

Final Youth Focus Group Summary Report

In April and May 2006, the following focus groups were facilitated by MAG staff and community partners to gather information about the impact of domestic violence on youth and needed resources.

Name	Location	Number of attendees
Metro Center Academy	North Phoenix	11
Boys and Girls Club	Mesa	6
Suns Diamondback Education Center	Central Phoenix	11
AA Cottages	Mesa	8
Peer Solutions	Phoenix	13
City of Avondale and City of Tolleson	Avondale	20
Scottsdale Youth Commission	Scottsdale	21
Copper Canyon High School	Glendale	23
Save the Family	Mesa	12
Tumbleweed (2)	Phoenix	16
Total to date	11	141

1. How do you define dating violence?

All focus group respondents defined dating violence as a range including physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse. Some also included peer pressure.

2. How do you define family violence?

Respondents believed this was similar to dating violence but that it applied to family members. There was more of an emphasis on physical abuse and child abuse.

3. Do you know of teens that are in abusive dating or family relationships?

At least 50 percent of respondents knew someone personally who was in an abusive relationship. At times this included themselves. In two focus groups, everyone knew someone who had been a victim.

4. Who do teens go to for help with dating violence or family violence?

Friends were the number one response, followed by nobody and family. Other responses included school although many did not trust teachers, the police and the Internet. Some cited less constructive alternatives such as drugs and suicide.

5. Where do teens get information about dating violence or family violence?

The Internet was the number one response, followed by school. Other responses included newspapers, the library, pamphlets, the media, doctors, hotlines, books, movies, their parents and being a witness of violence.

6. Where do you go for general information?

The responses were similar to the last question with the Internet and parents being most often cited.

7. What percent of teens do you think report dating violence or family violence?

There was general consensus that many teens experience but few report it. The percent of those who report violence ranged from 3 percent to 60 percent with 20 percent being the most common response.

8. What stops teens from reporting dating violence or family violence?

Fear was the most common response, followed by embarrassment, love or concern for the abuser and denial. Other responses include believing that they deserve the abuse, hoping the situation will change on its own and lack of support.

9. What resources are needed to help keep teens safe?

More information in mainstream venues was most often cited, followed by someone trustworthy to talk to and online resources such as an online discussion board facilitated by an adult or a group on My Space. Other responses include shelter, counseling, skits, personal testimonies, classes in school and religion.

10. What's the best way to involve teens in keeping teens safe?

Teens emphasized again having information available at non-domestic violence related events like malls, movies and sport events. Respondents also cited outreach in school, television, support groups and online resources.

11. Would you like information on healthy relationships? What kind of information would be the most useful?

There was a mixed response on this question. Many respondents wanted more information on this topic while others believed they knew enough about healthy relationships. These teens wanted more information on helping females say no to males that are pressuring them to engage in unwanted activities. The teens who did want information on healthy relationships included safe messages about sex as well. One group suggested a safe bystander campaign showing how to ask for help.