

Get It on the Agenda



Increase the awareness of community members and decision-makers about healthy relationship behaviors.

Why?

Dating abuse may not be seen as a pressing concern in your community, but building awareness can bring well deserved attention to this issue. This play suggests how to raise awareness and enlist the help of the community, including key decision-makers, to support Choose Respect and prevent dating abuse.

Where and When?

To raise awareness, messages need to be consistent and pervasive throughout the community.

How?

A sample proclamation can be found in the Zone 4 resources on the USB Flash Drive that comes with this Playbook.

Raise awareness.

Use plays from Zones 1, 2, and 3 to highlight the Choose Respect message in your community. Use the *Media Blitz* play from this zone to engage the media to spread the word.

Get on the community agenda.

Unfortunately, it often takes a tragedy to get dating violence on the community and political agenda. In contrast, Choose Respect focuses on preventing dating abuse before it starts. The messages are positive, and they empower the community to act to prevent dating abuse.

- Highlight dating abuse prevention and ways the Choose Respect initiative can be applied in your community. Decision-makers can feel good about supporting healthy relationship behaviors and policies in their community. The Zone 4 resources contains talking points that explain why respect should be a priority for action.

Plays in Action:

Community: Illinois

Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA)

IVPA is a one-of-a-kind state agency that awards grants to community and state level organizations for the prevention of all forms of interpersonal violence. IVPA's Youth-Led Mini Grants Program provides grants up to \$5,000 to support projects designed, implemented, and led by youth with adult support—a perfect fit for Choose Respect. IVPA has committed to fund five sites for the next 3 years to develop and implement a Choose Respect initiative throughout Illinois.

The IVPA's success reveals key lessons in securing funding for prevention:

- Devote time to build a broad, diverse, and educated membership and advocacy base. The Illinois Council for the Prevention of Violence worked together for 2 years before sponsoring legislation to establish the IVPA in 1995.
- Enlist state-level champions, especially nontraditional advocates, such as criminal justice leaders or state medical societies.

- Set up a face-to-face meeting. Provide decision-makers with written facts about Choose Respect and dating abuse and provide at least one action step. If the decision-maker is convinced that this is an important issue, it is important to help them take action right away.
- Ask a prominent decision-maker (e.g. the mayor) to proclaim a special Choose Respect Day. Host a press conference and give the decision-maker recognition for their support. This not only gives the decision-maker something to advertise, it gives your Choose Respect program a “celebrity” to encourage others to support Choose Respect. A sample proclamation can be found in the Zone 4 resources on the USB Flash Drive that comes with this Playbook.
- Invite survivors of abuse to talk about their experiences and how policy change can help prevent dating abuse. For example, if existing regulations make restraining orders difficult to obtain, advocate for changes that simplify the process. A real life story from a constituent is more likely to spur a decision-maker to take on this issue and suggest changes in the policy.

Want to Do More?

Involve as many individuals, groups and organizations as possible in your efforts to raise awareness for dating abuse prevention in your community. Start locally with your organization or neighborhood, and then expand outward to larger and larger jurisdictions. At each level, mobilize those you reach to join you in taking it to the next level.

Resources Needed:

- Create talking points for meeting with decision-makers
- Representatives to speak with key decision-makers
- Sample Proclamation*

Evaluation:

Document what you accomplish using Choose Respect tracking tools:

- **Stand Up & Be Counted**
Keep track of play participants and audience members. The Zone 4 Evaluation Tools contain a sign-in sheet.
- **Cheers & Changes**
After the play is complete, note your successes, challenges, and opportunities for the future. The Zone 4 Evaluation Tools contain a worksheet to help you do this.

Choose Respect feedback tools are recommended if you implement multiple plays. Take time to reflect on how far you have come in implementing Choose Respect in your community after completing a series of Choose Respect activities using Choose Respect feedback tools:

- **Policy Education and Advocacy Impact Survey**
After completing a series of activities, collect information for your evaluation. The Zone 4 Evaluation Tools contain a feedback form to help you do this.

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the *[insert organization/government office name]* encourages positive action on the part of youth in *[City/State]* by supporting the Choose Respect initiative; and

WHEREAS, Choose Respect is designed to motivate adolescents to challenge harmful beliefs about dating abuse and take steps to form healthy, respectful relationships; and

WHEREAS, approximately 1 in 11 high school students reports physical dating violence, equating to nearly 1.5 million high school students a year; and

WHEREAS, unhealthy relationships can have a lifelong negative impact on personal health; and

WHEREAS, adolescents who are involved in healthy, respectful relationships early have a better chance of sustaining healthy, respectful relationships as they get older and begin to enter adult relationships; and

WHEREAS, by equipping adolescents with skills for healthy relationships such as negotiation and compromise, Choose Respect challenges harmful beliefs about dating abuse and encourages adolescents to take steps to form respectful relationships; and

WHEREAS, Choose Respect capitalizes on positive action by offering adolescents the motivation to help them discover the power of self-respect and self-esteem, positively influencing attitudes and beliefs that will affect how they are treated and how they treat others; and

WHEREAS, parents, community leaders, civic organizations, and schools are an integral part of providing safe, healthy, and beneficial learning environment for adolescents; and

WHEREAS, helping adolescents Choose Respect is not just an investment in their future, it's an investment in *[City/State]* for generations to come.

THEREFORE, we recognize the need to help adolescents *[City/State]* Choose Respect and hereby declare *[date of local event]* as

Choose Respect Day

in *[City, State]*.

[date]

[Signature: Elected Official, Other Dignitary, Witness]

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CHOOSE RESPECT

PROCLAMATION

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