

Healthy Relationships Toolkit

Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships

WHAT IS THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT?

The Healthy Relationships Toolkit (HeaRT) is a prevention model developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to stop violence in adolescence before it starts. It includes prevention strategies for individuals, peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods. HeaRT focuses on teaching 11-14 year olds healthy relationship skills early to prevent dating violence, sexual violence, bullying, and other risk behaviors in middle school and across the lifespan.

WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE HeaRT



HeaRT is EVIDENCE-BASED

During middle school, students who participated in HeaRT reported less teen dating violence as well as other related outcomes, above and beyond the effects of another evidence-based prevention program. A follow-up study found that many of these effects continued through high school.



HeaRT is LOW-COST

CDC provides all of the tools and materials you need to implement HeaRT at no-cost to communities, including free online facilitator training.



HeaRT is DESIGNED FOR EVERYONE

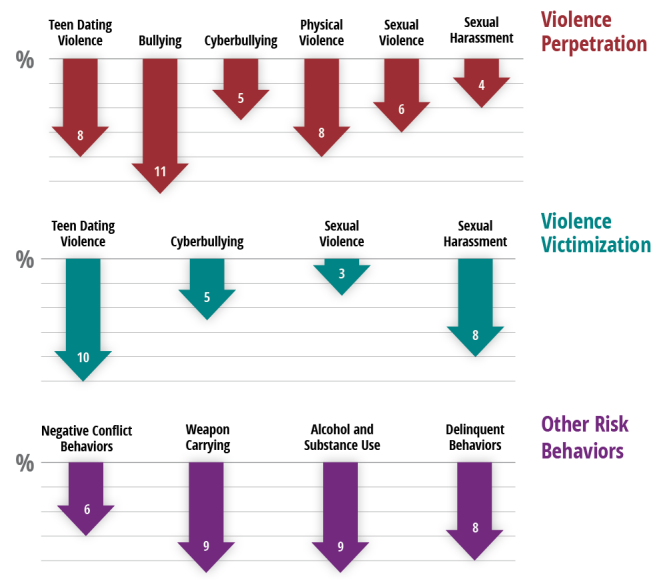
HeaRT was developed and tested in urban neighborhoods with varying backgrounds. The program materials incorporate a variety of images and perspectives to ensure representation of all young people.

THE NEED FOR HeaRT

Violence is negatively affecting teens in your community every day and can have severe, short- and long-term consequences. Preventing violence in adolescence is an important investment that can:

- Stop violence before it starts
- Promote healthy relationships that youth can carry into adulthood
- Create safer communities with less violence

DATING MATTERS® reduced risk for violence **perpetration** and **victimization** and **other risk behaviors** by 3-11%, on average, during middle school compared to another evidence-based program.*



*The Healthy Relationships Toolkit: Empowering Teens to Build Safe and Supportive Relationships was previously referred to as Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships.

"Investing in the Healthy Relationships Toolkit enables you to create a sustainable and lifelong change. We're starting to raise a generation who views violence as not okay and not normal."

– Prevention Lead

ACCESS THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT:

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/heart>



HeaRT CAN STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS

HeaRT is more than just a program. It includes **multiple prevention strategies** for youth and their peers, parents, schools, and neighborhoods to teach critical skills *and* create safe, supportive communities to help young people grow and learn.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO START IN MY COMMUNITY?

CDC developed the HeaRT website to give communities everything they need to kick off and sustain HeaRT. In addition to all of the tools and program materials, the Toolkit also includes:

- A Guide to Implementation, to help local health departments or community organizations implement the model. It includes a range of guidance on topics from capacity building to evaluation, as well as information about cost.
- A Coaches Playbook, to provide guidance and training to people who will oversee the program facilitators.
- A free online training for youth and parent program facilitators, which includes a training manual with helpful tips and resources.

All materials were updated in 2025 to appeal to young people today! These resources are provided at no-cost to communities. Explore more at the Healthy Relationships Toolkit website.



TESTIMONIALS

“Investing in HeaRT enables you to create a sustainable and lifelong change. So, you have entire generations, entire communities, that are starting to reap the benefits of having children, young adults, and adults who don’t choose to behave in violent manners.”

– Prevention Lead

“I think HeaRT has made it easier to have a good relationship with my parents because I’m not afraid to talk to them about things that I wouldn’t normally have wanted to talk about before HeaRT because I thought they might think that I’m not supposed to be thinking about that. But now, with the program, I know that teenagers my age do think about things like that in relationships. HeaRT definitely improved our relationship.”

- Youth

“I feel like not only has it empowered me, but it made me feel comfortable with being uncomfortable...It gave me tools and conversation starters and topics that I can discuss with my kids that I might not have wanted to discuss before, but they do it in a way that helps me not to be so uncomfortable.”

– Parent

SEE HOW HeaRT WORKS IN REAL COMMUNITIES!

Baltimore, MD

[Watch Video](#)

Chicago, IL

[Watch Video](#)

Ft. Lauderdale, FL

[Watch Video](#)

Oakland, CA

[Watch Video](#)