



**TEEN HEALTH**  
week

V I O L E N C E  
P R E V E N T I O N

**How to use this toolkit:**

This toolkit has been created to make it easy for a variety of organizations interested in adolescent health to participate in Global Teen Health Week. You are free to use and adapt any of the materials herein for your Teen Health Week activities; however, use of these materials is not required in order to promote adolescent health during Teen Health Week. Participating organizations are at liberty to celebrate Teen Health Week in any manner they wish, and are encouraged to be creative in adapting these ideas to meet the needs of the adolescents you wish to reach. Approval for activities or educational materials is not required.

**Background:**

As we read headlines and hear the news, we see the signs and impacts of violence all around us. Youth violence is a global problem and a public health problem, and includes bullying, physical fighting, sexual and physical assault, and homicide. Although rates of violence vary amongst and within countries, violence impacts many teens directly and/or indirectly. Many teens are either victims or perpetrators of violence, in the home, in the world at large, or in school. Girls are particularly vulnerable; the World Health Organization notes that girls are often the victims of violence and that every 10 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence. Young males comprise a much larger percentage of perpetrators and homicide fatalities.<sup>i</sup>

Risk factors for youth violence exist within individual teens, within their close relationships, and within their larger communities and societies as a whole. Effectively addressing youth violence requires addressing social determinants of violence (income inequality, rapid social change, and low levels of social protection).<sup>ii</sup>

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for protection from all forms of violence:

*“Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive. It is up to each government to review these laws in light of the Convention.”*

Furthermore, Article 29 addresses bullying and harassment:

*“The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.*

*As a society, therefore, we must educate children to ensure they develop positive attitudes and behaviours and avoid using their power to bully or harass others.”*

Violence has a lasting effect on the physical and mental well-being of adolescents and is a public health issue that demands our focus and attention.

**Objective: Today, the objective is to increase awareness of teen violence as a public health issue that demands their (and our) attention. The day’s aim is to provide resources and strategies teens can use to abate violence, control anger, help those in danger, and prevent violence.**

**A few facts about the types of violence that affect our teens:**

- Violence is a leading cause of death in older adolescent males.<sup>iii iv</sup>
- In the US, nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.<sup>v</sup>
  - 1/3 of US adolescents is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner
  - 1/10 of US high school students has been purposefully physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
  - Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18. The severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.
- In the US, youth are disproportionately affected by firearm violence, experiencing 1/5<sup>th</sup> of all firearm-related deaths and almost half of all non-fatal firearm injuries, while only comprising about 14% of the US population in 2010.<sup>vi</sup>
- In the US alone, almost 1 out of every 4 students have been bullied.<sup>vii</sup>
- In a study of 40 developing countries, an average of 42% of boys and 37% of girls were exposed to bullying.<sup>viii</sup>
- Bullying affects the bullied, the bullies, and teens who have witnessed bullying behavior.<sup>ix</sup>
  - Students who are bullied experience lower confidence and self-esteem and high rates of anxiety, depression and even suicidal thoughts.
  - Bullies themselves have a higher risk of getting into trouble with the law.
  - Witnesses feel less safe where bullying occurs.
- Bullying and intimate partner violence differ only in terms of the relationship between the abuser and the victim. These types of violence reflect aggression by one person with more power towards another with less power. These types of aggression are called “bullying” or “child abuse” or “dating abuse” depending on the relationship between the persons.<sup>x</sup>
- Globally, 1 in 10 girls under the age of 20 years report experiencing sexual violence.<sup>xi</sup> In one study, from 3–24% of women report that their first sexual experience was forced.<sup>xii</sup>
- Close to 1 in 3 middle or high school students in the US are exposed to cyberbullying<sup>xiii</sup>.

**Activities and Resources**

Setting or Outlet	Suggested activities or ideas
Medical Office Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have staff wear Teen Health Week t-shirts or lime green to celebrate the week.</li> <li>• Submit letter to the editor to local press about importance of violence and its impact on teens.</li> <li>• Partner with a local school to share educational materials about bullying, dating abuse or other forms of violence.</li> <li>• Partner with a local celebrity who is outspoken about bullying, dating violence, sexual assault or other forms of violence.</li> <li>• Promote your involvement in Teen Health Week with local newspapers, television and radio media. If you can be interviewed by local media / morning news use the opportunity to share information about youth violence as a health issue, and what you are doing to improve it in your community.</li> </ul>
School-wide ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence takes many forms; therefore, each school may have specific areas on which they wish to focus.</li> <li>• Remind students of resources school has available if they are threatened, bullied, or attacked at school.</li> <li>• Celebrate random acts of kindness – notice them and highlight them – recognize publicly in some way, if appropriate.</li> <li>• Set up a drop box where students can send an anonymous message to the counselor to receive advice on domestic violence, school violence, and potentially abusive relationships. Advertise the email address around school (on the walls, in the bathrooms, etc.), to encourage students to reach out for help.</li> <li>• Publish a student-written article in the school newspaper or blog about how violence affects the student body.</li> <li>• Ask Student Government to make a statement, facilitate a discussion between students and administrators, or host an event about the impact of violence on the school community.</li> <li>• Have a Neighborhood / Community party to bring neighborhoods together to reduce the prevalence of gang violence. Include a motivational speaker component that encourages leaving violence out of schools.</li> <li>• Have a presentation on cyberbullying with speakers (friends and parents of the bullied who have committed suicide) to talk about the horrific outcomes of cyberbullying. People can share personal experiences, and experts can give tips on how to deal with bullies, and educate on identifying bullying behavior.</li> <li>• Have lunch hour or after-school seminars, panel discussion consisting of a 1-hour discussion on different types of violence. Provide candy, lunch, extra credit etc. to the attendees.</li> </ul>

**Violence Prevention**

Setting or Outlet	Suggested activities or ideas
Health Class activities / concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use these free educational games about dating violence: <a href="https://jenniferann.org/tdv.htm#games">https://jenniferann.org/tdv.htm#games</a></li> <li>• Many schools have lesson plans on bullying. This week can be a good opportunity to cover this topic. Ideas for lessons can be found at <a href="http://www.prevnet.ca/resources/bullying-prevention-facts-and-tools-for-schools">http://www.prevnet.ca/resources/bullying-prevention-facts-and-tools-for-schools</a></li> <li>• Dating violence – Help classes understand what types of behavior constitute abuse in relationships. Many patterns are similar between bullying classmates and dating abuse.</li> <li>• Have students take this online quiz “Is my relationship healthy?” <a href="http://www.loveisrespect.org/for-someone-else-is-my-relationship-healthy-quiz/">http://www.loveisrespect.org/for-someone-else-is-my-relationship-healthy-quiz/</a> (there are other good quizzes on the same website, specifically for students).</li> <li>• Use this video to initiate a conversation about consent: <a href="https://youtu.be/fGoWLS4-kU">https://youtu.be/fGoWLS4-kU</a></li> <li>• Have students make an informational poster about the statistics of child abuse. Include on these posters hotlines or local resources where youth can get help.</li> <li>• Use the Dating Violence Quiz (in Appendix) as a basis for group discussion about healthy relationships and dating violence.</li> <li>• Students can participate in a session on bullying using the appended workshop outline.</li> </ul>
Social Media ideas (#2018teenhealth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post an anti-bullying message on your Snap story.</li> <li>• Have a contest with creating fact based educational images to share on Instagram. Most likes wins.</li> <li>• Post on social media healthy ways to cope with stress. Create a hashtag to you specific to your school, or use ##2018teenhealthStressBusters – share and try to get the posts to go viral!</li> <li>• Have students make an infographic about the statistics of child abuse to share via social media.</li> <li>• Share local hotlines and resources on social media.</li> <li>• Dedicate time for students to block accounts / friends who cyberbully. This could be done in an assembly (everyone’s phones out) or in a class or over lunch. This includes blocking people whom you see bully others even if they do not bully the individual.</li> </ul>
Tweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Got a question about a relationship? Healthy or unhealthy? Go to <a href="http://loveisrespect.org">loveisrespect.org</a> or text "loveis" to 22522. #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• Love and friendship can come in many flavors, but abuse is not one of them. #2018teenhealth</li> </ul>

**Violence Prevention**

Setting or Outlet	Suggested activities or ideas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DYK that 1/3 US adolescents is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a partner? You are not alone. #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• One of the best ways to stop bullying is when teens stand up for teens that are bullied. Don't just standby! #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• Did you know that the majority of kids injured or killed by a gun are hurt at home? Gun violence is a teen health issue. #2018teenhealth</li> </ul>
Facebook posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting bullied online? Try the STOP-BLOCK-TALK method: Stop communication right away; block the user; talk to a trusted adult. #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• We all get mad. How do you cool down when you're mad? Fresh air? Exercise? Talking to a friend? Share what helps you since it might help another! #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• Not sure how to help a friend who is being bullied? Don't just stand by. Here are some tips: <a href="https://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/on-the-spot/index.html">https://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/on-the-spot/index.html</a> #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• Check this out for a cool video that helps explain when a relationship crosses the line into abuse: <a href="http://realtalkwithdroffutt.org/relationships-and-dating/crossing-the-line-when-what-looks-like-love-turns-into-abuse">http://realtalkwithdroffutt.org/relationships-and-dating/crossing-the-line-when-what-looks-like-love-turns-into-abuse</a> #2018teenhealth</li> <li>• Did you know that the majority of kids injured or killed by a gun are hurt at home? Gun violence is a teen health issue. Ways to promote gun safety: <a href="http://realtalkwithdroffutt.org/general-health/gun-violence-is-a-teen-health-issue">http://realtalkwithdroffutt.org/general-health/gun-violence-is-a-teen-health-issue</a> #2018teenhealth</li> </ul>

Additional selected resources and links:

- **Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)** is a US initiative, led by the CDC, which takes a public health approach to preventing youth violence before it starts: <http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/stryve/>
- **Loveisrespect** is a resource to empower youth to prevent and end dating abuse. It is a project of Break the Cycle and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>
- Anti-bullying website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/>
- 21 Strategies to reduce youth violence worldwide are reviewed here: [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/youth/youth\\_violence/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/youth/youth_violence/en/)
- Educational videos for teens about bullying and violence: <http://www.prevnet.ca/resources/videos>
- The Life After Trauma Organization (LATO)'s mission is to help adolescents and adults prevent and recover from the long-term effects of trauma from commercial sexual exploitation, and other complex trauma. This website has many excellent resources: <http://www.thelifeaftertrauma.org/>
- Experts Link Teen Brains' Immaturity, Juvenile Crime- <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=3943187&page=1>
- Violence, the Media and Your Brain-<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/reading-between-the-headlines/201309/violence-the-media-and-your-brain>
- The Teen Brain: 6 Things to Know-<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-6-things-to-know/index.shtml#pub5>
- The Teen Brain: It's Just Not Grown Up Yet- <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124119468>
- Teen Brain: Behavior, Problem Solving and Decision Making- [http://www.aacap.org/aacap/families\\_and\\_youth/facts\\_for\\_families/FFF-Guide/The-Teen-Brain-Behavior-Problem-Solving-and-Decision-Making-095.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/aacap/families_and_youth/facts_for_families/FFF-Guide/The-Teen-Brain-Behavior-Problem-Solving-and-Decision-Making-095.aspx)
- Inside the Teenage Brain (video)-<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/inside-the-teenage-brain/>

**Activity Appendix**

**A Bullying Workshop created for students, by students:**

Possibly begin with a TED talk on bullying:

TED talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOtsNMCRYG0>

The adapted animation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltun92DfnPY>

The morning begins with a panel presentation, including:

1. A past student from the high school who was bullied during high school
2. A parent of a bullied child
3. A respected professional who was bullied at a kid/high school student
4. A teacher who observes bullying at the school
5. A bully

Each panel member can share their story regarding the bullying, and there will be time for Q&A after the presentations. After the panel, students are divided into small groups (within each group can be a combination of students of different grades and genders), and they will partake in the “In their shoes” activity, where they will be given stories about different students that are bullied. Each student can decide between 2 paths, which lead to different places for support or a negative outcome.

We often discuss the effects of bullying, and what the bullied can do in times of need. Less often, we discuss how to decrease the prevalence of bullying. Role play or decision trees can be a good tool to explore approaches to bullying as a problem. Students can discuss what happens if each option is pursued:

**For example:**

Sally is being bullied in the hallways of her high school by a classmate. There are no teachers in the hallways between classes, so no adult seems to be aware of the situation. Sally can:

- a. Go talk to her guidance counselor or a trusted teacher about what is occurring.
- b. Tell her parents.

Sally decides not to tell the teacher/counselor because she does not want to seem like a tattletale. Sally ends up telling her mother one day after school, since she feels upset by the bullying. Sally begs her mom not to call the school. From there:

- a. Sally’s mom can call the school and talk to a teacher.
- b. Sally’s mom does not call the teacher for now.

Sally’s mom decides not to call the school yet, but as the bullying continues, Sally continues to be upset and fearful of going to school, and avoids school-related activities, such as school dances and sporting events. She also does not go to the cafeteria during lunch time, so she ends up not eating during the day. Sally can:

- a. Approach her teacher for support.



- b. Wait for her mom to call the school.

Sally's mother calls the school to arrange a meeting to discuss the bullying issue in the hallways of school. A meeting is set up with Sally and the girl who is bullying her.

- a. The bully is influenced by the meeting
- b. The bullying continues...

Continue in this fashion...

Include in a bullying seminar/workshop: Education around appropriate language to use, recognizing bullying. How to apologize to someone (admitting wrong and validating feelings)

**Student created Dating Violence Quiz to be used as a basis for moderated discussion**

1. Are you being told what to do?
  - a. If your answer is yes, rethink about what you are being told to do. Do you appreciate it?
2. Are they saying things to make you feel bad?
  - a. If your answer is yes, do you feel that you deserve that?
3. Are they doing things to make you feel bad?
  - a. If your answer is yes, do you feel that you deserve that?
4. Is he/she treating you with respect?
  - a. If your answer is no, you should know that you deserve respect.
5. Do they respect your opinion?
  - a. In every relationship, you have the right to express yourself.
6. Are they spreading lies/rumors about you?
  - a. If your answer is yes, you should defend yourself/seek help
7. Are you forced to do anything against your will?
  - a. You shouldn't do anything against your will!
8. Did he/she threaten to harm you?
  - a. If the answer is yes, speak to an adult.
9. Is there honesty and trust in the relationship?
  - a. If the answer is no, speak to partner about that aspect of the relationship.
10. Are you happy?
  - a. If the answer is no, you have all the right to leave. Speak to your partner to understand where you both stand.

Finding an adult that you trust can be hard. After taking this quiz, if you feel like you need to speak to someone, you can always go to your counselor or a teacher that you trust. Talking about your struggle can help you, and adults can offer you advice and support. Just know that you have someone you can talk to.

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- The Teen Health Week Fellows Working Group at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia
- Amy Hughart Communications

### References

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- <sup>i</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs356/en/>
  - <sup>ii</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs356/en/>
  - <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs345/en/>
  - <sup>iv</sup> <http://apps.who.int/adolescent/second-decade/section4/page2/Violence-injuries.html>
  - <sup>v</sup> <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>
  - <sup>vi</sup> [https://www.childrendefensivenessnetwork.org/sites/childrendefensivenessnetwork.org/files/CSN\\_FirearmFactSheet\\_Youth2014.pdf](https://www.childrendefensivenessnetwork.org/sites/childrendefensivenessnetwork.org/files/CSN_FirearmFactSheet_Youth2014.pdf)
  - <sup>vii</sup> <https://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/about-us/>
  - <sup>viii</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs356/en/>
  - <sup>ix</sup> <https://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/about-us/>
  - <sup>x</sup> <http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/facts-and-solutions>
  - <sup>xi</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs345/en/>
  - <sup>xii</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs356/en/>
  - <sup>xiii</sup> <https://cyberbullying.org/summary-of-our-cyberbullying-research>