The Youth Advocate
August 2008
Youth and Sexual Violence Prevention: Beyond Stranger Danger
A Newsletter of the Youth Advocacy Task Force of
The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Youth Advocacy Task Force (YATF), which is coordinated by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, is a statewide coalition of Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocates who focus primarily on providing domestic and sexual violence advocacy services and prevention education programs to children and youth in Vermont. As part of our mission, we are committed to acknowledging the specific injustices experienced by young people and to holding their integrity and human rights as paramount in our work to end domestic and sexual violence. We meet regularly to share resources, design children and youth related materials, and support one another in carrying on this important and challenging work. The idea to produce a newsletter grew out of a desire to share our work and other youth related resources with a wider audience. In each issue, The Youth Advocate will highlight topic areas related to domestic and sexual violence and how these issues affect children and youth in Vermont. Enjoy!

Special Focus ~ Book Reviews

The Gift of Fear and
Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe (and Parents Sane)
Both By: Gavin de Becker

Reviewer: Kate Rohdenburg,
Education and Outreach Coordinator
Agency: WISE, Lebanon NH

Gavin de Becker’s two books on fear - while largely similar - shift time and focus beautifully towards the intended audience. Both are written conversationally, assuming a personal and almost intimate relationship between "teacher" and reader. The Gift remains largely focused on adult personal safety skills and boundaries, while Protecting focuses on those skills of a caregiver to protect children (being that this newsletter is focused on child safety, I'll largely refer to Protecting throughout my review).

Regardless of the audience, the greatest strength of both books is the sense of permission a reader gets to take back their power in any situation where a predator is trying to take control away.

At times de Becker seems to walk a fine line between empowerment and victim blaming (especially for those sensitive to any hint of blaming), he does take pains to remain solidly empowering. He makes clear the choices of predators, and also the resources (or lack thereof) of victims - how social norms specifically place (particularly female) victims at a disadvantage and (particularly male) predators at a solid advantage.

Society has trained us to believe that we don’t know the answers, that professionals know what’s best and that good parents listen to them. As a result, we have come to believe that we will find certainty outside ourselves.”
My Body
My Consent

Consent

By: Amy Hornblas,
Youth Services Coordinator

Agency: AWARE (Aid to Women,
Men and Children in Abuse
and Rape Emergencies)

Hardwick, Vermont

“Although I truly believe this encounter between us was consensual, I recognize now that she did not and does not view this incident the same way I did... I now understand how she feels that she did not consent to this encounter.”

-Kobe Bryant

A public statement made after charges that he sexually assaulted a female were dropped in Eagle County, Colorado, 2004.

Finding ways to effectively educate young people about sexual assault is very tricky. The confusing and contradictory messages our culture sends about victims, perpetrators, and how assaults happen are not only false but help perpetuate the crime. For example, the public swarmed to Kobe Bryant’s defense because his victim went to his room. However, the confusion clears quickly if we focus on the meaning of consent.

Sexual violence means sexual acts committed without consent. Consent means permission. Legally, words or actions must be used to give consent. Consent must be granted for every act, every time. Consent must be freely given.

Coercion means using manipulation, pressure, guilt trips, or blackmail in order to get someone to “give in.” When coercion is used, there is no consent.

Asking permission is something we all have plenty of experience with. Since we were young, we’ve learned to ask permission for things. It’s helpful to relate consent for sexual activity with other times in our lives when consent is a cultural norm. One story we like to tell in our workshop is about property rights:

Imagine a new house has been built next door. The architecture of this house is so awesome - you’d love to go inside but you don’t know the owners and haven’t been invited in. One day you notice the neighbors aren’t home, the door is wide open, and there is a “welcome” mat out front.

Would you go inside?

Most people have an intuitive cultural sense to realize that to go in would be crossing a boundary. A minority of people choose not to go in for fear of being caught.

Now, imagine the neighbors introduce themselves and invite you inside for a tour. Would you go in and open up the refrigerator and help yourself to a drink? If you needed to use the bathroom, would you go off to find it by yourself? Once the tour reached the bedroom, would you start going through the dresser drawers?

Now, imagine the house is a physical body. Why do we put more value on property rights than on the integrity of our personal physical space?

Imagine a world where our bodies were protected, and nobody could touch us without permission.

Most people don’t want to hurt others. Sexual activity is about sharing pleasure. Communication is the name of the game! It can be as simple as making eye contact with your partner and asking: “Are you o.k.? “Does this feel good?” “Do you like this?” Consent can increase the fun for all involved.

Asking for consent is a skill that starts at an early age, and can be taught in developmentally appropriate ways throughout one’s life. Teaching young children about their personal space and how to respect other’s personal space is sexual violence prevention. Talking with young adults about how they ask permission for a kiss is also violence prevention. Learning about boundaries is a lifelong process, and the basic rule is a simple one:

Don’t Guess, Ask!

AWARE’s Consent Programs are based on work by Michael J. Domitz (May I Kiss You?)

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He also specifically makes a point of referring to any strategy to keep oneself (and one's offspring) alive as a victory in survival (not a failure for not screaming louder, fighting harder). His main priority throughout both books is to reintroduce fear not as a hindrance, but as a survival tool.

Particularly riveting is the way de Becker outlines predatory behaviors (see Strategies of Predators) specifically using the gender stereotypes that we are all so accustomed to. He quotes one mother arguing against raising her daughter in the box of the feminine conform: "That would be equivalent of saying, 'it is better to be hurt by a male than be thought unfeminine by the male who seeks to hurt you.'" She goes on to the astute observation that far from living in fear of all strange men, it is in fact the most honest and liberating act to merely recognize what they are strange men; "I will not let anyone take away my openness to the world, but true openness is realizing that the guy across from me is not who I want him to be, but who he is."

So de Becker's argument is that once we recognize and align ourselves with reality - that there is danger in the world and it could happen to us - we are able to use our baser animal instincts, our human intuition, to weed out the real danger from the imagined. From there we are allowed to take whatever steps necessary to protect ourselves. This may be as simple as getting comfortable with the word "no", or being diligent and aware of school/childcare provider's policies, or as difficult as realizing that we too may be faced with a situation where we may become violent for instance, if anyone tried to hurt our child.

While de Becker speaks to our common sense, he does so in a way that sometimes feels counter-intuitive. Our current child safety strategies are wrong, he says, and he lists these strategies out as myths. "Never Talk to Strangers" is taken down for not only being ineffective (because we talk to strangers every day, and expect our children to do the same), but ultimately more dangerous (who can a child turn to for help if everyone is a stranger?)

Furthermore it puts the onus of responsibility on a child that is ill-equipped to handle such demands. "Go to a Policeman" doesn't work either - identifying markings officers are all above the line of vision for a child. And since security is one of the most common work places for predators, imitation of an officer not outside the realm of possibility.

Lastly, the catch-all "No Place/ Person is Safe" is particularly inhibiting for a child. Superficial fear tactics increase anxiety and decrease our natural, human sensitivity to intuitive fear.

As educators and mentors in the lives of young people, I find either of these books rich with teaching tools (however, reading both may feel repetitious). While de Becker is clear that it is an adult's job to protect a child, it is also our responsibility to guide the youth into clever, capable individuals - allowing them to thrive on a feeling of safety, and personal integrity based on fact, not on fear.

"NO is a full sentence.
Anyone who chooses not to hear the word No is trying to control you."
Youth Advocates and Educators Available for Schools Statewide

By: Stephen McArthur, Violence Prevention Educator
Agency: Battered Women’s Services & Shelter, Barre, VT

Two years ago, I began to work in Washington County schools with my co-facilitator Meg Kuhner, Director of Outreach and Education for Battered Women’s Services & Shelter (BWSS), running workshops with students about bullying, dating violence, domestic violence, and developing healthy relationships. Among other things we work to empower students to:

be effective bystanders and friends, understand the beliefs and stereotypes that can lead to abuse and violence, and clear away misconceptions and misunderstandings around the issue of consent.

Network Programs across Vermont deliver similar programs and cover an array of additional topics such as joyful and healthy sexuality, sexual harassment and violence, power and control, and navigating gender roles.

Those of us who do this work strongly believe that it contributes to a long-term generational change in the way young people view violence in our culture, and that more information on how to develop healthy relationships has a positive impact on their lives.

While even short, one-hour classes can make a difference, we do know that dedicating more comprehensive work these efforts can have even greater beneficial effects.

In 2007, a small amount of money was appropriated to fund prevention and outreach to children and youth who have experienced domestic violence in their home. Six projects were funded in Vermont which created innovative programming including:

- developing support groups for children who have witnessed domestic violence and who reside at a homeless shelter,
- training school staff and providing prevention services at Middle Schools, and
- providing support groups for boys who use or are at risk of using violence (Project Safe Choices).

At BWSS, Meg and I were funded to work with a group of teen mothers every week for an hour and a half, and with a group of 7th and 8th grade boys for an hour every week.

While we have no scientific evidence that these efforts have made positive changes, we do have anecdotal evidence. In one case, some members of the boy’s group took it on themselves to report a planned after-school fight to school authorities. On another occasion, two “graduates” of our teen mothers group supported another young woman (who was experiencing an abusive relationship) in reaching out to our agency. We have received feedback from school staff that they’ve noticed positive behavioral changes in students who attended our support groups. Finally, we’ve had occasions when students would come to us or to school officials, after one of our regular school presentations, to report a problem about abuse and seek help.

Vermont Network Youth and Outreach Educators reached:

- 2,525 college and university students;
- 4,097 community members;
- 3,275 middle and junior high school youth;
- 3,377 high school youth; and
- 1,159 Vermont professionals

with rape prevention and resource information.

(cont page 7)
**Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children.**

**By:** The Youth Advocacy Task Force

**FACT:**
*Child sexual abuse happens in both rural and urban areas, at all economic and educational levels, and across all racial and cultural groups.*

Saying ‘no’ to an older and more powerful person is hard for children. Parents can teach their children:

- *that it is okay to say ‘no’ to adults, ie, it is OK to say ‘no’ to a hug from a family member.*
- *to recognize behaviors that don’t feel ‘right’.*
- *how to get help with what they need.*

**What is child sexual abuse?**

Any sexual activity between an adult and a child or adolescent (as well as between an adolescent and a child is sexual abuse.) This includes both touching and non-touching behaviors.

Touching includes everything from fondling to intercourse. Non-touching includes exposing oneself to a child, taking sexually explicit or provocative photographs of a child, and showing pornography to a child.

While exploring sexuality is a normal and healthy part of growing up, there may be times when children are involved in activities with one another that are not healthy. Pay attention when one child:

- **is larger in size and/or is more than 3 years older in age.**
- **has greater mental, emotional, or physical ability.**
- **uses power through treats, bribes, or physical force.**

**Who sexually abuses children?**

Most people who sexually abuse children look and act just like everyone else. It’s hard to face the fact that someone the child knows – and even likes or loves – might be an abuser. Most abusers are either family members (fathers, mothers, step parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins) or other trusted adults – *not strangers.*

Abusers usually build up to the abuse slowly. At first, most children do not fully understand what is happening. By the time the abuse is happening, children often believe that they are to blame. This is because the abuser has told them so.

People who sexually abuse children often appear friendly and trustworthy. When people – including family members and other trusted adults spend time with children there are signs to watch for. For example:

- **they find reasons to be alone with children – take outings or trips without other adults.**
- **they often have a ‘special’ child friend and usually want to be alone with that child.**
- **they may give this child lavish gifts or pay unusual attention to the child.**
- **they make sexual comments to others about a child’s body or sexuality.**

**Tips to help protect your child:**

Talking is one of the best ways to protect your child. Start early and talk often about this and other safety matters. Here are some simple rules that even young children can be taught:

- **No Secrets.** “No one should ever tell you to keep a secret from me – one that might make me mad if I found out. An adult who cares about you will never ask you to do this.”

- **All body parts have names.** No matter what names your family uses for penis, vagina, breasts, and buttocks, talk your child about these body parts in an open and honest way. When we don’t talk about these parts of our bodies, we send the message that they are not to be spoken about. Abusers rely on children to follow their parents’ lead of not talking about ‘private parts.’ “All parts of your body have names. These are _____.”

- **Adults should not touch certain parts of your body.** “Adults and older children have no business ‘playing’ with your private

(continued page 6)
parts. When I help you with washing or wiping yourself – that is not the same as playing.

- Doctors and nurses help you by examining these body parts – but it’s not a secret.”

- Adults don’t need help with their bodies. “Adults and older children will never need help from you with their private parts. If you are asked to help with washing someone’s private parts, please come and tell me right away. I will not be angry with you.”

**How can I tell if my child has been sexually abused?**

Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common. If you are becoming concerned about unusual levels of anxiety or a behavior change in your child, these can be signs of sexual abuse – or of many other childhood stresses. Below are examples of behavior seen in children who are being or have been sexually abused:

- New words for private parts that were not learned at home.

- Sexual activity with toys or other children, sexual play with dolls, or asks others to behave in a sexual way.

- Does not want to talk about a ‘secret’ involving an adult or older child.

- Not wanting to be left alone with a certain babysitter, friend, relative, other child, or adult.

Sometimes, a child’s behavior might change when left with a certain person for example, going from talkative and cheery to quiet and distant.

If your child tells you that sexual abuse is occurring, **take it seriously.**

**What can I do if I think sexual abuse has occurred?**

If you believe abuse is happening, start by simply asking your child, “**You seem unhappy. What’s troubling you? I love you and I won’t get mad at you – no matter what you tell me.**”

Often child sexual abuse is not obvious. This makes many people who think abuse is happening uncertain. They may not want to share what they are thinking with others. Concerned adults can call or visit the child’s doctor. Other resources include the police, the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families, and confidential help lines.

Listen to what your child is saying and call your child’s doctor right away. By working together, parents, health care providers, teachers, and other adults in our communities –

**we can prevent the sexual abuse of our children.***

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**Websites of Interest**

**General**
- Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence: [http://www.vtnetwork.org/](http://www.vtnetwork.org/)
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Teen Dating Violence**
  - Teen Action Campaign, Inc. [http://seeitandstopit.org](http://seeitandstopit.org)
- **Sexual Violence**
  - Rape Incest and Abuse National Network (RAINN) [http://www.rainn.org/](http://www.rainn.org/)
- **Stalking**
  - Stalking Resource Center (Part of National Center for Victims of Crime) [http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx](http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx)
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Sexual Violence**
  - National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) [http://www.nsvrc.org/](http://www.nsvrc.org/)
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We know that School Principals, Teachers, School Counselors, Nurses, and other officials around the state struggle with the effects of bullying, sexual harassment, dating, domestic and sexual violence every day, and that these issues challenge the healthy learning environment we all want for our children.

The member agencies of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence have professional, expert education and outreach staff who have been working in Vermont schools for many years teaching staff, students and parents about the issues of domestic, dating and sexual violence.

We urge you to contact the agency in your county (listed on the back of this newsletter) to ask about how you can bring Network Educators into your schools for workshops, health fairs, classroom presentations and on-going support groups.

Many teaching professionals have been allies in our work to end domestic and sexual violence in Vermont. Often, it is Health Teachers, School Counselors, and Principals who reach out to Network Programs and invite educators and Youth Advocates into Vermont schools.

Thank you for your dedication to your students and for your support for our programs.

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Sexual Abuse in Vermont...

In 2007, member programs of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence served 1,205 victims/survivors of sexual violence throughout the state; 207 were children and youth under the age of 18. (VNADSV 2007 Annual Report)

There were 2,633 reports of child abuse (physical and/or sexual) or neglect in Vermont accepted for investigation in 2007. (Child Abuse and Neglect in Vermont, published by the Department of Children and Families, 2007)

Experts estimate that one out of every seven adult women in Vermont has been the victim of forcible rape sometime in her lifetime – that’s more than 32,000 women Vermonters. (Rape in Vermont: a Report to the State, Kilpatrick and Ruggiero, 2003)

In the year 2006, there were 149 forcible rapes reported to law enforcement in the State of Vermont. (2006 VT Crime Report)

329 sexual offenses were reported to Vermont law enforcement in 2007. (2007 VT Crime Report)

The average age of victims of incidents of rape that were reported to Vermont police in 2004 was 21; almost half of these victims were under the age of 18. (2004 VT Crime Report)

The victim and the assailant were known to each other in 99% of reported rapes, and in 25% of these crimes the victim and perpetrator were either family members or intimate partners. (2004 VT Crime Report)

According to the US Department of Justice, only approximately 38% of sexual offenses are reported nationally. (US DOJ, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings, Rape and Sexual Assault: reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1999-2002. Rennison Ph.D, Callie M. August 2002)

For women who report having been raped at some time during their lives, 22% were under the age of 12 at the time of their first rape; 32% were between 12 and 17; 29% were between 18 and 24; and 17% were 25 or older. (Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey, Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998)
Understanding Sexual Predators: Knowledge is Power

The only way crime victimization can be prevented, is by stopping perpetrators. Sexual assault is NEVER the victim’s fault. However, the majority of crimes against women are perpetrated by men who know and have their trust. Knowing more about how predators operate, we can reduce our risk of being targeted. (Information is from The Gift of Fear by Gavin de and Predators by Anna Salter.)

Strategies predators use include...

- **Taking advantage of women’s socialization to be “nice”**
  Predators know women are socialized to be nice and probably don’t want to make a scene. Women may feel it is their job to help the if they are in a relationship or trying to keep the relationship together. *Keep in mind:* it is always OK to stand up for yourself and do whatever it takes to keep safe. You’re not overreacting by defending yourself. Your safety is more important than what someone thinks of you. If it’s your partner and he needs help, he needs to get it from a professional – it doesn’t have to be your responsibility.

- **Alcohol and Other Drugs**
  Predators look for people who are drunk or will encourage drinking to make victims vulnerable. They will use substance abuse as an excuse for their behavior and to blame the victim. Alcohol is by far the most common substance used to disarm a victim, but other substances are put in drinks (alcoholic or not) to increase vulnerability.
  
  *Keep in mind:*
  *Never leave a drink unattended.*
  Be mindful of how much alcohol you are consuming and if someone is encouraging intoxication.

- **Eye Contact**
  As a culture, we think if someone looks us in the eyes, they are telling the truth. This is not always the case. Predators specifically use this tactic to convince victims of their honesty.
  
  *Keep in mind:*
  *Eye contact does not necessarily correlate with honesty.*

- **Discounting “No”**
  Predators test boundaries by trying to negotiate or ignore a “no”. Example: You are offered a drink, you say “no” but he continues to insist. You finally agree or he just brings it and you accept it. This is a sign to the predator that you can be manipulated. He’s relying women’s socialization to be nice.
  
  *Keep in mind:*
  *You CAN say “no”.*
  If someone is not accepting your boundary, the safest thing is get away from them.

- **Forced Teaming**
  Predators try to establish premature trust by using terms like “we”, making it seem as though you have a common goal. Example: you are struggling with a flat tire. Someone stops to offer help and says “I will help. We’ve got to get you home.”

  *Keep in mind:*
  This person is not in the same situation as you.

Even if someone seems nice and offers to help, don’t feel bad or rude if you decline their help. If the person keeps insisting, it’s a red flag, not a sign of good intentions. They may also be “loan-sharking”, trying to make you feel indebted to them.

- **Charm and Niceness**
  Charm and niceness are abilities, not personality traits. There are strategies not necessarily used to harm, you but can be used that way. Niceness is not the same as goodness.

  *Keep in mind:*
  Reframe thinking “someone is charming” to “This person is trying to charm me.”
  Then ask yourself what they are trying to gain.

- **Too Many Details**
  When people lie, they feel the need to support the lie with additional details, so they keep talking. This is also meant to distract people from the obvious and from the context of the situation. There may also be an unsolicited promise included.

  *Keep in mind:*
  The context in which details are offered is important. Check the appropriateness for the amount of detail with the subject.
• Typcasting
Predators may try to obtain a desired behavior by insulting a potential victim so she will be motivated to prove them wrong. For example saying “You think you’re better than I am” might motivate someone to try to prove that they are actually friendly by engaging with the predator.

*Keep in mind:
You do not have to prove anything to anyone.

If someone is putting you down or making you uncomfortable, that is not your problem. With many of the above tactics, a predator is testing a potential victim. Will you engage in conversation? Can you be manipulated by guilt? Do you not trust your intuition?

*Keep in mind:
If something doesn’t seem right, it probably isn’t.

Trust in yourself and try not to worry about what others think of you. Someone who’s not a predator will appreciate that.

**Remember:**
Despite our best efforts and risk avoidance strategies, sexual violence is only the fault of the perpetrator.

Sexual violence is never the fault of the victim. If you or someone you know has been victimized, consider calling your local rape crisis center.

1-800-489-7273

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Not Without
My Consent

Age of Consent Laws

The following information was taken directly from the Vermont state legislation website at:

http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/statutes2.htm

CHAPTER 64.
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

§ 3252. Sexual assault

(a) No person shall engage in a sexual act with another person and compel the other person to participate in a sexual act:
(1) without the consent of the other person; or
(2) by threatening or coercing the other person; or
(3) by placing the other person in fear that any person will suffer imminent bodily injury.

(b) No person shall engage in a sexual act with another person and impair substantially the ability of the other person to appraise or control conduct by administering or employing drugs or intoxicants without the knowledge or against the will of the other person.

(c) No person shall engage in a sexual act with a child who is under the age of 16, except:
(1) where the persons are married to each other and the sexual act is consensual; or
(2) where the person is less than 19 years old, the child is at least 15 years old, and the sexual act is consensual.

(d) No person shall engage in a sexual act with a child who is under the age of 18 and is entrusted to the actor’s care by authority of law or is the actor's child, grandchild, foster child, adopted child, or stepchild.

(e) No person shall engage in a sexual act with a child under the age of 16 if:
(1) the victim is entrusted to the actor's care by authority of law or is the actor's child, grandchild, foster child, adopted child, or stepchild; or
(2) the actor is at least 18 years of age, resides in the victim's household, and serves in a parental role with respect to the victim.

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For more information or awareness materials call the Vermont Network Office at 802.223.1302 or contact your local program directly through the numbers listed on the back page.
The Dating Bill Of Rights

I have the right to...
Trust myself and my instincts
Be respected as a person
Change my mind
Express my feelings
Refuse a date
Be free from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse

25% OF ALL DATING VIOLENCE VICTIMS DON’T TELL ANYONE!

If you or someone you know is being hurt...
reach out, talk to someone, and call:

Dating Violence 1-800-228-7395
Sexual Violence 1-800-489-7273

(Confidential to anonymous callers)

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Teen dating violence is a pattern of behaviors that one partner uses to control the other. The abuse can be emotional, physical or sexual—or all three—and can include threats of violence. How do you know when a teen might be in an abusive relationship, especially if she or he says the relationship is ok? Most of the time, violence happens when the couple is alone. You might not see physical signs of abuse like bruises or red marks.

**Learn to recognize a teen in trouble!**

**Here are some signs to look for:**

**Does the abuser...**
- Name call and “put down” the victim?
- Act extremely jealous? Frequently accuse the victim of ‘cheating’?
- Monitor and check up on the victim’s whereabouts and activities?
- Try to isolate the victim from friends and family?
- Have uncontrollable anger, break things?
- Threaten the victim or self?

**Does the victim...**
- Make excuses for the abuser’s behavior?
- Worry about upsetting the abuser?
- Frequently change plans to please the abuser?
- Show signs of dramatic change (appearance, weight, grades)?
- Have unexplained injuries?

**Who Do Teens Talk To?**

Studies point out that victims of teen dating violence rarely talk to their parents about their relationships. They are most likely to talk to their friends. **25% of teen victims don’t tell anyone about the abuse that they are experiencing.** The message is clear: adults need to become more educated about the dynamics and warning signs of teen dating violence. They need to learn how to reach out and respond to the children and teens in their lives.

In Vermont, parents, caring adults, and local communities are recognizing that dating violence is an important issue for our young people. Schools are inviting prevention educators into their classrooms to teach teens about healthy relationships. With continued public awareness and action, it is possible that future generations of Vermont teens will grow up in an environment where dating, domestic, and sexual violence is neither accepted nor tolerated.

**What Can You Do?**

**Talk to children about dating violence.**

Use recent events, TV shows, news, etc. to start conversations about dating violence and healthy relationships. Talk and listen to children in non-judgmental, understanding ways. Give your undivided attention when the opportunity for dialogue with children and teens presents itself. Contact your local Vermont Network program for reading and resource materials on dating, domestic and sexual violence.

**Get support for yourself.**

The programs of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence are available to talk with parents and concerned adults about ways to support teens who are in abusive relationships.

**Support your local domestic and sexual violence program.**

The 16 Vermont Network programs provide 24 hour hotlines, emergency shelter, legal and emotional support. Programs will work with children and teens who are affected by domestic and sexual violence. Services to youth include prevention education, support groups, and creative and innovative outreach projects. Call the program in your area to find out how you can be involved and learn more!

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- 1 in 5 female students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner (Silverman, PhD; Raj, PhD; Mucci, MPH; Hathaway, MD, MPH. JAMA (2001))
- Girls who are victims of dating violence are at increased risk of suicide, early pregnancy, unhealthy weight control, and substance abuse (Silverman, PhD; Raj, PhD; Mucci, MPH; Hathaway, MD, MPH (2001))
- Most victims report their abuse to friends (66%); rather than to parents (26%); 25% told no one. (Cate Henton, 1983)
# Youth Advocacy Task Force Member Programs

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Hotline Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWARE</td>
<td>Hardwick area</td>
<td>472-6463</td>
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<tr>
<td>Battered Women’s Services and Shelter</td>
<td>Barre/Montpelier area</td>
<td>1-877-543-9498</td>
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<td>Clarina Howard Nichols Center</td>
<td>Morrisville area</td>
<td>888-5256</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Beginnings</td>
<td>Springfield area</td>
<td>885-2050 or 674-6700</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAVE</td>
<td>Bennington area</td>
<td>442-2111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutland County Women’s Network</td>
<td>Rutland area</td>
<td>775-3232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault Crisis Team</td>
<td>Barre/Montpelier area</td>
<td>479-5577</td>
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<td>Safeline</td>
<td>Orange and Northern Windsor Counties</td>
<td>1-800-639-7233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>St. Johnsbury and Newport area</td>
<td>748-8645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voices Against Violence/Laurie’s House</td>
<td>St. Albans/ Franklin &amp; Grand Isle area</td>
<td>524-6575</td>
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<tr>
<td>WomenSafe</td>
<td>Addison County &amp; Rochester</td>
<td>388-4205 or (800) 388-4205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Helping Battered Women</td>
<td>Burlington/ Chittenden Co. area</td>
<td>658-3131</td>
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<tr>
<td>WISE (Women’s Information Service)</td>
<td>White River Junction, VT/ Lebanon, NH</td>
<td>866-348-WISE (9473)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Crisis Center</td>
<td>Brattleboro area</td>
<td>1-800-773-0689</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Rape Crisis Center</td>
<td>Burlington/ Chittenden Co. area</td>
<td>863-1236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

~Network Program Children and Youth Services~

Children and Youth related services provided by Vermont Network Programs vary across the state. Services include:

- **Prevention Education** in flexible formats on topics including: healthy relationships, dating and sexual violence, domestic violence, bullying, the effects of domestic violence on children, media literacy, and consent.

- **Support Groups** for children, teens, and non-offending parents with variety of focuses relating to domestic and sexual violence.

- **Emotional Support** for children, teens, and non-offending parents.

- **Emergency Shelter** for families fleeing from domestic or sexual violence.

- **Advocacy** for children, teens, and non-offending parents with courts, schools, DCF, and other child related systems.

- **Training and in-services** about domestic and sexual violence related issues for teachers and other professionals working with children and youth.