

Prevention and Response to Teen Dating Violence or Sexual Assault in Rural Communities Tip Sheets

Introduction

This short guide is made up of 7 easy-to-use tip sheets to assist rural communities in developing a framework in the prevention and response to teen dating violence that centers the voices and experiences of young people aged 11 to 19, with a focus on young people from historically marginalized communities.

Collaborations — Tip Sheets 1 and 2 focus on building and maintaining collaborations by being clear on the purpose, values, practices, and power-sharing structures to ensure meaningful youth engagement, with a focus on young people from historically marginalized communities.

Direct Services, Confidentiality, Privacy and Mandatory Reporting — Tip sheets 3 and 4 focus on providing direct services to youth. Tip sheet 3 centers on the relevance of your services. Tip sheet 4 focuses on confidentiality, privacy, and mandatory reporting.

PREA and Title IX — Tip sheets 5 and 6 focus on the effects of federal legislation (PREA and Title IX) on supporting survivors of dating and sexual violence and the role of local organizations in supporting initiatives that flow out of these laws.

Evaluating Impact — Tip Sheet 7 focuses on how to evaluate your impact as you work to serve survivors of dating and sexual violence and prevent this violence from occurring in the first place.

These tip sheets are only brief overviews of information to get you started. The last page of this document provides resources for further information and guidance as needed.



Tip Sheet 1: Collaborations

No one organization offers all the solutions. Centering young people, especially young people from historically marginalized communities, and collaborating with a wide range of partners can generate new approaches.

Recruit young people from historically marginalized communities to increase the likelihood that your work will benefit all young people. Recruit organizational partners who are invested in the well-being of young people in your community.

Here are reflection questions to consider in developing your purpose, long-term vision, values, and practices:

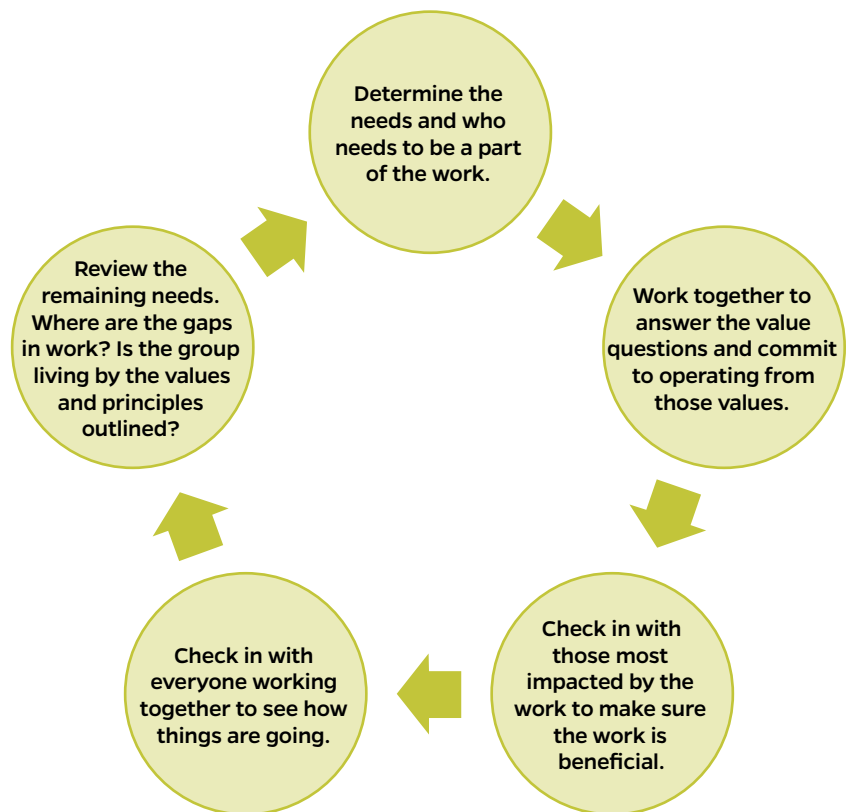
Purpose — What is the purpose of the collaborative? The “why” behind coming together?

Long-term Vision — What is your boldest vision for young people 100 years from now? What are the indicators needed at year 50, 25, 12 and 6 to make this vision a reality?

Values — What values are reflecting beliefs on how we want to be with one another in our collaboration?

Practices — What are intentional human-centered practices to incorporate into our collaboration? Opening prompts and the sharing of food to build relationships? Do we want to sit in a circle?

Identifying your collaboration’s purpose, vision, values, and practices is a cyclical process. Recommit or shift as needed.



Tip Sheet 2: Sharing Power with Young People and other Stakeholders

Engaging with young leaders, particularly those from underserved communities, in collaborative work means developing structures and processes that enable real power sharing between all involved. It also means dealing honestly with the roles you are prepared for young people to play.

Are you sharing power with young people?

Here are some questions for reflection as you think about sharing power with youth:

1. Where does ultimate decision-making authority lie in your work with underserved youth? In other words, who has the final say?
2. What specific roles are youth engaging in? For example, are they providing feedback or co-creating projects?
3. How are all the adults in our collaboration engaging with the youth, regardless of the structure we have in place? Are the adults listening and learning as well as sharing? Do the young people feel heard when the group comes together?

Sharing Power with Youth

Providing multiple options and opportunities for engagement and being open to new ideas.

Developing community agreements as a group. These could include connecting with one another, being fully present even with your doubts and fears, speaking your truth, and reflecting on why certain things bring up certain reactions.

Acknowledging areas of previous or potential harm between members of the group (e.g. representatives from government systems and historically marginalized youth).

Where does your youth engagement fall on Hart's Ladder?

Intergenerationally, shared decisions with adults:

This occurs when projects or programs that 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 are assigned but informed:

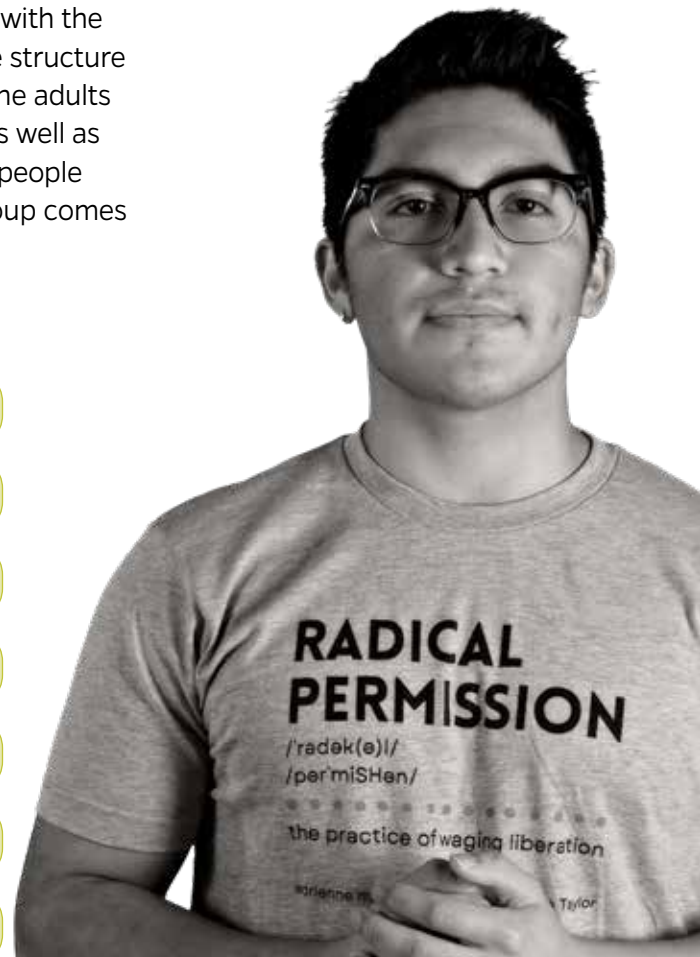
This occurs when young people are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved. This embodies talking to youth for one-time purposes such as a focus group.

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.



Tip Sheet 3: Providing Direct Services

Providing direct services with young people who have experienced teen dating violence or sexual assault means prioritizing services that are developmentally and culturally relevant, adaptable, and responsive to their needs.

Questions to ask when providing services to underserved youth:

Questions to ask when providing services to young people

- Have we asked and considered the specific needs of young people?
- Have we created culturally relevant services for young people from historically marginalized communities?
- Have young people, particularly young people from historically marginalized communities, been meaningfully represented in the development and decision-making about our services and programming?

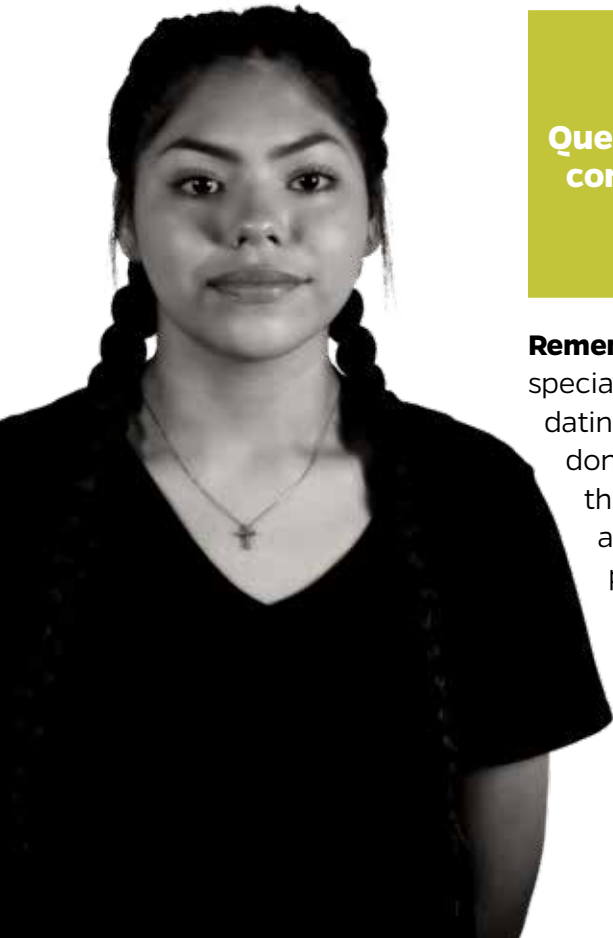
Questions about readiness

- How much am I prepared to listen for understanding to the needs of young people?
- In what ways can I check my assumptions about young people and historically marginalized communities?
- Am I ready to share power with the youth I am hoping to support?
- How will we assess whether our work is actually encouraging meaningful access for young people, especially young people from historically marginalized communities?

Questions about consequences

- Have we considered how sustainable these services or programs will be in the long term?
- How will we close off the program or service if it has to stop unexpectedly?
- What if we no longer have funding to support this project? What happens then?
- What kinds of resources are needed at the beginning, as well as throughout its life, in order to sustain it?

Remember: Young people are experts in their own lives. There is no special checklist for serving young people who have experienced teen dating violence; you just have to be willing to acknowledge what you don't know, listen for understanding, and learn. Building relationships that promote authenticity and trust will ultimately lead to meaningful and relevant support. It is also essential to engage in accountability practices when you make a mistake or cause harm.



Tip Sheet 4: Privacy, Confidentiality, and Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting includes requirements for certain adults to report abuse, abandonment, or neglect of children. It is important that you are familiar with your state's mandatory reporting statutes to determine who is required to report and the circumstances.

At the same time, as with adult survivors, young people who are victims of sexual assault and dating violence have needs for privacy and rights to confidentiality. Not having appropriate policies and practices around privacy and confidentiality can be a barrier for young people seeking the services they need. Young people from historically marginalized communities, especially, may have reasonable fears around reporting of any kind because of historical or present trauma and violence they experience by government systems.

In order to balance the legal needs with the needs of the young people seeking services, it is important to allow young people the option to OPT OUT of any disclosures.

For example, a mandatory reporting policy might say:

Prior to a potential disclosure of abuse by a young person, they should first be informed of the mandatory reporting requirements and given the option of continuing to disclose or not.

Services and participation in an organization's programming will not be contingent on a disclosure of abuse.

There is an overall balance here. If you believe that a young person is in immediate danger, safety is paramount. However, remember that for many, safety is not accomplished by any additional systems involvement in their lives.

SAFETY ≠ REPORTING
SAFETY = INFORMATION AND OPTIONS



Tip Sheet 5: Title IX

What is Title IX?

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational settings. Title IX prohibits gender discrimination and sexual harassment by and against students and employees that occur within educational programs and activities. To comply with Title IX, schools must take certain actions when learning that a student experienced behaviors that may constitute covered forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

Steps schools can take to comply with Title IX?

School districts and college campuses must:

- 1) Appoint a Title IX coordinator and publish their name and contact information on the school's website and in the school handbook,
- 2) Publish an anti-discrimination policy and grievance procedure,
- 3) Train Title IX Coordinators and post training materials on district and school websites,
- 4) Remind all school staff that they are required to report sexual harassment because all employees are now mandatory reporters,
- 5) Respond promptly and effectively to Title IX sexual harassment and offer supportive measures.

Recent changes to Title IX create additional requirements of which schools should be mindful. Go to the U.S. Department of Education: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-titleix-20200904.pdf>.

Where can you come in?

As a local organization, you can support prevention and intervention strategies within your local school districts by offering education to adults and youth and intervention support as needed for survivors of dating and sexual violence. If your local school has not implemented a comprehensive school policy, you can work with school officials to implement and support any collaborative work as well. You can also promote the leadership of the students throughout these processes and serve as an ally for incorporating youth participation in areas in which they are currently not provided opportunities.



Tip Sheet 6: You and the Prison Rape Elimination Act

What is the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)?

PREA is a federal law to address the elimination and prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment in both adult and juvenile correctional facilities. This includes sexual violence perpetrated by facility staff, as well as other inmates.

What is the connection between PREA and serving young people?

On any given day, nearly 60,000 youth under age 18 are incarcerated in juvenile jails and prisons in the United States, with a disproportionate amount of those young people having identities from historically marginalized communities (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Trans and Queer youth). Furthermore, young people in juvenile detention are listed as having increased vulnerability to sexual violence while incarcerated.

Intervention and Prevention

Many states, in addition to PREA, have a zero-tolerance policy associated with sexual violence in these facilities. Intervention policies generally state that staff are required to document all reported sexual violence, maintain confidentiality (as much as possible), and maintain safety for anyone reporting violence. Prevention opportunities could be for staff or young people who are detained. Facilities may also have a PREA coordinator.

Where can you come in?

As a local organization, you can support survivors of sexual violence within juvenile detention centers by learning more about the needs of the young people who are detained and challenges in your local juvenile facilities. Get to know the PREA coordinators and find ways to collaborate through education and other intervention services. Book clubs or other conversation-based activities can be effective ways to engage young people.

How can you be ready to support survivors of sexual violence in juvenile detention?

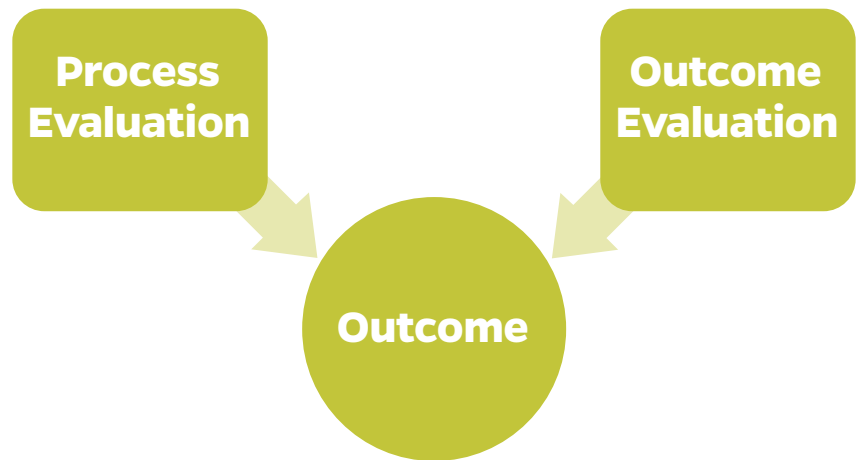
It is important to learn about the historical connections between the criminalization of youth who are marginalized and sexual violence. Some of your work, internally and externally, will be to remember that no one deserves to be a victim of sexual violence. Spend some time talking to people who have experienced the criminal legal system and survivors.

What can you learn about their experiences? Work with them to make changes not only within the juvenile detention system but outside of the system so that fewer young people are incarcerated to begin with.



Tip Sheet 7: Assessing Impact and Telling the Story

Collaborations need both process and outcome evaluations in order to tell the full story of your impact.



Process evaluation examines whether or not you are doing the activities you said you would do in the ways you said you would do them. This includes assessing whether or not your work is aligned with your values. For example, if your values include centering the needs of the most marginalized youth, a process evaluation would take a look at the ways your work has consistently done that.

Outcome evaluation examines whether or not the results you were hoping for or expected actually happened. For example, if your work in juvenile detention facilities is supposed to have an outcome of providing full access to resources for all victims of sexual violence, an outcome evaluation would take a look at whether survivors of sexual violence within the juvenile detention center have had full access to available resources.

Some ways to collect data for both process and outcome evaluations include:



Some ways to share data include:

