

# Preventing **Teen Dating** Violence

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A Plan for Healthy Youth Relationships in Minnesota

December 21, 2011



Minnesota Department of Health

This plan was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 3U17CE0001796-01W1 (Core II)

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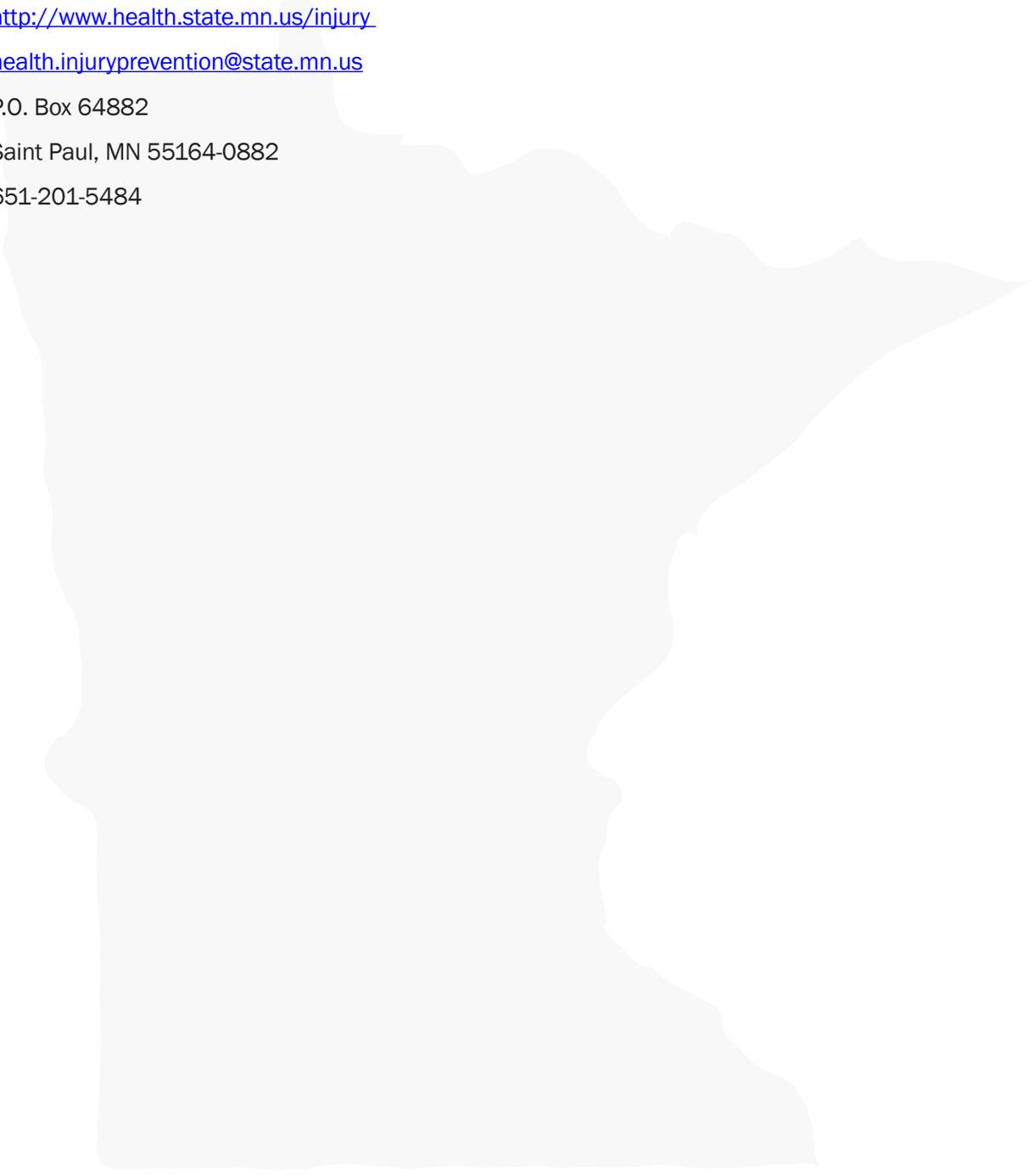
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## **A. Prevention Vision**

The vision of the Minnesota State Alliance on Healthy Youth Relationships (SAHYR) is to work strategically in Minnesota to create new and support existing programs, policies and systems that help youth develop healthy relationships. Healthy relationships, both platonic and intimate, require healthy individuals. Thus, our desire is to improve and promote health and stability in the lives of Minnesota's youth.

## **B. Work Group Description**

This plan is the result of a 25-month grant project in Minnesota, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Minnesota was one of six states to receive funding for this Teen Dating Violence Prevention (TDVP) Initiative. The other five states were California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. This report summarizes findings about youth issues and services, based on data collection, policy research, individual interviews, and focus groups. Based on these findings, the plan makes statewide recommendations for preventing teen dating violence and developing healthy youth relationships.

The grant required each state to identify a large metropolitan area (population of 500,000 or more) with which to work. The larger states selected a single city or county. In Minnesota (population 5.2 million), we selected the entire seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (2.8 million, of whom 384,358 are youth ages 10-19): Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties, including the large cities of Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Coon Rapids, Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Later in the project, we selected Ramsey County as the local entity to work with CDC and their contractor (RTI Consultants), to develop a web-based assessment tool. This project will continue beyond the end of the basic project (December 31, 2011).

The grant was awarded to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Injury and Violence Prevention Unit. Our primary community partner was the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW). The project was led by an advisory group, which named itself the State Alliance for Healthy Youth Relationships (SAHYR) in order to focus on the asset promotion aspects of teen dating violence prevention. Members of this team included representatives of these organizations (**Appendix A**):

*Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women*

*Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault*

*Minnesota Department of Education*

*Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)*

*MDH Injury and Violence Prevention Unit*

*MDH Adolescent Health Program*

*Minnesota Department of Public Safety*

*Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition*

*Casa de Esperanza*

*Domestic Abuse Project*

*Ramsey County Department of Public Health*

*Sexual Assault Services (Hennepin County)*

*Sexual Offense Services (Ramsey County)*

*Teenwise Minnesota (formerly Minnesota Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention)*

This team met nearly every month from October 2009 to July 2011. Agendas and activities followed the stages of the project as recommended by CDC. Members actively participated in developing additional questions and methodology for the environmental scan and provided valuable input from their organizations about youth involvement, the policy scan, and recommendations for the plan. The group made decisions throughout the project by consensus.

## C. Problem Description

Teen dating violence is an important issue for youth ages 10-19 in Minnesota. In the initial meetings of the SAHYR, the group discussed the term “teen dating violence.” They decided to limit the use of that term in their work because (1) youth do not relate to the term “teen;” (2) “teen” literally refers to those 13-19, does not translate well into Spanish, and is more restrictive in age than the populations being targeted for programmatic activity; (3) youth do not “date” in the same way as previous generations; and (4) “violence,” while clearly understood in the public health community to include prevalent emotional abuse, in the vernacular implies principally physical acts.

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**“Each generation is changing, the stuff they experienced, adults would be amazed at what youth go through. Even over a year, it can totally change and have different experiences. I don’t feel like just because they are older they will understand. That’s why I want someone my age that I can relate to.”**

*—Participant in youth focus group*

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Recognizing, however, that a common definition was needed, our work group defined the problem as physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence within a dating relationship, within the age range of 10 – 19 years.

The State Alliance wished to emphasize a positive goal or outcome of developing healthy youth relationships, not merely preventing teen dating violence. This approach requires moving “upstream” to do primary prevention and create a healthy environment for youth. Primary prevention is defined in Minnesota’s Sexual Violence Prevention Plan<sup>1</sup> as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The Promise of Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence: A Five-Year Plan to Prevent Sexual Violence and Exploitation in Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Health, June 2009. Web site: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury>

*Primary prevention is action that takes place before sexual violence has occurred, to prevent initial perpetration or victimization.*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention uses the following definition<sup>2</sup>:

*Primary prevention includes individual/relationship or family/community/and or environmental or system level program, activities, or policies that prevent violence and first time perpetration and victimization from initially occurring.*

A focus group discussion by experts, affirmed by literature review, identified three protective factors – healthy relationships, mentoring, and gender equity – and one risk factor – alcohol use – as being frequently associated with teen dating violence. The team integrated these risk and protective factors into Minnesota’s environmental and policy scans.

To connect healthy youth development with primary prevention, the team had an extensive discussion of (a) the qualities youth need to have in order to have healthy relationships; (b) the qualities of those who influence youth; and (c) actions that can occur at all levels to contribute to healthy youth relationships. These discussions are summarized in Appendix B and the recommended actions are reflected throughout this plan.

The programs that provide TDV prevention or intervention services in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area are extremely diverse. They are housed in or sponsored by schools and alternative education programs, youth organizations, faith communities, sexual and domestic assault programs, local health departments, and other venues. They vary widely in the kinds of services provided, curricula or programming used, funding and staffing available, and their capacity to evaluate their effectiveness. This CDC-funded project is believed to be the only concerted effort to gather information and provide networking or guidance across this wide spectrum of service providers.

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2 Core II Part C TDVP Prevention Initiative Programmatic Guidance

# Environmental scan

Staff from MCBW and MDH interviewed (in person or by email survey) 234 people in the project area. Participants in the scan represented community-based organizations, local public health, state agencies, and schools. The full environmental scan is found in **Appendix C**.

**Table 1:** Environmental Scan Overview

Type of Organization	#Recruited	#Participating	#Response Rate (%)
Community based organizations (cbo)	155	78	50
Schools (all types combined)	402	150	37
Local Public Health Agencies (lpha)	9	6	67

The ethnic/cultural diversity of the Twin Cities area was reflected: 57 percent of the community service providers and 39 percent of schools surveyed responded that they offer services to youth and families in a culturally specific setting. Although we sought information about services for 12-18 year olds, several agencies indicated that young adults need and are benefiting from continued services. The public health and state agencies surveyed stated that they serve all socioeconomic groups. Of the community based agencies surveyed, 95 percent stated that they work with low-income people. Of the community based programs, 52 percent offer gender-specific programs to males and 57 percent offer these programs for females. Of the schools, 42 percent offer female-specific programming and 38 percent offer male-specific programming. Services are offered in a wide range of settings including after school programs, neighborhood and community centers, faith-based settings and domestic violence centers. Many participants stated a desire for a single source or site for resources on teen dating violence prevention. Some resources are now

posted on the MDH website: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/tdv/>. MDH also has developed a Healthy School Environments Online Toolkit, which includes resources appropriate to healthy youth development: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/svp/toolkit>. Finally, the environmental scan participants indicated they needed assistance with program evaluation. School and community-based programs stated they could benefit from current information about the teen dating violence programs that exist in their geographic area.

In Minnesota, we added questions to the CDC questionnaire to determine services offered that relate to the four risk and protective factors identified by our research. We found that:

- **Healthy relationship** skill development programs, such as conflict resolution and anger management, are offered by 93 percent of the community-based agencies surveyed and 90 percent of the schools surveyed.
- **Alcohol consumption** education is offered by 75 percent of the community-based agencies and 88 percent of the schools.
- **Gender equity** programs are offered by 70 percent of the community-based programs and 64 percent of the schools.
- **Mentoring** services are offered by 58 percent of the community-based agencies and 39 percent of the schools.

Many respondents to the environmental scan expressed the hope that eventually a single entity or organization might coordinate services that address teen dating violence. Additionally, schools need to increase their capacity by working more regularly and effectively with community-based organizations and local public health.

## Policy Scan

Minnesota's policy scan (**Appendix D**) included the gathering and analysis of policies, statutes and other documents that dealt with teen dating violence prevention *per se* or with the four risk

or protective factors that were part of the environmental scan: healthy relationships, mentoring, gender equity, and alcohol consumption. Sources for the policy information included faith communities, state laws, governmental agencies, schools, racial/ethnic advocacy organizations, sexual and domestic violence organizations, and high school sports organizations. The paper data were augmented with telephone and in-person interviews to gather broader information on how well various policies are enforced and whether they appear to be effective.

To enhance this scan, in spring 2011, two University of Minnesota public health graduate students analyzed the policies in the scan (and other sources not previously explored) and made recommendations for changes. The policy scan information, in combination with the environmental scan and youth focus group data, provided the basis for the plan recommendations.

## Youth Focus Groups

In spring 2011, more than 200 youth participated in focus groups designed to gather their perspective on teen dating violence. Eighteen (18) groups met, 16 in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and two in other parts of the state. Settings for the groups were varied, to capture a representative sampling of Minnesota youth. They included high schools, alternative high schools, and community-based organizations. Participants included teen parents, formerly homeless youth, high-risk immigrant and refugee youth, Native American youth, and youth who participate in teen outreach programs.

Youth expressed clearly that TDV is a problem that they encounter. Some youth revealed personal stories about abuse while others recounted behaviors they had seen or heard about. Many youth also revealed problems in their own families with domestic violence. Youth indicated that while physical abuse occurs, it is emotional and verbal abuse that they see most often in teen relationships.

We also conducted four focus groups with 8th through 10th grade youth in three different settings to hear their thoughts on “healthy” relationships, to query where they learn about healthy

relationships, and to probe for what they would do if they thought a friend or relative was in an unhealthy relationship. The most often expressed desired characteristics needed for a healthy relationship are trust, good communication and genuine caring for one another. Most youth shared that they learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships by watching friends, relatives and social media (Facebook, TV, music, ads and celebrities).

Overall, the information gathered from the youth focus groups supported findings from the environmental and policy scans. Youth agreed that what we had learned from the scans would be beneficial to both prevent and address issues related to teen dating violence. However, they were unaware that many of the resources already existed. Clearly, programs and resources need greater visibility. Recommendations from youth are integrated into this plan and are described more fully in **Appendix F**.

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**“People never ask us for what we think. They just talk at us.  
I like being able to talk about it and tell you what we think.”**

*—Participant in youth focus group*

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## **The Minnesota Student Survey**

This survey is administered triennially (website: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/>). It asks questions about activities, experiences, and behaviors. Topics queried include tobacco, alcohol and drug use, school climate, physical activity, violence and safety, connections with school and family, health, and other topics. Questions about sexual activity are asked only of high school students. The survey is administered jointly by the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, and Public Safety. Two fact sheets on TDV-related questions are found in **Appendix G**.

Two questions on the survey apply directly to victimization due to teen dating violence, and one question applies to perpetration.

*Has someone you were going out with ever hit you, hurt you, threatened you or made you feel afraid?*

Of 9th graders surveyed, nine percent of females and five percent of males responded “yes.” Of 12th graders, 14 percent of females and seven percent of males responded “yes.” In the higher risk settings of Area Learning Centers and correctional facilities, the percentages are double those of mainstream schools.

*Has someone you were going out with ever forced you to have sex or do something sexual when you didn't want to?*

Of 9th graders surveyed, nine percent of females and four percent of males responded “yes.” Of 12th graders, 12 percent of females and six percent of males reported “yes.”

*Have you ever physically or sexually hurt someone you were going out with? (This might include shoving, slapping, hitting or forcing them into sexual activities. This also includes threatening to do these things.)*

Of 9th graders surveyed, three percent of females and two percent of males responded “yes.” Of 12th graders, four percent of females and four percent of males reported “yes.”

## **Hospital Intimate Partner Violence Data**

Within the MDH, information is easily generated from hospital discharge records provided by Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA). These data<sup>3</sup> originate from more than 90 percent of Minnesota hospitals and represent about 95 percent of hospital discharges. Victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) are identified using the two ICD-9 codes, E967.3 (abuse to an adult or

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3 Reference: Jon Roesler, Minnesota Department of Health, Unpublished data, June 22, 2010.

child by a current or former spouse or partner) and V61.11 (counseling for victim of spouse/partner abuse) documented in the hospital discharge records, for individuals ages 10-19. In 2009 there were 13 such hospital treatments reported in Minnesota, one of whom was an inpatient, and all of whom were for females.

## **The Minnesota Femicide Report**

Since 1989, the MCBW has monitored information about women, children and men murdered in Minnesota. MCBW tracks all homicides, in which the known or suspected perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner, as these cases account for the majority of murders of women in the United States and in Minnesota. The information on these murders is compiled into an annual Femicide Report. Three TDV-related deaths were noted as occurring in 2010 in Minnesota.

## **Uniform Crime Reports**

These reports<sup>4</sup> describe arrestees for rape by age. Other rape and sexual offense data are available from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. For 2009, the following rape arrest information is publically available: nine arrests, ages 10-12; 21 arrests ages 13-14; 17 arrests age 15; 25 arrests age 16; 36 arrests age 17. Total arrestees under 18: 108.

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4 Reference: Surrige KA, ed.: Minnesota Crime Information, 2009. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, July 1, 2010.

## D. Prevention Partnerships

Minnesota has no state requirements for TDV education or for comprehensive sexuality education. However, MDH has a strong partnership with the Minneapolis Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence. Minneapolis is the largest city in our metro area; its youth violence has decreased by 62 percent since the implementation of their Blueprint in 2006. Minneapolis also has focused on developing protective factors, especially healthy relationships and mentoring, and reducing risks. We intend to keep strengthening our relationship with this strong partner to address disparities and ensure connectedness to our growing immigration population.

Despite its reputation for strong educational programs and relatively high graduation rates, Minnesota has one of the highest rates in the nation of disparity in educational achievement and employment based on racial/ethnic background. The state also faces both challenges and opportunities in its immigrant populations. We have the largest Somali population in the nation, and are second only to California in Hmong immigrants. Both groups live predominantly in the Twin Cities area.

Minnesota is known for our strong coalitions and partnerships. We continue to work with the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC) to address the problem of sexual assault and trafficking of Native American girls. We have a representative on the human trafficking task force and have supported the work of a Twin Cities non-profit organization, Breaking Free, to aid in helping girls and women get out of prostitution.

The MCBW is a DELTA PREP (Preparing and Raising Expectation for Prevention) Project and has participated in training and technical assistance with the CDC to incorporate primary prevention in their coalition and community and state IPV efforts. MCBW is a recognized leader in raising public awareness of battering, developing materials, and coordinating events that increase media attention supportive of the needs of battered women and their children. With 21 MCBW/MN-CASA partner programs, Minnesota had the largest *Choose Respect* public awareness initiative in the nation.

## **E. What's Next: Emerging Youth Issues**

We know that we need to listen to our youth more instead of talking at them. We know that youth today “hook up” in different ways than what their parents called “dating.” Relationships between youth heavily involve electronic communications. Emerging issues relate to sexting, cyber-stalking and bullying, both in person and on-line. Children need to learn about respectful relationship needs much earlier than adolescence. Most of our partners agree that if healthy, respectful relationship building was a part of core curriculum in elementary school as well as being modeled in the home and community, there would be fewer incidences of bullying and TDV as our youth get older and relationships become more intimate and complex.

Our scans confirmed that many people and organizations are concerned about preventing TDV but there is little coordination of efforts. With fewer resources and greater demands on time with youth, we need to coordinate our efforts and strive to create social norms that promote respect and discourage sexual violence and exploitation. We need to do a better job of evaluating what is working to prevent TDV in our communities and establish a central information site to share our successes.

The actions that can be taken are listed below and are assigned to various levels of the socio-ecological Model.

### **Potential stakeholders and partners involved with the plan**

1. All participants in environmental and policy scans
2. Minnesota Departments of Education, Public Safety, Corrections, and various divisions or programs within the MDH (Executive Office, HIV-STD program, Adolescent Health, Maternal and Child Health, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs, Suicide Prevention)

3. Statewide Coalitions: Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault ( MNCASA), Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW)
4. Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC)
5. Domestic Abuse Program in St. Paul
6. Casa de Esperanza
7. Sexual Violence Prevention Network (nearly 2,000 people throughout the state who receive regular email updates and are invited to quarterly meetings)
8. Faith communities
9. Schools
10. Elected officials who might implement the policy recommendations

We will share this plan with all those who participated in the scans and we hope to offer follow-up gatherings for further sharing such as the “Meet and Greet” we hosted after the environmental scan. We also intend to share lessons learned at the annual meetings of the statewide coalitions. Clearly, we are recommending better collaboration on teen dating violence initiatives in every community.

## **F. TDV Policy Recommendations**

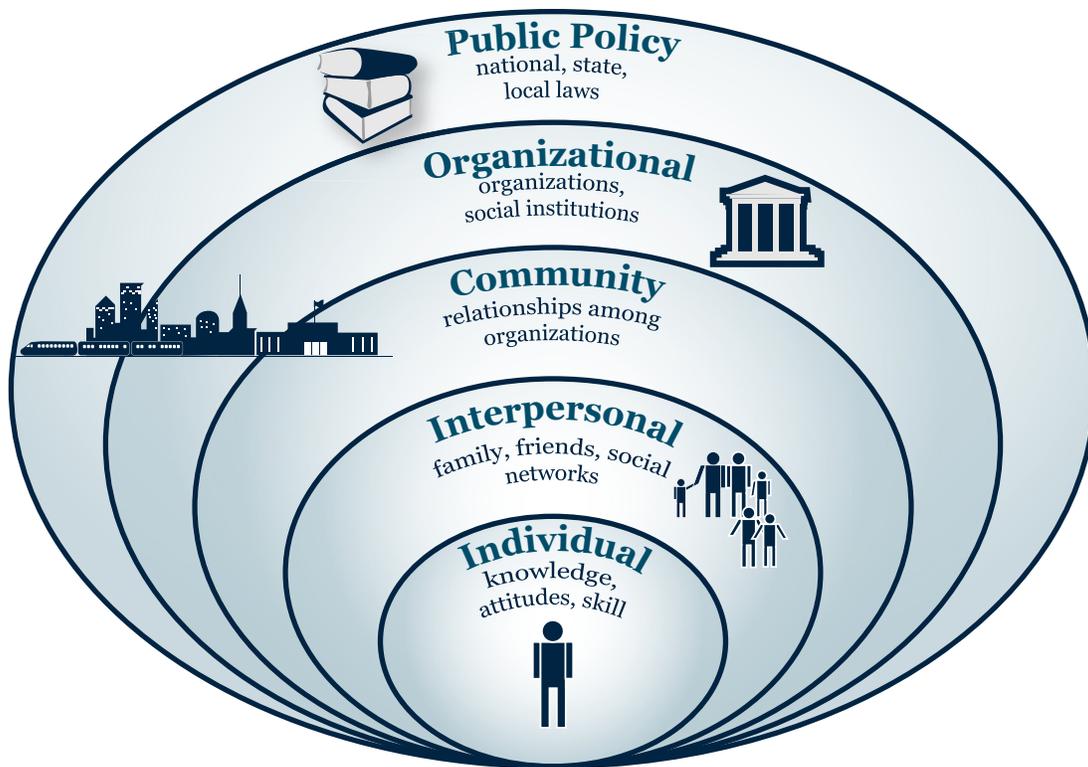
### **General Considerations**

Minnesota is a state that has a wide range of diversity and any policy changes need to take into account that diversity. Geographically the state is large and there are clear distinctions between the needs and resources available in extreme rural areas, small towns and cities and in the metropolitan areas. Minnesota also has large immigrant populations located in urban and rural areas. For example, we have the largest Somali population in the nation, and are second only to California in Hmong immigrants. Minnesota also has 14 reservations and associated trust lands. Native Americans represent 1.1 percent of our population but are disproportionately victims of sexual assault.

### **Individual and Interpersonal Levels**

Policies proposed need to address youth-identified issues and youth-identified solutions. Interventions and policies meaningful to and for pre-teens may be different than those for teens or 20-year-olds. Depending on the specific community demographics, the interventions and prevention strategies may be different. Caution should be taken to not take adult models and wholesale apply them to youth. Adult relationships are different than youth relationships and interactions and strategies need to be tailored.

Although we use the socio-ecological model, we recognize policy needs and recommendations may overlap categories.



*Socio-Ecological Model*

Policy recommendations need to address the full spectrum of prevention from the individual through relationship and community to the organizational and societal levels. Policy change in one area cannot be effectively implemented without support from the other socio-ecological model levels also being committed to and supportive of the policy change. For example, bullying policies that focus on individual student behavior, as bullies, as victims of bullying and as by-standers, are not going to be effective if there is still a school culture that refuses to intervene in bullying behavior and a community message that tells kids to resolve their own problems and a societal message that says “kids will be kids – bullying is just a part of growing up.” Bullying policies that focus on individual responsibility combined with school policies that promote active conflict resolution are needed. A practice of open discussion of conflict and community awareness campaigns that support the individuals and schools in doing things differently will create a full spectrum strategy that should result in a decrease in bullying behavior and a cultural shift toward healthy self-images for youth, respectful interactions with peers and good conflict resolution skills. Funding needs to be provided for all of this work to be effective. Change needs to happen

from the top down – from administrators to teachers to parents to youth. This is how climates/ environments are changed.

Prevention work is difficult to measure and does not produce immediate results. The commitment for policy change needs to be long term. Policy recommendations need to have implementation strategies that reflect the long-term nature of prevention change, that have accurate evaluation components and can be adapted. The research in the area of teen dating violence is not comprehensive. There are significant areas where it is not known what is effective for which populations. The very nature of work with teens is one that is changing and adapting. While there are similarities across time about teen development, teens by nature seize upon new technologies, like to reinvent themselves and, with the rapid changes in technology, the environment surrounding them changes quickly.

One strategy is to promote data collection and evaluation to measure progress and success. The data collection and evaluation should include measures that look at the unique/specific communities including LBGTQ, communities of color/Native communities, and rural vs. urban. The Minnesota Student Survey is one vehicle that will continue to be used for data collection and evaluation. Youth service agencies should also be required to report on the effectiveness of their prevention and intervention programs.

## **Specific Recommendations**

Promoting protective factors and reducing or eliminating risk factors is the essence of domestic and sexual violence prevention. Policies at all levels of the socio-ecological model should focus on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. Minnesota focused on the risk factor of alcohol use and the three protective factors of healthy relationship, mentoring and gender equity. Minnesota has identified a series of specific recommendations. The recommendations draw upon existing strengths and resources and are some of the basic building blocks for longer term prevention strategies.

One of the issues in teen dating violence prevention work is the lack of interconnectedness in this arena. While service providers and policy makers think about the various risk and protective factors individually, youth do not experience or live these factors independent of each other. For example, a youth who is using drugs and alcohol may also be making unhealthy relationship choices and may be struggling with gender inequities. Services and policies need to address all of the risk and protective factors together. While Minnesota has focused on four of the risk and protective factors for the purposes of this grant, any youth prevention work should take into consideration all risk and protective factors. The Search Institute's 40 Assets List (**Appendix H**) contains a more robust protective factor list.

## **Recommendation 1**

The target for all of the recommendations is the full spectrum represented in the socio-ecological model: Individuals, interpersonal/families, community, organizations and public policy. Activities may focus on one level of the socio-ecological model as a starting point toward achieving the desired outcome/recommendation but we are aware that to be successful, activities must address all levels. We have selected activities that start us in this work.

**Recommendation:** We need to coordinate and implement prevention efforts in the state.

**Goal:** Form and regularly convene an oversight team to coordinate and implement the statewide plan.

### **Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

1. By January 31, 2012, the State anti-violence coalitions (namely MCBW, MNCASA and MIWSAC) will convene the first oversight team meeting. The team shall meet monthly to provide direction, advice and oversight for the implementation of the recommendations of this plan. Membership of the oversight group shall include representation from the identified geographic and cultural populations as well as represent all significant areas of service and policy that impact healthy youth relationship development.

2. By March 31, 2012, the state coalitions and MDH will develop and deliver training for the oversight team on the state plan so that the membership is more fully aware of the differing approaches and professional distinctions that are reflected in the oversight team membership.
3. By December 31, 2012, the oversight team will update public policy recommendations collected during the initial policy scan relating to youth throughout the state including legislative policy and school policies.
4. By December 31, 2012, the oversight team will make recommendations to five organizations and agencies that would better coordinate and promote effective teen dating violence prevention work throughout Minnesota.
5. The oversight team will identify at least five opportunities to strengthen and develop mechanisms for effective communication between youth service providers and domestic violence/sexual violence organizations including meaningful ways to include youth participation.

**To accomplish this, we will need:**

- a. Staff members to work with and on the oversight team
- b. Meeting space & meeting expenses for the monthly meetings
- c. Travel stipends to support broad based and consistent participation with the team and
- d. Phone conferencing costs to support broad based and consistent participation.

**To evaluate progress and impact, we will:**

- a. Monitor and track participation with the oversight team
- b. Track progress made on plan activities
- c. Survey team for a self-assessment on effectiveness of the oversight work and

- d. Monitor and track rate and quality of outside service and policy providers making contact with the team.

## Recommendation 2

Community-based agencies can expand the capacity of the school to provide services and trained adults to be available to connect with youth. Community-based agencies have expertise on healthy relationship development and violence prevention as well as offer a different pool of adults with whom youth can connect. In schools where there are community-based agencies already partnering with the schools, these relationships should continue to be fostered and strengthened. In schools where there are minimal or no relationships with community-based agencies, these partnerships should be established.

**Recommendation:** We need a strong statewide network of youth service organizations, domestic and sexual violence organizations, schools, faith communities and community groups working on prevention efforts.

**Goal:** Increase and improve working relationships and the sharing of information amongst the many different youth serving organizations, domestic violence/sexual violence organizations and all the other organizations, agencies and institutions that interact with youth to improve and expand teen dating violence prevention work with youth.

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**“I can’t say enough how important I think it is to get knowledge out to kids and teens and programs because it opened up a lot of doors for me.”**

*—Youth focus group participant*

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### **Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

1. By February 28, 2012, state coalitions (in collaboration with the various oversight team organizations) will create an advisory committee to the team comprised of direct service pro-

viders from the youth service field and the domestic violence/sexual violence field to provide feedback and input to assist the team's work and provide the voices from the field.

2. By June 30, 2012, the state coalitions, MDH and the oversight team will develop and deliver the first cross-training for youth service organizations and domestic violence/sexual violence organizations.
3. By July 31, 2012, the state coalitions, MDH and the oversight team will develop three tools for local communities to identify, convene and network with a wide array of organizations and groups on prevention work. Promotion of materials will continue throughout 2012.
4. By December 31, 2012, the oversight team will identify at least five trainings and conferences for opportunities to offer the tools to local communities.
5. By December 31, 2012, four additional cross-training/networking events will be held in other regions of the state.

**To accomplish this, we will need:**

- a. Staff to implement activities
- b. Meeting/training/networking space and materials
- c. Travel stipends to support broad based participation at events/trainings and
- d. Speaker fees for trainers and travel costs to host events throughout the state

**To evaluate progress and impact, we will:**

- a. Monitor and track participation with the Advisory Group
- b. Survey advisory group for a self-assessment on effectiveness of the advisory group as well as effectiveness of the prevention implementation efforts
- c. Record and track participation at events/meetings/trainings noting demographic and organization/agency information and

- d. Conduct written evaluations from event participants. Evaluations will be reviewed by the advisory group and oversight team.

## Recommendation 3

Throughout the process of conducting focus groups we heard youth say countless times that they appreciated that we wanted to hear from them. We were not there to tell them what we thought they should be doing but were genuinely interested in what they had to say. Young people want to be talked with and not at. While it is important to provide youth with information it is also critical to provide young people a setting where they can openly converse with adults who will listen to them.

**Recommendation:** We need strong statewide youth leadership actively engaged in teen dating violence prevention.

**Goal:** Meaningfully engage youth in the prevention work and promote leadership on anti-violence issues among youth.

### **Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

1. In February 2012, MCBW will host a statewide Teen Leadership Summit as one vehicle for promoting prevention implementation plan work.
2. In March 2012, the state coalitions will create and host Youth in Public Policy events at the Action Day to End Violence Against Women at the State Capitol.
3. By September 30, 2012, four youth advisory boards will be created in metro, suburban, small city and rural locations as a resource for those doing prevention work. State coalitions in collaboration with the oversight team and advisory group will coordinate the setup and provide technical assistance to the youth advisory boards.
4. By October 31, 2012, state coalitions in collaboration with the oversight team, advisory group and local organizations will provide the first training to youth boards on ways to en-

gage in prevention policy work on a local level. Technical assistance will be provided to the youth boards on an ongoing basis.

5. By December 31, 2012, develop evaluation standards for youth boards.
6. By December 31, 2012, the oversight committee will have participated in four youth leadership projects being developed by and in communities of color that focus on teen prevention issues including but not limited to Boys & Girls Camp with MIWSAC, Be More Campaign, MN Men's Action Network's Best Party work, and Latino Men's Network On Prevention (LMNOP).

**To accomplish this, we will need:**

- a. Staff to implement activities
- b. Meeting space and supplies for youth advisory groups, including food and other incentives for participation
- c. Travel costs for adult advisors/initial trainers for youth advisory groups
- d. Meeting space and participation incentives for youth focus groups
- e. Travel costs for organizations conducting youth focus groups
- f. Youth Leadership Summit – Mall of America rental space, food, meeting costs, travel stipends, speaker fees
- g. Action Day Event – meeting costs, travel stipends
- h. Convening leadership projects – meeting space costs, meeting expenses, travel stipends.

**To evaluate progress and impact, we will:**

- a. Review participant evaluations from specific events

- b. Youth advisory boards will complete a self-assessment on their effectiveness and on the prevention implementation plan
- c. Track and monitor attendance at events/meetings noting demographics and organizational affiliations and
- d. Track the level of participation and interaction among various youth leadership projects.

## Recommendation 4

Research shows that youth are highly impacted by the messages they receive from the media. These messages are often sexually charged, violent and convey negative messages about women and communities of color. We suggest that instead of trying only to remove the messages we also educate youth about the information they are taking in from the media. Through education and analysis, youth are able to better identify and filter negative messages rather than emulate them.

**Recommendation:** We need media messages that reflect positive messages about teen dating violence prevention work.

**Goal 1:** Make youth a more informed consumer of media messaging to minimize the negative impacts of the media.

### **Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

1. In February 2012, educate 100 youth on how to interpret and deal with media messaging through Teen Leadership Summit. Educational materials will be promoted through the Youth Advisory Boards and other avenues identified by the state coalitions, oversight team, advisory group and youth advisory boards.
2. By September 30, 2012, the state coalitions and partners will develop and distribute curriculum to six schools that educate youth on how to interpret and deal with media messaging.

**Goal 2:** Promote positive media messaging as it relates to teen dating violence and prevention.

**Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

1. By June 30, 2012, identify five businesses that target youth who are willing to look at how marketing campaigns can promote positive prevention messages.
2. By June 30, 2012, identify at least 10 public media campaigns that convey positive, prevention messages (e.g., Miss Representation, DOVE, Be More, etc.).
3. By September 30, 2012, establish relationships with the five identified businesses to begin work on prevention messages.
4. By December 31, 2012, host a roundtable with the oversight team, advisory group and youth advisory boards as well as community partners to address ways to promote positive media campaigns.
5. By June 1, 2013, a marketing plan will be launched with an identified business that has a positive prevention message targeted at teens.

**To accomplish this, we will need:**

- a. Staffing to implement activities
- b. Meeting space and supplies for educational events
- c. Travel stipends
- d. Costs to purchase campaign materials and/or distribution rights.

**To evaluate progress and impact, we will:**

- a. Seek evaluation and feedback from youth participants in the educational events
- b. Track participation in educational events noting demographics and organizational affiliations

- c. Track frequency and variety of positive prevention messages being aired through various media outlets and
- d. Track progress of engaging businesses in creating and promoting positive prevention marketing campaign aimed at youth audience.

## Recommendation 5

Across all of the youth focus groups, youth stated that they were most likely to seek out a trusted adult to discuss violence issues and to receive assistance with problems. The trusted adult did not need to be someone designated to deal with violence issues or any particular topic area, per se; rather, the person just needed to be an adult whom they could trust.

**Recommendation:** Every child in the state needs to have access to teen dating violence prevention resources and services.

**Goal:** Promote and expand quality programs with a specific focus on strengthening and developing services that address prevention efforts in a broad and comprehensive way, that are sustainable across time and that are responsive to the unique needs of the youth in local communities.

### **Activities/Timelines/Primary Responsibility:**

(The activities of this goal are primarily the work of local organizations and institutions. The oversight team will look for opportunities to promote this work. Ability to implement activities will be dependent on funding being secured.)

1. By October 31, 2012, all schools that currently offer programs/services related to the identified risk and protective factors will advertise their services broadly to students. Incoming students should be made aware of the schools effort to promote a healthy, respectful environment in their school as well as having programs and services to accommodate needs advertised to all students on a regular basis throughout each school year.

2. By December 31, 2012, curriculum that promotes preventive factors in an age appropriate fashion for pre-kindergarten through college will be expanded and developed in five communities.
3. By December 31, 2012, broad-based training for 40 trusted adults will be offered by partners in five communities so community members have a wide base of knowledge and can be an entry point for youth to appropriate services in their local communities.
4. By December 31, 2012, five new youth voice spaces will be created in schools and communities where youth can provide their thoughts and opinions to adults.
5. By December 31, 2012, three new training sessions on identified risk and protective factors such as healthy relationships and mentorship skills will be offered to teachers, support staff, and community organizations to increase contact between teens and healthy adult role models.
6. By December 31, 2012, two new businesses will offer incentives to employees for providing ongoing volunteerism with youth.
7. By December 31, 2012, two new women's organizations will support the mentoring of women in high profile, non-traditional jobs to mentor girls and encourage girls to be in leadership positions and/or become elected officials.
8. By December 31, 2012, a cross-training with the oversight partners and Mentoring Partnership MN will be conducted to promote education about how dominant cultures can, in given situations, adversely influence minority cultures.
9. By December 31, 2012, two new collaborations for mentorship opportunities between local college campuses and junior and senior high schools will have been created.

10. By December 31, 2012, the oversight committee will have met with rites of passage programs and programs focused on an affinity group to encourage that they infuse information on risk and protective factors into their programs.
11. By December 31, 2012, all adults working with youth in schools, programs servicing youth, anti-violence organizations and youth developments specialist should have baseline information on a wide range of issues for youth including healthy relationship development and mandatory reporting.
12. By December 31, 2012, a recommendation will go out to all schools to offer training to parents on healthy age appropriate development for their student K-12 so that parents, schools and youth servicing agencies are all delivering similar messages and support to youth.
13. By December 31, 2012, a recommendation will go out to partner with Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD), HIV, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Unit and, other related agencies to support the inclusion of teen dating violence material in their prevention strategies.

**To accomplish this, we will need:**

- a. Staffing and resources to implement activities.

**To evaluate progress and impact, we will:**

- a. The Oversight Committee will meet in December 2012 to assess activities completed, new partners engaged, and future goals to promote teen dating violence prevention. Evaluation plans will be recommended as part of every activity planned. Evaluation may include focus groups or interviews with staff and youth both prior to activity implementation and at reasonable time intervals after implementation
- b. A student survey will test knowledge of resources, how many youth access the programs offered in the schools, what issues arose in the schools, what would prevent them from accessing services and general feedback from students who actually accessed services.

## **G. Appendices**

[Appendix A Roster listing of workgroup members](#)

[Appendix B SAHYR Healthy Relationships Discussion Notes](#)

[Appendix C Environmental Scan](#)

[Appendix D Policy Scan](#)

[Appendix E TDV Youth Focus Group](#)

[Appendix F Cordelia Anderson Youth Quotes](#)

[Appendix G Minnesota Student Survey Fact Sheet 1](#)

[Appendix G Minnesota Student Survey Fact Sheet 2](#)

[Appendix H Search Institute Risk and Protective Factors](#)

[Appendix I Minnesota Department of Health Org Chart](#)

[Appendix J Ramsey County Memo of Understanding](#)

[Appendix K Executive Summary: Preventing Teen Dating Violence](#)

The Minnesota Department of Health understands the emotional, financial and lifelong effects of sexual violence. Our MDH Organizational Chart is attached in **Appendix I**

*It is the vision of the Minnesota State Alliance on Healthy Youth Relationships (SAHYR) to work strategically in Minnesota to both create new and support existing programs, policies and systems that provide resources for all youth to promote healthy relationship development. We recognize that healthy relationships, both platonic and intimate, require healthy individuals. Thus, our desire is to improve and promote health and stability in the lives of Minnesota's youth.*

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**“They should start education earlier about dating abuse. I think the younger it is the more helpful it is.”** — *Youth focus group participant*

**“In the brain as in the economy, getting it right the first time is ultimately more effective and less costly than trying to fix it later.”**  
—*James Heckman, Nobel Laureate Economist*

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