

DELAWARE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

100 W 10TH STREET SUITE 703
WILMINGTON, DE 19801

(302) 658-2958
WWW.DCADV.ORG

About the Authors

Delaware's Plan for Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence was created through the collaborative efforts of the Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Consortium (IPVPC), a statewide strategic planning group of community stakeholders and leaders who are dedicated to ending IPV in Delaware. These cooperative efforts have been guided and informed by the collective wisdom of our national partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 13 other state domestic violence coalitions awarded funding through the Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements Through Leadership and Alliances Program (DELTA).

Delaware's Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Consortium:

Abriendo Puertas
Child, Inc.
ContactLifeline
Delaware Center for Justice
Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Delaware Department of Education
Delaware Division of Public Health
Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Delaware Domestic Violence Task Force
Delaware Girls Initiative
Delaware Office of Prevention and Early Intervention
Delaware Office of Women's Health
Delaware Victims' Rights Task Force
First State Community Action Agency
Jewish Family Services of Delaware
Latin American Community Center
Living Legacy Ministries
Peoples' Place II
Prevent Child Abuse Delaware
University of Delaware
YMCA Resource Center of Delaware

Although substantial work lies ahead, we celebrate the significance of a state-specific plan that is focused first and foremost on stopping violence before it starts. We encourage all Delawareans to join us in this journey to ending intimate partner violence and becoming the first state where safe and healthy relationships are the norm for all of our citizens.

This publication was supported by the Cooperative Agreement Number 1US4CE001527-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

¹ Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Homicide trends in the United States [online]. [Cited 2006 Aug 28]. Available from URL: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/intimates.htm

² Delaware School Survey (2008). Final Report. Available from <http://www.udel.edu/cdas/index.html>

³ Delaware School Survey (2007). Final Report. Available from <http://www.udel.edu/cdas/index.html>

⁴ CDC Injury Prevention Risk and Protective Factors for IPV. Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>; Harway H, O'Neil JM. What causes men's violence against women? Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control. Strategic direction for intimate partner violence prevention. Available from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPV_Strategic_Direction_One-Pager-a.pdf

Every day, 3 women in the United States lose their lives as a result of abuse and violence by an intimate partner¹

28% of Delaware 8th graders report having heard or seen violence between people in their homes during the past year³

18% of Delaware middle and high school students report being physically abused by their boyfriend/girlfriend²

Can abuse and violence in relationships be prevented? **YES.**

Stop the violence before it starts with **primary prevention.**

Ending Intimate Partner Violence: A Primary Prevention Approach

Over the last 30 years, advocates have worked tirelessly to raise awareness about abuse and violence in relationships and its detrimental effects on individuals and our society. So far, the response to this awareness has largely focused on after-the-fact efforts like improving victim services and system response, and community education on the warning signs of abuse.

While these efforts represent critical strides, there is a growing body of evidence that we can eliminate intimate partner violence (IPV) more effectively by addressing the root causes of abuse before it ever occurs.

Toward these efforts, the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence has coordinated an extensive plan to promote safe and respectful relationships for all Delawareans.

What is Primary Prevention?

- Raising awareness of abuse and violence in relationships as a public health problem and the role we all play in making it stop
- Educating individuals to understand how attitudes, beliefs and behaviors can support healthy relationships
- Implementing programs that encourage healthy relationships and provide opportunities for positive social interactions
- Creating community conditions where healthy, respectful and equitable organizations and institutions thrive
- Fostering social norms that cultivate peace and non-violence



DELAWARE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WWW.DCADV.ORG

Risk Factors

Research has shown that a combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors can compound the likelihood of an individual becoming a perpetrator of intimate partner violence (IPV).

Much of this research has focused specifically on men because, statistically, males perpetrate the majority of IPV. Likewise, attention has focused primarily on individual-level factors such as low self-esteem, anger, hostility, and emotional insecurity, along with relationship-level factors such as physical or psychological abuse endured as a child.⁴

A public health problem of this magnitude, however, cannot be explained solely by individual characteristics or biological predispositions. Therefore, it is essential to understand the role that community and societal factors play in fostering the persistence of IPV:

- Poverty and associated factors (e.g. overcrowding)
- Low social capital (e.g. lack of institutions, relationships, and norms that shape a community's social interactions)
- Negative portrayal of women in the media
- Traditional gender norms (e.g. women should stay at home, not enter workforce, and be submissive; men support the family and make the decisions)
- Institutional structures that promote unequal power between men and women
- Historical and societal patterns that glorify violence against women
- Gender role socialization process of men and women
- Social norms supportive of violence

Delaware's Plan for Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence

Preventing abuse and violence in relationships requires true social change. It is an active, assertive process of creating community conditions where healthy relationships can flourish.

Delaware's plan seeks to influence systemic change within four priority areas:

PRIORITY AREA 1

Non-Traditional Systems

Systems, agencies, faith-based and service organizations and civic groups that are not traditionally associated with intimate partner violence will come to understand and realize their role in the primary prevention of IPV and will willingly and effectively engage in policies and practices that promote healthy relationships and foster respectful societies.

Key outcomes

- A multicultural, cross-discipline leadership group will be established to focus on the prevention of intimate partner violence
- Resources will be established to support collaborative, cross-discipline activities that promote healthy, non-violent relationships

PRIORITY AREA 2

Education of Individuals and Systems

Delaware's public and private education systems will incorporate principles and practices that promote healthy, non-violent relationships and will provide evidence-based instruction on healthy relationships and intimate partner violence prevention.

Key outcomes

- Delaware's middle and high school students will receive a unit of instruction addressing healthy relationships as a part of their overall health curriculum
- Delaware's education systems will adopt and embrace policies for students and staff that promote respectful, non-violent relationships as an integral part of school culture

For more information about Delaware's Plan for Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence, email: training@dcadv.org

PRIORITY AREA 3

Data Collection and Surveillance

As an essential part of Delaware's public health research agenda, broad data collection efforts across age groups and populations will be conducted so that key intimate partner violence health indicators can be studied.

Key outcomes

- Data on perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual violence will become a key element of study in Delaware Division of Public Health's ongoing analysis of statewide health risks
- A digital library of reports, research briefs, policy analyses and comprehensive data about perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual violence will be widely available and easily accessible

PRIORITY AREA 4

Cultural Values and Societal Norms

Attitudes will be cultivated that embrace healthy, non-violent relationships within local communities and throughout Delaware.

Key outcomes

- A public education campaign will be launched to challenge existing norms and promote the development of healthy and safe relationships
- Media organizations and outlets will take responsibility for the healthy and unhealthy messages being promoted
- Businesses, non-profits and human rights organizations will work collaboratively to increase the economic and social status of women in communities throughout Delaware

Protective Factors

Today, almost all of the available research on the prevention of abuse and violence in relationships focuses on the risk of perpetration, with very little examination of the factors or attributes that challenge unhealthy behaviors. However, there is growing evidence of the protective value that respectful relationships provide in the elimination of intimate partner violence. Characteristics of healthy relationships include:⁵

- Belief in non-violent conflict resolution
- Effective communication skills
- Ability to negotiate and adjust to stress
- Belief in a partner's right to autonomy
- Shared decision-making
- Trust

Promotion of these resilient relationship characteristics can occur on many levels —from individuals and families, to the larger communities we live in.

"Many who live with violence day in and day out assume that it is an intrinsic part of the human condition. But this is not so. Violence can be prevented. Violent cultures can be turned around. In my own country and around the world, we have shining examples of how violence has been countered. Governments, communities and individuals can make a difference. We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear."

—Nelson Mandela
World Health Organization's
World Report on Violence
and Health, 2002

What can you do to support the prevention of abuse and violence in relationships?

- **Individuals:** Learn how communication styles, gender messages, and media techniques can prevent or support healthy relationships and think twice before you use your consumer power towards products or campaigns that promote harmful messages.
- **Parents:** Teach your children to reject attitudes and behaviors that support abuse and violence, especially in the face of peer pressure or messages to the contrary in popular culture. Visit www.safeandrespectful.org to learn more.
- **Community Leaders:** Organize your community to hold local businesses, media and marketing companies accountable for ads, messages and organizational practices that promote harmful community norms.
- **Policy-Makers:** Support legal reform and policies that bring about changes in institutional culture and practice, and that advance equality and non-violence in our communities.