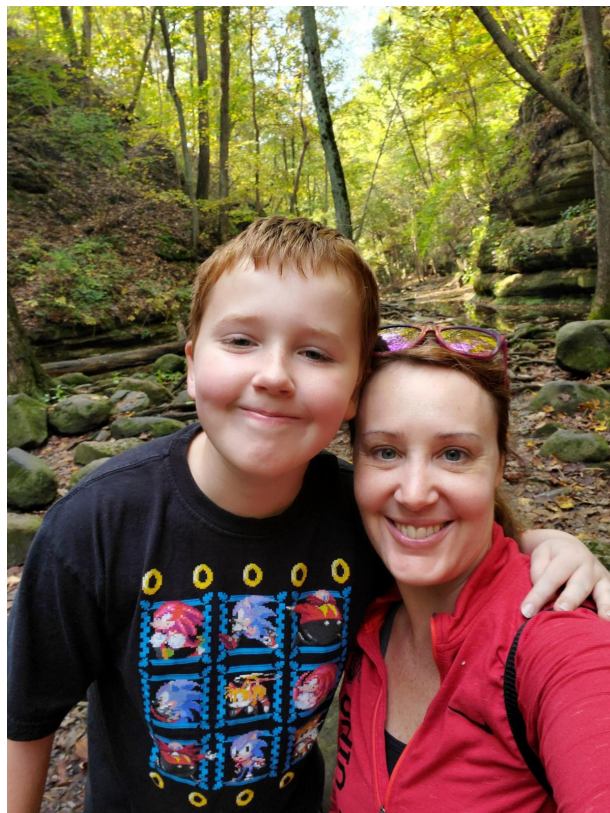


You are receiving this email because you have previously supported South Suburban Family Shelter and our work to end domestic violence. If you would like to unsubscribe you may do so at the bottom. We hope you stay and stand with us to see a world free from violence.



From the Desk of your Friendly Neighborhood Executive Director



Do you remember when you started dating? Or even when you started thinking someone was “cute” and you wanted to find ways to be around them more often? Do you think it was when you were a teen, or maybe just a bit sooner?

The picture above is me and my 10-year-old son. He is in fifth grade, and guess what? He has friends that have started dating. He, himself, is way past his first crush, meaning I could not wait until he was a teen to talk about dating and healthy relationship behaviors. In fact, I did not wait very long at all. We've been talking about respect and consent since he was a toddler. Because of that, it makes it easier to work those concepts into current discussions now. This is one aspect of my parenting that I am quite proud of. Somehow, I've managed to create an open dialogue and he feels comfortable talking to me about all things relationship focused. I listen while he shares the "gossip" or "drama" from the school day. I never react with judgement, but instead ask some clarifying or probing questions meant to help him think deeper about what is going on. I remind him that there may be times I need to contact an adult, and we discuss when that would be.

My goal is to keep this open dialogue going and continue creating a safe, comfortable space for him to share and question this whole idea of dating and relationships. Even at 10, he is feeling pressure to date. He is feeling pressure to fit in and do what the other kids are doing. As adults, it is important that we create space where children can be open with us about this and we can help think through the consequences of any choice they may make. We can't be next to them all the time, but when we talk, THEY DO LISTEN. There is no handbook on dating! That is why they need to hear from YOU. The loving adult in their life that can help them understand what they deserve from a relationship and what boundaries are important to establish and respect from others.

I know it only going to get more complicated for my son from here on out. I understand that, as a parent, I have a responsibility to help him navigate this time and set boundaries that will be difficult to keep under the strain of peer pressure. Knowing how to be in a healthy relationship isn't an instinct we are born with, it is a skill we must learn and practice. And for each skill, we need loving and patient teachers who believe in us and want the best for us. This is where you step in as that crucial protective factor.

In Peace,
Jennifer

Let's Talk About It - It's Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

by Angela Davis and Zach Cappos, Anew Community Educators

Angela and Zach are two of Anew's Community Educators that provide educational teachings and training in schools, businesses, church groups, sororities and more, to provide crucial information in age-appropriate presentations to inform the public on healthy relationships, and how to identify abuse. Prevention outreach is key to stopping the cycle of abuse.



Every February, young people and their loved ones join together across the country for a national effort to raise awareness about the issue of teen dating violence through Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM). This annual, month-long push focuses on advocacy and education to stop dating abuse before it starts.

Dating violence is more common than people think, especially among teens and young adults: one in three teens in the US will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with before they become adults, and nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors. ([Source](#))



Presenting statistics and facts like above are great tools for starting the conversation with teens; however, this month, we want to take it a step further. The theme for this year's TDVAM is "**Talk About It**", which is a call to action for adults and young people to take the initiative to have meaningful conversations about the relationship spectrum. Talking about a range of relationships on the spectrum allows young people to identify the keys to healthy relationships, while understanding the characteristics of unhealthy or abusive ones.

As community educators, we know these conversations can be difficult to start. When we approach a classroom with one of our programs on healthy relationships, we commonly get blank stares, or the students feel embarrassed to speak about dating in front of their peers. This is to be expected, as we often hear that this topic is not discussed at home. This is why it is so important to talk about what a healthy relationship means, and how to identify an unhealthy one.

When these conversations do not happen, students report feeling anxious and unsure about developing healthy relationships (3). In the worst cases, students will not be able to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship or not know how to reach out

for help once they are in one. This can also lead to unaddressed sexual harassment or misogyny, which appears to be increasing among young people (3).

When students are engaged in these conversations, they are more confident in their abilities to maintain healthy relationships. Some topics we speak about with students are the characteristics of different relationships, warning signs of abuse, using technology safely, the cycle of violence and more. You can start the conversation of these topics at home!



Here are a few suggestions for getting the conversation started:

-Be transparent: Students will open up more when adults lead by example. Consider moving beyond generalities and sharing information that is age-appropriate and relevant.

-Validate Feelings: Teen dating can feel overwhelming. Ask them what emotions come up from their experiences and let them know when what they are experiencing is normal and expected.

-Use examples that young people know : Using examples from shows or the media is a great way to speak about healthy relationships without asking someone to give up personal information.

-Meet teens where they are : Balance listening with education by asking open ended questions to determine what teens already know and what they would like to know.

-Don't expect to achieve every goal in one day : Start small by just starting the conversation.

If you would like to know more, see these great resources below or contact our community education team for classroom presentations! Email Angela at angela.d@anewdv.org, or Zach at zach.c@anewdv.org for further information.

(1) [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance](#)

(2) [The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#)

(3) [The Talk: How Adults Can Promote Young People's Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment](#)

Wear Orange Day is TOMORROW, February 9, 2022.

Join us to support Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

Snap a selfie and tag us on social media!

@AnewDV on Facebook and Instagram



Community Education Team above shows off their #Orange4Love spirit in 2021.

20-Hour In-Person Training

Anew offers an in-person Abuser Intervention Facilitator 20-Hour Training in collaboration with our educational partner South Suburban College. Registration will open on our website later this week. Have a look at our schedule to determine if this training can work for you!

South Suburban College hosts the Anew in-person training sessions at their South Holland campus in the MB Financial Banks Suite. All training participants must comply with South Suburban College's COVID-19 safety protocols, which can be found on their [website](#).



20-Hour Training Schedule

**Anew: Building Beyond
Violence and Abuse
Abuser Intervention
Facilitator 20-Hour Training
hosted by:**

**South Suburban College
15800 State Street
South Holland, IL 60473**

**Sessions will be held in the
MB Financial Bank Suite
located near the Atrium and
Cafeteria.**

**Contact Kerry Hill with
any questions at kerry.h@anewdv.org**

Tuesday 2/22	Wednesday 2/23	Thursday 2/24	Friday 2/25
In Session: 9a - 10:30a	In Session: 9a - 10:30a	In Session: 9a - 10:30a	In Session: 9a - 10:30a
Break	Break	Break	Break
In Session: 10:45a - 12p	In Session: 10:45a - 12p	In Session: 10:45a - 12p	In Session: 10:45a - 12p
Break	Break	Break	Break
			In Session: 12:30p - 1:15p
In Session: 1p - 2:30p	In Session: 1p - 2:30p	In Session: 1p - 2:30p	
Break	Break	Break	
In Session: 2:45p - 4p	In Session: 2:45p - 4p	In Session: 2:45p - 4p	

**Supporting Anew: Building Beyond Violence and Abuse is easy,
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