

# Rural Collaborations to Prevent and Respond to Teen Dating Violence





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# Rural Collaborations to Prevent and Respond to Teen Dating Violence

## Introduction

Collaboration is essential to effectively prevent and respond to teen dating violence. No single organization can do this work. A collaboration representing multiple partners is better situated to identify and address individual and community needs.

This is no small task. An impactful collaboration does not need to be large, perfect, or have all the answers. A collaboration of three people grounded in mutuality of relationship and purpose can have significant impact.

## Overview of Effective Collaborations

Effective collaborations embody these qualities:

- Clarity of purpose for the collaboration.
- Organizational capacity to energize the collaboration.
- Mutual relationships with young people and other partners.
- Shared long-term vision, values, and practices.

Here are questions for reflection on the collaboration’s purpose, organizational capacity, potential partners, and long-term vision, values, and practices:

Purpose for Collaboration	<p>At the outset, spend time getting clear on the purpose of the collaboration — the “why” for the creation of a collaboration. The more focused and particular a collaboration is the more narrowly it frames itself, the more passion and commitment it generates.</p> <p>Here are questions to reflect on the purpose of the collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is this collaboration important?</li><li>• Why is this collaboration different from all my other collaborations? Why is it different from other collaborations addressing youth issues or violence?</li><li>• What is this that other collaborations aren’t?</li><li>• What is the “why” that cannot be answered by us and requires the input of other partners?</li><li>• Is there another collaboration that could be expanded to include teen dating violence?</li><li>• Does the purpose take a risk a little bit? Does it take a stand? Is it willing to unsettle some participants? Does the purpose refuse to be everything to everyone?</li><li>• Identify the reasons you think you are forming a collaboration and keep drilling below them. Ask why you’re doing it. Every time you get to another, deeper reason, ask why again. Keep asking why until you hit a belief or value.</li></ul>
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Organizational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the potential collaboration in alignment with our organization's purpose and mission?</li> <li>• Do we have the organizational capacity and administrative staff to energize a collaboration?</li> <li>• Do we have someone or several people (shared leader!) to lead the collaboration?</li> <li>• Do we have or can we develop transparent, open communication skills?</li> <li>• What is the value added to our organizational work by forming the collaboration?</li> </ul>
Potential Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are potential partners open, ready, and willing to collaborate to prevent and respond to teen dating violence in your community?</li> <li>• Are there authentic relationships with the people most impacted by teen dating violence - young people, and specifically young people from historically marginalized communities?</li> <li>• Are direct service providers or culturally specific organizations interested in this effort? If culturally specific organizations do not exist in your community, are their influencers or leaders from historically marginalized communities?)</li> <li>• What is the history between all of the potential partners in the collaboration?</li> <li>• What are some anticipated challenges with the different parties working together?</li> <li>• What specific partnerships or collaborations have worked in the past in our community?</li> </ul>
Long-term Vision, Values, and Practices	<p>How do we want to collaborate - The "how" we are together as human beings is as important as the "why."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the impact we are working to create for your descendants? Is the vision bold enough?</li> <li>• What are the values of this collaborative?</li> <li>• Are we valuing centering youth from historically marginalized communities?</li> <li>• What are the practices - the intentional ways of being - that you would integrate into the collaboration? Examples include sharing food (using non-federal grant funds or a potluck), sitting in a circle, sharing, and building connection through storytelling, physical movement, etc.</li> </ul>

Reflecting on possible answers to these questions prior to forming the collaboration can clarify your purpose, and answering them collectively can serve as an opening activity for the collaboration. The collaborative may want to go in a different direction than what you, the original organizer, had initially imagined. Be prepared to be flexible to address each participant's purpose for the collaboration.

# How to Identify and Engage Collaborative Partners

*Who must be included to achieve our purpose?*

## Young People

Young people are experts on their environment and culture and are essential to the development of relevant, engaging, and effective strategies in any collaboration on the prevention and response to teen dating violence.

If the collaborative's purpose is to positively impact the lives of young people who are at risk of or who have experienced teen dating violence, it is essential to center young people with an emphasis on young people from historically marginalized communities, including but not limited to: Indigenous, Black, and brown youth, Queer & Trans youth, youth who are unhoused, youth who are immigrants or resettled through the refugee process, youth with disabilities, Deaf youth, and youth from oppressed religions.

**How do you recruit youth who are passionate about positively impacting their peers and who are opinion leaders across multiple, diverse social groups within their school/community?**

- Ask young people who are influencers across diverse social groups.
- Reach out to culturally specific leaders or organizations or youth-serving organizations in your community and be specific about your request.
- Ensure any recruitment materials emphasize and reflect youth from historically marginalized communities.

Engaging with young leaders and building these partnerships requires active listening and meaningful relationship building. These relationships need to move beyond work-sharing partnerships and “projects” and into connected ways of being together, such as taking time to build relationships on a human level. Ask questions about their interests and vision for the future. Support and mentor young people. Share food and engage in fun activities - movies, book club, team building activities - to foster relationship building. Youth leadership takes a variety of forms, so consider the many ways in which young people with various interests and skills might be brought in to support and help guide the collaboration.

## Youth-Serving Non-Governmental and Governmental Organizational Partners

Ask the following questions as you seek to identify potential organizational partners:

- Who do young people trust and seek help from, especially young people from communities impacted by marginalization?
- What people, groups, or organizations bring young people together? Schools, youth groups, culturally specific groups, faith-based institutions, etc.
- Who provides direct or indirect services to young people who have experienced teen dating violence?

These questions might lead you to collaborate with people or organizations that you would not immediately consider, such as youth-serving organizations for unhoused youth, immigrant youth, or youth resettled through the refugee process.





There is no set list of partners. Invite partners based on the envisioned purpose of your collaborative effort. Existing relationships are also important, especially in rural communities. Consider who can help achieve the purpose as well as who may potentially hinder your efforts if they are not given the opportunity for meaningful engagement. Sometimes, you need a range of partners at the table in order to achieve your purpose and goals.

Below are some examples of collaboration projects and potential partners:

Purpose	Partners
Implement a comprehensive prevention effort in the school district for February's National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (for campaign ideas go to <a href="http://www.idahocoalition.org">www.idahocoalition.org</a> ).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people</li> <li>• School-based youth organizations (Student Leadership, etc.)</li> <li>• School administration and personnel</li> <li>• Representatives from after-school programs</li> <li>• School Health Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Your state department of health and welfare</li> </ul>
Develop and implement an awareness campaign on accountability in healthy relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people</li> <li>• Representatives from local media</li> <li>• Local artists, especially youth artists</li> <li>• Social media influencers</li> <li>• Local businesses frequented by youth</li> </ul>
Coordinate dating and sexual violence comprehensive response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people and youth survivors of dating violence</li> <li>• Mental health counselors and social workers</li> <li>• Health care providers</li> <li>• School Health Advisory Councils</li> <li>• Community-based direct service providers</li> <li>• Local governmental response agencies</li> <li>• Restorative justice activists</li> </ul>
Develop dating violence and sexual assault prevention and response policies for a high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people</li> <li>• Students active in campus-student groups</li> <li>• Faculty and administrators</li> <li>• Title IX representatives</li> <li>• Community-based direct service providers</li> <li>• Individuals who would be responsible for enforcement of policies</li> <li>• School Health Advisory Councils</li> </ul>

# Convening the Collaboration

## Invitation with Purpose

Invite key stakeholders to the collaborative with a clear purpose. Clearly communicate the anticipated commitment needed to fully participate in a collaborative (time, number of meetings, resources, etc.). If you have relationships with any potential partners, invite them in a way that honors the relationship. Be creative in your initial invitation! How you make people feel matters.

## Engage Young People in Rural Communities

Young people have an integral role in the prevention and response to teen dating violence. At the outset, young people must be integrated into the planning of the collaboration and be included at each step. Some things to consider include:

- How do we effectively recruit youth from historically marginalized communities?
- How will we compensate youth for their work with this collaboration?
- How will we ensure that the challenge of geography in rural communities is addressed so that youth who don't have access to reliable transportation can still participate? Is there a virtual option where you can provide technology?
- How will we support a young person's ongoing participation with awareness of their emotional and physical needs, including providing transportation, flexible schedules, food, and other resources?
- How will we facilitate authentic intergenerational relationships between the adults and the young people?

Roger Hart's (2016) Ladder of Young People's Participation below is a good reference for assessing your organization's and collaborative's readiness to engage young people, and for reflecting on how the collaboration and youth involvement are evolving over time.

**Intergenerationally shared decisions with adults:** This occurs when projects or programs are initiated by young people and adults through an intergenerational process and decision-making is shared between young people and adults. This type of collaboration is full of opportunities to share expertise and learn across ages.

**Young people-initiated and directed:** This occurs when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role. This process can minimize the experience and wisdom of adults.

**Adult-initiated shared decisions with young people:** This occurs when projects or programs are initiated by adults, but the decision-making is shared with young people. Processes are developed to invite full youth participation. This process can minimize the experience and wisdom of youth.

**Youth are consulted and informed:** This occurs when young people give advice on projects or programs that are designed and run by adults. The young people are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults. This might embody utilizing youth advisory groups.

**Youth as token participants:** This occurs when young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.



**Youth as decoration:** This occurs when young people are used to help or “bolster” an initiative indirectly.

**Youth for marketing:** This occurs when young people are used in pictures and materials to show youth involvement when there is really none.

*\*Adapted from Robert Hart’s Children’s Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care.*

The goal is for your organization and collaboration to evolve over time up the ladder. In order to have an impactful intergenerational collaborative, adult allies need to create the conditions for youth to share their lived experience, passion, and leadership style. Here are a few ways to facilitate this process:

- Build relationships among and center youth across diverse social groups in your school and community.
- View and treat young people who are historically marginalized as community leaders.
- Listen for understanding.
- Exchange skills and knowledge to increase youth leadership in local change efforts.
- Provide opportunities for youth to lead bold conversations to build youth power.
- Deepen young people’s knowledge around advocacy as a strategy for systemic change and strengthen their skills when engaging systems leaders and decision-makers.

## Center Young People from Historically Marginalized Communities

Young people from historically marginalized communities experience teen dating violence and sexual assault at disproportionate rates and are essential leaders in the prevention and response to dating violence and sexual assault. Here are some reflection questions to consider:

- **Black, brown, and Indigenous Youth** — How can we meaningfully recruit from non-white communities without being extractive? How can we ensure that the experience is mutually beneficial for the youth?
- **Undocumented Youth, Immigrant Youth, or Youth Resettled through the Refugee Process** — Is our programming culturally relevant and sensitive to folks new to the United States? How are we practicing ensuring language access and justice? Are they comfortable working directly with law enforcement?
- **Youth who are in Detention Centers** — In what ways are we allowing young people in detention centers to meaningfully provide their input without repercussions from their peers or the staff at detention centers? Are we offering continued partnership when they are no longer in detention?
- **Queer and/or Trans Youth** — Will Queer and/or Trans youth feel safe with our adult partners and feel like they can be their fullest selves when they are working with other youth? How will we engage Queer/Trans youth if their parents do not know that they are Queer/Trans?
- **Deaf Youth and Youth with Disabilities** — How can we ensure that youth who communicate differently or have accessibility needs have ample time to prepare and participate meaningfully? Are we prepared for access needs that may change?

## Creating a Generative Environment for the Collaboration

Invest energy in planning for the collaboration. *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters* by Priya Parker is a helpful resource to help you with planning your collaboration meetings. Among the many learnings from Priya Parker's book:

**The collaboration or gathering starts the moment people become aware of its existence.** It's easy to focus on preparing all the practical aspects and forget to prepare the people. Priming your attendees for the gathering is crucial. Think about what behavior you'd like at the meeting and look to foster it ahead of time.

**The best gatherings have tension.** They have heat. They cause controversy. There is something at stake. Politeness prevents progress. Good controversy helps you re-examine values, priorities, and non negotiables. This leads to something better than the status quo.

As your collaboration forms, dedicate sufficient time to come to an agreement on the purpose of the collaboration, a long-term vision, values, and practices. Even if the original purpose of the collaboration excited people to join, it's important that everyone be part of the process of clarifying the purpose — the why — behind the collaboration. Consider including the purpose at the top of every meeting agenda or document to foster alignment.



## Touchstone Practices or Community Agreements

Consider adopting *Touchstone Practices* or developing community agreements on how you want to interact with one another. They can be a starting place for creating the conditions for an effective collaboration, addressing and counteracting power dynamics, and bridging gaps between members in the collaboration.

The following table describes each Touchstone Practice with the meaning behind each of them.

Touchstone Practices	Statement/Agreement
Give and receive welcome	In this circle, we support each other's learning by giving and receiving kindness, reconnecting to abundance, and remembering there is more than enough for all of us to thrive.
<u>All of you</u> is welcome	Be here with your purpose, gifts, and strengths as well as your doubts, fears, and failings, your deep listening as well as your speaking, your full humanity.
Speak your truths in ways that respect the truths of others	Share authentically, trusting that your voice will be heard, your contribution respected. Your truth may be different from, even the opposite of, what another in the circle has shared. Speak only for yourself. Use "I" statements.
When the going gets rough, turn to wonder	If you feel judgmental or defensive, ask yourself, "I wonder what brought them to this belief?" "I wonder what they are feeling right now?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set judgment aside to listen to others – and to yourself – more deeply.
Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions	With such questions, we can listen for understanding and learn from each other. "I'm curious, can you tell me more?"

## Practices of Wholeness

Practices, or intentional, conscious ways of being, that tend to our wholeness can strengthen a collaboration. For example, practices of sitting in a circle (or on Zoom) and sharing an opening prompt that builds connection among the participants can be helpful.

Examples of opening prompts to build connection:

- What are your favorite simple pleasures?
- If you were a plant or a tree, what would you be and why?
- Where or what do you call home?
- Where do you get your best ideas?
- What is one kind of self-care that you practice and why?
- Where are your spaces of reflection?

Practices that interrupt overwork and foster well-being, such as breathing together, taking breaks every 90 minutes, movement, and activities that foster joy can also be helpful. Make room and space for big leaps!

Activities can encourage youth and adult engagement in collaboration meetings. [Liberating Structures](#) is an incredible resource with a range of activities to encourage active engagement in meetings.



## Vision or Future Horizon

Early in the collaboration, develop a shared long-term vision, 100 years or seven generations into the future. The collaboration should always keep their focus on the vision and create the story of the vision or future horizon. Most importantly, the collaboration's strategies should always align with the vision or future horizon. By visioning we can avoid the habit of thinking incrementally and small.

Here is a visioning or future horizon activity to guide the participants through:

Invite people to envision indicators of a healthy thriving community OR community where everyone is whole and able to thrive (use language that will get them to the biggest vision). Play music if you can in the background.

Supplies: Sharpie markers, small and large sticky Post-Its (big so people think big), and a wall.

- Start 100 years out at the top — What do we want — healthy foods/safe water; health care for all; universal wages; governance for the whole; restoring our wholeness/healing; beloved community, no borders, no prisons — to look like? Get really clear and descriptive! Have people work individually or in pairs to generate many Post Its. Bring the large sticky notes to a wall — sort and put like themes together — have 4/ 5 themes on large Post Its that represent the most energy in the room.
- 50 years — What needs to happen 50 years from now to know we are on the path to the 100-year vision? Invite everyone to write on smaller Post Its under the themes they want to contribute to, and cluster similar ideas together.
- 25 years — What needs to happen 25 years from now to know we are on the path to the 100-year vision? Invite everyone to create more Post Its. Invite people to sort and cluster similar offerings
- 12.5 years — What needs to happen 12 years from now to know we are on the path to the 100-year vision? These responses can guide your strategies in moving forward.



*A graphic illustration of a 100 Year Vision created by young people in Idaho.  
Kristen Zimmerman, graphic illustrator.*

## Power Dynamics in the Collaboration & Conflict Resolution

Working collaboratively also means that power dynamics will surface. In our society, we know that certain groups of people hold more power than others due to institutional inequality. There may be many forms of power inequities in your community, but here are a few prevalent examples:

Governmental Systems — Criminal Legal, Juvenile Detention, Child Protective Services — relationship with communities and youth of color	The partnership between governmental systems - criminal legal, juvenile detention, or child protective services - has a history and policy of removing young people from homes, schools, and communities. This historical harm and ongoing power dynamic can negatively impact a collaboration if it is not explicitly named and addressed within the collaboration. This is especially true for youth from marginalized communities and culturally specific community organizations who have experienced historical trauma and are fearful of governmental systems based on previous community experiences of state-sanctioned violence.
Faith leaders' relationship with Queer & Trans Youth	While faith-based organizations can be important institutions, particularly in rural communities, many Queer & Trans youth may have had and may continue to have traumatic experiences associated with their sexuality or gender expression and identity.
Teacher's relationship with students	Educator/student partnerships can be a good way to bridge the gap between perspectives in order to make changes in school environments. However, the student-teacher dynamic and adultism within the school environment may create challenges to open and honest communication.

When working with youth, both intergenerationally and in partnerships within institutions with complex relationships with youth, it is important to begin by setting clear relationship expectations.

Establishing the Touchstone Practices described in the previous section can be helpful in addressing and counteracting power dynamics and bridging gaps between members in the collaborative.

Power dynamics also come with biases, assumptions, and stereotypes. In collaborative efforts, it is important to address them head-on to create “brave” spaces for all involved. This includes early open discussions of the assumptions adults make about young people and vice versa. It also includes thinking about strategies for addressing stereotypes as they come up. You may have to revisit power dynamic discussions frequently. Unfortunately, our history and culture create a lifetime of socialization in implicitly dehumanizing each other and it's our collective responsibility to create new systems where everyone is valued for their full humanity.

### Addressing Conflicts

Conflict, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and breaks in trust can all happen in any relationship. While we can do our best to avoid conflict, it is inevitable. It's important that we address conflict when it happens instead of shying away from it. Unfortunately, due to our relationship to the dominant culture and shame, most of us do not know how to be accountable for our actions. But we can learn – and continue learning – about being accountable in our relationships.

The following Accountability Practices are one way a group might address conflicts as they emerge. Your collaboration may develop something slightly different based on the group's needs. However, the principles below should still inform your collaboration's accountability practices **Above all, working together means continually fostering of relationships, even as issues emerge and mistakes are made.**

## Steps for Addressing Conflict and Centering Accountability to Each Other

Accountability has four parts, and each part is important to the entire process:

**Part 1 – Self-reflection** is needed to understand your actions and the impact of those actions. Self-reflection helps you get to a place where you are willing to make things right. Looking inward and sitting with uncomfortable feelings (but not with guilt or shame) may help you understand the choices you made, the outcomes of those choices, and how to make different choices in the future. Questions to ask yourself: “What happened?” “Why did I say or do that?” “How did my words or actions impact the person I care about?”

**Part 2 – Apologizing** is a chance to share that you understand what you did and to take responsibility for the impact of your actions. Apologizing is a fundamental part of rebuilding trust and requires us to practice being authentic and courageous. Accountability doesn’t have to be scary, even though it can be extremely uneasy and uncomfortable. Words you can use: “I’m sorry that I (name what you did) and that it impacted you (name how it caused harm). I want to rebuild trust and will make an active effort to (name the way you will change your behavior) in the future.”

**Part 3 – Repair** means making amends and rebuilding trust. It is an opportunity to do the work necessary to be in a healthy relationship with those you have hurt or harmed — and to be in a healthier relationship with yourself. Repair can take a long time — you may need to apologize more than once. Questions to ask yourself: “How can I rebuild trust with the person I’ve harmed?” “What is the pace of trust I can move at right now?”

**Part 4 – Behavior change** is one of the hardest parts of accountability. It will likely take time and lots of practice. Talk to people you trust about mistakes you’ve made, things you are ashamed of or feel guilty about, or times when you weren’t your best self. Understanding your behavior and how it impacted others may help you identify ways to act differently in the future.

For more information on how to practice accountability and make meaningful apologies, see our resource, “[Accountability in Healthy Relationships](#).”

## Prevention and Intervention Strategies

This section explores potential strategies that the collaboration may work on. This is not an exhaustive list; in fact, the work to address teen dating violence should be open to new and compelling innovations as your collaboration identifies activities that can make a positive impact on youth in your community.

### Quick note:

A collaboration can be formed to carry out just one type of activity or multiple strategies. While working together on a particular activity is important, the collaboration should still consider the long-term vision they co-created. In other words, the collaboration should reflect on where this one event or activity falls in the long-term plan of confronting and ultimately ending dating violence in your community.

Prevention and Intervention strategies that benefit from a collaborative approach include:

**Teen Dating Violence Prevention & Awareness:** Some prevention efforts focus on the relationship level of the [social-ecological model](#) and typically involve building on healthy communication and other relationship skills. Other approaches focus on the institutional level of the socio-ecological model, such as changing school and community policies and working with parents and teachers. Effective prevention efforts focus on the outer layers of the socio-ecological model - changing social norms. While there are many prevention resources and program models, not all of them have



strong research support, and many of them are not specifically designed with the needs of rural communities in mind. The best prevention approaches combine multiple types of interventions to form a comprehensive initiative that addresses the multiple influences in a young person's life.

**Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault Response Teams:** Many communities, including rural communities, have developed collaborative response teams to address adult domestic and sexual violence and child sexual abuse. These response teams have signed agreements to share information about cases and discuss the appropriate response for each case or review the cases to determine lessons learned. The prevailing goal of these teams is to develop comprehensive responses to these harms. For teen dating violence, collaborative response teams might also be school or district-wide in addition to community-wide.

## Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting Policies and Protocols for Serving Survivors of Teen Dating Violence or Sexual Assault

An important foundation for an organization or collaboration responding to teen dating violence is having the most effective policies and protocols in place. This also increases your organization's and your collaboration's readiness for the work that you are undertaking. Whether you are working together to provide comprehensive crisis and advocacy services, supporting prevention education, or developing outreach and awareness campaigns, solid policies around confidentiality, information sharing, and mandatory reporting will provide guidance as well as protection if needed. This section includes sample tools that you can use for any circumstance.

### Templates and Tools for Serving Youth

#### *Confidentiality Policy Language*

When working in collaboration to prevent and respond to teen dating violence, confidentiality is paramount. A lack of confidentiality can be a serious barrier for young people continuing to seek support and/or sharing potentially supportive resources with their peers and may deter future youth from help-seeking behaviors. For Queer & Trans youth, for example, the stigma associated with their gender expression or sexuality may increase the need for added safety and precautions.

#### **Here is sample language for confidentiality policies for your collaboration:**

*(Insert collaboration name) adheres to a strict confidentiality policy in line with (insert name of the program). All members of this collaboration agree to indefinitely respect the privacy of survivors and others represented and/or discussed through the course of this collaboration, including the confidentiality of members and member organizations of this collaboration.*

*(List the kind of information that needs to be kept confidential here)*

*If information must be shared, e.g., in the case of mandatory reporting, youth clients or youth collaboration participants must be kept informed about what information must or will be shared as soon as possible.*

Each organization represented in the collaboration must review its individual organization's policies for alignment with the policies of this collaboration.

## Interagency Information Sharing Flowchart

Within your collaboration, there may be times when it is important to share information (potentially confidential) with members of the group. It is important to make sure that this sharing of information is in line with any confidentiality policies and to reflect on the potential benefits and consequences of this information.

1. Is sharing this information necessary for furthering the work of the collaboration? If NO, do not share the information. If YES,
2. Could an individual or group of people be harmed or potentially harmed if this information is shared? If YES, consider alternatives. If NO,
3. Has everyone who will be impacted by this information being shared been informed and given the opportunity to respond? If NO, discuss this information with all those who may be potentially impacted. If YES,
4. Is sharing this information in its current form in line with confidentiality and other current policies in place? If NO, adjust to alignment with the values and policies of the collaboration. If YES, share the information.

### Mandatory Reporting Policy Sample

Every state in the United States has its own laws and policies regarding mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect and which parties within the state are mandatory reporters. It is important for every organization working with and for youth and any collaboration formed for this purpose to be aware of their state-specific laws. Additionally, you should talk to the youth involved in the work, either as clients, participants, or collaborators, about mandatory reporting and engage them in setting out youth-informed plans for addressing mandatory reporting requirements **before** disclosures occur.

Any mandatory reporting policy should list the categories of people within the state who are mandatory reporters, the circumstances under which they are required to report, and how any young people involved will be informed of this requirement.

#### Here is a sample policy:

*Within the (insert collaboration name), the following individuals are responsible for reporting child abuse and neglect, including dating violence perpetration, to the (name of the reporting agency within the state).*

*(List individual roles that are mandatory reporters here)*

*Prior to the potential disclosure of abuse by a young person to a mandatory reporter, a young person will be informed of the mandatory reporting requirements and given the option of continuing to disclose or not. This choice will not impact the ability of a young person to participate and/or lead this project or collaboration.*

For more information on your local mandatory reporting laws, who is considered a mandatory reporter, and to learn more about harm reduction practices related to mandatory reporting, visit these sites:

[www.childwelfare.org](http://www.childwelfare.org) .

<https://www.mandatoryreportingisnotneutral.com/>



## Evaluating Collaborative Approaches

Evaluating approaches to the prevention and response to teen dating violence presents a variety of challenges in rural settings, including, for example:

- Lack of access to evaluators (e.g., consultants, university professors) to provide guidance or serve as external evaluators.
- Hindrances to confidentiality when you have a limited number of young people as clients or participants.
- Bringing people together in one accessible space for data collection such as focus groups and other methods that entail the participation of those most impacted.

However, when done well, evaluation can help you improve your work and show the impact you have on survivors and the community. Different types of evaluation require different processes and different levels of resources and expertise. This section will focus on some basic guidelines to help you frame an evaluation, but you can also consider hiring an evaluation consultant to support your efforts. Even if you do not have one in your local community, many consultants can work with you from afar. Additionally, if you have a college nearby, you might consider reaching out to see about partnership opportunities with students or professors in departments such as sociology, social work, psychology, or public health.

Thinking about evaluation at the beginning of any collaborative effort will encourage you to design ways to check your progress toward your goals and better assess the results of your efforts. At the most basic level, for evaluation, you need to consider a few key things:

- What is success? Or what is the ultimate result you hope to achieve with your efforts?
- How will you know success when it happens? Or how will you know that you have not yet achieved success?

## What Does Positive Impact Look Like?

Conducting a meaningful and useful evaluation requires that you develop a clear sense of what impactful efforts look like for your collaboration. By “positive impact,” we mean that you know what it will look like when your collaboration has helped young people, or your local community has reached a positive result that they might not have achieved without the collaboration.

### Examples of impact:

1. For a teen dating violence intervention using a response team, positive impact might mean that a client has had all or most of their most pressing needs met when engaging with all the institutions they come in contact with after seeking support at the local dating violence organization.
2. For a prevention initiative, positive impact might mean that young people feel safer in their local community.
3. At the level of your collaboration itself, positive impact might be an increase in collaboration members infusing consistent dating violence content or perspectives into their work.

## Indicators of Positive Impact

Once you know what positive impact looks like, you need to think about how you will know whether you achieved that success or not. What will you be able to observe that will show you that you're on your way or have arrived at your destination? If you can list a few examples, called indicators in evaluation lingo, then you only need to figure out how you will collect and use those examples systematically.

An indicator is an approximate way to measure progress toward an outcome, a signal that the desired change is happening or has happened (Patton, 2014). You can have--and often need--more than one indicator per change.

For example, if we take the third example of impact above in this section, a few indicators might be:

- Partners engaged in education-based interventions add content to their curriculum focused on raising awareness of dating violence, supporting protective factors against violence, or addressing risk factors for violence.
- Partners engaged in media-related work revise content to reflect realities of teen sexual and dating violence or to alter perceptions of risk and protective factors.

You could then collect these indicators either through a simple survey that asks partners to share when they do these things, or you could have a checklist that you use during meetings to check off times when partners report efforts toward infusion.

Infusing content into work products or processes	Yes	No	Details (What kind of content? What product or process?)
Townsville School District			
Townsville Head Start			
Townsville OUT for Youth Community Organization			

\*The organizations above are simply used as an example and do not refer to any actual organizations in any local community, in particular.

## Process Evaluation

A process evaluation determines whether program activities have been implemented as intended and resulted in certain outputs. For example, if your work is meant to be youth-centered, then you can evaluate your processes to make sure that youth are both present and an integral part of developing and implementing the collaborative. Give the same chart to the youth involved in the collaboration and a few adult members to have them complete it so that you can get multiple perspectives. Any discrepancies between what the young people say is happening and what the adult members say is happening should be directly addressed.

Indicator	Measure
Young people show up to meetings	Number of young people who show up to meetings vs # of young people involved in the collaborative (can average for multiple meetings or list each meeting)
Young people speak up in meeting unprompted	Tick marks for each time a young person speaks unprompted and a few examples of what they said
Adults in the group actively solicit the input of young people.	Tick marks for each time an adult seeks young people's input and a few examples of what they said
Young people's ideas receive thoughtful consideration by the group rather than being quickly dismissed	Number of collaborative initiatives or activities that came initially from a young person's ideas Examples of ideas and discussions

## Conclusion

We hope the offered practical tools and guidance around developing meaningful collaborations to address teen dating violence in your communities were helpful. The importance of comprehensive, collaborative efforts that center the experiences of those most impacted by violence cannot be overstated. As we continue to work towards ending teen dating violence and sexual assault in our communities across the country, we value the experiences, knowledge, and vision of the young people who will lead this work now and into the future.

The Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence can offer support with your collaboration. To find out how to receive support for your collaboration to prevent and respond to teen dating violence or to see more of our materials, visit our website at [www.idahocoalition.org](http://www.idahocoalition.org).

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