

FORMAL EVALUATION
OF DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

by

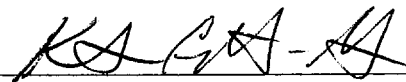
Amy Segerstrom

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Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
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The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Segerstrom, Amy L.
(Writer) (Last Name) (First)

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This document describes a formal evaluation of a Dating Violence Prevention Program pilot project conducted by New Horizons, a domestic abuse agency serving women and children in Buffalo County, Wisconsin. The program was created in response to an increase in the number of reports of dating violence in Buffalo County. The program took place in the fall of 1999 and was conducted with a group of nine female students at the Mondovi Middle School, Mondovi, Wisconsin.

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine potential changes that would enhance the program's implementation and its effectiveness. Evaluation data was gathered through the administration of three self-report questionnaires and a focus group

interview. All data were recorded during the final program session. The questionnaires and focus group interview were designed to describe program participants and to assess the evaluation process (e.g. utilization and delivery) and outcome variables (e.g. attitudes, satisfaction, psychological safety) Data were analyzed and reported via quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results of the evaluation showed the typical participant of the Dating Violence Prevention Program to be a 13 years old female resident of the City of Mondovi, attending the eighth grade and living with their biological mothers. Half of the participants had dated in the past and half were currently dating. All of the subjects were able to list at least one adult with whom they could speak to regarding questions or concerns about dating violence.

Regarding program utilization and delivery, the time and location of the program were found convenient. The quality of handouts, group size, and level of supervision were found acceptable. Subjects found that the length and number of sessions could have been greater. Results of the assessment designed to measure psychological safety showed that overall, subjects felt psychologically safe during the Dating Violence Prevention Program.

Outcome measures showed that subjects enjoyed the exercises and activities and regarded the topic of dating violence as important for middle school students. They also showed that subjects agreed that violence against a romantic partner was never okay.

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However, a couple of subjects indicated that violence was acceptable if a person were defending himself or herself.

Results of the Utilization and Delivery questionnaire showed that the time and location of the program were convenient and that the quality of handouts, group size, and level of supervision were acceptable. Subjects indicated that the length and number of sessions could have been greater. Results of the assessment designed to measure psychological safety showed that overall, subjects felt psychologically safe during the Dating Violence Prevention Program.

Results of the Focus Group Interview reaffirmed the subject's written responses and provided additional information regarding the impact of the poor listening skills of group members.

Unknowns to the evaluation include whether results can be generalized to the population of eighth grade females attending Mondovi Middle School as well as whether the program could be conducted successfully with different age groups. Limitations include the lack of evaluation impact assessments.

Suggestions for improving the Dating Violence Prevention program include identifying females who may be at risk for dating violence, incorporating the program into school curriculum, adding topic areas that subjects expressed interest in, increasing the length and number of program sessions, and educating participants on reflective listening. Suggested changes in evaluation design include adding pre/post measures of attitudinal and behavior changes and using control and treatment groups

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Chapter One

Introduction

This document describes and presents the results from a formal evaluation of a Dating Violence Prevention Program (DVP program) pilot project that was conducted by New Horizons, a domestic abuse agency offering services to women and children in Buffalo County, Wisconsin, in the fall of 1999 at the Mondovi Middle School, Mondovi, Wisconsin. The primary purpose of the evaluation was to gather data that could be used to direct DVP program improvements. Specifically, data was gathered on the demographics of program participants, client satisfaction with the program, and utilization and delivery of the program. At the request of New Horizons, a University of Wisconsin-Stout graduate student conducted the evaluation as part of a plan B thesis project.

The DVP program was offered by New Horizons in response to an increase in the number of reports of dating violence in Buffalo County and inquiries about the availability of services for adolescent females involved in abusive dating relationships. The primary purpose of the DVP program was to educate adolescent females about the

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issues surrounding dating violence and provide knowledge of support and protection services for those females who may already be involved in dating relationships characterized by violence.

Mondovi, Wisconsin was chosen as a potential site to pilot the dating violence prevention program for two primary reasons. First, Mondovi is the most populated city in Buffalo County and therefore programming offered in Mondovi would have the potential to serve a larger population of adolescent females. Second, most of the reports of dating violence were coming from the Mondovi area.

Because most females begin their dating careers while in middle or high school, it was thought that the public schools would be a natural site to offer programming. Consequently, in the spring of 1999, the domestic abuse coordinator from New Horizons began conversations with the middle school guidance counselor at Mondovi Middle School to discuss the possibility of implementing a DVP program in the middle school in the fall of 1999. The guidance counselor and the middle school administrator agreed to let New Horizons conduct a DVP program with their female students pending school board approval. New Horizons, Mondovi Middle School administration, and the members of the Mondovi School Board approved the program curriculum in August of 1999.

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New Horizons adopted a support group format for the program because support groups have been found to be an effective means of intervention and prevention with adolescent females (Gilligan, 1982). Psycho-educational programming designed to prevent dating violence typically provide participants with information about abuse (Bezold & Rosen, 1996), opportunities to identify and challenge existing beliefs thought to contribute to dating violence (Levy, 1998), skills for managing anger and communicating effectively (McNulty, Hellis, and Binet, 1997), and opportunities to enhance self-esteem (Levy, 1998). The DVP program offered by New Horizons focused on providing information about risk factors and patterns for potential abuse, examining and challenging cultural beliefs and attitudes that contribute to violence, and educating participants about self-esteem. Appendix A describes the content of the DVP Program in detail. In a meeting between the program facilitator, school administrator, and guidance counselor, it was decided that the program would be pilot tested on a group of nine eighth grade females considered to be at risk for dating violence by school administrator and guidance counselor.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide demographic information regarding the population served, determine client satisfaction with the program, and assess the utilization and delivery of the program. The evaluation consisted of three questionnaires

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and a verbal (qualitative) assessment that was recorded on cassette as part of a focus group discussion. The questionnaires and verbal assessment were administered during the last session of the dating violence prevention program.

Questionnaire number one, titled a Demographic and Attitude Questionnaire, (Appendix B) collected demographic, attitudinal, and social support information about the subjects. Questions about the subject's age, grade, marital status of parents, living arrangements, past and present dating behavior were asked in order to create a descriptive profile of the program participants. Questions were also asked which assessed the subject's attitudes towards violence and their existing support system. The latter was included in order to determine potential areas for increased /decreased intervention. For example, if subjects indicated an acceptance of violence towards a romantic partner and indicated they had no one in their lives with whom they could discuss problems with dating violence, New Horizons could modify programming designed to change attitudes towards violence and to provide resources to adolescents in need of adult intervention.

Questionnaire number two, titled A Student Evaluation Form (Appendix C), asked subject's to indicate the degree to which they liked or disliked the exercises and activities

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of the program using a Likert scale format. These questions were asked in order to determine the overall satisfaction with which subjects regarded the activities and exercises of the program.

Questionnaire number three, titled A Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire (Appendix D), collected information about the utilization and delivery of the program. Questions about the program's time, length and number of sessions, location, group size and quality of handouts were included in order to determine changes in these areas that may result in a stronger program. Subjects were also asked to respond to a series of statements that assessed how safe subjects felt while taking part in the DVP program. Statements focused on those characteristics (perceived treatment, level of trust in-group members, adherence to confidentiality) that psychotherapists consider to be essential to a client's sense of safety when involved in a therapeutic group experience (Corey & Corey, 1997). The degree to which subjects considered the group experience to be safe psychologically was used as another measure of overall satisfaction with the program.

Subjects were also asked to verbally respond to questions as part of a focus group conducted during the final program session (Appendix E). Questions such as "What did

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you like best/least about the program?" were asked in order to gain a more in depth understanding of the written responses contained in the questionnaires.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This review of the literature surrounding program evaluations of DVP programs will first provide background information on DVP models developed with both educational and social support group formats. Next reviewed will be factors unique to adolescent DVP programming. Results from formal evaluations of DVP programs will then be presented. Lastly, a discussion of the components of program evaluations regarded in the literature as necessary to successful program evaluations will be discussed, specifically in relation to the New Horizons DVP program.

Dating Violence Prevention (DVP) Programs

Educational Format

Dating violence prevention models often follow an educational format. The literature on such programs focus on providing information on the components of successful

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programming (Levy, 1998). Programming may be lecture based or may utilize written materials, speakers audio, or audio-visual technologies, role-play, storytelling or theater performances (Levy, 1998). Education based DVP program curriculums primarily focus on providing information about the issue of dating violence, examining cultural beliefs and attitudes thought to contribute to the problem of dating violence, teaching relationships skills that aid in the prevention of dating violence, and providing resources on how to obtain help (Levy, 1998). Each of these will be discussed briefly.

Information regarding dating violence.

Dating Violence Prevention Programs with an educational format provide information to participants about the definition of dating violence (Levy, 1998). The question “what is abuse?” would be discussed (Sousa, 1998) and terms such as “batterer”, “battered woman”, and “domestic violence” would be defined (Jones, 1987). Patterns of abuse and information about the stages of abuse may be given. (Walker, 1979). Students may also be given facts and statistics surrounding the prevalence of dating violence in order to dispel myths surrounding dating violence (Jones, 1987). In some programs, there may be

speakers presenting personal stories of abuse in order to help “put a face” on the issue of dating violence (Sousa, 1998).

Cultural beliefs and attitudes.

Because cultural beliefs and attitudes are thought to be a contributing factor to the problem of dating violence, many educational programs provide opportunities to identify and challenge existing beliefs thought to contribute to the problem of dating violence (Levy, 1998). Some cultural beliefs that are typically challenged are attitudes towards women (Sousa, 1993), attitudes towards violence (Sousa, 1998), and beliefs surrounding male/female relationships (NiCarthy, 1986). The concept of stereotypes would be discussed (NiCarthy, 1986), while beliefs surrounding sex and gender roles would also be examined and challenged (Levy, 1998).

Skill building.

Several studies have suggested that programming designed to change violent behavior needs to emphasize that violence is neither normal nor necessary (Levy, 1998). Effective

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approaches to changing violent behavior included in DVP programs have included education on anger management, assertiveness training, and skills for communication (McNulty, Heller, and Binet, 1997). Skills for conflict resolution have also been included in some programs (Powell, 1998).

Providing resources.

Successful DVP programs would also provide participants with information about how to get help (Levy, 1998). Information about hospitals, clinics, women's shelters and rape crisis centers, law enforcement personnel, and other available professionals should be provided.

Support Group Format

Some Dating Violence Prevention models have followed a support group format. The support group format is similar to the educational format in its focus on a chosen topic, often with a planned curriculum (Levy, 1998). Support groups designed to prevent dating violence often focus on providing information about the topic of dating violence,

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challenging attitudes thought to contribute to the problem of dating violence, building relationship skills, and providing resources to get help. They would also take into consideration factors unique to adolescence in dealing with the issue of dating violence (Levy, 1998).

The support group format differs from the educational format in that it allows for more interaction and support among participants. The role of the leader also differs in that the leader would be considered more of a facilitator than an educator. In addition, because of the personalized and intimate nature of support groups, there would be discussions of confidentiality regarding disclosures and discussions of personal issues to safe guard the emotional and physical safety of members. Issues arising from group process would also have to be addressed (Levy, 1998).

Factors Unique to Adolescent DVP Programs

Researchers have suggested that dating violence is due, in part, to the young adult state of development (Levy, 1998). Therefore, when discussing a DVP program for adolescents, developmental factors must be considered. Some of these factors are as follows.

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Adolescents are more likely than adults to conform to group norms (Levy, 1998). These group norms often involve a rigid stereotypical view of what constitutes male and female behavior, particularly in regards to dominance and passivity. Adolescents typically believe that females are the caretakers and are the ones primarily responsible for the success of the relationship. Expectations of a girlfriend require that a young woman give up those activities (relationships, interests, and talents) that interfere with the romantic relationship. Males are expected to be the sexual initiators, the decision-makers, and to have some control over the female's activities and behavior.

Adolescents also experience normative confusion over violence in dating relationships because of their inexperience with dating relationships and tendency to define whatever is happening to them as normal (Levy, 1998). They may romanticize the violence (i.e, look how jealous and possessive he is, he must really love me). Adolescents typically believe the violence is the result of other problems in the relationship which will disappear once these other problems are resolved.

Adolescents may also be at risk for dating violence because they may believe that a violent relationship is better than no relationship (Greene & Chadwick, 1998). This belief is especially true for adolescents with low self-esteem.

Formal Evaluations of DVP Programming

Educational Programs

Although educational programming designed to prevent dating violence is increasing, formal evaluations of such programming in the literature are few. McNulty, Heller, and Binet (1997), evaluated a Dating Violence Prevention Program conducted in Brattleboro, Vermont. The program consisted of a performance of a play called *The Yellow Dress*, which addressed the issue of dating violence. The performance was then followed by small group discussions of about ten students, each led by trained adult facilitators. The program was evaluated as part of a final meeting of committee members responsible for bringing the performance to the community after the program. The primary purpose of the meeting was to identify changes for future DVP programming. Committee members discussed the use of permission slips, the space available for the discussion groups, the role of the facilitators, and issues surrounding program recruitment. A survey was distributed to teachers involved after this meeting in order to gather data regarding their reactions and feedback to the program. Student and teacher reactions were also discussed as part of the meeting.

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Overall reactions to the program from students and teachers were positive with the authors reporting that during the small group discussions, students appeared “fully engaged” (p.28). Teachers reported that students continued to discuss the issues raised by the performance for several days in their classrooms. Comments made by the students after the performance showed greater awareness of the issues raised. Results of the discussion focusing on specific changes in programming were not reported.

Foshee et al., (1998) evaluated a dating violence prevention program called “Safe Dates” conducted in North Carolina. The program consisted of both school and community activities. The school activities consisted of a peer acted theater production, a ten session curriculum, and a poster contest. The community activities included services for adolescents experiencing dating violence such as a crisis line, support groups, parent materials, and training for community providers.

The program evaluation consisted of gathering data to determine the effectiveness of these various activities in changing attitudes about psychological abuse victimization and frequency of perpetration experiences. Victimization and perpetration were measured using several outcome measures. Psychological abuse victimization was measured by asking participants if any of fourteen acts considered to be psychologically abusive had ever occurred to them while dating. Items such as “damaged something that belonged to

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me” or “insulted me in front of others” were rated from 0 to 3 with 0 standing for “never” and 3 standing for “very often”. Items were then summed and rated.

Non-sexual violence victimization was measured by asking respondents how many of sixteen different behaviors had happened to them and how often. Examples of behaviors listed included “slapped me”, “kicked me”, and “hit me with a fist”. Responses could range from 0 for never to 3 for ten or more times. The items were then summed.

Sexual violence victimization was measured by asking the same base question for non-sexual violence with the addition of the two baseline behaviors “forced me to have sex” and “forced me to do other sexual things that I did not want to do”. Items were summed in a parallel manner to the non-sexual violence items.

Students were also asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements designed to measure acceptance of proscribed norms (norms considering dating violence unacceptable in all circumstances) and prescribed norms (norms accepting dating violence under certain circumstances), perceived positive consequences of dating violence, and perceived negative consequences of dating violence. The same Likert format was used to measure all four constructs.

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Violence in current relationships was measured by first asking students if they were in a dating relationship and if they responded “yes” then asking them to indicate the number of times a partner had used physical force against them and how often they had themselves. Response options ranged from 0 for never to 3 for 10 or more times.

Conflict management was also measured using a Likert scale format. Constructive communication skills, destructive communication skills, constructive responses to anger and destructive responses to anger were measured. Communication skills were measured by asking “During the last 6 months, when you had a disagreement with someone, how much of the time did you do the following things?” Response options ranged from 0 for never to 3 for most of the time. Responses to anger were measured by asking students “During the last 6 months, when you were angry with someone, how often did you do or feel the following things?” there were four items measuring constructive responses and six items measuring destructive items. Responses ranged from 0 for never to 3 for very often.

A treatment and control group were used. Subjects were both male and female. Fourteen public schools in rural North Carolina were stratified by grade and students were matched by school size. One member of each matched pair was then assigned to either the treatment or control group.

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Measures were administered both pre and post program to obtain a baseline and measure changes. Differences in the treatment and control group were then compared.

There were no significant differences between the treatment and control group in outcome, mediating, or demographic variables at baseline. After programming receipt, adolescents in the treatment condition reported significantly less psychological abuse perpetration than adolescents in the control group condition. They also reported significantly less perpetration of violence against a dating partner and reported initiating significantly less psychological abuse perpetration against partners. Adolescents in the treatment condition were significantly less supportive of prescribed dating violence norms and more supportive of proscribed dating violence norms. They were also significantly more likely to use constructive communication skills and responses to anger. They also perceived more negative consequences from dating violence.

Jones (1987) reported on an evaluation of a statewide Domestic Violence Prevention Program conducted by the state of Minnesota. The program, conducted with junior and senior high students, had four primary goals: to have students be able to define important terms such as *abuse*, *domestic violence*, and *battered woman*; to educate students about the facts surrounding battered women, to have students understand the reasons why battering occurs; and to acquire skills and knowledge which would reduce the chances of

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young people becoming abused by their partners. The program hoped to achieve these goals through the use of activities, exercises, guided discussions, role-plays, and story-telling.

Two hundred twenty-five teachers involved in the teaching of the program and 560 junior high students and 600 senior high students took part in the evaluation which consisted of pre and post-tests administered to experimental and matched control groups. Subjects consisted of both genders. The pre and post-tests consisted of eighteen true-false items that assessed student's knowledge about domestic violence, five items assessing attitudes and three open-ended questions which asked students to demonstrate knowledge regarding available resources for help in addressing abuse problems.

There were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on pre-test measures of students knowledge of domestic violence for the junior high students. On the post-test, the experimental group had mean scores significantly greater than the control group. These differences were maintained even when gender and location (urban, rural, suburban) were controlled for.

There were no significant differences in the pre-test scores to the five attitude items between experimental and control group for the junior high students. Scores did not significantly change for either experimental or control group on the post-test, indicating

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little change in attitudes resulting from the curriculum. Interestingly, there were statistically significant differences between males and female junior high students on four of the five attitude items with the female students more often responding in the desired direction.

The results of the senior high students were similar to the junior high students with results from the pre-test on knowledge items being similar between experimental and control groups. The experimental group actually scored one point lower on the pre-test than the control group but increased their mean score by three points on the post-test in comparison to the control group which only improved their scores by less than one point. Differences between groups was statistically significant even when controlling for gender and location (rural, urban, or suburban.)

Responses of the senior high students were also similar to the junior high students on the five attitude items with little change in attitudes resulting from the program. Again, female students scored in the desired direction more often than males with differences between the males and females on four of the five items considered statistically significant.

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In summary, it appears that the domestic violence prevention program offered in Minnesota schools achieved its goal of increasing knowledge of students in the area of domestic violence. However, the program did little to change attitudes towards domestic violence. Results also indicate that the attitudes of male and female students differed with the responses of the males being more cause for concern.

Support Group Programs

Evaluations of dating violence prevention programs following a support group format in the literature are also few. Rosen and Bezold (1996) conducted an evaluation of a Dating Violence Prevention Support group model with three separate support groups. One group was conducted by the first author with five high school students, the second group was conducted with three college students and the third group with five college students. The high school students were referred by a school counselor who considered them to be at risk for relationship abuse. The college students were recruited by brochures left at a campus clinic.

The program consisted of nine one hour sessions. There were five program goals that were identified: "1. to identify various kinds and levels of abuse and intimidation: 2. to

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develop a sense of entitlement to have relationships without abuse and intimidation : 3 to understand the dynamics of abusive relationships and the insidious negative consequences to victims sense of self: 4. to develop effective interpersonal skills and 5. to develop a sense of empowerment that goes beyond self-esteem enhancement to seeing oneself as an effective choice maker” (p.522).

Written evaluations were completed by participants after the program. The purpose of the written evaluations was to suggest changes for subsequent groups. Focus group interviews were conducted with each of the college student groups. The discussions were led by the first author who was not involved in the group in order that participants could feel free to share both positive and negative information. The 90 minute focus group session was audio-taped and transcribed. The transcribed account was read with six themes being identified and reported. The six themes were a safe environment, relationship perspective, self-efficacy, skill development, recognition of personal rights, and suggestions for improvement. A safe environment referred to the importance of participants feeling that the group was a place in which they could voice their thoughts and feelings without criticism. Relationship perspective referred to the increase in the ability of the participants to be more objective regarding their own relationships as a result of participation in the group. Self-efficacy referred to participant’s increased ability

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to take responsibility for setting limits in their relationships with their partners. Skill development referred to the concrete communication and problem solving skills participants felt they had gained by taking part in the program. Recognition of personal rights referred to the participants increased awareness that they had the right to be treated with respect in a relationship. Suggestions for improvement included balancing the didactic and experiential portions of the program and preparing participants for the emotions they may experience upon hearing personal stories of abuse from fellow participants.

NiCarthy (1986) included a description of student reactions to exercises and activities that were part of a course she co-created called *"Addictive Love and Abuse: A Course for Teenage Women"*. The goals of the program included creating an awareness of violence and abuse in relationships, being able to recognize signs of addictive love and emotional, sexual, and physical abuse, understanding the relationship of addictive love to abuse as well as the roles of power and sex in abuse, understanding the rights of individuals- including the right to not be abused, and creating an awareness of alternatives to abuse and resources for battered women. Although she did not conduct a formal evaluation, reporting on student's reactions to the course could aid others in creating or modifying dating violence prevention programming.

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Overall, student responses to the program were positive with the exercises generating thoughtful discussion. In particular, the students responded to discussions on addictive love, emotional abuse and brainwashing and a film on battering. Students were hesitant to discuss their own experiences of dating violence and would only do so indirectly if the group leader asked them general questions such as “What are some of the ways in which men abuse women?” Students also had difficulty with a role-playing exercise where they were asked to stand up for themselves in an abusive relationship. In particular, they had difficulty imagining words or actions that may put the relationship at risk in favor of self-preservation.

Levy (1998) described several support group models for young women in dealing with dating violence and included information from discussions with support group facilitators used to evaluate their effectiveness. Four central issues from the discussions were reported.

The first issue was confidentiality. Young women were reluctant to discuss their personal stories unless confidentiality was assured. This was especially true for school based groups. Group leaders emphasized that support groups need to have strict rules of confidentiality and stress adherence to them.

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The second issue raised was the multiplicity of the participant's problems. Young women in dating violence support groups typically have concurrent needs. For example, they may be abusers of alcohol, school dropouts, or have family problems. Support groups need to be able to address these multiple problems experienced by a teenage girl.

Third, young women in dating violence support groups are often reluctant to identify dating violence as a serious problem. Participants may deny or minimize relationship abuse until well into the group when they trust the adult leader and other group members.

Lastly, group leaders may experience issues arising from communication with parents and school. Group leaders face the dilemma of when to include parents/schools as part of the solution to the problems experienced by teenage girls. There may be times participants do not wish to have their parents involved even when the group leader feels it is in their best interest. The group leader may also have to make decisions regarding when to break confidentiality if the safety of a participant is at stake. The group leader may also face the dilemma of recognizing that disclosure of information may lead to further and more severe abuse.

Program Evaluations In General

Although the literature regarding formal evaluations of Dating Violence Prevention Programs is scant, information needed to guide such a process is available by examining the general literature on conducting program evaluations. This literature, in turn, can be broadly categorized into either process or outcome evaluations.

Process Evaluations

An examination of process variables would be essential to a program evaluation because of their connection to outcome (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998). Specifically, before a program can result in desired outcomes, it must be implemented correctly and utilized by the participants fully. If either implementation or utilization is not adequate, desired outcomes would not occur.

Process variables in mental health program evaluations refers to those “service or components of care that can be initiated, modified, enhanced, or stopped.” (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998, p. 125). In other words, process variables are those variables which can be controlled. Questions such as "who is actually receiving the full

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program" and "what program activities are actually implemented and how" are examples of process variables

(Ogles, Lambert, & Masters, 1996). Process evaluation issues can be further categorized into issues surrounding program delivery and use.

Program delivery.

A program evaluation should include data on how a program was delivered (Ogles, Lambert, & Masters, 1996), for the way in which a program is delivered can influence the outcome of the program. The issues of adherence to the program goals and curriculum as well as the competence of the facilitator would need to be addressed. Information on client variables that effect delivery such as age, income, and gender would also need to be gathered (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998). Program processes such as treatment type, treatment dosage, provider, administrative and context variables may also be looked at as influencing outcome (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998). For example, one type of treatment versus another or one dosage versus another may influence the outcome of a program.

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Program use.

A program evaluation should also include information on how a program was utilized (Ogles, Lambert, & Masters, 1996). This is because the manner in which a program is used can influence the outcome of the program. For example, if a program were offered at a time which was inconvenient for potential program participants, participation rates would be lowered.

There are many factors that can potentially effect the utilization of programs: time, proximity, transportation, religious and cultural beliefs etc. (Ogles, Lambert, & Masters, 1996).

It is also important to show that the program was received by those who needed it (Ogles et al., 1996). It would defeat the purpose of programming to have it received by a population who can not benefit from it.

Outcome Evaluations

Outcome refers to changes that occur in an individual over time. Outcome evaluations would be evaluations designed to measure these changes (Berman, Rose, Hurt, &

Kolarz, 1998). Outcomes would provide empirical data useful in determining program effectiveness. Effectiveness can be measured indirectly or directly (Ogles, Lambert, & Masters, 1996), and both will be discussed briefly.

Direct effectiveness measures.

Programs may be designed with the outcome of changing a recipient's behaviors, attitudes, emotions, or beliefs. To directly assess the changes of such programs in meeting their outcome objectives, pre-post program changes in these constructs are measured.

When evaluating program outcomes, data gathered should be reasonable and reflective of the goals and mission of the program and the organization sponsoring the program. (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998). Outcome measurements should also take into consideration the financial and other resources available to an organization (Berman, Rosen, Hurt, & Kolarz, 1998). For example, an organization may only have the financial resources to determine short-term changes and lack the funds to follow-up at a later date to measure for long term changes.

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Indirect effectiveness measures.

Indirect effectiveness measures refer to measures that imply effectiveness “relative to consumer expectation” (Ogles, Lambert, & Masters 1996, p.274). Measurements of client satisfaction are one method of measuring effectiveness of programming indirectly. The belief is that the more satisfied they are with a program, the more likely they are to make prescribed changes leading to the direct outcomes of interest. There are two primary approaches to measuring client satisfaction. The first is to obtain a measure of global satisfaction. Global satisfaction refers to an overall measure of satisfaction. Secondly, client satisfaction may be considered a function of specific dimensions. For example, psychological safety may be a dimension considered a measure of client satisfaction. Psychological safety refers to the level of comfort an individual feels in revealing his/her thoughts and/or feelings to others. This would be an appropriate measure for program evaluations of support groups because it is known that psychological safety is an important factor in the success of support groups (Corey & Corey, 1997).

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Program Evaluation of New Horizons DVP Program

To develop the program evaluation plan for the New Horizons DVP program, both the literature on DVP programming and program evaluations were used as guides. Because the New Horizons DVP program was a pilot program, the majority of evaluation questions were process in nature. Due to the time limitations (gathering of outcome data immediately upon completion of the program), only attitude change toward dating violence and client satisfaction with programming were assessed. Outcomes related to actual direct behavior change are left for future evaluations.

Process Evaluation of the New Horizons DVP Program

The evaluation of the New Horizons DVP program assessed processes related to the programs use and delivery. Potential variables effecting utilization and delivery were identified in a meeting between graduate student researcher and the domestic abuse coordinator from New Horizons. The variables identified as effecting utilization and delivery were time, days, length and number of sessions, location, program materials, group size, and adult supervision. The time, days, length, and number of sessions and

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location of the program were considered important because it is known that these logistical factors can influence how a program is utilized and delivered. Adult supervision was deemed important because program participants were adolescents and issues of psychological safety may arise.

Client variables identified as important were age, grade level, parent's marital status, living arrangements, dating history, attitudes towards violence, and existing support system. These client variables were considered important because the New Horizons domestic abuse coordinator wished to create a socio-demographic profile of the users of the New Horizons DVP program to support decisions regarding what population to target for future programming.

Lastly, informative data was gathered regarding participants existing support system. This was gathered to investigate the need for increased/decreased intervention developing/cultivating such support.

Outcome Evaluations of the New Horizons DVP Program

The New Horizons DVP program evaluation also assessed outcomes related to attitudes and client satisfaction. First, a measure of attitudes towards relationship violence was included by asking subjects if relationship violence was ever acceptable. Next, an overall measure of global satisfaction was created by assessing the degree to which the exercises and activities of the DVPP were liked or disliked. The assumption behind such a measure being that the more the clients indicated they liked the exercises and activities of the program, the greater the degree of client satisfaction. Secondly, client satisfaction was examined in light of the construct of psychological safety mentioned earlier. The assumption being the greater the degree of psychological safety, the more satisfied they would be with the program.

Chapter Three

Method

Participants of DVP Program

All nine participants of the dating violence prevention program were chosen by the Mondovi Middle School administrator and the Mondovi Middle School guidance counselor. Females asked to be part of the dating violence prevention program were considered to be at risk for dating violence because they were all known to be dating or they had had contact with the school administrator and/or guidance counselor for personal, relationship, and /or school problems. One participant attended the program at the request of a parent. It is not known why the parent wished her child to participate in the program. All participant's and their parents signed a consent form to participate in the program (See Appendix F).

Evaluation of DVP Program

Participants of DVP Program Evaluation

The subjects involved in the evaluation were eight of the nine participants of the dating violence prevention program. One participant was ill the day of testing and thus did not take part in the evaluation. All evaluation subjects voluntarily agreed to participate in the evaluation and they and their parents signed evaluation informed consent forms. (See Appendix G).

All subjects were eighth grade females attending the eighth grade at Mondovi Middle School. All subjects lived in the city of Mondovi. As Table 1 indicates, six of the subjects were thirteen years of age. Two were fourteen. Two of the subjects had parents that were married, four had parents that were divorced, one subject had a father who was deceased and one had parents that had been together her entire life but had never married. Three of the subjects lived with both biological parents. Five of the subjects lived with their biological mother only. Half (n=4) of the subjects indicated they were currently in a dating relationship; the others indicated that, although they had dated in the past, they were not dating at the time of the evaluation.

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Procedures

The school administrator informed all participants of the dating violence prevention program and their parents of the formal evaluation by telephone before the beginning of the program. Participants were informed that their participation in the evaluation was voluntary and that they could participate in the program regardless of whether they choose to take part in the evaluation. The school administrator gave evaluation consent forms to all participants before the start of the program (Appendix G). All consent forms were collected at the start of the program.

Participants were given the option of attending the DVP program instead of their physical education class for a period of two weeks. Participants received physical education credits for attending the program. The program took place over a period of two weeks in the fall of 1999 in a classroom at the Mondovi Middle School. The nine sessions were forty minutes long and were held in the afternoon.

The program followed a support group format with one adult facilitator present to lead the exercises/ activities and group discussions. The program consisted of eight sessions evenly divided between a focus on building self-esteem and providing information about dating violence. An outline of the program is included in Appendix A.

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The DVP program was implemented as outlined in Appendix A except for the following. The outline was not followed during the seventh session due to conflicts that surfaced between group members outside of the program. After the sixth session, the program facilitator worked on problem solving by having participant's role-play potential solutions to the problem. The program resumed as normal following this incident. The outline of the program was also not followed in regards to the opening and closing exercises (i.e., journaling and "wise old woman") due to time constraints.

All evaluation data was collected during the ninth session of the program. Two different means of gathering data were used: questionnaires and focus group. The program facilitator administered three questionnaires: a Demographic and Attitude Questionnaire, a Student Evaluation Form, and a Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire. Subjects were provided ample space and privacy for questionnaire completion. They were told to answer the questions thoroughly and honestly, that there were no right or wrong answers, and to inform the facilitator if they had any questions. Program facilitator collected all questionnaires once completed. The questionnaires were not coded so as to be identifiable. Completion of the three questionnaires took approximately fifteen minutes. Upon completion of the questionnaires, subjects gathered in a circle for a focus group interview.

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To conduct the focus group interview, the facilitator asked the subjects to verbally respond to a series of questions about the program (Appendix E). Subject's verbal responses were recorded on a cassette tape. The interview lasted approximately thirty minutes.

Measures

Self Report Questionnaires

Three self-report instruments were adapted and /or created by researcher for use in this evaluation. The questionnaires were evaluated and deemed appropriate for use by the New Horizons domestic abuse coordinator, the Mondovi Middle School administrator, and the Mondovi Middle School Guidance counselor. The questionnaires were pilot tested on a group of five seventh grade females known to the student researcher.

The seventh grade females were all twelve year old students attending Mondovi Middle School. Four of the five lived with both biological parents. One lived with her biological mother and step-father). The questionnaires were considered to be understandable and

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computable within a fifteen-minute time frame by the seventh graders, thus, no changes needed to be made on the questionnaires.

Demographic and Attitude Questionnaire.

Appendix B contains the first questionnaire. It was adapted for use from an existing instrument contained in the Holmen Teen Group Curriculum. (The Holmen Teen Group Curriculum was a educational program created for teens about abuse issues; original author unidentified). It contained demographic questions, such as age, grade level, parent's marital status, and living arrangements. A question regarding dating history was asked to determine if the program reached the subjects before or after they began their dating careers. Open-ended questions that assessed subject's attitudes towards violence, existing support system, and desire for more information regarding dating violence were asked to determine potential areas for increased intervention by New Horizons.

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Student Evaluation Form.

The second questionnaire was developed specifically for the evaluation. It evaluated the degree to which subjects enjoyed the exercises and activities of the dating violence prevention program (Appendix C). Activities were listed in the order in which they took place and subjects were asked to rate the activities using a five point Likert scale. Each possible response was assigned a numerical value as follows: RL=Really Liked (five points), L=Liked (four points), N=Neutral, (three points), D=Disliked (two points), and SD=Strongly Disliked (one point).

The Student Evaluation Form also contained open-ended qualitative questions. These questions asked respondents how important they felt the program was to middle school age students, what were the most/least helpful aspects of the program, what they liked or disliked about the program, and what questions or concerns did they have about dating violence. Some of the qualitative questions were adapted for use from an existing instrument contained in curriculum materials originally used by a teen group in Holmen, Wisconsin.

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Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire.

The third questionnaire evaluated the utilization and delivery of the dating violence prevention program (Appendix D). Questions about the time, days, length and number of sessions, location, program materials, group size, and adult supervision were included. The Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire also contained statements asking subjects to rate their feelings of safety and/or indicate the degree that certain conditions known to affect feelings of safety in a group were present. Some examples of statements that were asked were “I felt safe being part of this group” or “I was treated fairly by group leaders.” Subjects were instructed to respond to the statements by circling number five if they strongly agreed with the statement, number four if they agreed with the statement, number three if they felt neutral towards the statement, number two if they disagreed with the statement and number one if they strongly disagreed with the statement.

Focus Group Interview.

The focus group interview consisted of eleven program specific open-ended questions (Appendix E). Examples of questions include “Do you feel the material presented as

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part of this program is important for middle school students?” and “What information was most/least helpful?”. No additional questions were asked to help clarify the subject’s answers.

Planned Analysis

Demographic data from the Demographic and Attitudes Questionnaire were analyzed via frequency counts and percentages. The open-ended questions were analyzed by listing responses and tabulating frequency counts of those responses.

The Likert items from the Student Evaluation Form and Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire were analyzed via frequency counts, means, and standard deviations. The open-ended qualitative questions from the Student Evaluation Form were analyzed by listing responses and tabulating frequency counts of those responses. The focus group interview was analyzed by listening to audio-tape of interview, transcribing responses, and tabulating frequency counts when applicable.

Chapter Four

Results

Demographic and Attitude Questionnaire

Demographic data from the Demographic Questionnaire are presented in Table 1 and discussed previously in the evaluation subject section of chapter three. Results from the open-ended questions of the Demographic Questionnaire are given in Table 2. Regarding the question “Who can you talk to if you have problems or questions about dating, domestic, or sexual abuse?” six (75%) of the subjects listed two or more responses. Mother/Aunt were listed most frequently followed by their principal (who happens to be female) and/or best friend. Professional therapist, sister, best friend’s mother, guidance counselor, friends, parents, or boyfriend each received endorsement by one respondent.

Regarding the question “Is it ever okay to hit or act violently towards a husband/wife or girlfriend/boyfriend?” all eight subjects agreed that it was never okay to do so. When asked why violence would or would not be acceptable, responses included “because it is wrong”, “because abuse is bad”, “because it (abuse) is not a way to express love”, and

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“because it hurts physically and mentally”. Two of the subjects mentioned that physical violence was "okay" if you were defending yourself.

Regarding the question “Is there anything about domestic or dating violence that you want to know more about?” All eight (100%) of the subjects responded ‘No’.

For the question “Are there any topics you wish had been discussed?”, a majority of subjects responded “Yes”. Potential topics that were suggested were “how to move on from a relationship”, “date rape”, “dating older guys and how you can get your parents to lay off your back about them”, and “abuse from parents and step-parents”.

Student Evaluation Form

The first part of the Student Evaluation Form evaluated the degree to which subjects liked/disliked the exercises and activities of the program. Eight exercises were highly rated, eleven exercises had moderate ratings, and none of the exercises received a low rating. Means and Standard Deviations for each exercise are summarized in Table 3.

The second part of the Student Evaluation Form asked a series of open-ended questions designed to gather more qualitative information about the subjects responses to the program (Table 4). When asked “Were the materials presented important to middle

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school students?" all eight subjects (100%) responded "Yes." When asked "Why?" subjects responded "to know what's going on", "to become aware of different things", "because we will either have or will experience it", "because the group really learned something", "it helped me to like myself more", "so that we know what may go on in life as we get older", and "because we need to know about it".

When asked, "What information was the most helpful?" subjects responded "learning about the different types of love", "information about dating", "information about abuse" and "gender stereotypes". When asked, "What information was the least helpful?" three subjects (37.5%) responded "none" and two subjects (25%) responded that "it was all helpful." The remaining three subjects (n=37.5%) did not respond to this question. Information that was listed as being the least helpful was "the names exercise" 12.5% (n=1), "the power wheel exercise" 12.5% (n=1), and "information on sexual abuse" 12.5% (n=1). Some of the subjects listed an exercise as being "least helpful" even after responding that "it was all helpful". When asked "Do you have any questions or concerns relating to yourselves or someone you know concerning the topic?" all eight subjects (100%) responded "No."

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Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire

Information from the Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire is summarized in Table 5. The first question on the Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire queried subjects on reasons for program non-attendance. None of the subjects responded to this question because all subjects attended every session.

The second question asked, "If the time and/or days the group met was inconvenient, please list a time and/or day that would have worked better". Seven subjects (87.5%) indicated the time the group met was convenient. One subject (12.5%) indicated that it would have been more convenient if the group had met "after school once a week".

The third question asked, "How did you feel about the length of the program sessions?" Six of the subjects (75%) responded that the "sessions were not long enough." Two of the subjects (25%) indicated that the length of the program sessions were "just fine".

The fourth question asked, "If you think the sessions were too long or not long enough, how long do you think they should have been?" Four subjects (50%) responded "an hour to an hour and a half." One subject (12.5%) responded at least two more weeks." One subject (12.5%) responded "two hours."

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Question number five asked, "How did you feel about the number of sessions?" All eight (100%) of the subjects responded "there could have been more sessions".

The sixth question asked subjects to indicate whether meeting at the Mondovi Middle School was "okay" or "not okay" with them. All eight (100%) of the subjects responded that meeting at the Mondovi Middle school was "acceptable."

The seventh asked, "Would you be interested in continuing to meet as a group?" All eight subjects responded "Yes."

Question number eight inquired about the quality of the handouts. Half of the subjects responded that "most of the handouts were informative and helpful", with the remaining half responding that "some of the handouts were informative and helpful."

Questions number nine and ten inquired about the size of the group and adult supervision. All eight (100%) of the subjects indicated that the size of the group and the level of adult supervision were adequate.

Table 6 presents the results from the series of statements designed to measure psychological safety. Subjects primarily agreed or strongly agreed with the statements "I felt safe being part of this group", "I was treated fairly by group leaders", "The group leaders listened to me", "I could trust group leaders", "Group leaders observed confidentiality", "group leaders were sensitive to my needs" and "I was comfortable with

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sessions being held at Mondovi Middle School.” . Statements that subjects moderately agreed with were “I was treated fairly by the group”, “group members listened to me”, “I could trust group members”, “group members observed confidentiality”, “group members were sensitive to my needs”. Subjects disagreed with only one statement: “I was comfortable sharing my thoughts”.

Focus Group Interview

To the question “Do you feel the material presented was important for middle school students?” Eight subjects (100%) responded “Yes.” Reasons that were given were “because you need to know for now and later” 12.5% (n=1), and “it’s important to know what’s happening as we’re starting to form relationships” 12.5% (n=1). Subjects were not asked for further clarification.

To the question “Are eighth graders too young or too old for this type of programming?” All eight subjects (100%) indicated that the program was most

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appropriate for eighth and ninth graders. All eight subjects (100%) agreed that sixth and seventh graders were too young for such material. Subjects were not asked to elaborate why.

When asked “What information was the most helpful?” subjects responded “the information on gender” (12.5% (n=1), “the power wheel because it was a way of visualizing” 12.5% (n=1), “the information on the different types of abuse, especially labeling emotional abuse as abuse and viewing controlling behavior as abuse” 12.5% (n=1) and “the information on the different types of love” 12.5% (n=1).

When asked, “what information was the least helpful?” one subject responded “the power wheel exercise” but could not give a reason why. Another subject responded “the video” stating she didn’t like it because of the rhyming scheme throughout. Three subjects mentioned the journaling exercises were a “waste of time” because nobody did them. Two subjects mentioned that they were aware of the time constraints and felt like we rushed through the materials. When subjects were asked “How long (in minutes) should the sessions have run?” they all responded “an hour to an hour and a half.”

When asked “How long do you think this program should have run?” three subjects (37.5%) mentioned the program should have been either a quarter or semester long course that met everyday as part of their health class curriculum in order to receive

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school credit. One subject (12.5%) thought the program should have been offered one day a week after school for a semester.

When asked about the appropriateness of the group size, seven subjects (87.5 %) indicated that the size of the group was either just right or could have been smaller. One subject (12.5%) responded that the group could have been larger. When asked why, she responded “because there would be more people supportive of other viewpoints and there might be a better chance that someone else was going through something similar.”

When asked “Did it impact the group that some members were having a problem with one another outside of the group?” seven subjects (87.5%) responded “Yes” and one subject (12.5%) responded “No.”

When asked, “Did it impact the group that some people had poor listening skills?” four subjects (50%) responded that it did negatively impact the group. One subject (12.5%) responded that “some days it did and some days it didn’t.”

When asked, “What topics should we have spent more time on?” three subjects (37.5%) responded “gender.” When asked about additional topics the group could have discussed the subjects responded “how to manipulate parents” 12.5% (n=1), “getting along with parents/friends” 12.5% (n=1), and “how to get over relationships” 12.5% (n=1). When asked about any other changes that would make the program better, five

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subjects (62.5%) responded that the group should be smaller. Three subjects (37.5%) responded that the sessions should be longer because they didn't have time to say everything. One subject (12.5%) mentioned that it might be better to have a group of people that were strangers instead of friends. Another subject responded to this statement by stating that "it would be harder to talk if everyone weren't friends". When asked "What other changes would you suggest for the program?", subjects had no response.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Discussion Related to Process Variables

All of the subjects indicated as part of the written assessment that the time and days the group met were convenient. This is not surprising given that the program was offered during study hall for the majority of the subjects. Those subjects who were involved in classes were able to temporarily change their schedules with the cooperation of the Mondovi Middle School administrator and instructors. Because of scheduling problems, it would be difficult to continue offering the program during school hours unless the program were to be incorporated into the curriculum of a class such as Health or Physical Education. One subject indicated during the focus group that if the group had met once a week after school, she would still have been interested. Three of the subjects were involved in volleyball at the time the dating violence prevention program took place and

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would not have been able to attend if the program had been held after school.

Extracurricular activities such as sports programs happen throughout the school year and make it difficult to schedule special programming for students after hours.

The majority of subjects (75%) indicated as part of the written assessment and focus group that the program could have been longer both in terms of the number of sessions and the length of each session. Most of the subjects indicated that an hour and a half would have been an appropriate length of time.

All subjects thought that the Mondovi Middle School was an appropriate site for the program to be conducted. This was somewhat surprising as one of the concerns expressed by the New Horizons domestic abuse coordinator was that the girls may be uncomfortable meeting at the school because of a desire to remain anonymous. It was her experience that victims of dating violence often feel shame and embarrassment about being involved in an abusive relationship. This may apply for a different set of students, such as those who have been identified as victims of dating violence.

All subjects expressed a desire to continue meeting as a group. When asked during the focus group about potential topics or themes around which such a group might organize, subjects mentioned “how to get your parents off your back about dating older boys”, and “how to get over a broken relationship”. The issue of dating violence was not mentioned

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as an organizing theme even though they did mention future programming should include more information about date rape. It is possible that dating violence is not an overriding concern for this particular group of females and they may be interested in receiving more information about date rape more out of curiosity rather than a desire to protect themselves. It is also possible that they are reluctant to suggest topics such as date rape as an organizing theme out of fear of shame or embarrassment should it come to light that they are involved in an abusive relationship. One subject did indicate as part of the written assessment that abuse from parents or stepparents would have been a topic that could have been discussed. It is possible that abuse from parents or stepparents may be an organizing theme around which a group could form.

Half of the subjects indicated that most of the handouts were informative and helpful, while the other half indicated that only some of the handouts were informative and helpful. Unfortunately, no data on the reasons or explanations as to why the latter group thought they were less informative were gathered.

All of the subjects indicated that the size of the group "was okay with me." However, when asked if there were any changes that would make the program better during the focus group discussion, five subjects indicated that the group could be smaller. They each agreed that there wasn't enough time for everyone to say what they wished and in their

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opinion, reducing the size of the group would have given each participant more “air time” so to speak. One subject indicated that the group could have been larger to provide more viewpoints.

All of the subjects indicated as part of the written assessment that the adult supervision was adequate. The issue of adult supervision did not arise as part of the focus group discussion. All of the subjects seemed to have an adequate support system as they were all able to list more than one adult with whom they could speak to if they had problems or questions about dating, domestic, or sexual abuse.

Discussion Related to Outcome Variables

Subjects Overall Satisfaction with Exercises and Activities

Overall, subjects indicated they enjoyed the exercises and activities of the DVP program with thirteen of the nineteen exercises having a high or moderate rating of liking. In particular, they enjoyed the discussion surrounding gender roles and sexual stereotypes and indicated during the focus group they would have liked to spend more time on these topics. Other exercises that were highly rated were “the wise old woman”,

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“three wishes for our lives”, “five imaginary lives”, “discussion of the types of love”, “discussion of the continuums of abuse”, the video on dating violence, and the “three phases of abuse” exercise. This may be due to the more personal nature of these exercises. The “three wishes for our lives” and “five imaginary lives” exercises gave the subjects a chance to define what they wanted for their lives. The discussion of the types of love may also have been important because it dealt with a subject most adolescent females are interested in. The exercises and activities specifically related to abuse were also highly rated by subjects, and since dating violence was the primary focus of the program, this is desirable. Although none of the subjects indicated that dating violence was a problem in their own lives, they seemed to recognize the potential for it to become an issue at some point in their dating careers as all subjects indicated during the written and verbal assessment that the information on dating violence was important for middle school age students.

Although the journaling exercise received less than a moderate rating (mean score of 3.38), it is possible that this is due to the inconsistent nature of how the journals were utilized during the program. After the third session, the journals were not discussed nor were any suggestions made for additional topics to write about due to time constraints.

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The “wise old woman” exercise, which was intended to serve as a closing ritual for the group, was eliminated after the third session because of time constraints. This was unfortunate because participants rated this exercise as enjoyable.

All subjects agreed as part of both the written assessment and focus group interview that the material presented was important for middle school age students. The majority of subjects found all exercises and activities to be helpful. Activities and exercises that subjects considered the most helpful were related in that subjects had a personal interest in the issues raised. Exercises considered to be least helpful may have been so because the information gained from them was not relevant to their own lives.

When asked verbally and as part of the written assessment if there were any additional topics relating to dating violence that should have been included, one subject mentioned “date rape.” Unfortunately, she was not asked to clarify why she wanted more information on this topic. The issue of date rape was discussed during the exercises related to abuse. However, there were no exercises that specifically addressed the topic of date rape. Other topics unrelated to dating violence involved the subjects relationships with peers, parents, and “ex” romantic partners. These topics were also likely mentioned because of their relevance to the lives of these young women. This would be consistent

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with our culture which supports the assumption that females are more interested in and responsible for the health and well-being of relationships.

Subjects Feeling of Psychological Safety

A second primary indicator of subjects overall satisfaction with the DVP program was the degree to which they considered the experience to be psychologically safe. Overall, the subjects indicated a high degree of psychological safety. For those items pertaining to sharing thoughts and feelings with other group members the means were lower although still moderate. This may be due to the conflicts that group members were experiencing outside of the group.

Subjects Attitudes Towards Relationship Violence

Subjects were asked to indicate as part of the written assessment whether they believed it was ever okay to act violently towards a romantic partner. All subjects indicated that it was never okay to act violently towards a romantic partner, with the exception of acting in self-defense. Because this measure was only taken post-program,

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no conclusions about the effectiveness of the DVP program in causing attitude change can be reached. However, the direction of the post-program measure was desirable. Had this post-program measure of attitude shown that subjects regarded relationship violence as acceptable, it would have been clear that the DVP program was ineffective, and would have needed to place more emphasis on the aberrant nature of such behavior.

Unknowns and Limitations

Because of the method of sample selection as well as the size of the sample, it is possible that the results of this evaluation are not generalizable to the population of eighth grade females attending Mondovi Middle School. Another group of eighth grade females may have regarded the dating violence prevention program differently.

It is also unknown whether this program could be conducted successfully with adolescent females of different ages, for example, seventh or ninth graders or for those with varying levels of dating violence risk. Because research in this area is still fairly new, it is difficult to say with certainty which contextual and risk factors point towards a potential problem with dating violence. As more information on dating violence

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becomes known, assessment and screening tools to help identify females at risk for dating violence should be more readily available. These tools can then be used to better characterize the population with which DVP programs are most effective.

It is also unknown what the effect was of having the focus group conducted and the questionnaires administered by the program facilitator. It is possible that the subjects would have been more forthcoming about potential problems with the program had an objective party, with whom no relationship had been established, conducted the evaluation.

Another limitation to the evaluation was the absence of impact assessments. There were no pre and post-tests administered to subjects to measure attitude and behavioral changes nor was there a control group with which to compare responses. Therefore, it is unknown whether the DVP program resulted in desired changes.

Implications-Suggestions for DVP Program Change

Should New Horizons be interested in continuing the dating violence prevention program, the following changes related to process and outcome variables are recommended:

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1. *Identify Females who may be at Risk for Dating Violence* - Although the literature shows that the risk for becoming a victim of dating violence is approximately thirty percent (Levy, 1998), New Horizons may want to further investigate those factors which help identify females and males who may be at risk for such behaviors and target programming specifically for those individuals.
2. *Incorporate the Program into Existing Classroom Curriculum*- Because subjects indicated that the time, days, and location were acceptable, it may be worthwhile for New Horizons to investigate the possibility of incorporating the program into existing classes offered through the schools. Schools are a logical vehicle for the dissemination of information for adolescents. Most school systems have elective classes with such topics as family living or health education which could accommodate a unit on dating and relationship violence. New Horizons may need to invest money and resources educating school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers about the relevance of the topic of dating violence for today's young women and men.
3. *Increase the Length of Program Sessions*- Sessions were originally designed to run

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approximately seventy-five minutes per session. The wise old woman and journal exercises, which would take approximately fifteen minutes apiece, were eliminated to accommodate the forty minutes of a classroom period. Several times, subjects mentioned feeling as if the facilitator were rushing to get through material. Subjects suggested that the program sessions be increased to sixty or ninety minutes. The length of sessions could be increased to seventy-five minutes as originally planned and then re-evaluated.

4. *Increase the Number of Program Sessions to include more Topics Related to Dating Violence-* There were many topic areas related to dating violence that could only be touched on due to time limitations, for example, date rape. If the number of sessions were increased, more information could be provided on topics such as date rape, the role of alcohol and drugs, and jealousy in dating violence.
5. *Reevaluate the Quality of Handouts-* Since half of the subjects regarded only some of the handouts as being worthwhile, it may be worth further investigation to determine on which program materials participants would appreciate receiving written materials.

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Using the data gathered from this investigation, those topic areas participants indicated they had a greater interest in, such as gender and date rape may be the topics worth providing written materials on.

6. *Consider a Reduction in Group Size*- Although subjects indicated as part of the written assessment that the size of the group was acceptable, several subjects did mention during the focus group interview that the group size could be reduced. From the data it is clear that subjects felt a need for more time in which to speak and either a reduction in group size and/or increasing the length and number of sessions may address this issue adequately.

7. *Leave the Level of Adult Supervision as is*- From the data, it is clear that subjects found the level of adult supervision to be adequate i.e., one adult for nine participants. Increasing the level of adult supervision may decrease the level of comfort/psychological safety and make valuable disclosures regarding involvement in dating violence even less likely.

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8. *Keep those Exercises and Activities which Received a Moderate to High Rating*-The majority of exercises and activities were rated as enjoyable by subjects. The “wise old woman” exercise and journaling exercises, which were eliminated due to time constraints, should remain part of the program. Increasing the length and number of sessions would make this possible.

9. *Add Additional Exercises and Activities on those Topics Subjects had an Interest in*-Subjects indicated they were interested in receiving more information on date rape. If the number of program sessions were increased, date rape could be addressed in a session or two. Subjects also indicated they wished to have spent more time on topics such as gender and issues related to other personal relationships. Even though some of the topics mentioned did not relate specifically to dating violence, addressing these issues with young women may enhance their self-esteem leaving them less vulnerable to dating violence.

10. *Eliminate those Topic Areas that Subjects did not have an Interest in*- Although subjects did not give any of the exercises and activities a low rating as part of the written assessment, there were a couple of items mentioned as part of the focus group

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interview that subjects did not care for. One subject did not like the video because of the rhyming scheme. Perhaps a more current video that did not have a rhyming scheme could be shown. One subject mentioned she did not like the “power wheel exercise” but could not give a reason why. This makes it difficult to assess the appropriateness of the power wheel exercise. Given that only one subject had a negative comment about this exercise, it is appropriate to keep it in the program and assess any future negative reactions to the exercise in greater detail. The journaling exercises were also mentioned as being a “waste of time” by a couple of subjects as part of the focus group interview. Because this may be due to the inconsistent use of the journals, future programs should use the journals more. It should then be assessed to determine if consistency in use leads to greater acceptability.

11. *Include Sessions on Reflective Listening and Communication Skills to Increase the Level of Psychological Safety*- Given that the mean scores on items Measuring psychological safety in relation to peers were lower than the scores

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measuring psychological safety in relation to the adult facilitator, it may be worthwhile to include information on the importance of reflective listening and a discussion on the issues of respect and responsibility when taking part in a therapeutic group experience.

Evaluation Design Changes: Suggestions for Future Evaluations of DVP Programs

To increase the utility of future program evaluations of DVP programs, several changes could be made to the evaluation design. First, pre/post testing of behaviors to measure attitudinal and behavior changes as a result of programming need to be conducted. For example, it would have been helpful to know if the subject's attitudes towards relationship violence changed as a result of the program. Second, the use of a control and treatment group would provide valuable information about whether attitudinal/ behavioral changes could be attributed primarily to the program. Third, it would be valuable to have long-term as well as short-term measures of attitude/behavioral changes to determine the effectiveness of the program over time. Fourth, it would be valuable to increase the number of attitudinal/behavioral changes measured. For example, measures of psychological abuse perpetration and

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victimization could be taken pre and post program to help determine the effectiveness of the information given. Fifth, the sample size needs to be enlarged. This would increase the validity/generalizability of the results as well as allow for statistical tests of significance. Sixth, it would be helpful to conduct the program and program evaluation with different age groups to determine the optimum age for this type of program. For example, the program could be conducted with seventh and ninth graders. Seventh, it may be beneficial to have the questionnaires and focus group administered by someone other than the program facilitator to allow for more objectivity in responses.

In addition to changes with program design, changes could be made in the program evaluation in terms of the questions asked to assess subject demographics, ratings of exercises and activities, utilization and delivery issues, and psychological safety. For example, it may be beneficial to include more socio-demographic questions. Questions could have been asked about other variables known to be related to abuse, such as the personal/familial use of alcohol and drugs, family income, and parent's level of education. These additional questions could be used to assess to what degree a young woman could be considered at risk for dating violence. Clarification questions

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related to exercises and activities during the focus group need to be incorporated into the evaluation design. It would have been helpful to know exactly why subject's liked/disliked exercises and activities in order to assess what changes, if any, need to be made in this area. Regarding utilization and delivery issues, subjects could have been asked if they would have preferred receiving this information in an educational instead of support group format.

It is possible that educational programs such as those described in the literature review would be more appealing to students and thus, more effective.

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Appendix A

Proposal for Dating Violence Prevention Program

The following proposal is for a dating violence prevention program for female's ages twelve to fourteen. The purpose of the program will be to increase participant's knowledge of self esteem, assertiveness, and attitudes regarding romantic relationships that are believed to contribute to dating violence. Though this is a fairly new area of research, there are numerous studies that identify low self esteem, lack of assertiveness, and "feminine" gender identities as being risk factors for dating violence (Levy, 1991, Rosen & Bezold, 1996, and O'Keefe, 1997).

The dating violence prevention program will consist of eight sessions; Sessions one through five will focus on strengthening the participants self esteem and examining gender roles. Sessions six through eight will deal more specifically with the issue of abuse in dating relationships. Program membership will be limited to ten members with one adult graduate student as facilitator. (If there is a great deal of interest, a second group could be conducted upon completion of the first program.) Students will have the option of attending this program as part of their Physical Education curriculum. The program will take place on school property and will be promoted through teachers, counselors, posters, and word of mouth. Although the group will be open to all eighth grade females, parents of females thought to be at risk for dating violence by school personnel will receive a phone call from either the middle school guidance counselor or principal about the program. A flyer about the program and a handout providing

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information about the risks and benefits of being part of a psycho-educational program will be sent home with potential participants. Written permission from parents will be required for participation.

Basic Ground Rules for Group Participation:

1. Program participants are asked to make a commitment to attend all sessions unless they are ill or there is a family emergency.
2. Program participants agree to be on time.
3. Program participants agree that there will be no gossiping about what is said and done in group.
4. Confidentiality will be observed by program leaders and participants. The importance of maintaining confidentiality will be stated at the beginning of each session. Group leaders and participants will monitor confidentiality. If confidentiality is breached, the breach will be discussed openly and the participants will decide if the person breaching confidentiality will be permitted to continue in the program. A sincere apology from the person breaching confidentiality to the person who has been injured by the breach will be expected. The group leader will breach confidentiality if she determines that the safety, health, and/or well-being of a program participant is being jeopardized by observing confidentiality. Program leader will inform school guidance staff, New Horizons, UW-Stout and other

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officials as required by law when confidentiality needs to be broken. Program participants will be made aware of the limits to confidentiality.

5. No smoking/drinking/drugs before or during meetings.
6. Participants must have written permission from parents to participate.
7. Parents will be notified if a participant decides to drop out of the program.
8. Participants agree to communicate as openly and honestly as possible and to express real feelings as much as possible.
9. Participants agree to give everyone a chance to share without interruptions or put-downs and to listen attentively and non-judgmentally to each other.
10. Participants agree to show respect to everyone in the program and what they contribute to the program.

Evaluation of DVP Program

Agenda for Sessions:

Session One:

1. Introduction of Co-leaders (discussion of qualifications) and program participants.
Provide opportunity for participants to talk about what they wish to gain from the program.
2. Discussion of confidentiality with possible role-play between group leaders to illustrate. Handout a confidentiality contract, which spells out the promise to maintain confidentiality. Ask group members to sign.
3. Discuss the rights of group members such as the right to participate, the right to feel safe, the right to equitable treatment etc. Along with this, discuss premature termination (how it impacts the group) and ask members to please discuss their desire to terminate with the program leaders before doing so.
4. Pass out program rules and ask participants for input on additional rules (For example, what should happen if we discover someone did not maintain confidentiality?)
5. Briefly discuss what will be happening in each session: Opening ritual- sharing of journal entries for those who wish. Journals will be handed out and a list of potential topics and suggestions for entries will be provided.

Closing ritual will consist of asking participants what the “wise old woman” inside of them says about each session. (The concept of the “wise old woman” as a metaphorical tool will be explained in exercise one.)

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6. Opportunity for participants to discuss their feelings about being in the program.
7. Exercise one: The Wise Old Woman (Sapsford, 1997).

Explain concept of the wise old woman-“Each of us has a voice inside us that knows what is best, what is right for us. Sometimes we listen to this voice and sometimes we ignore her. We can call this voice the wise old woman.” Pass out crayons and paper and ask participants to draw and color their wise old woman. Discuss and share drawings. Ask participants to share times they are aware of listening to their wise old woman and times they are aware of ignoring her. May ask participants what their wise old woman is telling them about being part of this program.

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Session Two:

Focus is on developing self awareness."Who Am I?", learning about me, who I am, what makes me. Purpose is to strengthen participants' sense of self-concept and self image.

1. Sharing of journal entries or any thoughts or feelings participants have had that they would like to share with the group since the last meeting.
2. Exercise One: Who Am I? Pass out sheet, which asks members to list personal information about themselves. Questions such as what is your favorite activity, food, television show, school subject, color, clothing, animal. What is something that really bugs you? When are you the happiest? Saddest? Who are you in your family? When do you feel the strongest? Discuss.
3. Exercise Two: Names (Liebmann, 1986). Ask members what names they would choose for themselves if they could. What do their given names mean? In what ways do they like or dislike their names? etc.
4. Exercise Three: Three Wishes (Liebmann, 1986). Have group members draw three wishes for their lives. Discuss. Close by asking group members what their "wise old woman" is telling them about the group session.

Session Three:

Defining Self-Awareness. Focus of this session will be to help participants develop a stronger sense of self.

Open by sharing of journal entries.

1. Exercise One: Discussion of Self-awareness. Participants will be asked to define self-awareness and will discuss self-image and self-concept as two components of self-awareness. Close by asking group what their “wise old woman” is telling them about the program session.

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Session Four:

The purpose of this session will be to help participants to define their value system.

1. Open by sharing journal entries.
2. Exercise One: Have participants examine various pictures of famous women and explore the personal characteristics of the women that are evident from the pictures (For example, a picture of a female athlete).
3. Exercise Two: Have each participant list women they admire can be living or dead, real or fictional. Discuss.
4. Exercise Three: Five Imaginary Lives (Cameron, 1996).
Have each participant list five imaginary lives they would like to live. Discuss.
5. Ending: Share with group what “wise old woman” is telling them about session. In journals- choose one imaginary life and write a plan for getting there.

Session Five:

The purpose of this session will be to explore what it means to be a male or female in our culture. Participants will examine their own beliefs about gender roles, specifically, those beliefs about gender roles relating to romantic relationships.

1. Open by sharing of journal entries.
2. Exercise One: Discussion of stereotypes. Ask participants what is meant by the phrase “sex role stereotyping”. Handout sheet listing different stereotypical sayings such as “a woman’s place is in the home” or “women are the weaker sex”. Discuss. Have girls identify stereotypical ways in which women are portrayed in TV, movies and magazines. May also have them examine the messages regarding heterosexual relationships in fairy tales (such as Beauty and the Beast and Cinderella etc.) Discuss.
3. Exercise Two: Ask participants to compile a list of words associated with the words “masculine” or “feminine”. Discuss. Close by asking group what their wise old woman is telling them about session.

Session Six:

The focus of session six will be love and abuse. Participants will distinguish between nurturing, romantic, addictive, abusive types of love in order to help them determine the difference between love and abuse.

1. Open by sharing of journal entries

2. Exercise one: Discussion of types of love (NiCarthy, 1997): Group leader says "I'm wondering whether you've heard the phrase addictive love before. You've probably heard something about drug and alcohol addiction. Perhaps you can imagine what's it like for a person in love to feel she has to have a particular person or she'll fall apart. What is that like?" List students' responses and save for discussion. Ask students "what are some early signs of addictive love and what might you be able to do when you notice those signs?" List the terms nurturing, romantic, addictive, and abusive love across the top of a blackboard. Have participants identify different behaviors that might fall under each of these categories.

3. Exercise Two: Identifying continuums of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual (NiCarthy, 1997). Group leader asks, "What are some of the ways that people abuse their partners physically? Emotionally? Sexually?" List answers and discuss.

3. Exercise Three: Power Wheel Handout listing emotional abuse and brainwashing (NiCarthy, 1997). Leader distributes copy of power wheel and says "we're going to list some types of emotional abuse, and we'd like to you to give examples of ways that

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people emotionally abuse each other under each of these categories.” Leader would then write the following leaving space for filling in examples on a blackboard:

- enforces isolation of the partner
 - insists on attention being focused on their own comfort and convenience and way from the desires of their partner
 - threatens
 - demonstrates power or superiority over their partner
 - enforces trivial demands
 - grants occasional rewards or favors
4. Close by asking group what their wise old woman is telling them about session.

Session Seven:

The focus of session seven will be to examine passive, aggressive, and assertive styles of communication. Purpose is to teach participants how different styles of communication effect interactions with others. Session will also focus on creating awareness of individual rights in order to help participants recognize the difference between choosing to give up rights and having them taken away and give them practice negotiating for rights when a partner does not recognize them. (It will be noted that while good communication skills are important, a partner's aggression is about who they are and not about a woman communicating incorrectly.)

1. Open by sharing of journal entries.
2. Exercise One (NiCarthy, 1997). Leader writes the words Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive across the top of a blackboard. Leader then brings up hypothetical scenarios discussing problem's students may have with one another and then asks, "What might be an (assertive, passive, aggressive) way of handling this problem?"
3. Exercise Two: (NiCarthy, 1997). Leader asks students to state the rights they believe they are entitled to as students, parents, children, or other appropriate categories. Discuss.
4. Exercise Three: (NiCarthy, 1997). Discuss situations in which one might choose to

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give up ones rights as part of a compromise or because at a particular moment it is not of great importance to exercise them, and the difference between giving them up and having them taken away. Choose for discussion the problem that seems most common for the group. Have two-group member's role-play situation while other group members suggest solutions that are assertive.

Close by asking group what their wise old woman is telling them about session.

Session Eight:

Wrap-up. Focus of session will be to provide information on cycles of abuse and identify resources (both internal and external) for those who experience abuse.

1. Open by sharing of journal entries.
2. Video presenting information on cycles of abuse and profiling victims of dating violence followed by discussion.
3. Exercise One: Discussion of the three phases of abuse: tension building, explosion (violent incident), and honeymoon (Walker, 1979).
4. Provide participants with resources should they experience dating violence or have a friend who is experiencing dating violence.
5. Wrap-up/ closure: Have group members share their thoughts and feelings about the program. Make it clear that this part of discussion will be recorded on cassette for research study and anyone who does not wish to or does not have parental permission to participate in this portion of program may go into another room and play games. Group leaders also share what they appreciated about each member individually. End with taking of questionnaires.

Appendix B

Evaluation of DVP Program

Demographic and Attitude Questionnaire for Dating Violence Prevention Program

This is an anonymous survey. We do NOT need your name. We only need the following information completed:

Birthdate ____ Last two letters of last name ____

1. Age ____

2. Grade ____

3. My biological parents are:

married

divorced

separated

other (Please list here) _____

4. I live primarily with:

both biological parents

one biological parent (specify here by circling mother or father)

one biological parent (specify if mother or father) and stepparent

grandparent(s)

foster family

other (please list here) _____

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5. I live:

in Mondovi

other (please specify) _____

6. Please check the statement below which applies to you:

I do not date at this time nor have I ever dated.

I am not dating right now, but I have dated in the past.

I am dating now.

7. Who can you talk to if you have problems or questions about dating, domestic or sexual abuse?

8. Is it ever okay to hit or act violently towards a husband/wife or girlfriend/boyfriend? Explain.

9. Is there anything about domestic or dating violence that you would like to know more about?

Evaluation of DVP Program

10. Are there any topics that you wish we would have discussed?

Please list any additional comments on the back of this form.

Evaluation of DVP Prevention Program

Appendix C

Evaluation of DVP Prevention Program

Student Evaluation Form

Birth-date _____ Last two letters of your last name _____

Please rate the activities that were part of this program as follows: number 5 = Really Liked, number four = Liked, number 3 = neutral, number 2 = Disliked, number 1 = Strongly Disliked. If you don't remember the activity, ask the group leader. If you were absent during an activity, do not rate it.

	SD	D	N	L	RL
Wise old woman	1	2	3	4	5
Keeping a journal	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of self concept	1	2	3	4	5
Names	1	2	3	4	5
3 Wishes for our lives	1	2	3	4	5
Exploring characteristics of famous women	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of women we admire	1	2	3	4	5
Five imaginary lives	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of gender stereotypes.	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of types of love	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of continuums of abuse	1	2	3	4	5
Power wheel handout	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of passive, aggressive, assertive styles of communication	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of individual rights	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation of DVP Prevention Program

Role play applying different communication

styles to actual problems

1 2 3 4 5

Video on dating violence

1 2 3 4 5

Discussion of the three phases of abuse

1 2 3 4 5

1. Do you feel that the material presented as part of this program is important for middle school students? Why or why not?

2. What information was most helpful?

3. What information was least helpful?

4. Do you have any questions or concerns relating to yourself or someone you know resulting from this topic?

5. If you would like to talk to someone about these concerns please sign your name here: _____

Appendix D

Utilization and Delivery Questionnaire

Birth-date _____ Last two letters of last name _____

If you attended less than half of the program, please answer the following question:

1. It was not possible for me to attend all sessions because of (check all that apply):

- transportation
- location
- personal illness or emergency
- family emergency
- job
- boredom, irrelevance
- other (please list) _____

2. If the time and/or days the group met was inconvenient, please list a time and/or day that would have worked better below:

3. How did you feel about the length of the program sessions?

- The length of the program sessions was fine with me.
- The sessions were too long.
- The sessions were not long enough.
- other (please list) _____

Evaluation of DVP Program

4. If you think the sessions were too long or not long enough, how long do you think they should have been?

5. How did you feel about the number of sessions?

The number of sessions was fine with me.

There were too many sessions.

There could have been more sessions.

6. Meeting at the Mondovi Middle School was:

okay with me.

not okay with me.

If meeting at the Middle School was not okay with you, please indicate why below:

7. Would you be interested in continuing to meet as a group?

Yes, I would be interested.

No, I would not be interested.

Evaluation of DVP Program

8 Quality of handouts:

- Most of the handouts were informative and helpful.
- Some of the handouts were informative and helpful.
- Most of the handouts were a waste of time and paper.
- All of the handouts were a waste of time and paper.

9. Size of the group.

- The size of the group was okay with me.
- The group was too large.
- The group was too small.

10. Adult supervision:

- There were not enough adults present.
- There was just the right number of adults present.

11. Please rate the statements below as follows: If you strongly agree (SA), circle 5, if you agree (A), circle 4, if you are neutral (N), circle 3, if you disagree (D) circle 2, and if you strongly disagree (SD), circle 1.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I felt safe being part of this group	1	2	3	4	5
I was treated fairly by group members	1	2	3	4	5
I was treated fairly by group leaders	1	2	3	4	5
The group leaders listened to me	1	2	3	4	5
The group members listened to me	1	2	3	4	5

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I could trust the group leaders	1	2	3	4	5
I could trust group members	1	2	3	4	5
Group leaders observed confidentiality	1	2	3	4	5
Group members observed confidentiality	1	2	3	4	5
I was comfortable sharing thoughts/feelings	1	2	3	4	5
Group leaders were sensitive to my needs	1	2	3	4	5
Group members were sensitive to my needs	1	2	3	4	5
I was comfortable with sessions being held at Mondovi Middle School	1	2	3	4	5

Please make any additional comments on the back of this form.

Appendix E

Evaluation of DVP Program

Questions Asked as part of Focus Group Interview:

1. Do you feel the material presented was important for middle school students?
2. Are eighth graders too young or too old for this type of programming?
3. What information was the most helpful?
4. What information was the least helpful?
5. What did you think about the size of the group?
6. How long do you think the program should have run?
7. Did it impact the group that some members were having a problem with one another outside of group?
8. Did it impact the group that some people had poor listening skills?
9. What topics could we have spent more time on?
10. What are some additional topics that could have been discussed?
11. What other changes would you suggest for this program?

Appendix F

Group Participation Consent Form

I understand that my participation in the dating violence prevention group sponsored by New Horizons and conducted at Mondovi Middle School is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that anything I say or do will be held in the strictest confidence unless my safety and well-being are in question, in which case, the group leader will break confidentiality and report her concerns as she is required to do by law. By signing this document, I agree to abide by group rules and understand that if I choose not to observe group rules I may be asked to leave the group.

Signature of student:

_____ date: _____

I give my child _____ (insert name) permission to participate in the dating violence prevention group program sponsored by New Horizons and conducted at Mondovi Middle School. I understand that anything my child says or does as part of this group will be held in the strictest confidence unless her health and well-being are in question in which case, I understand the group leader will break confidentiality and report her concerns as required by law. My child and I have discussed the group rules and are in agreement that they will be observed. I am responsible for my child's conduct and will not hold Mondovi Middle School, New Horizons, the group leaders or anyone else responsible for what happens to my child. I agree to be responsible for providing transportation to and from the group and will pick up my child promptly at the arranged time.

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

_____ date: _____

Appendix G

Study Consent Form

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that the purpose of this study is to monitor the utilization and delivery of a dating violence prevention program conducted at Mondovi Middle School. I understand that the study is being conducted as part of a graduate student thesis project and any information that is being collected during this study will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be part of any permanent record. I understand that at the conclusion of this study all records which identify individual participants will be destroyed.

Signature of Student:

_____ date: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

_____ date: _____

NOTE: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the student researcher or research advisor and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54741, (715) 232-1126.

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Information Regarding Subjects of Dating Violence
Prevention Program.

Demographic Information	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
Age Thirteen	6	76
Age Fourteen	2	25
Attend Eighth Grade	8	100
Live in City of Mondovi, WI.	8	100
Biological Parents Married	2	25
Biological Parents Divorced	4	50
Biological Parents Separated	0	0
Father deceased	1	12.5
Parents together but not married	1	12.5
Living w/ both Biological Parents	2	25
Living w/ Biological Mother	3	62.5
Living w/ Biological Father	0	0
Living w/ Biological Grandparent	0	0
Living w/ Foster Family	0	0
Living w/ Other	0	0
Have Never Dated	0	0

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 1 Cont:

Demographic Information	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
Not Currently Dating but have Dated in the Past	4	50
Currently Dating	4	50

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 2

Summary of Responses to Open-ended Questions surrounding Subjects Existing Support System, Attitudes towards Violence, and Desire for Further Information towards the Topic of Dating Violence.

1. Who can you talk to if you have problems or questions about dating, domestic, or sexual abuse?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
Mother/Aunt	3	37.5
Principal	2	25
Best Friend	2	25
Professional Therapist	1	12.5
Sister, Best Friend's Mother, Guidance Counselor, Friends, Parents, or Boyfriend		

Table 2 Cont:

2. Is it ever okay to hit or act violently towards a husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
No	8	100
Yes	0	0

Table 2 Cont:

3. Why or Why Not?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“Physical violence is okay if you are defending yourself”	2	25
“Because it is wrong”,	1	12.5
“Because abuse is bad”	1	12.5
“Because it (abuse) is not a way to express love”	1	12.5
“Because it hurts physically and mentally”	1	12.5

Table 2 Cont:

4. Is there anything about domestic or dating violence that you may want to know more about?

Response	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
No	8	100
Yes	0	0

5. Are there any topics you wish we would have discussed?

Response	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
Yes	5	62.5
No	3	37.5

Table 2 Cont:

6. If yes, what would be the topics?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (P)
“How to move on from a relationship”,	1	12.5
“Date rape”,	1	12.5
“Dating older guys and how to get your parents to lay off your back about them”,	1	12.5
“Abuse from parents and step-parents”.	1	12.5

Table 3

Evaluation of DVP Program

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Exercises of Dating Violence Prevention Program.

Name of Exercise	Mean	Standard Deviation
Wise Old Woman	4.50**	.52
Keeping a Journal	3.38	1.19
Discussion/Self Concept	3.5	.76
Names	3.88	.83
Three Wishes for our Lives	4.50**	.76
Characteristics of Famous Women	3.13	1.13
Discussion/ Women We Admire	3.75	1.04
Five Imaginary Lives	4.25	.71
Discussion/Gender Stereotypes	4.50	.76
Discussion/Types of Love	4.38	.74

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 3 Cont:

Exercise:	Mean	Standard Deviation
Discussion/ Continuums of Abuse	4.00	.53
Power Wheel Handout	3.50	.76
Discussion/Communication Styles	3.88	.64
Discussion of Individual Rights	3.71	.76
Role Play/ Communication	3.57	.79
Video on Dating Violence	4.25	.46
Discussion/Three Phases of Abuse	4.25	.89

**= Highly Rated Exercises with Mean Scores of 4 or greater.

* = Moderately Rated Exercises with Mean Scores of at least 3 but less than 4.

Exercises appear in order in which they were presented in DVP Program.

Table 4

Subject's Responses to Open-ended Questions of the Student Evaluation Form

1. Were the materials presented important to middle school students?"

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Yes"	8	100
"No"	0	0

2 "Why?"

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"To know what's going on",	1	12.5
"To become aware of different things",	1	12.5
"Because we either have or will experience it",	1	12.5
"Because the group really learned something."	1	12.5
"It helped me to like myself",	1	12.5

Table 4 Cont:

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“So that we know what’s going on in life as we grow older”,	1	12.5
“Because we need to know about it”.	1	12.5

3. “What information was the most helpful?”

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“Information about abuse”	3	37
“Learning about the different types of love”	2	25
“Information about dating”, “Gender stereotypes”	1	12.5

Table 4 Cont:

4. "What information was the least helpful?"

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"None",	3	37
"No response"		
"It was all helpful"	2	25
"The names exercise",	1	12.5
"The power wheel exercise",	1	12.5
"Information on sexual abuse"	1	12.5

5. "Do you have any questions or concerns relating to yourself or someone you know about the topic of dating violence?"

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"No"	8	100
"Yes"	0	0

Table 5

Summary of Program Utilization and Delivery Data.

1. If the time and/or days the group met was inconvenient, please list a time and/or day that would have worked better.

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"The time/days was convenient"	7	87.5
"It would have been more convenient if the group had met after school once a week".	1	12.5

2. How did you feel about the length of the program sessions?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"The sessions weren't long enough"	6	75
"The length of the sessions was fine."	2	25

Table 5 Cont:

3. If you think the sessions were too long or not long enough, how long do you think they should have been?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“An hour and a half.”	4	50
“At least two more weeks.”	1	12.5
“Two hours.”	1	12.5

4. How did you feel about the number of sessions?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“There could have been more.”	8	100

5. Was meeting at the Mondovi Middle School okay?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“Yes.”	8	100

Table 5 Cont:

6. Would you be interested in continuing to meet as a group?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Yes."	8	100

7. What about the quality of the handouts?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Most of the handouts were informative and helpful."	4	50
"Some of the handouts were informative and helpful."	4	50

8. What about the size of the group and the level of adult supervision?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"The size of group and adult supervision were adequate."	8	100

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Statements regarding Psychological Safety

Statement:	Mean	Standard Deviation
"I could trust group leaders	4.88	.35
"I was comfortable with sessions being held at Mondovi Middle School"	4.63	.52
"Group leaders observed confidentiality"	4.63	.52
"Group leaders listened to me"	4.38	.74
"I was treated fairly by group leaders"	4.38	.52
"I felt safe being part of this group"	4.25	.71
"Group leaders were sensitive to my needs"	4.25	.71

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 6, Cont:

Statement:	Mean	Standard Deviation
"I was treated fairly by the group"	3.75	1.16
"Group members were sensitive to my needs"	3.63	1.19
"Group members listened to me"	3.5	1.07
"Group members observed confidentiality"	3.38	1.06
"I could trust group members"	3.25	1.28
"I was comfortable sharing my thoughts."	2.88	1.46

*Higher scores indicate greater feelings of psychological safety.

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 7

Summary of Data from Focus Group Interview.

Do you feel the material presented was important for middle school students?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
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“Yes.”	8	100
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Are eighth graders too young or too old for this type of programming?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
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“The program is appropriate for eighth and ninth graders.”	8	100
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“The program is not appropriate for sixth and seventh graders because they are too young.”	8	100
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Table 7 Cont:

What information was the most helpful?		
Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“Information on gender.”	1	12.5
“The power wheel.”	1	12.5
“Information on the different types of abuse.”	1	12.5
“Information on the different types of love.”	1	12.5
What information was the least helpful?		
Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
“Journaling exercises.”	3	37.5
“Having to rush through materials.”	2	25
“The video.”	1	12.5
“The power wheel exercise.”	1	12.5

Evaluation of DVP Program

Table 7 Cont:

How long should the sessions have run?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"An hour to an hour and a half."	8	100

How long do you think the program should have run?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"The program should have been a quarter or semester long class for school credit."	3	37.5
"The program should have been offered once a week after school for a semester."	1	12.5

What do you think about the size of the group?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"The size of the group was just right or could have been smaller."	7	87.5%
"The group could have been larger."	1	12.5%

Table 7 Cont:

Did it impact the group that some members of the group were having a problem with one another outside of group?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Yes."	7	87.5
"No."	1	12.5

Did it impact the group that some people had poor listening skills?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Yes."	4	50
"Some days it did and some days it didn't."	1	12.5

What topics could we have spent more time on?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"Gender."	3	37.5

Table 7 Cont :

What are some additional topics that we could have discussed?"

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"How to manipulate parents."	1	12.5
"Getting along w/ parents/friends"	1	12.5
"How to get over a relationship."	1	12.5

What other changes would you suggest for this program?

Response:	Number of Subjects (N)	Percent of Subjects (%)
"No response."	8	100
