NDVH Launches Teen Dating Violence Helpline and Website

New Outreach Effort, Funded by Liz Claiborne, Features Live Chat to Reach Teens on the Web

One in three teenagers reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their partner.

Nearly one in five teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break up.

Eighty percent of teens regard verbal abuse as a “serious issue” for their age group. Eighty-one percent of parents either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don’t know if it is an issue.

The statistics prove that dating abuse is a significant problem for teenagers today. Since 2000, Liz Claiborne Inc. has commissioned surveys that reveal teen dating violence is an issue that must be acknowledged and addressed.

On February 8, NDVH joined Liz Claiborne Inc. in their efforts to help teenagers across the country by launching loveisrespect.org, the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline (NTDAH). The web-based and telephone helplines were created to help teens, ages 13–18, as well as anyone else affected by teen dating abuse.

“While the Hotline’s outreach is vast and effective, we realized that teens represent a largely overlooked group that is being affected by dating abuse and/or violence”

The Helpline offers live 24-hour assistance from trained teen and adult advocates on the phone at 866-331-9474 (or 866-331-8453 TTY). In addition, loveisrespect.org is the first interactive dating abuse website, staffed by trained advocates, where teens can write and receive immediate assistance in a one-on-
Hotlines is published to provide information about National Domestic Violence Hotline services and operations, as well as national domestic violence issues and trends. It is a project of the Texas Council on Family Violence based in Austin, Texas. Materials from Hotlines may be reprinted without permission, using the following credit: “Hotlines, a publication of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Texas Council on Family Violence.”

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National Domestic Violence Hotline

In comparison to this time period last year, the Hotline cut abandoned calls by 3,251 (or 5.3%) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NDVH 2007</th>
<th>Calls Received</th>
<th>Calls In Answered</th>
<th>% Calls Abandoned</th>
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In the first month of operation loveisrespect.org received almost 20,000 unique visitors to the helpline website, with over 48,000 total pageviews.

Hotline Donors
The National Domestic Violence Hotline extends its deepest gratitude to the following contributors for their generosity (November 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007)

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This edition of on the line features calls from our new National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline and chats from the Helpline’s website — loveisrespect.org

“I’m her mother. Shouldn’t I be able to tell her what to do?” The caller sounded frustrated and desperate. Her 17-year-old daughter was carrying around a cell phone that her abusive boyfriend had given her for Christmas. He was calling and texting the phone over twenty times a day. It had gotten to the point that he was calling at 3 in the morning to make sure she was in bed. The daughter was now talking about the possibility of moving in with him. As a mother, the caller was at the end of her rope. There had to be something that she could do to fix the situation. This was her “baby,” and it was her job to protect her.

I explained that it was perfectly natural to want to protect her daughter by telling her what to do. However, using force could alienate her and drive her further into the abusive relationship. What her daughter needed was support. I suggested to the mother that she open up the lines of communication for her daughter by sitting down to talk to her personally and by encouraging her to reach out to others. We talked about the dangers of certain technologies such as cell phones, especially those with tracking devices, and I encouraged the caller to talk to her daughter about these dangers. I also suggested that the mother mention the Helpline to her daughter. Because the lines are confidential and anonymous, the daughter could talk to someone about her situation without fear of the conversation reaching her mother or her boyfriend. The caller sounded calmed and relieved. “It’s nice to know that I am not the only one that can help.”

The girl on the other end of the chat was fifteen years old, a sophomore in high school. She had gone to loveisrespect.org because her eighteen-year-old senior boyfriend had threatened to tell the whole school if she didn’t sleep with him. She said that it didn’t feel right, but she wasn’t sure; it was her first relationship.

I told her that I was glad that she decided to chat with us. At fifteen years old, a lot of people are just starting to get into relationships, and they are beginning to explore what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. I told her that she was right to be concerned, and I explained that it was not okay for her boyfriend to use threats to coerce her into having sex. I understood that it was tempting to stay in the relationship because of the status it gave her at her school and because of the heartache involved in breaking up, but I encouraged her to really think about her own physical and emotional boundaries. We talked about her safety when she was alone with him, and we discussed some emotional coping strategies if he did spread rumors about her or if she decided to break up with him. It seemed like she really found confidence in the idea that she could make her own decisions. I reminded her that she could always come back to loveisrespect.org if she had any other questions or if she ever needed support for her dating relationships in the future.
NDVH’s National Advisory Board Continues to Grow

The Hotline’s National Advisory Board (NAB) welcomed two new members in February. The NAB consists of prominent national leaders who are committed to raising awareness and the resources necessary to ensure that the Hotline’s lifesaving work continues.

Maury Lane, Corporate Communications Strategist at FedEx Express, and Rose Kirk, Vice President Corporate Employee Communications at Verizon, joined the NAB at its first meeting of the year in New York City.

Lane specializes in business development, public relations, strategic messaging, government affairs, and world-wide media relations. Prior to his position at FedEx Express, Lane was president of Hill Country Communications in Austin. He continues to act in an advisory position to the agency.

At Verizon, Kirk is responsible for creation and coordination of employee communications strategies across all of Verizon’s major lines of business, including wireless, telecom and business. She has received numerous awards, including three Verizon Excellence Awards for outstanding contribution to corporate revenue growth goals and an Addy Award for a Southwestern Bell Yellow Pages’ branding campaign.

NDVH is proud to welcome these two distinguished individuals to the Board.

Hotline Updates Service Provider Database

Emily Toothman, NDVH Staff Writer

In an effort to utilize ever-changing technologies and to accommodate for the specialized needs of its teen callers, the National Domestic Violence Hotline has designed and implemented a system to update its database of over 4500 providers and resources. The updated database is also now being used as a resource for the Advocates on the loveisrespect.org National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and Liz Claiborne Inc.

In January of 2007, NDVH created the Provider Maintenance Application (PMA) so that providers could add/update their information online. Using the new online format, programs can conveniently maintain their contact and service information from their own computers. Providers are encouraged both to update their information and to recommend programs in their area, especially those that specifically cater to teens and young adults experiencing relationship abuse. For those programs that prefer to send in this information manually, mail-outs were sent to all existing providers in the database. All in all, providers are now given four separate options in adding or updating their information: by phone, by fax, by mail, or online.

It is the hope of the NDVH staff that the new, improved database will be better able to serve the needs of those involved in relationship abuse. By making it easier for providers to update their information — and by adding resources to the database that specifically reflect the needs of the new teen callers — NDVH is working towards creating a more accurate and extensive base of information from which to operate the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the loveisrespect.org National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline. The more accurate and detailed the database, the more information the Advocates have to offer the caller. The more information the caller has, the more empowered he or she is to take action against domestic abuse.

NDVH would like to extend a thank you to the providers who have already updated their information and to encourage those who have not yet added or updated their information. There is still time! Interested parties can view the new Provider Maintenance Application at www.pma.ndvh.org. They may also reach the NDVH database staff by phone at (800) 525-1978 or by fax at (512) 453-8541. Forms may be mailed to: PO Box 161810, Austin, TX, 78716.
Decade for Change Summit Holds Final Sessions
Focus Areas for the Future Include Public Awareness, Education and Training, Organizing Men to Stand Up as Role Models and Prevention Programs Focused on America’s Youth

On February 2, NDVH held the final meeting of a three-city Decade for Change SUMMIT in Los Angeles. Leaders from various industries across the country convened to announce preliminary action steps to end domestic violence in America by 2017.

“Despite significant efforts over the past decade to address the problem of domestic violence in our country, 33 million American women continue to experience abuse every year,” said NDVH chief executive officer Sheryl Cates.

“These action steps are designed as a challenge to unite as a nation to end domestic violence. It is time to awaken the hope that we, as a society, can work together to bring the promise of safety and hope to every home in America.”

“Just like domestic violence transcends gender and economic boundaries, the SUMMIT Call to Action bridges government and business boundaries and looks to all segments of our society to make a difference”

The groundbreaking SUMMIT has brought together 100 national leaders and advocates since October 2006 to focus on a 10-year blueprint for preventing domestic violence in this country. Panelists include Meredith Wagner, vice president of public affairs, Lifetime Television; Angela Cobb, program manager, the Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program; Laysha Ward, vice president of community relations, Target; and Patrick Gaston, president, Verizon Foundation.

“Just like domestic violence transcends gender and economic boundaries, the SUMMIT ‘Call to Action’ bridges government and business boundaries and looks to all segments of our society to make a difference,” Angela Cobb said. “The Allstate Foundation is committed to this issue and challenges not only other leaders in our industry, but all of corporate America to make a difference.”

Based on outcomes of the SUMMIT, the forthcoming blueprint report will focus primarily on public awareness, education and training, organizing men to stand up as role models, and prevention programs focused on America’s youth.

As of the final February SUMMIT meetings, three overarching themes have emerged: change public perceptions—the treatment of domestic violence must change from silent acceptance to complete intolerance; early intervention/education—proactive steps must be taken to end the cycle of intergenerational violence starting with our children; and “it’s everybody’s business”—the key to eradicating domestic violence is to create a united effort among key societal sectors to establish industry-specific strategies and tactics that address the problem.

Denise Brown, CEO of the Nicole Brown Foundation, attended the SUMMIT in February. She is a vocal advocate in the plight against domestic violence. “It’s time we all band together and strive for one common goal to stop domestic violence. I am proud to be part of this SUMMIT,” Brown said.

The final SUMMIT Blueprint for Change, which will elaborate on a Bill of Rights and include metrics for measuring success, will be presented to the White House, Congress, domestic violence advocates, leadership in key industry sectors and the public in October, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“This is a wake-up call — for individuals and families, corporate America and our government — to forge a public/private partnership to break the silence,” added Cates. “As a society, we can and need to do more. The SUMMIT Call to Action is an opportunity to unify our collective wisdom to create a society of safety and hope for the next generation.”
one private chat room.
Liz Claiborne Inc. initiated and funded the Helpline and website with a multi-year, million-dollar grant as part of the company’s commitment to help end teen dating abuse in this country. NDVH staffs and operates both projects.

NDVH has offered its support services to adults for 10 years. Approximately 20,000 callers receive resources and safety planning through the national hotline every month. Now, teenagers will have their own line to access information, referrals, safety planning, networking and support.

“While the Hotline’s outreach is vast and effective, we realized that teens represent a largely overlooked group that is being affected by dating abuse and/or violence,” said NDVH/NTDAH president Rose Pulliam.

Pulliam said only about one-third of teenagers who report experiencing dating abuse proceed to tell anyone about it.

“Teens experiencing dating abuse face unique obstacles,” she said. “They don’t necessarily trust adults; they lack knowledge about resources; they face pressure from peers and adults to be ‘grown up’ and to be in a romantic relationship.”

Loveisrespect.org is designed to be a resource for anyone dealing with teen dating abuse. It takes into consideration the obstacles, safety implications and preferred methods of communication for teens.

The online interactive chat with volunteer teen and adult advocates is available during peak hours of service, from 4 p.m. to midnight.

“If teens are not turning to their parents for help, it is essential that they have a private outlet where they can discuss their fears with someone who will provide immediate assistance,” said chief executive officer of NDVH and the Texas Council on Family Violence Sheryl Cates. “This helpline and website were designed exclusively for teens so they can speak to a peer or an adult advocate anonymously and confidentially.”

Emily Toothman, a survivor of teen dating abuse and volunteer on the Helpline, shared her story at the project’s launch. She was 19 years old, a student in college and in her first “real” dating relationship. Her boyfriend was controlling, but Emily said she didn’t recognize his behavior as signs of abuse because it wasn’t physical violence.

“I would have given anything to have someone to talk to — someone who would listen to me, someone who would not judge me for the decisions that I had made, someone who could help me decide what to do next.”

“He would monopolize my time, get angry when I would spend time with other friends, tell me what to wear and even pick out my outfits,” she said.

“To me, it felt like he was just showing me that he cared about me and that he loved me. Looking back, I can now tell you that he had power over me.”

Emily broke up with her boyfriend, but it was after she left that he became a physical danger to her. He stalked her, threatened to ruin academic relationships with teachers, called her constantly and eventually turned to physical violence.

“I came home from school late one night to find him on my doorstep. He was wearing steel-toed boots and was armed with broken glass beer bottles,” she said. “I consider
Volunteers

myself very blessed that I left with only one broken rib and some cuts and bruises.”

After going to the police, Emily took self-defense lessons and returned to school. Her ex-boyfriend found her again on campus and threatened her with a knife. She was able to escape him using a self-defense move she learned. He was arrested and charged with two counts of assault with a deadly weapon.

“I have never felt as alone as I did during the time that I was being stalked, harassed and abused,” Emily said.

“I would have given anything to have someone to talk to — someone who would listen to me, someone who would not judge me for the decisions that I had made, someone who could help me decide what to do next. That is why I am here today.”

Emily is now an advocate on the Helpline. She says she finds a sense of purpose in the work that both NDVH and NTDAH do.

“That [purpose], combined with the deep feeling of community involved in this field, makes my job one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.”

All advocates have received more than 40 hours of training from seasoned supervisory staff, survivors of teen violence and other experts in the field. Callers have the opportunity to talk through their concerns and get information from teens and those working closely with teens about the issues, obstacles and consequences of abuse.

“We will be helping them make those first steps toward safety and recovery,” Pulliam said at the press conference. “Real people, real lives. Real help, real time. And each call, each chat, means we’re one step closer to ending teen dating abuse.”

“I wish that I had known at the time what I know now,” Emily said. “I am not alone. I am very honored to be a part of such an amazing generation of young people who will start the conversation about dating abuse, and who will change the realities of young people across the nation.”

NNEDV Publishes National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS) Survey

Results Show Additional Shelter Resources Needed Nationwide

Rajani Ramachandran, NDVH Staff Writer

In November 2006, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) in collaboration with health economists at Harvard University administered the National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS) survey. The purpose of the survey was to document the number of individuals served by domestic violence programs nationwide. 1,243 domestic violence programs from across the country (62%) participated in the survey, giving advocates and researchers a glimpse into the number of individuals seeking services, the types of services requested and the number of service requests that went unmet due to a lack of resources.

The survey period began at 8:00 a.m. EST on November 2, 2006, and ended at 7:59 a.m. EST on November 3, 2006. Addressing the safety and confidentiality needs of the victims, the survey instrument was designed to collect information pertaining to the number of victims being served and the types of services being provided. Any information that could identify any specific victim at a participating domestic violence program was left out of the survey.

During the 24-hour survey period 47,864 adults and children received direct services. This included:

- 14,344 adults and children who sought refuge in emergency shelters
- 7,933 who lived in transitional housing facilities for domestic violence survivors
- 25,587 who received non-residential services such as individual counseling, legal advocacy and children’s support groups

Hotlines across the country that provide critical support and information to victims of domestic violence also participated in the survey. During the 24-hour period, local and state hotline advocates answered 15,431 calls. The National Domestic Violence Hotline answered 1,213 calls during that time.

The survey also brought to the forefront the issue of limited resources and how considerable needs of victims go unmet. More than 5,000 of requests for services were referred elsewhere because domestic violence programs did not have the resources to aid them.

The detailed NCDVS report is available online at http://www.nnedv.org. The report also includes information on staff, prevention and education, community populations and state-level data.

Source: http://www.nnedv.org/
It is an eventful time for the Hotline. We partnered with Liz Claiborne Inc. to launch our nation's first Helpline for teenagers, joined other leaders at the SUMMIT to discuss actions geared towards ending domestic violence in America by 2017 and updated our Hotline database to ensure better services for the needs of our callers.

Today's teenagers face unique challenges in their relationships. The Hotline continues to work with leaders in the industry who understand the technological needs of today’s connected youth. Since the launch, advocates are able to provide young callers with 24-hour support through the Teen Dating Violence Helpline and the loveisrespect.org live chat. By making these types of services available at a younger age, we are educating future generations about how to create healthier relationships. We are already encouraged to see that these services are making a difference in our children’s lives.

I want to extend a special thanks to our providers who updated their information utilizing our new Provider Maintenance Application. It is wonderful to see our Hotline database continue to evolve to better meet the needs of individuals seeking help.

As we move into spring, we continue to increase our services and outreach. Our efforts include expansion of the Hotline facilities to increase our capacity to serve more callers as well as increasing our online presence so we can extend our services to all generations seeking help from abusive relationships.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Cates
CEO National Domestic Violence Hotline