



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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JCDPH WORKS WITH SCHOOLS TO PREVENT TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

February is recognized annually as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. This is a time to raise awareness about abuse in teen and 20-something relationships as well as promote programs that prevent it. Dating violence is more common than many people would think—according to a recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 8% of high school students reported physical violence and 7% reported that they had experienced sexual violence from a dating partner within 12-months before the survey. Teens who are victims in high school are at a higher risk for victimization during college and throughout their lifetimes.

Here in Jackson County, programs are offered in the school system that address issues associated with teen dating violence. Health educators with the Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) offer *Making Proud Choices* to all ninth graders in the county. This program helps young people increase their knowledge of HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy prevention; believe in the value of abstinence and other safer-sex practices; improve their ability to negotiate abstinence or other safer-sex practices; identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships; and take pride in choosing responsible sexual behaviors.

In addition, JCDPH educators teach *Media Aware* at the Jackson Community School. *Media Aware* is a web-based online program for high school students that addresses alcohol/substance use and risky sexual activity; media portrayals of romantic relationships; building a healthy relationship; dating violence and abusive relationships; STI prevention and testing; gender role stereotypes; effective communication with parents, romantic partners and health professionals; FDA-approved birth control methods; sexual assault, bystander intervention, and consent.

Finally, educators from JCDPH provide *Senior Seminar* to all seniors as a refresher in healthy decision making before graduation. *Senior Seminar* is a four-part exploration with outside speakers reaching out to high school seniors. Topics include money management, violence prevention, STD and contraception, substance abuse, and more.

For more information about these programs, call Katie Hutchinson or Curt Collins at 828-587-8292 or 828-587-8252 respectively.

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