals and families they serve in advocating for themselves and joining with others to continue the work, and continue to grow, refine their services, and empower future generations of activists.



Creating Safety and Fostering Trust. RHY and DV/SA programs rely on a process of open, honest communication in order to build trust and a feeling of being safe with those seeking help. They actively invite participation and teamwork with individuals coming to programs for services. At the core of these trust building efforts is actively believing participants as they tell their stories.

Building Autonomy Through a Strengths-Based Model. DV/SA and RHY fields are both rooted in a strengths-based model of service that builds on clients’ resilience. A strengths-based model emphasizes that by building upon their individual strengths. DV/SA advocates refer to this as “survivor-defined advocacy,” “self-empowerment,” or “self-determination,” and RHY providers use the term “positive youth development.” Regardless of what it is called, employing a strengths-based model includes providing support and resources that empower clients and involving them in making decisions that affect them.

Developing Common Language

The RHY and DV/SA fields have developed their own terms to convey unique concepts and perspectives. The use of different terms can sometimes create barriers to effective communication between fields. Examples include:

RHY Field	DV/SA Field
<p>Youth in High Risk Situations</p> <p>The term “youth in high risk situations” reflects this reality by removing the label of inadequacy from the youth and prescribing it to the situation. Another term for this type of language selection is “people first language.”</p>	<p>High Risk Youth</p> <p>Labeling the youth as “high risk” may convey the idea that the youth is inadequate, incapable, or incompetent.</p>
<p>Domestic Violence Victim</p> <p>Some RHY providers may use the term “domestic violence victims” to include the children and young people who have lived in a home where one adult is using power and control tactics to abuse the other adult.</p>	<p>Child Abuse</p> <p>Domestic violence is understood to occur between adults in intimate relationships and is not child abuse in and of itself. If a child is physically, emotionally, sexually abused or neglected by a parent, relative, or other primary caregiver, it is more accurate to refer to this as child abuse, rather than domestic violence.</p>



Key Terms & Definitions

An early element of coalition building between the RHY and DV/SA programs should include discussions to identify each field's key terms and work to build a common language.

The RHY Label

Youth who have run from their living situation are often referred to as runaways, couch surfers, street-dependent youth, etc. Likewise, youth in unhealthy relationships may be described as a victim experiencing dating violence, intimate partner violence, or domestic violence. While service providers use these terms to better understand who these youth are and determine their eligibility for services, young people that belong to these populations may not see themselves in any of these categories and may describe their experiences without using a label. Service providers should be mindful that these labels can sometimes alienate young people seeking support.

Gendered Language in DV/SA Programs

In the DV/SA field, the use of gendered language to describe victims and perpetrators has sometimes been controversial. The DV/SA movements have historically focused on gender-based societal inequities as an important root cause and context for the violence, abuse and coercive control women experience at the hands of male partners. As the movement grows to focus on intersectionality and inclusivity, language evolves and adapts.



DV/SA advocates often use the terms "victim" or "survivor" to refer to the people accessing the services of local DV/SA programs. Because women and girls experience disproportionate rates of domestic and sexual violence and men are more likely to perpetrate this abuse, DV/SA programs may refer to survivors and perpetrators using gendered terms. Nonetheless, this does not always fully reflect the context and complexity in which domestic and sexual violence occurs. Survivors of any gender deserve safety and advocacy.

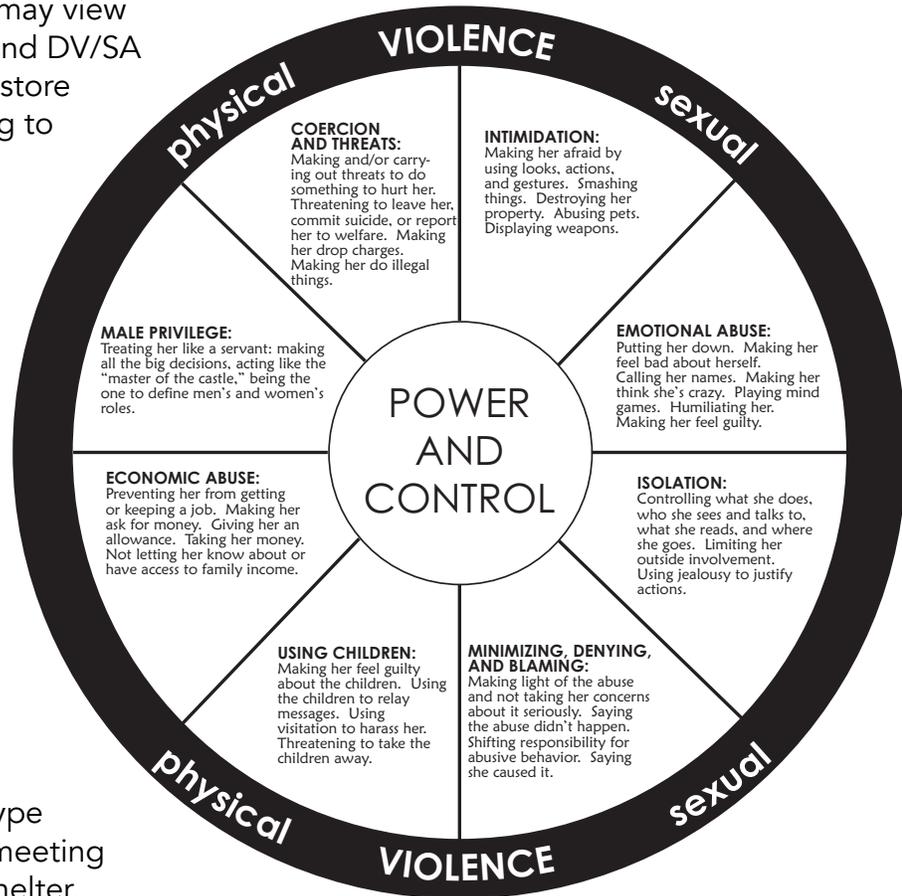


Power and Control

In the DV/SA field, the term “power and control” has a negative connotation. Domestic and sexual violence are characterized by the use of power and privilege by the perpetrator to exert control over the victim. Meanwhile, runaway and homeless youth seeking services often lack essential power and control over their circumstances and may view themselves as powerless. Both RHY and DV/SA programs work with their clients to restore control over their own lives by helping to build autonomy and agency.

Dating Violence vs. Relationship Violence/Abuse

The DV/SA field uses the term “[teen dating violence](#)” to describe the use of abusive tactics by one partner in a dating relationship to control, manipulate, humiliate, and abuse the other partner. However, for runaway and homeless youth, “dating” in the traditional sense may seem irrelevant to their current circumstances. Instead, “dating” someone might mean that another person is “taking care of you.” This type of relationship most often relates to meeting basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, protection, or money and often includes sexual exploitation of the youth.



[Relationship Warning Signs Power & Control Wheel](#)

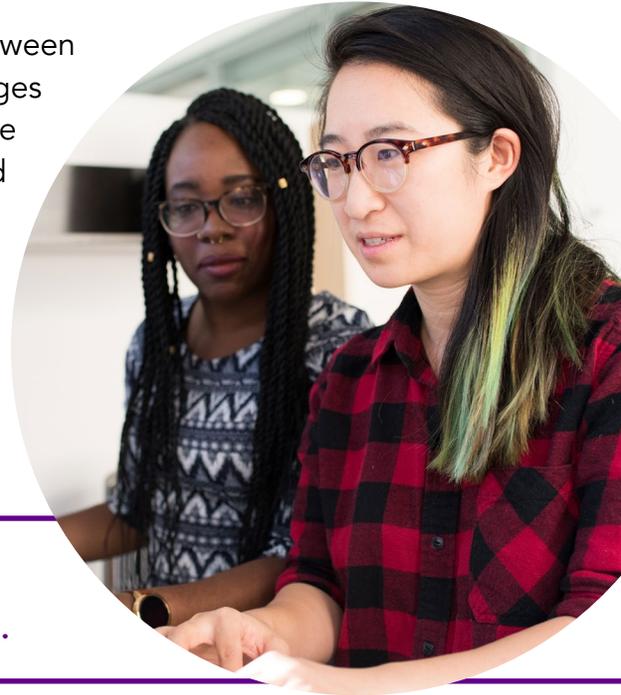
Because of this, youth living on the street may not identify with the term “teen dating violence” and other language that DV/SA programs may use. This has implications for how intake questions and screening and assessment are approached. For example, asking “Do you feel safe in your relationship?” is more likely to connect to a possibly violent relationship than asking, “Does the person you date ever hit you?” The term “relationship violence” may be more useful within RHY and DV/SA collaborations.

An introduction to a glossary of key terms and definitions used throughout the Toolkit and by RHY and DV/SA programs: [Key Terms and Definitions Handout](#)



Building Partnerships

Successful collaborations involve creating connections between people and purpose and sometimes require building bridges where none previously existed. In many communities, there has been limited or no prior contact between runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) programs. Too many communities do not have both RHY and DV/SA programs, which creates even more challenges to forming statewide, local, and organizational partnerships committed to design and support effective intervention and prevention strategies for both homelessness and relationship abuse.



Successful collaborations involve creating connections between both people & purpose.

This section of the Toolkit explores the WHY and HOW of building and sustaining effective community collaborations to help runaway and homeless youth better understand and address relationship violence. Drawing heavily on the lessons learned from RHY/DV collaborative projects funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), we identify key steps for building relationships across fields, include a case example, and provide several tools and tips to support effective collaborations.

The Service Gaps

In many communities, there is a lack of interaction between RHY and DV/SA programs that creates a gap in training, information and services between the two. According to a multi-state survey conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Network of Family and Youth (MANY) and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV):

- Over **40%** of DV/SA service providers had no knowledge of the RHY programs in their area or the services they provided.
- Less than **50%** of the DV/SA service providers surveyed were familiar with or comfortable providing services to runaway or homeless youth.
- Less than **50%** RHY transitional shelter providers reported screening for intimate partner violence and victimization during intake and even fewer felt that they were providing effective services to address relationship violence and abuse.



Strengthening Response:

By sharing our knowledge and learning from each other about the populations served by each community, outreach outcomes and service provision to youth in need can be enhanced. When the two systems are better linked and formalized mechanisms for referrals, staff training, and program impact are developed, the community “safety net” will be stronger and more accessible to youth in need of protection and support.

A Logic Model for RHY and DV/SA Collaborations





Key Steps to a Successful Collaboration

The following 8 steps can serve as a roadmap for RHY and DV/SA service providers. The steps explore how providers can work more effectively to address the needs of youth that are runaways and experiencing homelessness that are experiencing relationship violence.



1. Identify Common Purpose

Determine goals of the collaboration to identify the common purpose. Participants in the collaborative effort come to the table based on a common interest in addressing these goals.

2. Examine Core Values

Embarking on cross-team collaboration with two completely different service systems requires an examination of core values. This process not only reveals common ground and shared values, but potential areas of conflict as well. Recognizing and acknowledging shared values can help new partners attain a true sense of synergy and connection to purpose.

3. Create a Shared Vision Statement

Shared values provide a foundation on which to build the collaboration and pave the way for creation of a shared vision statement to guide the work.

4. Explore Shared History

Reviewing movement milestones, cultural events, and political markers for the past 30 years, including the passage of key legislation, important benchmarks, and newsworthy events are critical to the development of the RHY and DV/SA fields. As each respective movement's milestones materializes on a timeline, it becomes clear that there is a compelling shared history and the intersection of accomplishments and challenges may emerge.



5. Understand Current Realities

Conducting an environmental scan can help the collaborative partners understand the challenges and opportunities facing one or both fields. A survey of the community/communities your effort will target ensures that your vision and action plan is grounded in the needs and interests of the youth you hope to assist.

6. Develop an Action Plan and Timetable

After laying the groundwork and finding common ground, you can begin to create a comprehensive action plan to guide your future work together.

Risks: Collaborative community groups run the risk of meeting to discuss a particular issue rather than strategize ways to respond to individual, family, and community needs and develop resources. Participants may lose interest in the meetings and groups that do not move toward measurable outcomes.



Action plans can also prevent a group from acting only when there is a crisis or tragedy; an action plan increases the probability that change will be strategic.

Forming small work groups to address specific goals in the action plan will:

- Empower members by allowing individual members to explore aspects of the work that are most interesting to them
- Create opportunities for members to get to know each other more intimately
- Produce results This method leads to the development of many deliverables in a shorter amount of time.

Remember, in order to effectively create a sustainable plan, it is necessary for the groups to coordinate efforts and complete work outside of meeting time. Provide time at each meeting for the groups to meet, discuss goals and for the groups to report on progress and enlist the support of the full group as needed. Each group will benefit from the work of the others.



7. Develop a Learning Community

The “care and feeding” of collaborative partnerships is important. Professional development and training are cornerstones to successful programs, but also of successful collaborations. In addition to providing opportunities to develop specific skills and knowledge needed to address goals, there is a much broader impact. There is an opportunity to develop a Learning Community. Effective Learning Communities apply theories of adult learning to create conditions that support and encourage continuous learning. This theory forms the foundation of a group action model that is participant-driven, needs-based, and outcome-centered. Built on the principles of Adult Learning (Florida Health, 2013) and Learning Communities (Smith, 2001), this model is effective because:



- Participants are autonomous and self-directed: they are involved in the process of identifying and planning their own learning and activities. Staff serve as the facilitator of the team process not as director.
- Participants are resources: the group can capitalize on each participants’ experiences and the rich reservoir for learning this represents. Learning integrates new ideas with existing knowledge.
- Activities are goal-oriented: meetings are designed with mutually identified, measurable goals.
- Activities are relevant: on-going participant feedback and needs assessment frame service delivery and allows for active involvement in design and content.
- Activities are practical and solution-focused: hands-on learning that provides direct application to program implementation by addressing challenges and enhancing services will be most effective in completing project tasks.

A Learning Community provides the context for people to share knowledge, expand their learning, develop strategic alliances, and form new ideas and practices. Based on the principles of adult learning, it brings a diverse group of people together, widens the conversation and opens the doors to unique connections that may not have otherwise been realized. Everyone has something to learn and something to teach. It uses a shared leadership model and critical reflection to create a culture of questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions so all grow professionally. The more people learn, the more they want to know.



8. Establish Consistency

Collaborations are well-served by consistency in structure, participation, and schedules:

- **Consistency in structure:** Have a format for your sessions that is familiar and predictable, but also remain flexible to meet the ongoing needs of the group. Sessions should include a mix of learning, group planning and reflection, and dedicated time for small work groups to establish goals.
- **Consistency in participation:** Commitment to the collaboration must come from the organization, not just individuals. Agency leadership must be invested in the process and willing to dedicate staff time.
- **Consistency in schedules:** Set meeting times one year in advance with group input. Not everyone will be able to make every meeting. Setting dates well in advance allows individuals to prioritize the sessions in the planning.





Examples of Promising Partnerships

Youth that are runaways and that are homeless may not be reached by traditional, school-based domestic violence prevention and intervention services and may require innovative approaches for outreach, education and support. The following are examples of the abstracts submitted by RHY and DV/SA providers as they partnered to enhance services to this population.



Janus Center And The Center For Women And Family; Bridgeport, CT:

Since 1978 the Janus Center for Youth in Crisis has served children and families in the Greater Bridgeport area. Opening in 1985 as a safe haven for women, The Center for Women and Family has been a beacon of hope for women and children subjected to domestic violence since 1997. One of two programs of the Council of Churches that serves children, the Janus Center focus is on serving runaway and homeless youth.

Our primary goal is not only to assist runaway and homeless youth to obtain stability, but to also keep children out of state systems and keep families intact. By collaborating with the Center for Women and families, we are able to add an educational component that will help reduce the risk factors associated with dating and domestic violence. In a 36-month period, the Janus Center, along with the Center for Women and families seeks to provide at least 180 youth with shelter and educational services.

The Prevention/Adolescent Dating Violence Program will consist of four main components:

Mobile Crisis Response is a 24-hour crisis hotline and a network of 32 Safe Places and 25 Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority buses, situated in well-known, neighborhood locations where children can get help any time of the day, seven days a week. Our staff of professionals can be immediately dispatched to assess the situation and develop a plan of action.

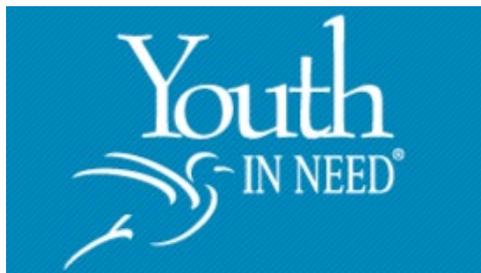
Intervention and Support includes short-term, individual and family counseling; conflict resolution; referrals to higher levels of care, as needed; prevention/education through support group sessions; serving as child and family advocates.

Host Home Care consists of placement in one of two community host homes located in Bridgeport and licensed by the Department of Children and Families. Here runaway and troubled youth can live until the situation has progressed to the point of reunification with families or caretakers.

Education consists of the dissemination of the "Lion Within" program, which educates and provide techniques on identifying the risk factors associated with domestic and dating violence.



Youth In Need And Women's Support And Community Services; Saint Charles, MO:



The collaboration is between Youth In Need (YIN), an agency committed to serving the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) population, and Women's Support and Community services (Women's Support), an agency committed to reducing the impact of sexual and relationship violence on individuals and our community.

This collaboration will:

- Prevent dating violence through coordinated community education and outreach,
- Enable agencies and their staff to effectively and efficiently identify youth at risk of dating violence, and
- Improve the delivery of responsive, comprehensive interventions to youth and families affected by domestic and/or dating violence.

Project implementation is facilitated by YIN's Basic Center, Transitional Living Program and Street Outreach program, and the comprehensive services provided by Women's Support. The collaboration will yield targeted programming for RHY and older youth in homes affected by domestic violence, in combination with a public health approach to sensitizing youth and the general population to dating violence and healthy relationships. A partnership between the existing community education and outreach programs Safe Place (YIN) and Project H.A.R.T. (Healthy Alternatives for Relationships Among Teens) at Women's Support will allow for widespread dissemination of information about healthy relationships, the risks of running away, and where to get immediate help for relationship and family concerns.

LUK Crisis Center, Inc. And Battered Women's Resources, Inc.; Worcester, MA:

LUK Inc.

LUK Crisis Center, Inc (LUK), in partnership with Battered Women's Resources, Inc. (BWRI), proposed to design and develop collaborative services to address the interaction of services for youth with respect to domestic violence and runaway and homeless youth communities. Both agencies have extensive histories of working with these populations, and have worked together on various projects in North Central Massachusetts for many years. LUK has been funded by the HHS to provide a Basic Center Program since 1993.

LUK and BWRI will develop the North Central Massachusetts Violence Intervention Project (VIP) to address the needs of homeless and at-risk youth who may be or will become victims and/or perpetrators of dating violence. Building on our existing infrastructures, VIP will include data collection and analysis, cross training between the



two agencies as well as with the community, the development and dissemination of a brief screening tool, and prevention and intervention strategies. VIP will serve the 27 cities and towns of North Central Massachusetts.

The VIP program will include the following components:

- Data Collection
- Cross training
- Screening Tools
- Prevention/Intervention
- Process Evaluation/Documentation

The overall object of the North Central Massachusetts Violence Prevention Project (VIP) is to design, develop, and implement collaborative services to address the intersection of services for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth in regards to their victimization and potential for victimization in dating relationships. VIP, jointly implemented by LUK and BWRI, will identify the extent of the needs of this population in North Central Massachusetts, and work together to increase the resilience of at-risk youth and their families to the effects of victimization. One of the North Central Area's strengths has been the various collaborative efforts that have occurred over the years among providers; VIP is one example of partnering agencies working together to create and sustain an integrated approach to providing services to local youth and families most in need.

LUK will conduct both process (conduct) and outcome (results) evaluations of VIP. The outcome evaluation will examine the extent to which targeted youth achieve desired results and the extent to which the collaborative efforts of LUK and BWRI provide information to advance our understanding of the intersection of domestic violence and runaway and homeless youth. The process evaluation will assess both the achievement of milestones in the implementation plan and the learnings achieved in the implementation of VIP. Results from VIP activities will be shared with the local community of Central Massachusetts and beyond. Best practices, evidence-based dating violence prevention curricula and other materials relevant to DV in youth in general, and runaway, homeless and street youth in particular, will be added to the Resource Library at the Central Massachusetts Center for Healthy Communities to allow access for the community.



Building Services



This section of the Toolkit provides guidance on how RHY and DV/SA agencies can link and enhance their services to better help runaway and homeless youth. Information, tools and strategies drawn from RHY and DV/SA collaborative projects funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) are highlighted. Specifically, we discuss:

- Increasing Staff Skills
- Creating a “Culture of Safety” at RHY and DV/SA Agencies
- Screening and Assessment for Relationship Abuse
- Safety Planning
- Reaching Runaway and Homeless Youth
- Relationship Violence Curricula for Runaway and Homeless Youth
- Curricula for Runaway and Homeless Youth

Increasing Staff Skills

A common element in many of the RHY and DV/SA collaborative partners were efforts to ensure that service providers working directly with runaway and homeless youth are well educated about relationship violence and about their agency’s approach to addressing it. These efforts typically involved cross-training to increase staff competencies to address issues of relationship violence and youth homelessness, improve referral outcomes, and identify and address policy and practice issues affecting services to this population.

For DV/SA staff, training approaches included providing information to advocates about runaway and homeless youth, the dynamics and complexities of relationship violence among street youth, intervention and prevention strategies, and other related



information. For RHY programs, staff may not be familiar with dynamics of relationship abuse among the youth they work with, appropriate assessment strategies, safety planning strategies that might be effective, and community resources. Some cross-training resources include:

- **The Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (HHYP)**
[Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth: A Practical Guide for Service Providers](#). A discussion of how the role of agency administrators, supervisors, and direct service staff can take steps to reduce the stress involved in working on such a challenging issue as relationship violence is included in section 8 (p.18) of this guide. HHYP also developed a number of other resources to support training efforts, including:
 - [Trauma Informed Consequences for Homeless Youth](#)
 - [10 Reasons for Integrating Trauma-Informed Approaches in Programs For Runaway and Homeless Youth](#)
 - [Understanding Intimate Partner Abuse In Runaway & Homeless Youth, developed by Peace Over Violence for DV/SA programs](#)
- **The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence**, in collaboration with the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services and the Florida Council Against Sexual Assault, developed [Teen Relationship Abuse: Prevention and Intervention Strategies](#), as part of the Teen Relationship Abuse Among Runaway and Homeless Youth Curriculum. Their training and community awareness strategy also included the development of [Dealing with Teen Dating Violence Among Runaways](#).

Creating a Culture of Safety at RHY & DV/SA Programs

The Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership placed a particular emphasis on **“creating a culture of safety that enables staff to respond effectively to the intimate partner abuse (IPA) experienced by their clients, while at the same time protecting other clients and staff from harm.”**

In [Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth: A Practical Guide for Service Providers](#), they suggest that in addition to staff training, RHY agencies take steps in the following areas:

- **Policies and Procedures:** develop agency-specific policies for addressing relationship abuse among the youth with whom they work, and ensure consistency of implementation.





- **Environment of Care:** ensure that the spaces that are created for youth communicate the agency’s concern about and commitment to address relationship violence and encourages help-seeking by youth experiencing or using violence in their relationships.
- **Services to Youth:** ensure that youth seeking help receive an individualized response that is appropriate, and the group work with teens includes information on building healthy relationships as well as responding to abuse.

In a similar vein, the [Florida Council Against Sexual Violence](#) outlined key approaches that DV/SA and RHY agencies could take to improve response to relationship violence among street youth in the flyer [Model Collaborative Protocols](#).

Screening & Assessment for Relationship Abuse

While youth that are runaways and homeless that are involved in abusive relationships face similar risks as their teen peers, their status both as youth and as homeless individuals presents unique challenges to service providers.

- The level of violence that they have experienced – which may make it seem “normal” – is likely to be quite high. Escape routes for them are limited or non-existent.
- While relationships with other homeless youth or adults might be exploitative or abusive, breaking ties with the only “family” that they have and with individuals who have provided some measure of protection might be difficult.
- Given their trauma histories and their lives on the street, substance abuse and mental health concerns are also likely to be issues for many of them, and may exclude them from some residential options that screen out for drug/alcohol abuse or who do have the capacity to provide the necessary mental health supports.
- Existing DV/SA intervention services are largely designed for heterosexual women. Homeless GLBT youth need access to sensitive and appropriate prevention and intervention services.



Because of these realities, screening and assessment for relationship violence and safety planning become extremely important.



Tools: Screening & Assessment For Relationship Violence

A number of screening and assessment tools have been developed to help RHY agencies explore issues of relationship violence with the youth they are working with.

Examples include:

- [Universal Abuse and Domestic Violence Screening Tool](#) developed by the Worcester County Health Department, Case Management Unit
- [Teen Dating Violence Assessment Questions](#) developed by the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) and San Diego Youth & Community Services (SDYCS)

The HYYP also engaged in thoughtful consideration of when and how such screening should be conducted within RHY programs, and offers the following guidance:

When should these questions be asked?

Screening questions about intimate partner abuse should be asked as part of the agency intake process. Of course, the type and scope of questions that are asked should match the level of service that youth are seeking and the capacity of the agency to respond to any findings. For example, if youth are only looking for a sandwich or a shower, it is not appropriate to ask IPA assessment questions unless there are other indicators that IPA is a problem. The answers youth provide to these screening questions can help the staff determine if further assessment is indicated. Other opportunities for conducting an IPA assessment include:

- When staff suspect or know a youth is in an IPA relationship;
- As part of an in-depth assessment conducted with each youth per agency protocols;
- When youth convey the willingness to answer personal questions about their intimate relationships; or
- When a youth asks for help with their relationship.



How do we ask these questions to get the most honest response?

- Youth in IPA relationships often feel out of control. Explaining the exceptions to keeping disclosures confidential allows a youth to decide how to proceed and when to disclose specific information.



- Use age-appropriate and gender-neutral language. When referring to partners, do not make assumptions about the youth's dating partner preferences (i.e., staff can use "partner", "they" or other popular youth-vernacular to refer to partners instead of "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" and "he/she".)
- When asking about IPA, make sure that the questions reference specific behaviors (such as hitting, kicking, slapping, verbal put-downs, threats, etc.) instead of referring simply to "intimate partner abuse" or "domestic violence." In this way, youth are clear about the behaviors that you are asking about. The Sample IPA Assessment Questions that are on the next page can be used as a guide.
- If possible, a staff member who knows the youth and has a positive relationship with the youth should ask these questions.
- IPA-related issues should be discussed in a non-judgmental fashion.
- Questions need to be asked in a private space to ensure confidentiality.

Safety Planning

As Peace Over Violence in Los Angeles points out in [Understanding Intimate Partner Abuse In Runaway & Homeless Youth](#):

Traditional safety planning isn't responsive to youths' needs and experiences: Current approaches to safety planning are based on a victim profile that is often not reflective of homeless youth. Traditional safety planning recommendations rely heavily on the use of domestic violence shelters and restraining orders, which may not be available to or appropriate for homeless youth. Few of the existing safety planning options offer any real protection to homeless youth.

Safety planning should occur with any and every youth victim of violence that discloses or gives an advocate reason to believe that an unsafe relationship exists. The plan should focus on both keeping the youth safe while he/she is at the program as well as in the community. The HHYP program offers the following guidance in [Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth: A Practical Guide for Service Providers](#).

This plan needs to take into consideration the following questions:

- Is the youth safe residing at or accessing services at your agency? If not, explore options for safe places for the youth to be during the day and at night.
- Are both partners served at the agency? If so additional considerations come into play.





- If the youth is not living in a shelter or residential program, are there ways to protect the youth's safety on the street?
- Will the youth accept a referral to a DV shelter for immediate safe and confidential housing?



The steps and guidelines of a safety plan should increase victim safety, reduce risk factors, and be prepared prior to the occurrence of another incidence of violence or harm.

Safety planning should not be construed to place responsibility for future violence on the youth victim, but it should assist a victim of domestic violence or intimate partner violence in exploring realistic, viable options and responses to threats of violence and/or abuse. It is typical that as victim's situation and circumstances change, such as moving from the streets or shelter

into a safe, stable living environment, the safety plan would need to be updated to reflect the current safety needs and concerns.

Examples of online safety planning resources to assist runaway and homeless youth that are being victimized by intimate partner violence are:

Futures Without Violence: Create a Teen Safety Plan

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/create-a-teen-safety-plan/>

loveisrespect.org: Safety Planning

<http://www.loveisrespect.org/get-help/safety-planning>





Reaching Runaway & Homeless Youth

One of the most challenging aspects of working with runaway and homeless youth is finding them. This is especially true for RHY and DV/SA programs looking for ways to better respond to the relationship abuse that many youth experience. As a result of the collaborative projects as mentioned on page 30, specialized posters and palm cards focusing on relationship violence were developed and distributed as part of other outreach efforts.

Examples of Palm Cards and Posters:

- **Palm cards:** <https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/download-materials/loveisrespect.org>
- **Palm Card:** [Youth Futures outreach palm card](#)
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- **Poster:** "[1800Runaway](#)"
National Runaway Safeline

To be effective, outreach efforts should focus on directly reaching youth who need services, but also connecting with those who can refer youth to services. Successful outreach efforts also involve multiple strategies and often include public service announcements such as bus stop billboards, newspaper and magazine articles, the wide dissemination of brochures, posters and palm cards that can be provided to youth or easily picked up by them in public places, and, of course, word of mouth.

The [Youth Collaboratory](#) formerly known as the Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth and Family Services (MANY) prepared the following list of outreach strategies for RHY and DV/SA programs that includes guidance on the use of community resource mapping, National Safe Place, speakers bureaus, youth partners, and street outreach.

Community Resource Mapping and Youth Partnership

One of the most effective strategies for targeting your outreach efforts is community mapping. Best accomplished through a team of staff and youth familiar with the community, participants identify the assets in the community for getting out the message about your program. Specific people within organizations and institutions are identified and a relationship is developed. Local businesses willing to support your program with postings should be included as well.





Here are some places to start:

- Other youth service providers in your area
- Health care providers, hospital emergency rooms, etc.
- Schools - target McKinney Act (homeless education) contacts and guidance counselors
- Child protective services - explain option for youth that they do not want to place within their system
- Direct outreach to youth: materials for distribution, visiting hot spots (malls, fast food, etc.)
- Homeless coalitions and task forces



Note: More information on Community Youth Mapping can be found at youthcommunitymapping.org/

Whatever your outreach strategy, be sure to include youth in the planning and implementation. Youth know the “hot spots” - they know the “language” - often, they know the “youth who need you” - they can be incredible resources to your outreach efforts. In fact, many experienced service providers would argue that an RHY outreach program without youth as a core role is not an effective one. Consider developing a position description for one or more youth volunteer or age-appropriate paid positions to canvass your community, distribute literature, talk with youth, serve as youth board members and identify community assets for follow-up by the outreach team.



Measuring Success



Outreach programs often involve a tremendous amount of effort and resources, and evaluation will help you build support for ongoing funding and save you time and money. Justifying the program, showing how it supports achievement of the overall goals and objectives, means identifying what worked, fixing what didn't, and ensuring that outreach continues to enhance the program (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.).

In [Evaluating Your Program – What Do You Need to Know?](#) Elizabeth Miller, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Pediatrics, U.C. Davis School of Medicine provides the following guidance:

- **Determine your key areas of interest**
The evaluation design for an RHY/DV provider partnership will vary depending on the key outcomes of interest. An evaluation may want to focus initially on service providers' (including street outreach workers) knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, e.g., how have the RHY program and DV agency changed in their level of knowledge of abusive behaviors among RHY, their level of confidence in assessing for partner violence, and their experiences with handling positive disclosures?
- **Pay attention to risk and other factors such as literacy**
Another strategy for basic data collection that is minimal risk to youth is to conduct an anonymous needs assessment survey. Online survey software can facilitate such data collection, where youth utilizing an RHY program can be asked to complete an anonymous survey online after they have completed their intake where there is absolutely no way for providers to know who entered what information. Another key consideration is the low literacy levels of RHY—some





researchers have argued for doing face to face interviews to address low literacy and comprehension barriers, while others have utilized computer-assisted audio technology (ACASI).

To assess whether the incorporation of a DV curriculum into RHY programming has had measurable impact in changing youth knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, another strategy to protect the anonymity of subjects is to have each participant create a secret code which only they will know that they enter on both pre and post-tests, which allows for the survey information to be linked (whether there was individual-level change) without anyone being able to discern the identity of any participant.

- **Under the definitions of “Mature Minors” and consent**

Depending on the level of confidential services provided in the context of the RHY program, the participant may be receiving services related to pregnancy, sexual health, substance abuse as “mature minors.” In this instance, they may be able to consent for their participation in a study, if obtaining parental consent would breach confidentiality and potentially result in the minor refusing all care. This concept of “mature minor” varies state to state, and different research ethics boards are likely to interpret the definition of a “mature minor” differently.

- **When more extensive data is sought**

More intensive data collection (including in-depth interviews) may require adult caregiver consent (especially if they are wards of the state), and providers are advised to consult with their local research ethics board (which may be a local academic medical center) prior to collecting data that is in addition to the basic information collected for service provision.



Other program evaluation resources:

- [Evaluation for Improvement: A Seven-step Empowerment Evaluation Approach for Violence Prevention Organizations](#)

This manual is designed to help violence prevention organizations hire an empowerment evaluator who will assist them in building their evaluation capacity through a learn-by-doing process of evaluating their own strategies.

- [Empowerment Evaluation Toolkit](#)

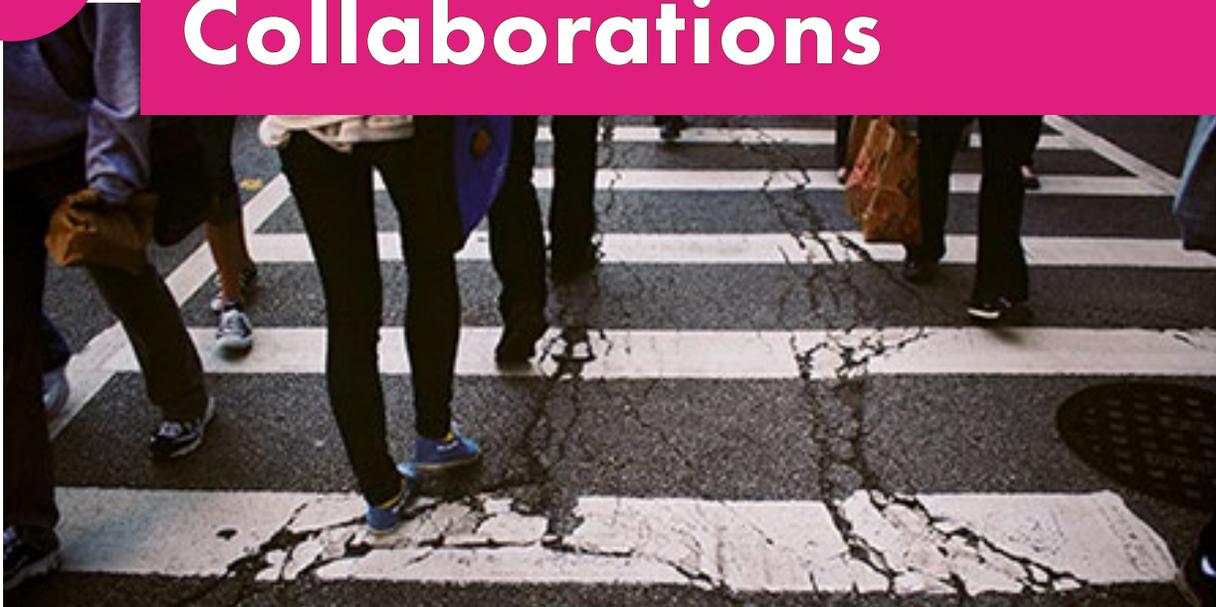
This toolkit provides guidance to local primary prevention providers on all stages of program evaluation including determining needs, resources, and capacity, stating outcomes and developing a logic model, and collecting, managing, and analyzing evaluation data.



- [Logic Model Development Guide](#)
Nonprofits today are being pressed to demonstrate the effectiveness of their program activities by initiating and completing outcome-oriented evaluation of projects. This guide was developed to provide practical assistance to nonprofits engaged in this process.
- [W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Evaluation Handbook](#)
This handbook provides a framework for evaluation as a useful program tool, it was written primarily for project directors who have direct responsibility for the ongoing evaluation of W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded projects.
- [W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide](#)
This development guide introduces the staff of nonprofits and community members to the underlying principles of logic modeling. Logic models present assumptions about how a program's actions are supposed to achieve intended outcomes; it often forms the basis for planning an evaluation.



Sustaining Collaborations



The intention of the RHY and Relationship Violence Toolkit is to increase awareness of the critical intersection of relationship violence and runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and, ultimately, to improve services for youth through the collaboration of community based organizations (CBO) providing services to youth and those providing services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

The incidence of RHY that experience relationship violence and the root causes documented in research makes a compelling case to create a coordinated response. Two service systems, DV/SA and RHY, are uniquely positioned to lead the development of a community response. Each of these service providers addresses some aspect of the complexity of needs that many youth present when seeking services.

The need and interest to work together is clear. However, while collaboration is effective, it can also be a challenge. Not all communities have both domestic violence/sexual assault and RHY programs operating there. Sometimes, barriers that previously deterred progress and were never resolved thwart well-intentioned efforts. Additionally, differences in approach to victims' accessing services - in DV/SA programs victims must first reach out to service providers whereas with RHY programs street workers may approach youth to offer support services - this may create challenges related to victim autonomy and agency.

This section was designed specifically to promote sustainable collaborations locally while guiding service providers to sections in this Toolkit that can support their efforts. Included are practical tools to promote meaningful, effective conversations that can lead to a sustained collaboration.



Sustaining the Partnership: There are many types of organizational relationships ranging from the very simple to more complex arrangements that involve shared funding sources. Below are some examples of how RHY and DV/SA service providers can partner, broken into a framework that ranges from basic cooperation agreements to full-scale collaboration.

Cooperation:

A simple agreement to operate cooperatively with one another.

Service referral agreement:

RHY and DV/SA service providers are in a position to readily refer clients to one another through *warm referrals* (having a meaningful relationship with the organization and staff to whom you are referring a survivor). To increase confidence in referring between local organizations, each party should become knowledgeable of the others' service delivery, including eligibility criteria for services, and agree to accept service referrals. This type of referral generally involves some type of agreement and consent on behalf of the survivor to share information between both organizations that will allow follow-up in order to know if the referral actually occurs and is effective.



Positive Impact: Linking youth with needed support services allows them to make informed choices.

Staff Training:

Increasing staff skills often results in enhanced services and improved outcomes for youth and families. Partners should agree to provide routine cross-training for one another's staff relative to their areas of expertise. RHY service providers can offer a depth of understanding of youth culture and the trends occurring locally and statewide. DV/SA providers can offer expertise in recognizing and addressing relationship violence as well as many of the related legal issues that arise in efforts to address the situation. By developing [an intentional plan to provide "cross-training"](#), expertise is expanded and service outcomes are positively impacted.

Informational resources:

Creating awareness about the intersecting issue and available services is a shared goal for both RHY and DV/SA service providers. Both want to make sure that helpful information and resources get into the hands of the youth and advocates that need it, and that RHY and DV/SA service providers support each other's efforts.



Coordination:

A plan for coordinated actions

Shared services:

Knowledge and information should be shared between partners, including appropriate service delivery. For example, one partner provides regular groups or training for clients and stakeholders, such as a DV/SA service provider that facilitates training on healthy relationships monthly for youth in the RHY program.



Provide joint training as community partners:

Leveraging each partner's unique experience and expertise to develop training and other resources can benefit both partners, and most of all, those that they serve. An example is RHY and DV/SA service providers coordinate to lead prevention education training at the local school district, or RHY and DV/SA service providers facilitate a monthly group for youth at the DV/SA program.

Identifying trends impacting the shared service area:

RHY and DV/SA service providers are connected to a range of diverse community stakeholders and are usually ahead of emerging issues within their communities. By coordinating around an emergent issue, positive impact and effective change increases.

For example, the trafficking of minors for commercial sexual exploitation/human trafficking is an issue for which both RHY and DV/SA service providers are often "first responders." Partners can work together to document and respond to these incidences. They can also partner together to ensure their staff understand the warning signs of commercial sexual exploitation and implement internal policies for how staff should respond.

[Bought and Sold: Helping Youth People Escape from Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#) outlines a clear strategy that includes coordinating community services.





Collaboration

Shared funding and other resources with a formal level of accountability

Responding to funding announcements that require a collaborative approach:

Collaboration has been demonstrated as an effective strategy in several movements and social services arenas and is often a requirement of many private and public funding opportunities. RHY and DV/SA service providers that are currently working together will find themselves best suited to respond to funding announcements requiring collaboration.

One example is the [OWW Consolidated Approach to Address Children and Youth Experiencing DV and SV](#), a federal funding opportunity that allowed multiple partners in the city of Seattle to coordinate a system of support that addresses the intersection of youth that are homeless and have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault. "[Project360: Full Circle approach with Youth who are Homeless and Victims of Sexual Violence](#)" is a trauma-based approach to working with youth that have become homeless due to sexual assault and then become trapped in a cycle of victimization on the streets.



Targeted Service Strategy:

An integrated service strategy to meet specific community needs is a powerful approach that both leverages resources and expertise and positions each partner to look for new resources to support the work. This could include developing a targeted strategy to address a need that emerges through local needs assessment.

Even when additional funding is not available, partners can pool their resources to further advance the project and address an unmet need. For example, [Project SAFE](#) is a phone-based clinical consultation program for parents and caregivers of youth ages 12-17 at risk of running away or who have already run where a counselor will listen, provide tools for coping with the teen, and help develop an action plan to improve the situation.



History

It is important to consider the impact of the participating organization's past with regards to working cooperatively or competitively. Successful collaborations thrive in communities that have a history of working together. These communities have been successful in institutionalizing collaborations amongst various organizations. Engage in a dialogue with your potential partners about past collaborations. Who were/ are the actors, the organizations, the individuals who have been involved in these collaborations? What worked well and why? What didn't work and why? What other lessons were learned? Taking in consideration the history of collaboration within the organizations involved can contribute towards a sustainable collaboration.

Although there isn't one single formula for sustaining collaborations over time, deepening your understanding of the issues faced by runaway and homeless youth, can contribute toward institutionalizing the collaboration.

This Toolkit should be viewed as an ever-evolving resource for the field. As additional information, tips, tools, best practices, curricula, or other materials are identified or developed, they will be added to the Toolkit. Please contact the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (800-537-2238 or nrcdvTA@nrcdv.org) if you have ideas or materials that you feel would enhance the Toolkit and make it more useful to RHY and DV/SA programs working individually or in partnership.

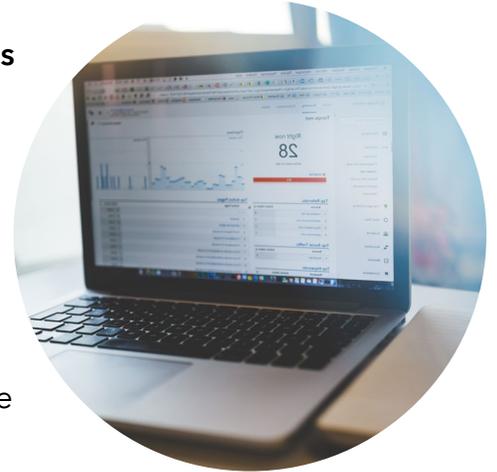


Additional Resources

Online Resources: Relationship Violence And Runaway And Homeless Youth

National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/

Launched by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in November 2017, the National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families (NCHYF) is a national resource for organizations that support runaway and homeless youth and their families with programs and services. NCHYF also serves the general public interested in learning about the issues facing runaway and homeless youth and the circumstances that contribute to their running away or becoming homeless.



loveisrespect

www.loveisrespect.org

loveisrespect is a national resource that can be accessed by phone or the Internet. loveisrespect offers real-time one-on-one support from Peer Advocates, who are trained to offer support, information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse relationships, as well as concerned parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

Children of the Night

www.childrenofthenight.org

Children of the Night is a privately funded non-profit organization with the specific purpose of providing intervention in the lives of children who are sexually exploited and vulnerable to or involved in prostitution and pornography.

STRYVE: Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere

vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/stryve/

Developed by the CDC, this website is for 11 to 14 year-olds. Its goal is to prevent intimate partner violence by teaching positive, respectful relationships when teens are first starting to date.

Girls Health

www.girlshealth.gov

GirlsHealth.gov is a website about girls' health. It includes several topics related to violence (Relationships, Bullying, and Safety). The relationships section includes information on parents, siblings, friends, and dating. Quizzes and interactive images make it fun. This website is for young female teens (ages 10 to 16).



Making the Peace

vawnet.org/material/making-peace-approach-preventing-relationship-violence-among-youth

Making the Peace is written to help young people break away from violence, develop self-esteem, and regain a sense of community. It provides exercises, role-plays, in-class handouts, homework sheets, and discussion guidelines to explore issues such as dating violence, gangs, interracial tension, suicide, sexual harassment, and the social roots of violence.

National Runaway Safeline

www.1800runaway.org

Formerly known as the National Runaway Switchboard, the National Runaway Safeline provides help for teens that ran away or are thinking about running away. Their mission is to help keep America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

www.nrcdv.org

Through VAWnet (www.vawnet.org), its comprehensive and searchable online resource center on violence against women, NRCDV provides a wide range of information, publications, Applied Research Papers, special collections and other resources on domestic and sexual violence issues. See [Preventing and Responding to Teen Dating Violence](#), which emphasizes collaborative and multilevel approaches to the prevention of and response to teen dating violence.

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships

startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships (Start Strong) is the largest initiative ever funded to target 11- to- 14-year-olds and rally entire communities to promote healthy relationships as the way to prevent teen dating violence and abuse. Start Strong are bringing together a wide variety of partners in 11 communities across the country to tackle this issue and to empower young people to support safe and healthy relationships and ensure violence and abuse are never tolerated.

Stop Bullying Now

www.stopbullying.gov/

Contains resources for teens that are bullies and teens who are the victims of bullies. It explains what bullying is, what teens can do, and has games and interactive activities.

Teaching Tolerance

www.tolerance.org

Tolerance.org is a principal online destination for people interested in dismantling bigotry and creating, in hate's stead, communities that value diversity.

TeenSource

www.teensource.org/ts/

TeenSource.org is a complete sex education guide that strives to answer teens' questions about the experiences they face in life but are too afraid to ask. Many teen sex education resources about sexual health, relationships, and issues that affect teens and young adults today are available.



Resources: Minor Sex Trafficking

Need Help Or Want To Report A Tip?

The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. The National Hotline is operated by Polaris Project, a non-profit, non-governmental organization working exclusively on the issue of human trafficking. Polaris is not a government entity, law enforcement or an immigration authority.

Call 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733)

Organizations

- [GEMS](#), The Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS) is an organization in New York State specifically designed to serve girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking. GEMS' programming is gender responsive, trauma informed, developmentally grounded, strengths based, social justice oriented, and culturally competent.
- [MISSEY \(Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting, and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth\)](#) is a community-based organization that provides comprehensive services to sexually exploited youth in Alameda County, CA. MISSEY also works to provide information to the community and government about the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- [Rights4girls](#) is a human rights organization focused on gender-based violence and its impact on vulnerable young women and girls in the U.S. Based in Washington, D.C., Rights4Girls works to make the lives of U.S. young women and girls a human rights priority through policy change.
- [Streetwork Project](#) works with homeless and street-based young people in New York City, some of whom have experiences trading sex.



Fact/Tip Sheets

- [Young Women's Empowerment Project's \(YWEP\) fact sheet](#) about teen girls and young women in the sex trade
- [YWEP's helpful tips](#) the reproductive justice movement can use to support girls, women and transgender people of color involved in the sex trade & sex work
- [YWEP's tips](#) for providers who work with young people who trade sex

Model Collaboration Protocols And Other Tools

Access the links below to view details, highlights, and products from RHY/DV Collaborative Projects funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau. As grantees and other local programs continue to develop their projects, the materials in this section will be updated.

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services and the Florida Council Against Sexual Assault

- [Flyer: Model Collaborative Protocols \(162 KB - PDF\)](#)
- [Brochure: Dealing with Teen Dating Violence Among Runaways \(4 MB - PDF\)](#)

Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership

The documents provided below were produced by agencies of the Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Covenant House California, Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, Los Angeles Youth Network, My Friend's Place and the Saban Free Clinic) and colleagues at Break the Cycle and Peace Over Violence. Production of these documents was informed by work initially supported through a grant from the SAMHSA Community Collaborations to Prevent Youth Violence and Promote Youth Development #1H79-SM553-17 and was further refined and expanded with support from the Department of Health Services, Administration on Children Youth and Families, Grant Agreement # 90EV033801.

- [Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth: A Practical Guide for Service Providers](#) (207 KB - PDF)
- [Homeless Youth and Intimate Partner Abuse Policy Brief](#) (110 KB - PDF)
- [Trauma Informed Consequences for Homeless Youth](#) (460 KB - PDF)
- [10 Reasons for Integrating Trauma-Informed Approaches in Programs For Runaway and Homeless Youth](#) (420 KB - PDF)



Youth Collaboratory, In Collaboration With The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- [Sample MOU](#) (20 KB DOC)

National Partnership To End Youth Homelessness

The National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness has developed the following checklist as a guide to help communities identify the minimum requirements for an effective permanent solution to prevent and end youth homelessness. The essentials are based on the National Alliance to End Homelessness Ten Essentials for Ending Homelessness in Your Community and the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, which draws from over twenty years of research and experience with communities around the country. The essentials are slightly modified to respond to the unique housing and service needs of homeless youth. No essential is more important than another. All require participation from every sector of the community.

- [The Ten Essentials Your Community Needs to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness](#)



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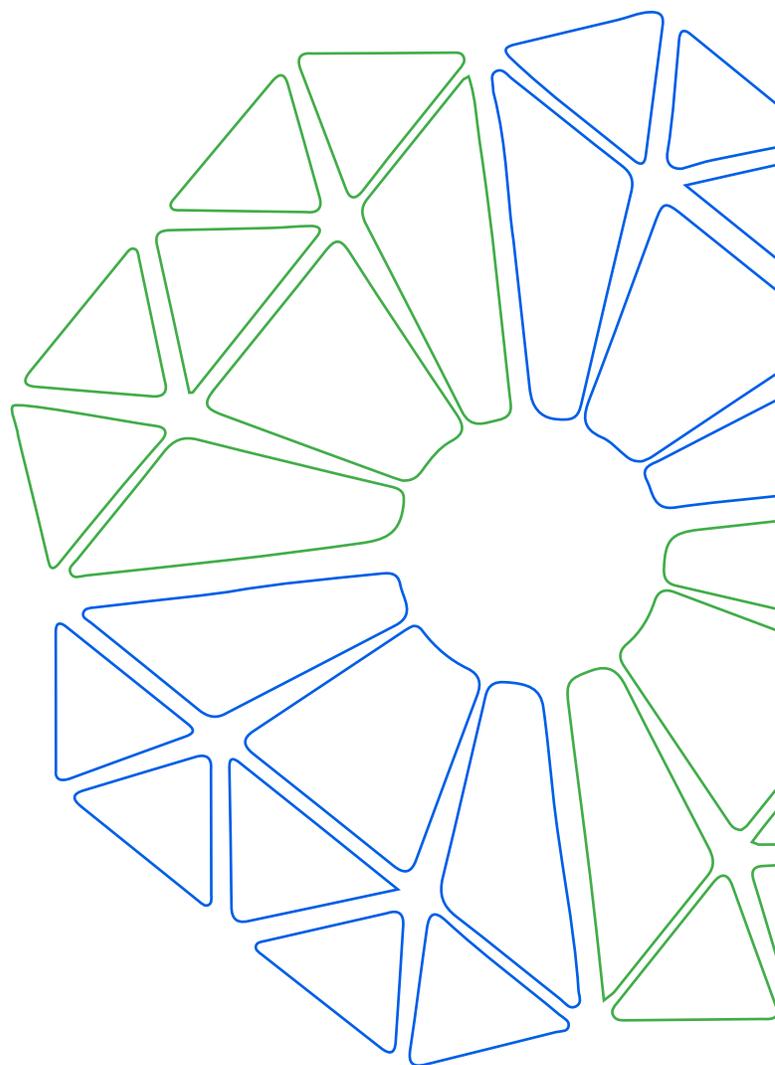
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