

Teens & Dating

By Willow Wheelock, Education & Outreach Coordinator

In March 2006, Liz Claiborne Inc. commissioned Teenage Research Unlimited to conduct a survey to gauge the degree to which teens have been involved in abusive/controlling relationships. The findings were astounding: the results showed that alarming numbers of teens experience abusive behavior in dating relationships and many teens feel physically and sexually threatened by



and by establishing effective policies and procedures that address these issues.

A comprehensive policy would include specific guidelines for responding to complaints of dating violence, involving student resource officers and/or law enforcement, providing services and accommodations for

“... 1 in 5 teens that have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner and more than 40% of teen victims report that abuse took place on school grounds.”

a partner or former partner. In fact, 1 in 5 teens that have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner and more than 40% of teen victims report that abuse took place on school grounds. Studies have shown that nearly one-quarter of teens report that they would confide in a coach, teacher or school counselor if

they were experiencing abuse from a partner. Couple this with the significant portion of their lives that teens spend in school and you see how schools are uniquely positioned to respond to the violence that teens experience. Schools should proactively do this by being prepared to sensitively intervene to support teens who are experiencing dating violence and sexual violence

victims, enacting appropriate consequences for abusive students and referring students to community based organizations. Included at the end of this article are highlights of a comprehensive dating violence policy.

It would be important for schools to create a standard procedure to be used by all school employees when a student

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Support Groups Offered

By Erin Dickman, University of Vermont
Bachelor's of Social Work Student Intern

Groups are intrinsic to empowerment, which is at the heart of being able to heal from the oppression of abuse and violence. Recently, WomenSafe started offering a weekly support group for women dealing with abuse and its effects. The objective of the support group is to provide a safe place for women to connect with each other in order to alleviate isolation, seek emotional support and share information. The drop-in format of the group allows victims and survivors the opportunity to develop coping and recovery skills to move forward to a healthier and happier life and plan for a life free from abuse. The ongoing weekly meetings are normally held on weekday evenings and free childcare is offered. For specific days and times, or for more information on the support group, call our hotline at 388-4205.

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Sexual Harassment

By Foresta Castañeda,
Outreach Advocate

In the fiscal year 2010, The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported receiving 11,717 charge receipts (complaints) alleging sexual harassment in the workplace. Of these complaints, 83.6% of charges were brought by women and only 16.4% of charges being brought by men. From entry level jobs to corporate boardrooms, sexual harassment can happen in any workplace and be perpetrated by any gender against another.

when the harassment creates a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment that prevents a worker from doing his or her job.

The Governor's Commission on Women has developed a guide entitled: "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, A Guide For Employees and Employers." The guide explains federal and state laws prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace and provides information and statistics on the prevalence of sexual violence in the workplace and its cost to employers. The guide discusses and outlines steps that employers should take, including adopting a workplace policy against sexual harassment and providing guidelines along with a model policy. The guide also provides

al violence with police.

Anyone wishing to learn more about how to protect their rights as an employee or how to better prevent and respond to issues of sexual harassment in the workplace as an employer are encouraged to reach out to WomenSafe for information and support. WomenSafe has copies of "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: A Guide for Employees and Employer" available for distribution. For additional information on this important topic you may visit the following sites:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (federal): <http://www.eeoc.gov/> or by phone at: 617-565-3200 (voice), 800-669-4000 (voice), 617-565-3204 (TDD)

"Both nationally and at the state level it is difficult to estimate the full extent of occurrences because sexual harassment in the workplace remains an under reported problem."

Both nationally and at the state level it is difficult to estimate the full extent of occurrences because sexual harassment in the workplace remains an under reported problem. Prohibited under both state and federal law, sexual harassment was first included in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibits sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination. In addition to making sexual harassment in the workforce illegal, Vermont's law also requires employers to take measures to stop the behaviors of sexual harassment in the workplace, and requires employers to implement a workplace policy against sexual harassment. Employers not in compliance with these requirements may be found liable for the sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in the workplace can include unwanted sexual advances, soliciting of sexual favors, and other verbal and physical or sexual conduct, up to and including sexual assault. This includes instances when the ability of a worker to keep their job or ability to get raises or promotions requires them to consent to sexual behavior; or

resources and information for victims of sexual harassment, including: how to document harassment and address it with the perpetrator, where to seek support, how to file a complaint with your company, how to file a complaint with Vermont's employment agencies, Attorney General, and Human Rights Commission and how to file a criminal complaint against perpetrators of sexu-

Vermont Public Protection Division Civil Rights Unit (state equivalent of EEOC): 802-828-5511

Human Rights Commission: 802-828-2480 or 800-416-2010 (voice/TTY)

Attorney General's Office (Civil Rights Unit): 802-828-3657 (voice) or 802-828-3665 (TTY)



Addison County's Commitment

By Naomi Smith, Executive Director

Addison County has been granted almost \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women to provide services to victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking incidents; and to hold perpetrators accountable. \$750,000 is to be spent over two years and \$250,000 over a three year period.

These grants will:

- Strengthen our prosecution, investigation, and batterer intervention program responses to hold perpetrators accountable while emphasizing victim safety;
- Continue to increase the safety and well-being of victims/survivors and their children by increasing the capacity of WomenSafe to meet these

needs while expanding our outreach to isolated communities, including migrant farm workers;

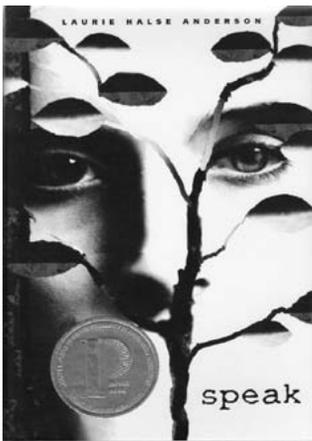
- Develop and implement strategies that will strengthen the safety of victims/survivors and their children by increasing awareness and ultimately preventing sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking;
- Expand and strengthen the Addison County Council Against Domestic and Sexual Violence in its role of coordinating our community's response to and prevention of these crimes;
- Develop new safe affordable transitional housing opportunities for survivors and their children; and
- Provide a broad spectrum of support services to meet the unique needs identified by those survivors accessing the transitional housing program.

Part of this work will involve ongoing training options and stipends for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) to provide rape exams in a victim sensitive manner, ensuring they receive the medical care they need while also col-

lecting evidence for prosecution of the perpetrator.

The Domestic Abuse Education Program (DAEP) is the Addison County program that provides batterer intervention services to men who have been convicted of domestic assault. They will increase their presence in Addison County and will strengthen their connections with our coordinated community response. This is especially important given the decreased presence of Probation and Parole in Addison County.

Significant funds are required to be set aside for Office of Violence Against Women nationally approved trainings. The grant participants will determine which trainings will best meet our needs to hone our skills and to coordinate our efforts more effectively on behalf of the victims/survivors that we all serve in one capacity or other. We have also allocated funding to bring national trainers to Addison County to speak to our providers and our community. Watch for these over the next few years – we hope you will attend!



Book Review *Speak* written by Laurie Halse Anderson

By Christina Grier,
The SVP Coordinator

Speak is a gift for anyone who has been a teenager and anyone who is raising a teenager. *Speak* is a glimpse into the mind of Melinda - a depressed

13 year old girl who is struggling to function during her first year of high school after being raped at the end-of-summer high school party. I call it a gift because it is an insider's look into how a lonely and depressed adolescent is feeling and what she is thinking. I am also reminded of recent stories in the news of young people who took their own lives. I don't believe we can necessarily stop a loved one's suicide, but I think a book like this gives insight into the thoughts and feelings of someone struggling with depression.

Melinda is entering her first year of high school without a friend and ostracized by others. There are many signs that

Melinda is dejected. She has practically stopped talking to everyone and is silent much of the time. "It is easier not to say anything...Nobody really wants to hear what you have to say (Anderson, L.H., *Speak*, 1999, p. 9)." From the outside, she is weird – she doesn't talk, she bites her lips until they bleed, she doesn't care about her appearance, she cuts school, etc. Even a new girl desperate for a friend notices that she's depressed. "You don't like anything. You are the most depressed person I've ever met ... you are no fun to be around...(Anderson, p. 105).

As an adult and a parent, I am frustrated with most of the adults in Melinda's life, because she drops hints of her pain, but few of the adults rarely act. Her parents live practically separate lives, busy with work and themselves that they choose not to see what's happening to Melinda. At one point, Melinda even cuts her wrists with a paper clip and when her mom sees the injuries, she says, "I don't have time for this, Melinda." Melinda goes on to explain that her mother, "... says suicide is for cowards....She bought a book about it... leaves the book on the back of the toilet to educate me (Anderson, p. 88)." Instead of using this opportunity to reach out to her daughter and start communicating, the mother sees Melinda's cry for help as a personal attack on her limited time and emotional resources.

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Book Review

Speak

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Throughout most of the school year, Melinda is tormented by her flashbacks, paralyzed with panic and continuously harassed by other students, including the rapist. However, there are a few bright spots in Melinda's life. Her art teacher, Mr. Freeman, is the only adult who seems to care what she thinks. He reaches out to her and invites her talk, "If you ever need to talk, you know where to find me...I think you have a lot to say. I'd like to hear it (*Anderson, p. 123*)."

She also transforms a janitor's closet at school into a safehaven, which becomes a safe place to which she can escape in an otherwise unforgiving world called high school.

Melinda survives her first year of high school and finds the strength to accept the rape and move beyond it. I hope that by reading *Speak* it will encourage us to communicate with each other and to reach out to someone who needs to talk or to someone who needs an unbiased ear. Most of all, I hope that it will speak to those young people who feel depressed and lonely and give them the sense of hope they need to get through the tough times, because it really does get better after high school.



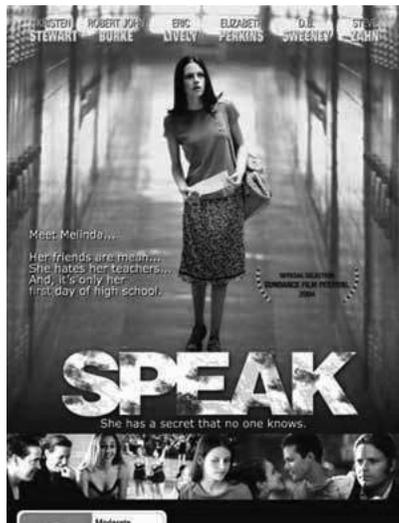
Sane Nurses

By Terra King, University of Vermont
Bachelor's of Social Work Student Intern

A sexual assault can be very psychologically traumatizing for a victim. While we cannot change the past, we can act as a support in the future. After an assault, it may be difficult for a victim to seek medical attention. This could be for many reasons, such as embarrassment or the fear of being re-traumatized resulting from having to re-tell their story. The need for a combination role of support and medical help was seen and the position of a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurse was established.

So what makes a SANE nurse different than any other nurse? SANE nurses are trained, not only how to examine a sexual assault victim, but also how to support him or her. Their goal is to maintain the dignity of the patient, while also collecting any evidence they can find. There are certain qualifications and training one must go through to become a SANE nurse, including an RN license, at least 2 years of RN experience and complete at least 40 hours of SANE nurse training.

The ultimate goal is to support and protect patients who have gone through a very hard experience, while also meeting their health care needs. Currently in Addison County, there are 2 SANE nurses who work out of Porter Hospital. One of the two is on call 24/7 to provide Addison County with this vital resource.



Movie Review

Speak

The movie *Speak* does an excellent job of bringing the story of the novel to life in a graphic and non-exploitative way. The movie depicts the struggle of a 9th grade girl who is trying to find her voice after being raped. Melinda Sordino, the main character is played by Kristen Stewart, who is

now a familiar face to most folks who have visited a check-out line lately, as she is the actress who played Bella in popular *Twilight* series. Stewart's skill at depicting depression in an engaging and graphic way is showcased in this movie as well as the *Twilight* series.

Though I was initially surprised to see the vivid color pallet of the movie, and concerned that this was in some way disrupt-

ive of the story, I soon embraced it. In fact, the colors invited the watcher to sit with the pain of the protagonist, and engage with her struggle. The cinematography of the movie was well crafted and clearly added a depth and beauty to the story.

As with any movie, certain elements of the novel were cut, and some changed a bit. However, the movie stays true to the main elements of the story and powerfully delivers the messages of the novel. Though the movie is certainly a difficult one to watch, it serves as a good discussion generator, and would be engaging to many teens.

My biggest critique of the movie actually involves two bonus features: a message from RAINN and the study guide questions. The RAINN message came across as putting all of the responsibility to stop rapists on the victim (a message that the movie clearly worked against) by asking victims to come forward to prevent further victimization. Additionally, the study guide focused exclusively on the decisions that the protagonist was making, and banal high school related questions, while ignoring the clear messages of community response and support, which the movie illustrated.

All in all, I would recommend this movie, and suggest that you not waste your time checking out the bonus features.

Help Us By Going Paperless!



WomenSafe works hard to conserve our environment. Please help us by signing up to receive The Advocate via email. Your participation means that not only would we save more trees and use less petroleum products in the production and distribution of this newsletter, but you would also be helping us to continue to raise awareness and consciousness of the issues faced by our family, friends and neighbors who are being victimized by their partners or other people in their lives - but in a cost-effective manner. Thank you to the almost 60 people who have already signed up!

If you would like to "Go Paperless," let us know at info@womensafe.net or call Carol at 388-9180.

Spring is Coming!

If you are wondering what to do with your gently used clothes and household items, consider donating them to Neat Repeats and designating WomenSafe as the recipient of the proceeds. For more information, call Carol at 388-9180 or Neat Repeats at 388-4488.



Photo by Ric James

Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award

By Christina Grier, The Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator

WomenSafe is pleased to announce that Lauraine Warfield was selected as the recipient of the 2011 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award (Kimberly Krans Award). The award is presented annually to a woman in Addison County and Rochester whose outstanding work and achievements have had positive impacts for, and furthered the safety of, women and children in our community.

As described by the person who nominated her, "Lauraine, throughout her long life has been an advocate, a friend and a tireless worker on behalf of many whose voices are seldom heard in our society. During her working life she ran a preschool for children with autism and for many years trained persons with developmental disabilities to work in the food services industries. Since retiring to Vermont in 1983 she served for many years as a full time volunteer at the Addison County Parent/ Child Center, an organization founded by her daughter, Cheryl Mitchell. At the Center she ran the food service, taught home making and budgeting skills to young parents, and quilting to untold numbers of people and befriended many struggling families as full equals in the community."

Lauraine is a member of the Milk and Honey Quilters and was a volunteer at HOPE when it was known as Addison County Community Action Group. For many summers, Lauraine ran a day camp for neighborhood children in her back yard in New Haven. She and her husband also hosted refugees from many countries during their quest for asylum. Lauraine served on the Board of Directors for the John W. Graham Emergency Shelter, including 3 years as Board President. Lauraine con-

tinues to host weekly sessions of cooking and quilting in her home for people with developmental disabilities.

Each year the award ceremony is held in March as part of National Women's History Month. This year's Kimberly Krans Award ceremony was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011. We are honored to recognize Lauraine and her tremendous impact on the community.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2012 Kimberly Krans Award, please contact us info@womensafe.net or 388-9180. Nominations are accepted throughout the year and until December 31, 2011.



American Flatbread Benefit Bake!

We are excited to announce that American Flatbread in Middlebury is hosting its **5th Annual Benefit Bake for WomenSafe**. Each year, this event raises several hundred dollars for the organization and it is a lasting tribute and honor to Kimberly Krans, dear friend, colleague and supporter of both American Flatbread and WomenSafe. With this amazing Benefit Bake, folks can enjoy excellent food in a warm atmosphere while making a positive difference in the lives of others. For every flatbread sold, \$3 will be donated to WomenSafe!

Bring your friends and your family to join us on Wednesday, April 27th from 5:00-9:00pm for the **5th Annual American Flatbread Benefit Bake for WomenSafe!** For more information, call WomenSafe at 388-9180 or American Flatbread at 388-3300.

A M E R I C A N
FLATBREAD
at the MARBLE WORKS

A special thank you

A special thank you to the Turtle Fur Group of Morrisville for donating over 100 hats, socks, ear warmers and neck warmers! We hung all the items on a clothesline in our office to make them available for service users coming into our office. The many women and children who choose items were very appreciative. These beautiful creations made our office space festive and warm during the dark, cold winter. Thank you again!



Teens & Dating

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discloses abuse to them allowing all students to get basic support regardless of who they first approach. In addition to this, specific staff should be identified as student advocates; these staff members would receive specialized training in teen dating violence and sexual assault and advocacy skills. The advocates would then be available to support a teen when dating violence has been identified while also providing ongoing support and education to staff regarding teen dating and sexual violence.

Mechanisms for the strictest level of confidentiality allowed within the law should be put in place when working with teens who experience dating violence. This means that all work with a teen victim should be restricted from disclosure to anyone else unless the teen has given specific permission. While teens should be encouraged to inform their parents/guardians about the abuse, if they choose not to, this decision must

be upheld by the school or designated staff member.

A student should be allowed to request accommodations from the school in order to preserve her/his access to meaningful education and safety on school grounds. A threat of dating violence or sexual violence is sufficient to allow a student to request such an accommodation. Allowing accommodations are vital to the prevention of further violence, as well as supporting students to know that they need not wait until violence escalates before they seek help from the school.

Dating and sexual violence often consist of a course of conduct. Because of this, any one action viewed individually may not appear serious; however, when evaluated within the context of a pattern of abuse the seriousness of the action can be understood. Teens who experience dating violence are the experts in their situation and in the threat the perpetrator poses to them and to others. For this reason, they should remain central to

any plan that the school undertakes in response to the violence. Educators are first responders to teen dating violence, and while schools are especially affected by dating violence, they also provide a rich setting for proactively addressing abuse. By implementing a comprehensive policy against abuse, training staff and educating students, schools can increase safety for teen victims and everyone in the school community.

For support implementing a school policy against dating and sexual violence, contact WomenSafe at info@womensafe.net or *Break the Cycle* at expert@breakthecycle.org. *Break the Cycle* consults with organizations, government agencies and schools on how to have a more comprehensive and collaborative response to dating violence. Through their school policy initiative, *Break the Cycle* can help a school coordinate, develop and implement a comprehensive system of prevention and care for teen victims of dating violence within schools.

Child Sexual Abuse

By Willow Wheelock, Education & Outreach Coordinator

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is everybody's business, and most people can take an active role in its prevention. One of the most effective tools in preventing the sexual abuse of children is education; one example is education for adults about what normal sexual development of children looks like, and what behaviors should raise concern or prompt action. Teaching adults how to respond to disclosures of CSA is also important, as is giving people tools for responding when the behavior of an adult or adolescent concerns them.

While providing accurate information and support to adults is a main component of effective prevention and intervention of CSA, providing children with accurate information is equally important. Healthy sexuality education programming can provide children with tools that may discourage predators from targeting them.

Providing children with simple rules on bodies and body boundaries, teaching

them that it is okay to talk about their bodies and their relationships with adults and other kids and giving them ideas of how they can get help and support if a boundary is violated or if they have questions about their relationships may prevent first time victimization. Fostering healthy communication skills, empathy and accountability in children may prevent first time perpetration by



children. The latter is important as up to 50% of all reported child sexual abuse is committed by juveniles.

Quality prevention education carries many benefits. It provides children with tools that may reduce their risk of victimization, it places the responsibility for addressing and ending CSA with adults and it supports the elimination of silence, secrecy, fear and shame that

often surrounds sexuality and enables child sexual abuse to occur.

WomenSafe is now offering two quality educational programs for preventing child sexual abuse. Care for Kids is a six week, fun, health-based, child sexual abuse prevention curriculum for children ages three to seven. This program is offered within the programming of a child care center, school, or after school program. Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development in Children is a one-time adult program that provides information about what healthy sexual development in children is, ways to foster it and what behaviors should raise concern or prompt action. This interactive program also gives adults the opportunity to practice answering children's questions

(think: 'Kids say the darnedest things'), teaches children to nurture and express empathy toward others, and identifies what adult responsibility for keeping children safe looks like. Both programs are free and are facilitated by trained, certified WomenSafe staff. Please call 388-9180 or email ww@womensafe.net for more information.

RSVP

Thank you to the RSVP volunteers who spend many hours preparing over 2,000 newsletters for our mailing. We couldn't get this information out to our readers without their help. We appreciate all their hard work and dedication! We would like to give a special thank you to Sylvia who coordinates the biannual RSVP mailing for us.



The Advocate

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WomenSafe does not necessarily share the opinions expressed by the writers and reserves the right to edit and determine the content of *The Advocate*.

Mission Statement: WomenSafe works toward the elimination of physical, sexual and emotional violence against women and their children through direct service, education and social change.



WomenSafe

Committed to ending
domestic and sexual violence

The Advocate

Newsletter of WomenSafe

Volume 16, Issue 1, Spring 2011

WomenSafe Provides:

- **Advocacy Services
(Free & Confidential)**
 - 24-hour Hotline
 - Information & Referrals
 - Emotional Support
 - Transitional Housing
Support & Advocacy
 - Medical Advocacy
 - Legal Advocacy
 - Systems Advocacy
 - Support Groups
- **Community
Outreach & Education**
- **Supervised Visitation
& Monitored Exchange**

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www.womensafe.net
office: 388-9180
fax: 388-3438

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Deaf callers use telephone relay.

The Supervised Visitation Program
@ WomenSafe (The SVP): 388-6783

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