



Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Kathleen Carlson, Acting Commissioner

This February, Stand against Relationship Abuse with HRA's Relationship Abuse Prevention Program

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, and HRA's Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) is participating in a series of events to spread awareness of this serious issue. While we often associate domestic violence with adults and families, abusive behavior can begin much earlier, when teens and pre-teens first start exploring relationships, and don't always know the risks and warning signs of an unhealthy relationship.

RAPP works with NYC teens to help them distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships and recognize that they deserve to be respected. RAPP is a school-based program, offering classes and counseling in over 60 middle and high schools throughout the city. RAPP also partners with community groups and offers a summer peer leadership program, where students learn more about relationship abuse and how to prevent it, and pass the information on to their friends.

"Our early experiences can shape who we are for years to come," said Cecile Noel, Executive Deputy Commissioner of HRA's Emergency Intervention Services, which includes RAPP. "It's important that young people understand that they're entitled to respect in a relationship, and that they don't have to live with a partner who hurts or threatens them. The RAPP program brings that awareness to New York City Schools and gets young people involved in spreading the word."

Some of the events happening this week include:

- At **John Bowne High School in Flushing, Queens** RAPP social Worker Kathleen Conger is working with a CBO in the building on a range of activities including: a Vow of Silence; Respect Collages; and a "Respect Constitution".
- In Abraham **Lincoln High School** in Brooklyn, the peer leadership program is running a new poster campaign printing out new designs, educating the school on the "relationship bill of rights" and what "healthy relationships are about..." These posters are printed in multiple languages and hung all throughout the school campus. In addition, they will be selling bracelets to raise funds for a DV shelter in the cafeteria next week, and all students will be encouraged to wear purple.
- Three schools are bringing a total of 30 students to the Teen Dating Violence conference run by the Brooklyn DA and Day One, titled, "keeping it real and keeping it safe" (not a RAPP event).
- At **Prospect High School in Brooklyn**, peer leaders will distribute "Respect" lollipops to promote healthy relating and to have a conversation about teen dating violence warning signs. The Peer Leaders came up with a list of what respect means to them and those ideas are the message on the lollipops. For example: "Respect is... treating me with love" "Respect is... knowing your limits".
- At IS52 in Inwood, Manhattan students will make red hearts and writing one thing they will do in order to prevent TDV and practice respect.

February 14, 2014

Like other kinds of abuse, teen dating violence is not just physical – it can include verbal, sexual, emotional and economic abuse as well. Trying to keep someone isolated from his or her family, or constantly monitoring his or her movements through phone calls and text messages is also a form of abuse. Teen dating violence is a problem for teens of all backgrounds, regardless of race, ethnicity, economic background or sexual orientation.