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Start Strong Los Angeles

Building Healthy Teen
Relationships



What is Start Strong?

- A four-year, multi-site comprehensive community-wide prevention program targeting 11-14 year old youth designed to promote positive relationship skills and reduce violence in any current and future relationships
- Funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF)

What is Start Strong Los Angeles?

- One of 11 sites including

Boston Public Health Commission - Boston, Massachusetts

Bronx –Lebanon Hospital - Bronx, New York

Catholic Charities Inc. - Wichita, Kansas

Clarian Health - Indianapolis, Indiana

Emory University School of Medicine - Atlanta, Georgia

Family Violence Law Center - Oakland, California

Idaho Coalition against Sexual and Domestic Violence - Boise, Idaho

Peace Over Violence – Los Angeles, California

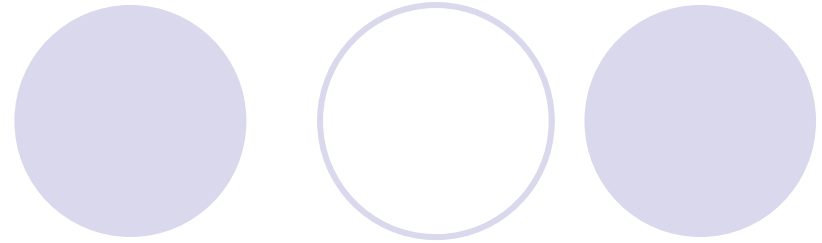
RYASAP - Bridgeport, Connecticut

SafePlace – Austin, Texas

Sojourner House - Providence, Rhode Island

Project Partners

- Berendo MS
- Virgil MS
- LAUSD
- Local District 4
- USC Institute for Multimedia Literacy

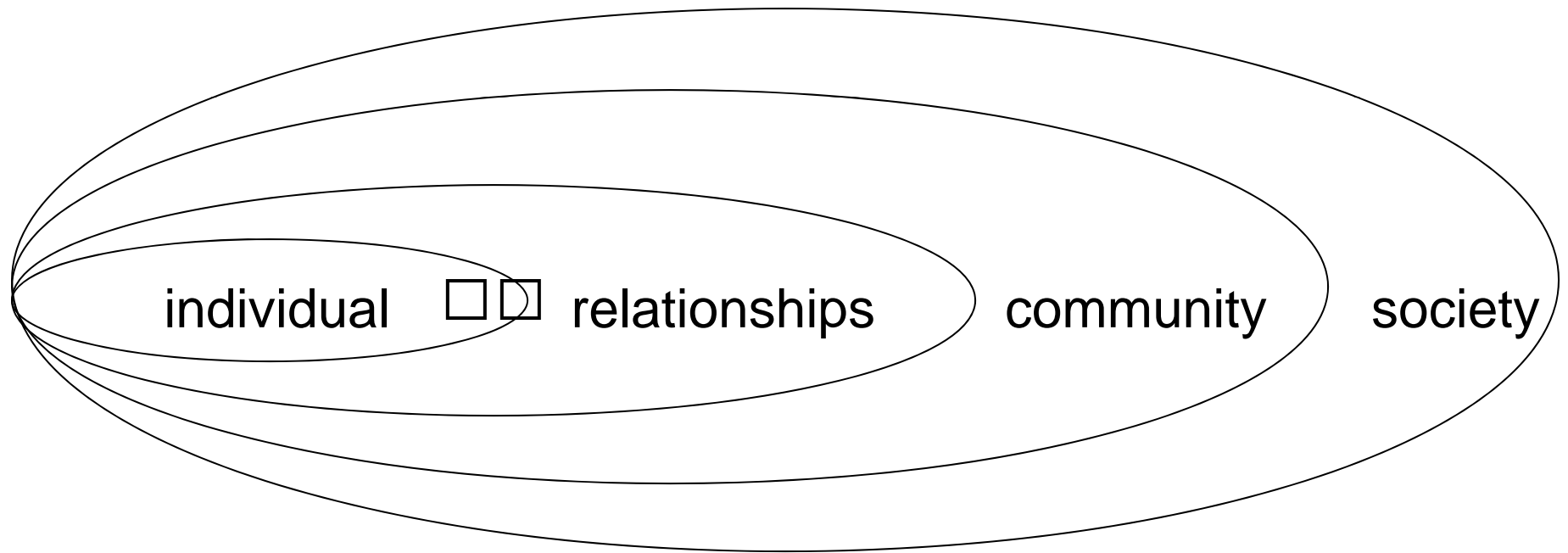




The four components of Start Strong

- Education and engagement of youth in schools and out of school settings;
- Education and engagement of teen influencers such as parents, teachers, and other mentors;
- Policy and environmental change; and
- Implementation of communications strategies to promote social norms change.

Ecological Prevention Model



Education and engagement of youth

- Youth education is school settings at Berendo and Virgil
 - In class education in 7th grade health classes using Safe Dates curriculum
 - In Touch With Teens education in classes other than 7th grade health and with specific groups of identified youth
 - Awareness raising including Denim Day at school and community events



Safe Dates

- Safe Dates is a research-based adolescent dating violence prevention program that includes a nine-session dating abuse curriculum, a play about dating abuse, and a poster contest. It targets both students who have never experienced dating violence to prevent them from ever experiencing it and students who have experienced dating violence to teach them how to stop violence in their dating relationships.



In Touch With Teens

- In order to help youth develop and maintain healthy, violence-free relationships, Peace Over Violence has been implementing the In Touch With Teens Violence Prevention curriculum in junior high and high schools and other community based youth organizations.
- The eleven-unit curriculum empowers youth to have healthy relationships by providing information about power and control, elements of healthy relationships and healthy sexuality, and media literacy as well as education on sexual harassment, sexual assault, and dating violence. The curriculum further addresses the development of pro-social skills such as empathy, impulse control, effective communication, problem solving, and bystander accountability.



ITWWT

- The In Touch With Teens curriculum was selected as one of five model youth-violence prevention programs in the United States (and the only such program from California) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was also selected as the relationship-violence curriculum for the Life Skills for the 21st Century curriculum of the Los Angeles Unified School District.
- “The evaluation results show that the curriculum was helpful in providing teens with the information, knowledge and skills needed to avoid abusive relationships and to promote healthy relationships. The majority of facilitator training participants found the curriculum to be a valuable resource and thought it was a good foundation for general information on topics related to teen violence.”TAPNET Evaluation, conducted by the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles



Awareness Raising Events

- Campus
- Community
- Denim Day in LA



Work with teen influencers

- Education for parents and caregivers
- Youth activism and training groups at Marshall HS and Miguel Contreras HS
- Training for service providers and educators

Parent Workshops



- Parent night
- Back to school night
- Parent groups at school
- Community parent groups



Training for service providers

- Professional Development
- Department meetings
- Agency trainings

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Older Youth

- P2P at high schools
- STOP clubs at high schools
- Work with youth in community settings



Policy change

- Work with school partners and community organizations to strengthen organizational policies that prevent relationship and sexual violence
- Organize activities that support policy reform efforts



Strengthen Organizational Policies

- Schools
- Community Agencies
- District



Support Policy Reform

- Trainings and workshops on individual policy areas
- Conferences

Social Marketing



- Work with youth and community and the IML to produce social marketing materials
- Coordinate youth and youth influencers to disseminate materials
- Increase public awareness of project activities



Produce materials

- Youth will work with the IML to produce culturally competent and relevant materials

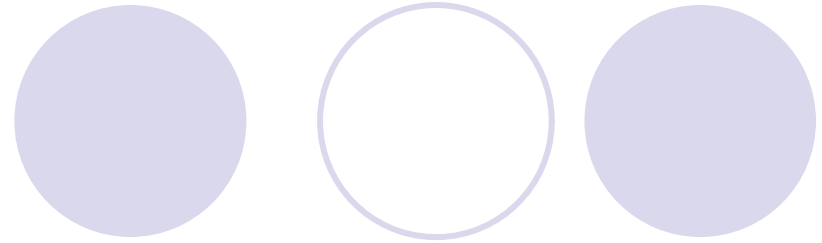
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Disseminate

- Via schools and agencies
- Via digital outlets
- At community events

Public Awareness

- Media coverage





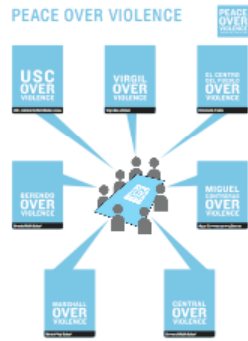
Why focus on middle school students

- Young adolescents are having relationships
- This is a key opportunity for prevention

GAMEPLAN

PEACE OVER VIOLENCE START STRONG L.A.

TEAM / RESOURCES



STAGES / TASKS

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEARS 3,4
YOUTH	Assess current school and community based education and activities that promote healthy teen relationships Implement planning	Education Youth Development Community Mobilization	Sustain and Institutionalize
MENTORS	Healthy teen relationship training and activities Establish youth activism and leadership program in high schools	Leadership Development	Sustain and Institutionalize
POLICY	Assess current organizational policies relationships	Activism and Advocacy	Community Endorsement
SOCIAL MARKETING	Activities Design program that enables youth and influencers to create social		Message Saturation



TARGET

Empower a traditionally institutionally disempowered community

PRIMARY OUTCOMES

- ↑ Community Infrastructure
- ↑ Knowledge, Skill, and Capacity of Community
- ↑ Create communities that foster/support healthy relationships
- ↑ Prevent ADV in 11-14 yo
- ↑ Promote development of healthy relationships in 11-14 yo
- ↑ Improve Healthy Relationship Competencies/ Assets in 11-14 yo
- ↑ Alter Aggression-Related Social Norms in 11-14 yo
- ↓ Acceptance of ADV of Community
- ↓ Perpetration of Behavioral Precursors to ADV
- ↓ Psycho, Phys., Sexual & Cyber ADV Perpetration & Victimization.

Connect TRA to other issues of oppression

OTHER OBJECTIVES

Increase community activism

SUCCESS FACTORS



CHALLENGES





Early Adolescent Development



Physical

- Increases in height and weight
- More development than at any other time outside of first two years
- Coordination issues
- Metabolic fluctuations may cause periods of restlessness and lassitude
- health vulnerability
- Girls tend to mature two years earlier than boys



Implications

- Availability of nutritious food and water
- Instruction about development
- Instruction about healthy lifestyles



Intellectual

- Develop the capacity for abstract thought processes
- But function varies significantly across individuals and content areas
- Favor active learning experiences
- Prefer peer interaction
- Interested in real life experiences

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Implications

- Create opportunities for peer interaction
- Active learning experiences
- Forums to explore reasoning behind rules
- Role modeling

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Moral/Ethical

- Become more aware of feelings of others
- Develop own personal values
- Start to see shades of gray

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Implication

- Explore thoughts and feelings
- Examine options of behavior
- Identify consequences
- Processes to make sound moral/ethical decision
- Wrestle with dilemmas



Emotional

- Search for independence
- Individuality/uniqueness
- Unpredictable, moody, erratic and inconsistent
- Self conscious
- Sensitive to criticism
- May believe problems and feelings are unique



Implications

- Provide opportunities for exploration
- Build adult/adolescent relationships
- Provide esteem building learning experiences
- Create supportive environment
- Use drama and role plays
- Distribute reading that normalize experiences

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Social

- Need to be in a group
- Loyal to peer group
- Emulate esteemed peers
- Test the limits
- Social maturity may lag behind physical and intellectual development



Implications

- Provide opportunities to form positive relationships with peers
- Provide experiences that promote choices and a sense of independence
- Integrate cooperative/ collaborative experiences learning opportunities
- Role plays



Engaging parents

- Examine data that describes parental knowledge and attitudes about youth dating relationships
- Identify strategies for engaging parents in dating violence prevention efforts



The Disconnect- An overview

- Parents lack awareness level of dating abuse
- Parents are overconfident about their ability to recognize the signs of dating abuse
- Many teens do not seek help for dating abuse from their parents
- Parents and teens are simply not having productive conversations about dating abuse
- Parents are not aware of available resources



The opportunity- an overview

- Parents are in a position to support and influence their children
- Parents have the opportunity to observe dating relationships



A snapshot

- 
- Parent involvement at Berendo Middle School



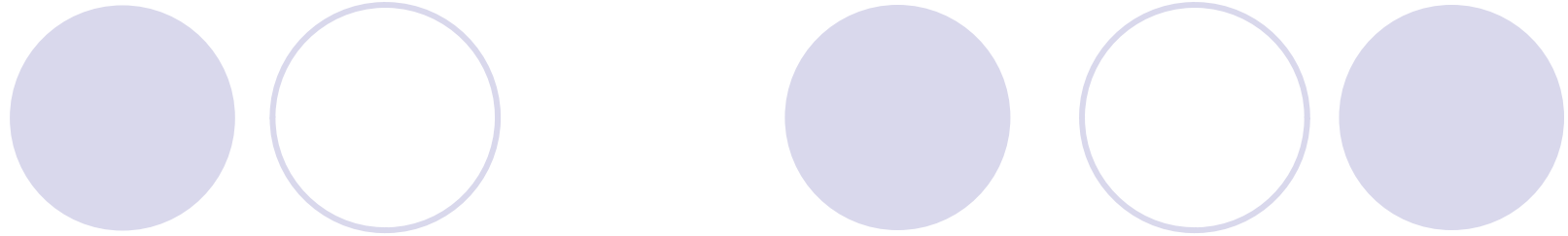
Hart Research Associates

- Parents of 11-14 year olds that attend public school
- 8 focus groups (Austin, Oakland, Boston, Boise)
- 401 phone interviews in Start Strong locations
- 402 nationwide

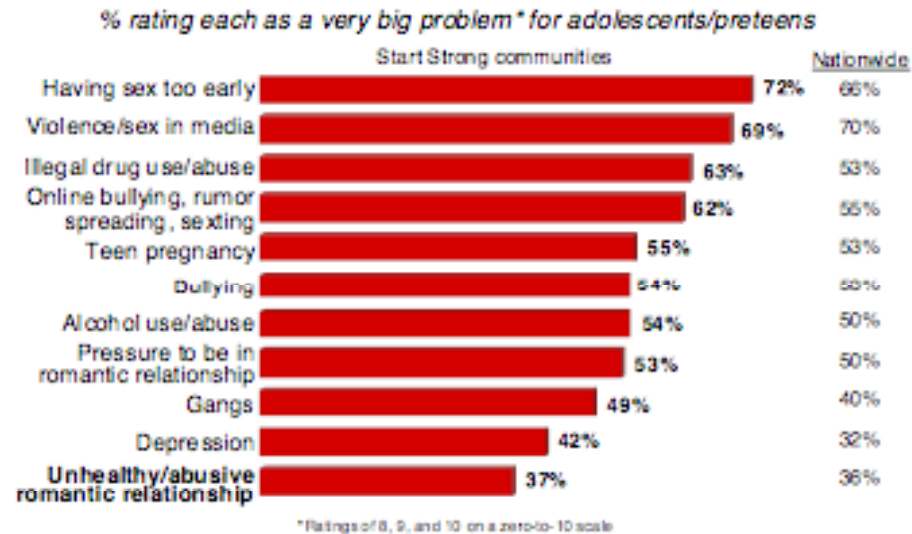


Finding 1

- While unhealthy or abusive romantic relationships is not a top-tier concern that parents have about their 11-to 14-year olds, they express significant concern about issues and problems that often are components of unhealthy or abusive relationships.



Unhealthy / Abusive Romantic Relationships Are Seen As Less Of A Problem For Preteens Than Are Other Related Issues





Finding 2

- Parents' greatest concerns about unhealthy or abusive romantic relationships among preteens are pressure to have sex and pregnancy.

When thinking about their children, they are more likely to express concern about pressure and emotional/verbal abuse than about physical violence or rape.



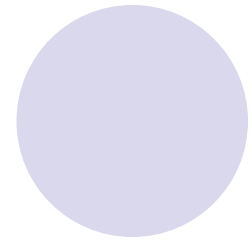
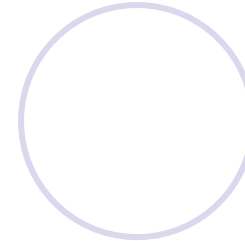
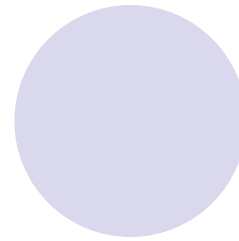
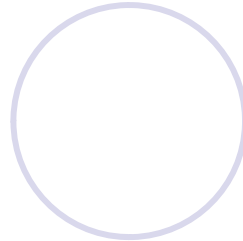
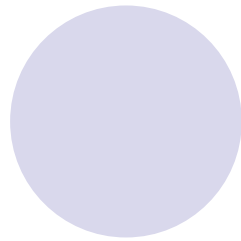
Finding 3

- The research reveals the challenge of finding effective language to engage parents in a conversation about unhealthy romantic relationships among preteens, as many parents—particularly those with 11- and 12-year-olds—say that their child has never been in a romantic relationship.



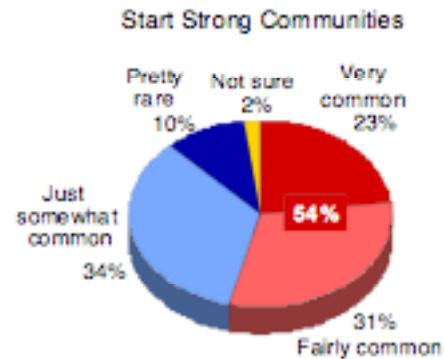
Finding 4

- Just over half of parents believe that unhealthy or abusive romantic relationships are common among preteens.



Just Over Half Of Parents Think That Unhealthy, Abusive Romantic Relationships Are Common Among Preteens

How common do you think unhealthy or abusive romantic relationships are among preteens and adolescents today?



Very/fairly common	
Whites	49%
African Americans	65%
Hispanics	59%
High school/less	61%
Some college	52%
College grads	47%
Income under \$50K	62%
Income \$50K to \$75K	56%
Income over \$75K	43%



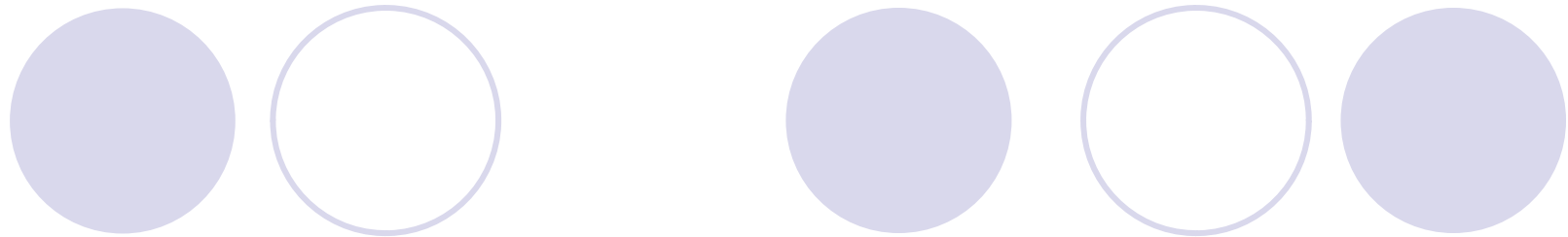
Finding 5

- Parents overwhelmingly recognize the critical role that they can play in helping their children develop healthy relationships and avoid unhealthy or abusive relationships.



Finding 6

- Large majorities of parents say that they have had conversations with their 11- to 14-year-olds about how to develop healthy, respectful romantic relationships and avoid unhealthy or abusive ones, although parents of 11-year-olds are notably less likely to have broached these topics.



PROPORTIONS EXTREMELY LIKELY* TO TALK WITH THEIR PRETEENS ABOUT SELECTED ISSUES

The importance of developing healthy, respectful romantic relationships to improve (his/her) overall health and well-being, including the appropriate way to treat others and to expect to be treated by others	75%
How your child uses the Internet and cell phone to interact in a romantic relationship and how to deal with threatening, pressuring, controlling, or inappropriate behavior	69%
How to deal with peer pressure from friends or classmates on issues related to romantic relationships	66%
How to make healthy decisions around romantic relationships, sex, and love	62%
How to deal with threatening, pressuring, or controlling behavior from someone their age with whom they have a romantic relationship	54%
The problem of dating violence, warning signs, and how to protect against it	53%

*Rating of 10 on a zero-to-10 scale.



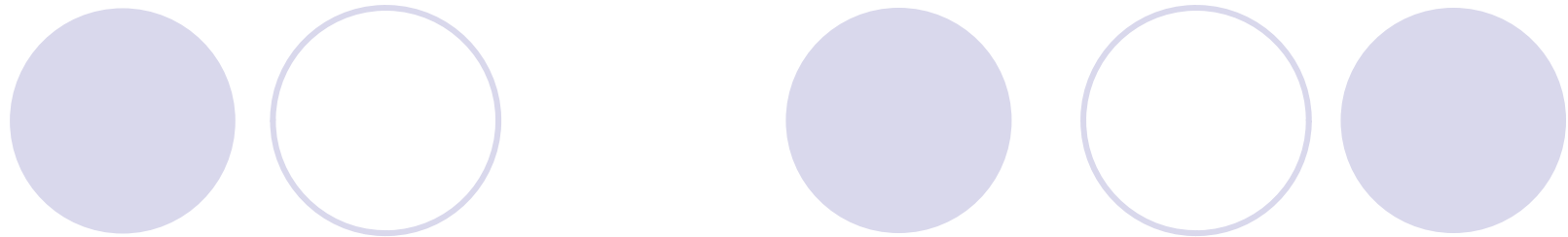
Finding 7

- The focus group discussions suggest that there is a lot that parents have not covered in these conversations with their preteens, however. Some parents relate their discomfort in bringing up the more intense and “scary” topics with their children, and some simply feel that their children, particularly 11-year-olds, are not ready for such conversations.



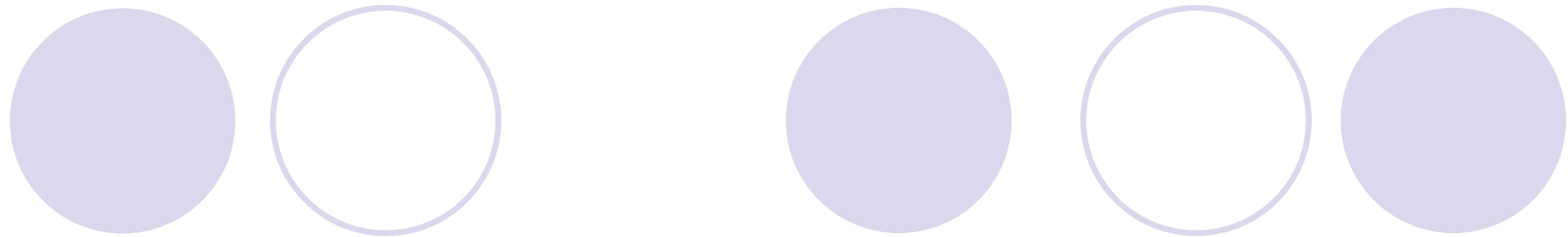
Finding 8

- The Start Strong campaign has the greatest potential to engage parents with a positive message frame about the critical role that parents can play in talking with their children about the importance of building healthy, respectful relationships.



**PROPORTIONS OF PARENTS VERY INTERESTED IN SELECTED PUBLIC
EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

	Start Strong Communities %	Nation- wide %
Intro to Internet, cell phone, social networking technology preteens are using; tips on how to help children manage these resources safely	60	60
Preteens perform for parents, expressing experiences/expectations for relationships through theater, art, poetry, music, providing starting point for parents to discuss how to talk about relationship abuse and healthy relationships with their children	52	38
Discussion group on challenges of parenting preteens and strategies on how to talk to children about developing healthy relationships	51	38
Information session led by instructor trained in adolescent development focusing on how to talk with preteens about building healthy romantic relationships and preventing relationship abuse	49	44
	(continued)	



**PROPORTIONS OF PARENTS VERY INTERESTED IN SELECTED PUBLIC
EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

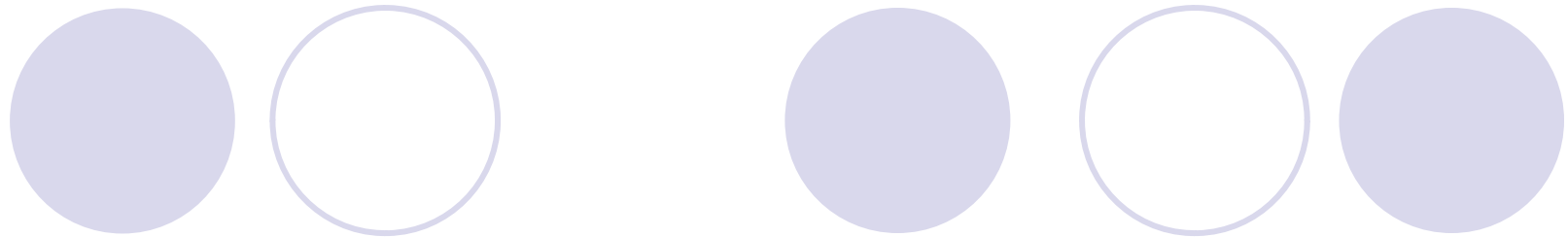
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	Start Strong Communities %	Nation- wide %
Discussion session using current short stories, books, movies, or plays about relationship abuse, adolescent development, other related topics to begin dialogue among parents and caregivers	39	30
Programs in which coaches of middle-school athletes speak to parents and caregivers about the lessons they are teaching their players about relationships and how to treat others	39	28



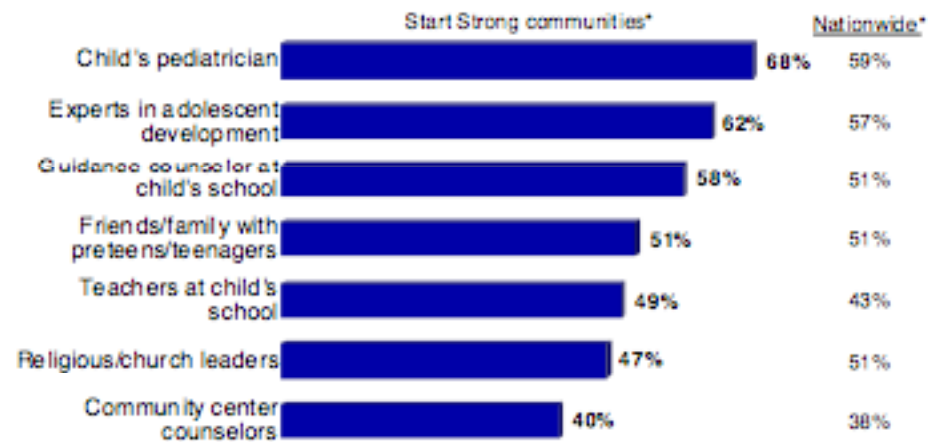
Finding 9

- Parents are most interested in getting information and guidance on how to talk with their preteen children from people who have an expertise on these issues and/or direct experience interacting with preteens.



Most Appealing Messengers Have An Expertise Or Direct Experience

% very interested in information/guidance from each on talking with preteens about developing healthy, non-abusive relationships



*Less than 35%: after-school staff, athletic coaches, employer, elected officials



Contact info

- Abigail Sims

Peace Over Violence

213-955-9090 ext. 107

Abby@peaceoverviolence.org

www.peaceoverviolence.org

24-hr crisis lines

- (626) 793-3385
- (213) 626-3393
- (310)392-8381

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Contact info

- Sylvia Rentaria
- Berendo Middle School
- 213-739-5675
- sar6556@lausd.net