

# Primary Prevention Reduces Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Among Youth



The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends [primary prevention interventions that aim to prevent or reduce intimate partner violence and sexual violence among youth](#). Evidence shows these interventions decrease perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual violence and increase bystander action.

The recommendation is based on a systematic review of 28 studies published through June 2016. Included studies evaluated interventions that combined educational information about intimate partner violence and sexual violence with strategies to teach healthy relationship skills, promote social norms that protect against violence, or create protective environments.

Primary prevention programs aim to reduce a person’s risk of committing violence, as preventing perpetration before it starts has the greatest potential to reduce rates of violence and improve public health (Cox et al.2010; DeGue et al., 2012; McMahon, 2000). Programs may target potential perpetrators or bystanders—people close to a situation who can challenge violence-supportive norms by directly reducing risk (e.g., by noticing a risky social situation and intervening) or by indirectly reducing risk (e.g., by challenging hostile attitudes towards women such as offensive jokes or objectifying language).

A CDC report found that among victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, nearly 26% of females and 15% of males first experienced some form of violence by that partner before age 18 ([Smith et al., 2018](#) ). In the United States, 7.4% of high school students report having ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to ([Kann et al., 2018](#) ). Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have short- and long-term negative effects on a developing teen. Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety; engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol; exhibit antisocial behaviors; and think about suicide ([CDC 2018](#) ).

The CPSTF recommendation aligns with and supports strategies and approaches described in [CDC’s Technical Packages](#)  on intimate partner violence and sexual violence. These packages are designed to help states and communities use the best available evidence to prevent violence.

**For More Information:**

- [The Community Guide](#)
  - [Violence Prevention: Primary Prevention Interventions to Reduce Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Among Youth](#)
  - [Primary Prevention Interventions to Reduce Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Among Youth](#) - use this one-pager as a quick reference
  - Webinar: [Interventions That Work: Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Among Youth](#)
- [Twitter® @CPSTF](#)  - official account for the Community Preventive Services Task Force
- [CDC, Division of Violence Prevention](#) 
  - [Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices](#)  [PDF - 4.52 MB] 
  - [STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence](#)  [PDF - 2.85 MB] 
- [CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health](#) 
- [CDC, Healthy Schools](#) 
- [CDC, Office on Women's Health](#) 
- [HHS, Office on Women's Health](#) 
- [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#) 

## References

CDC. [Teen Dating Violence](#) . Atlanta (GA): National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2018.

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DeGue S, Simon TR, Basile KC, Yee SL, Lang K, et al. Moving forward by looking back: reflecting on a decade of CDC's work in a sexual violence prevention, 2000–2010. *Journal of Women's Health* 2012;21(12):1211–8.

Kann L, McManus T, Harris WA, Shanklin SL, Flint KH, et al. [Youth risk behavior surveillance — United States, 2017](#) . *MMWR Surveill Summ* 2018;67(8).

McMahon PM. The public health approach to the prevention of sexual violence. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 2000;12(1):27–36.

Smith SG, Zhang X, Basile KC, Merrick MT, Wang J, Kresnow M, Chen J. [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief](#) . Atlanta (GA): National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2018.