Healthy Relationships Toolkit

Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT AT-A-GLANCE

Healthy Relationships Toolkit: Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships* is a comprehensive model to prevent violence in adolescence developed and evaluated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Healthy Relationships Toolkit (HeaRT) aims to promote healthy relationship behaviors and prevent violence before it starts. The model focuses on 11- to 14-year-olds to prevent dating violence, sexual violence, bullying, and other risk behaviors in middle school and across the lifespan. It includes multiple prevention components that focus on individuals, peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods. These components work together to reinforce and promote respectful, nonviolent relationships.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT?

The HeaRT comprehensive violence prevention model is comprised of seven prevention components (shown below). These components address key risk and protective factors for violence in adolescence across the social environments that influence young people, including peers, their families, their school, and their neighborhood. The seven HeaRT components are designed to reinforce consistent messages about healthy relationships across these contexts; promote complementary skills for youth, parents, and educators; and support these skills and messages with policy efforts.

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*The Healthy Relationships Toolkit was previously referred to as Dating Matters.

THE SEVEN COMPONENTS OF THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT

Youth Programs

The HeaRT youth programs provide middle school students with the knowledge and social-emotional skills (i.e., emotional expression and management, social skills) they need to expect and engage in healthy, safe relationships. CDC developed the 6th and 7th grade programs, and adopted an existing evidence-based program, Safe Dates, for 8th grade. Teachers, school staff, or a prevention educator from the community deliver the programs to youth.

Parent Programs

The HeaRT parent programs provide parents and caregivers of 11- to 14-year-olds with skills for positive parenting and effective parent-child communication while also helping them engage in a dialogue with their kids about healthy, safe relationships. CDC developed the 6th and 7th grade programs, and adopted an existing evidence-based program, Families for Safe Dates, for 8th grade.

The programs use a combination of group sessions facilitated by prevention educators in community-based settings and self-guided activities for parents and teens to complete at home. The Healthy Relationships Toolkit: Training for Parents is a free, self-administered online training for parents and caregivers. It ensures all families have access to core content from the HeaRT parent programs at no cost to communities.

Training for Educators

The HeaRT Training for Educators provides teachers and other school personnel with critical knowledge about violence in adolescence. It also provides the specific skills, strategies, and resources needed to prevent violence from occurring and to implement prevention activities in their schools.

i2i: Youth Communications Program

The i2i Youth Communications Program reinforces messaging from the HeaRT youth programs for all grades and promotes healthy relationship behaviors by using teen-led communications strategies (e.g., social media, community events) to reach youth in their communities.

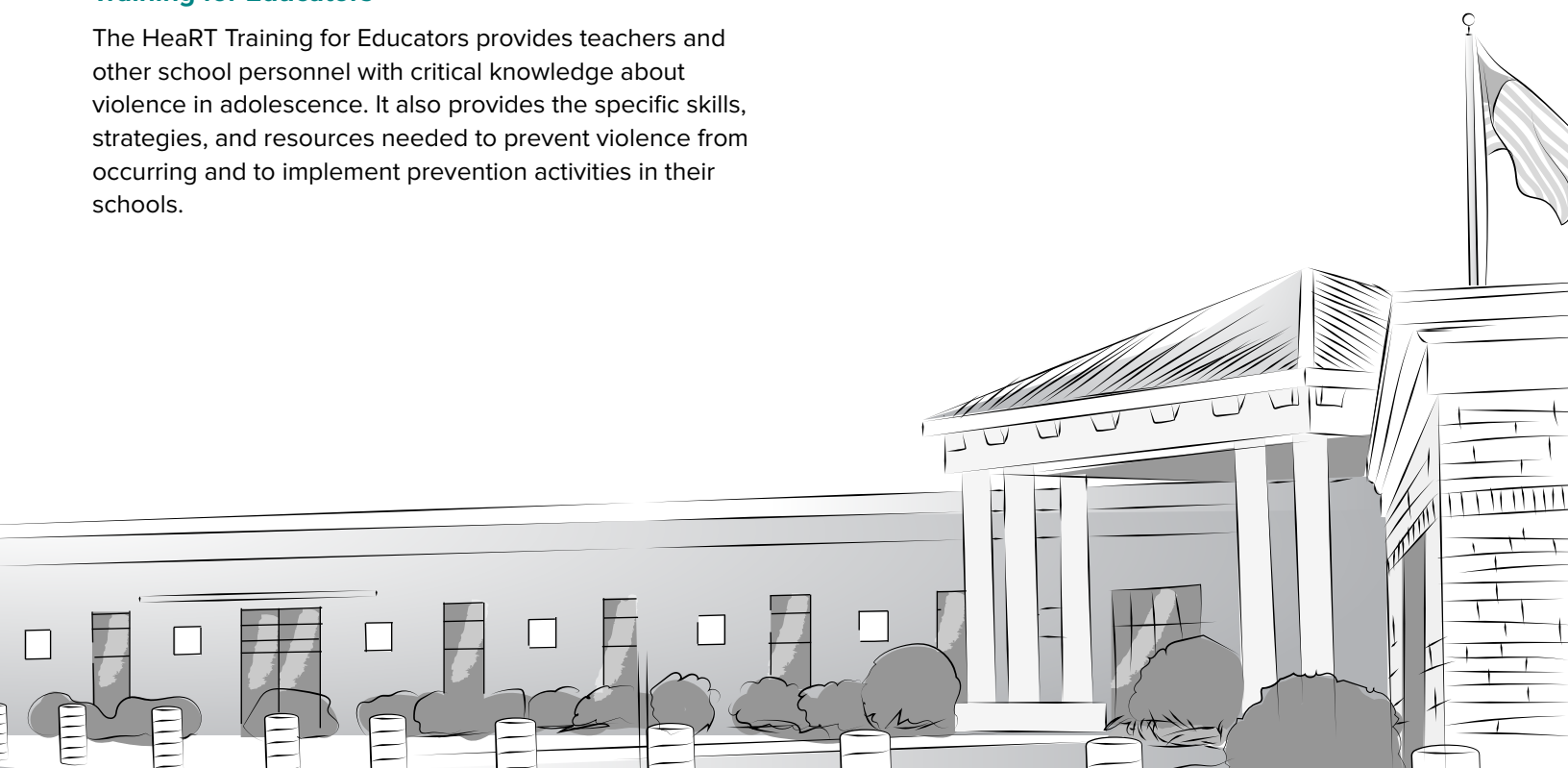## The General Capacity Assessment for Violence Prevention Tool (G-CAT)

General Capacity Assessment for Violence Prevention Tool guides organizations in enhancing local public health capacity to implement comprehensive violence prevention across their communities.

Guide to Using Indicator Data

The HeaRT Guide to Using Indicator Data aids local health departments (and other implementers) in collecting and using the best available health indicator data to inform community-level violence prevention activities.

Interactive Guide to Informing Policy

The HeaRT Interactive Guide to Informing Policy provides an overview of policy approaches to violence prevention, important considerations for informing policy, guidance for developing a policy plan, and tools and resources related to policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT

CDC developed the Healthy Relationships Toolkit to give you everything you need to kick-off and sustain the comprehensive violence prevention model in your community. In addition to all of the materials you need to implement each of HeaRT's seven prevention components, the website also includes:

Guide to Implementation

This guide aids local health departments, or other lead community based organizations, in planning and successfully implementing the HeaRT model, including information on:

- capacity-building
- staffing needs
- building community partnerships
- engaging key partners
- planning a budget
- recruiting and engaging participants
- tracking outcomes
- sustainability planning

Coaches' Playbook

The Coaches' Playbook provides guidance for HeaRT coaches responsible for overseeing and supporting youth and parent program facilitators. The guidance includes information on characteristics of good facilitators, training, supervision, and monitoring fidelity.

Online Facilitator Training for Youth and Parent Programs

Free, online training is available for youth and parent program facilitators. The training includes interactive exercises, quizzes, video demonstrations featuring experienced youth and parent program facilitators, and homework assignments to reinforce skills and knowledge. The site includes an accompanying training manual.

READY TO GET STARTED?

The Healthy Relationships Toolkit—with all of the materials, guidance, and tools you need to implement HeaRT— is available on CDC's VetoViolence website at https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/heart. The Toolkit is your one-stop-shop for everything HeaRT.