

Reaching Teens With The Truth:



A Teen Dating  
Violence Prevention  
Program Evaluation

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# Abstract

A four-week educational intervention on teen dating violence given to all 9<sup>th</sup> graders in a local high school was evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program. Quantitative data were gathered (in the form of written feedback forms) to measure immediate impact on the teen participants. A follow-up study conducted six months after the conclusion of the program yielded qualitative data (utilizing six focus groups of previous participants) which were then analyzed to determine retention and usefulness of information presented in the program, as an indicator of long-term outcome on the program's participants.

# Quantitative Evaluation

## Research Design

Immediately following a 4-week series of presentations on teen dating violence and healthy relationships, participants were asked to rate their ability both before and after the workshops on two measures: 1) ability to identify an abusive relationship, and 2) ability to support the victim.

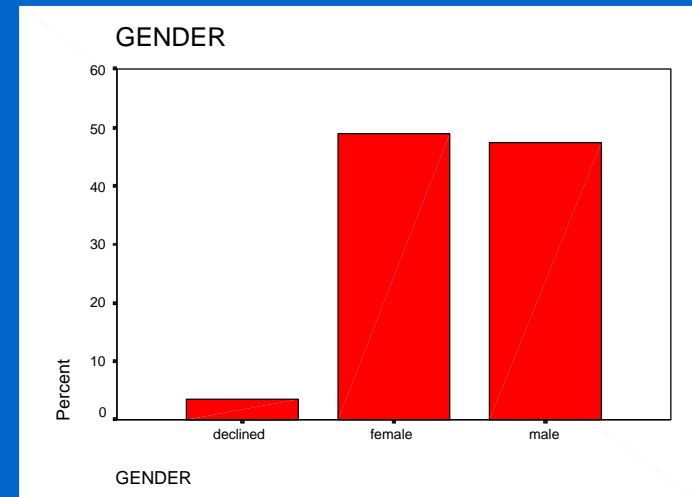
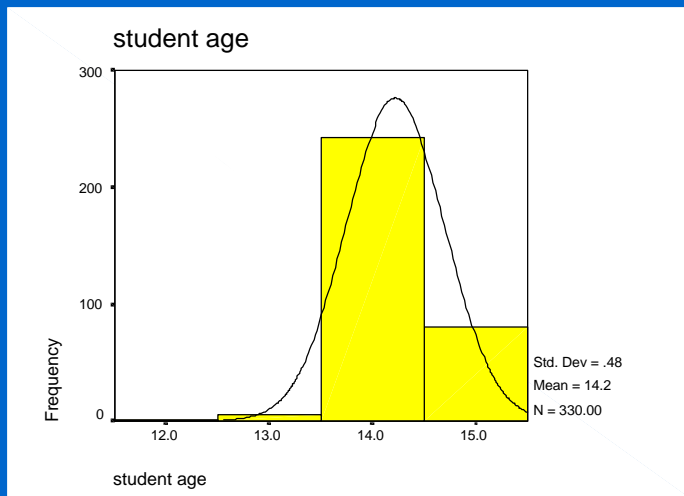
Primary analysis was done to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between pre- and post-presentation scores, with secondary analysis investigating scores by gender and age. Data analysis was facilitated by the use of SPSS for Windows, version 8.0.

# Quantitative Evaluation

## Participant Demographics

### Age

- All students (N=333) were 9th graders at a local high school.
- age ranged from 12 to 15.
- majority of participants (73%) were 14 years of age.



### Gender

- 163 females (48.9%)
- 158 males (47.4%)
- 12 unreported ( 3.6%)

(ethnicity data not collected)

# Quantitative Evaluation

## Survey Questions

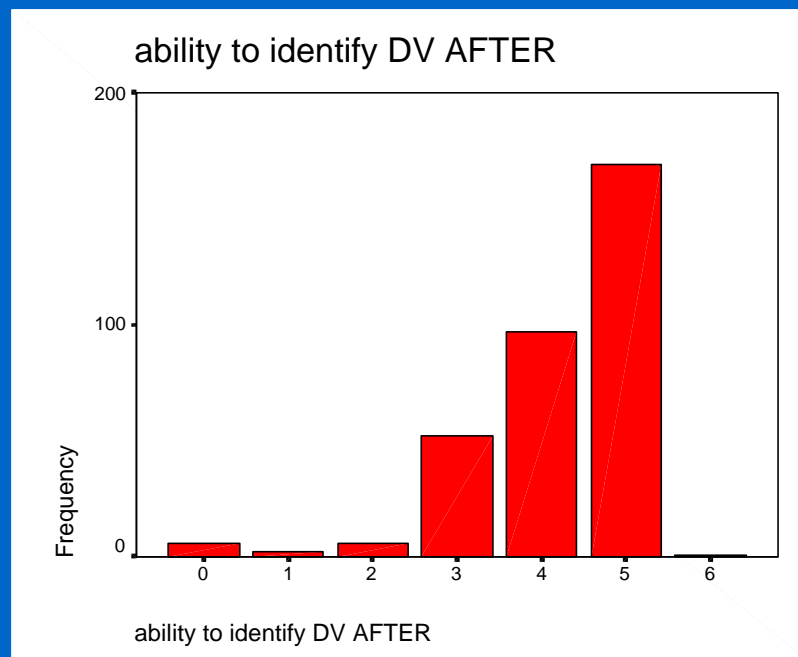
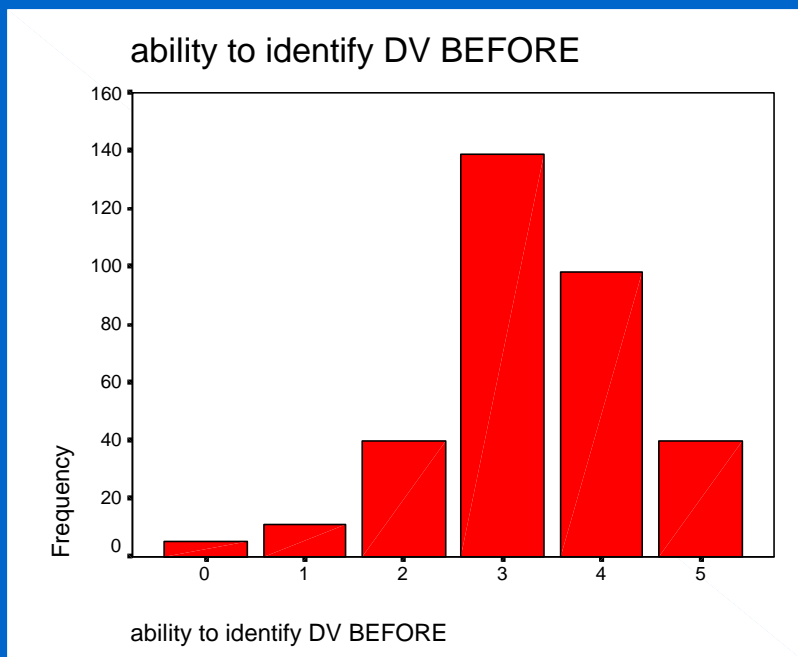
- Rate your confidence in your **ability to identify an abusive relationship** before/after the workshops
- Rate your confidence in your **ability to support the victim in an abusive relationship** before/after the workshops

Both questions were based on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest

# Quantitative Evaluation

## Ability to identify abuse

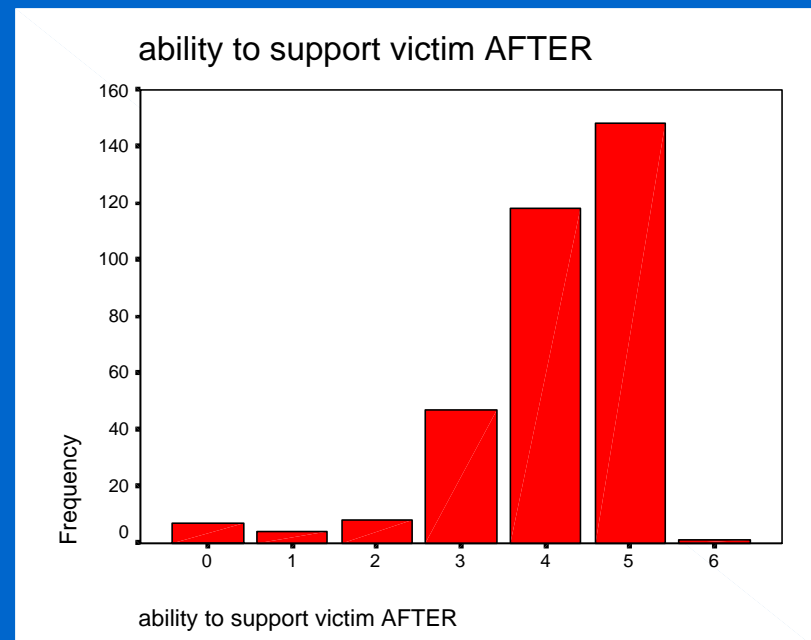
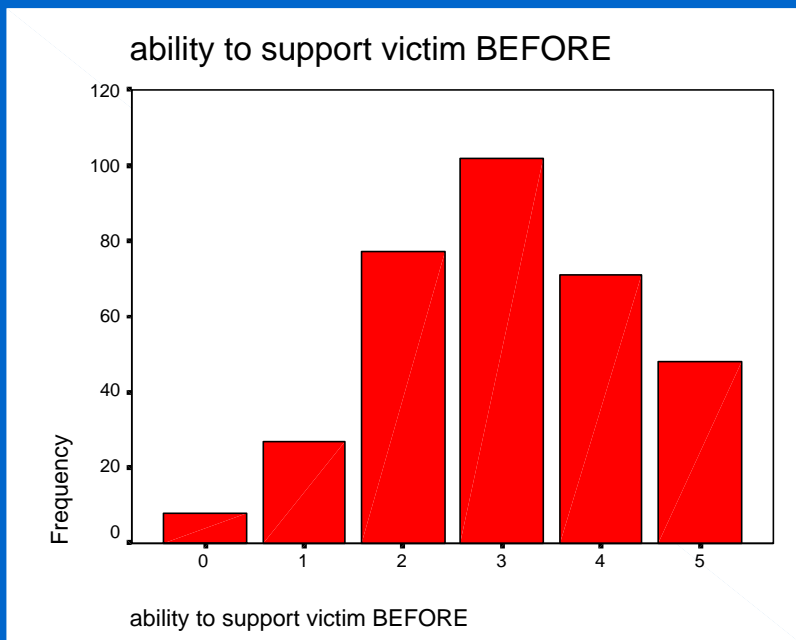
On the *identify*<sub>before</sub> variable, 41.4% of the overall population (138/333) rated their confidence levels at the top of the scale for their self-reported ability to identify abuse prior to the presentations; this increased to 79.9% on the *identify*<sub>after</sub> variable (266/333).



# Quantitative Evaluation

## Ability to support victim

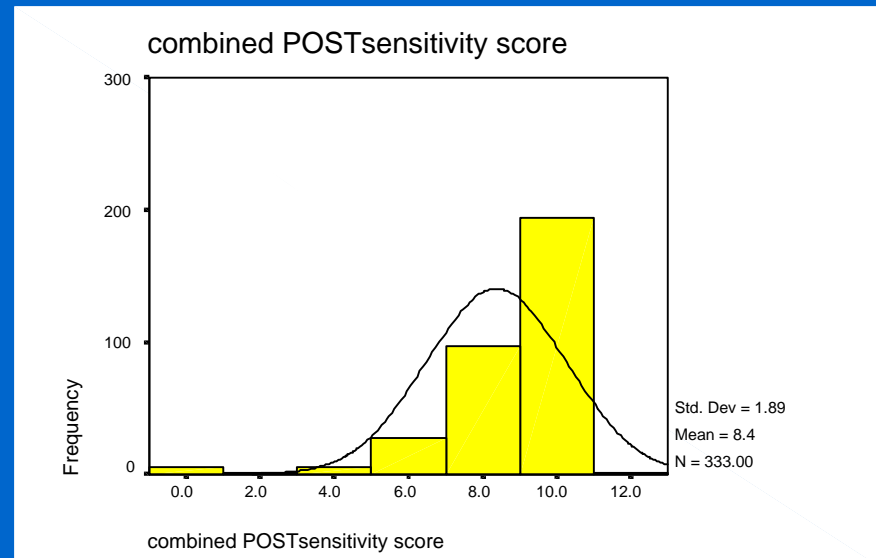
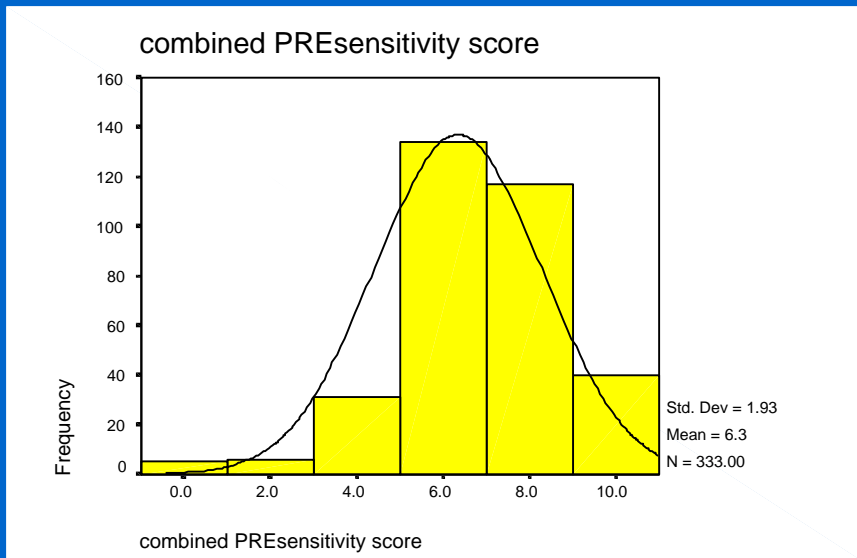
Likewise, the *support*<sub>before</sub> variable yielded a pre-presentation score of 35.7% as the overall population (119/333) rated high confidence levels for their ability to support the victim; the *support*<sub>after</sub> variable increased to 79.8% (267/333) after the presentations.



# Quantitative Evaluation

## Methods

The two ordinal variables of interest, **ability to identify abuse** and **ability to support the victim** were recoded into new continuous variables: **combined pre- and post-sensitivity scores**. Assumption checks were then conducted using Levene's test of homogeneity of variances and normality tests.



# Quantitative Evaluation

## Descriptive Statistics

- On the *pre-sensitivity score*, 12% of the overall population (40/333) rated their levels of confidence at the top of the scale for ability to identify abuse and for their ability to support the victim; this increased to 58.5% (195/333) on the *post-sensitivity score*.

	<i>pre-sensitivity</i>	<i>post-sensitivity</i>
	<i>score</i>	<i>score</i>
<b>Mean</b>	6.34	8.37
<b>Median</b>	6.00	9.00
<b>Mode</b>	6	10
<b>Std. deviation</b>	1.93	1.89
<b>Variance</b>	3.74	3.57

# Quantitative Evaluation

## Tests of Significance

- With sufficient evidence to overlook the violation of normality, a paired T-test was conducted on the **pre- and post-sensitivity scores**.
- The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was run on both pairs of ranked variables: **ability to identify abuse** before/after and **ability to support the victim** before/after.

# Quantitative Evaluation

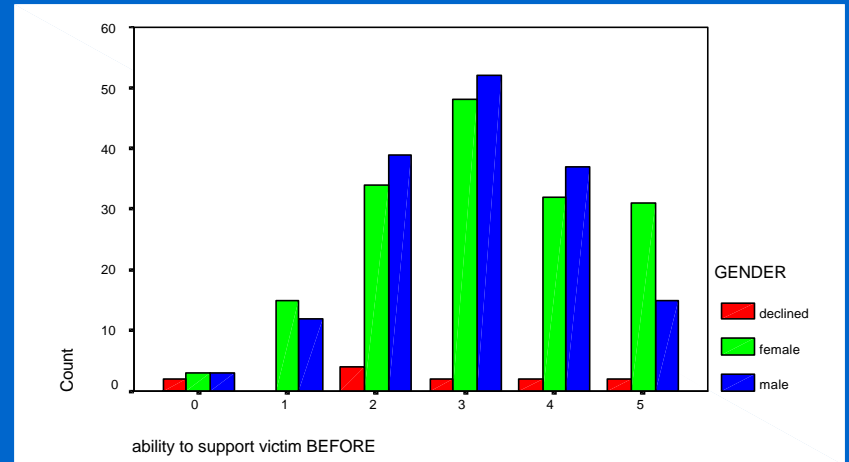
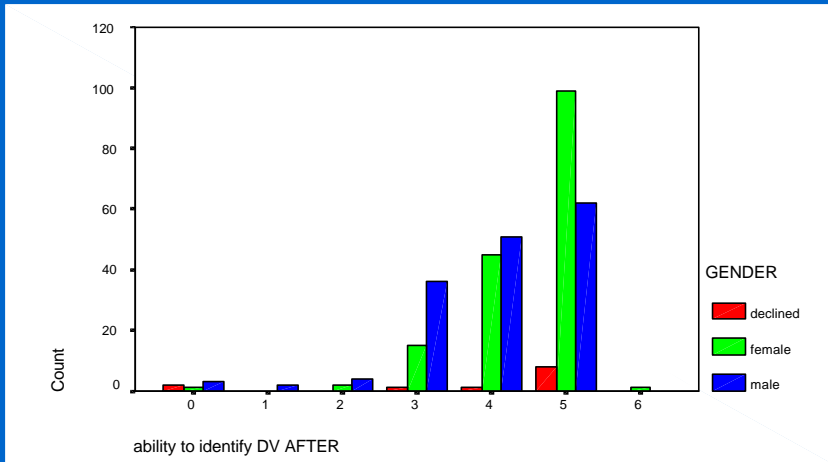
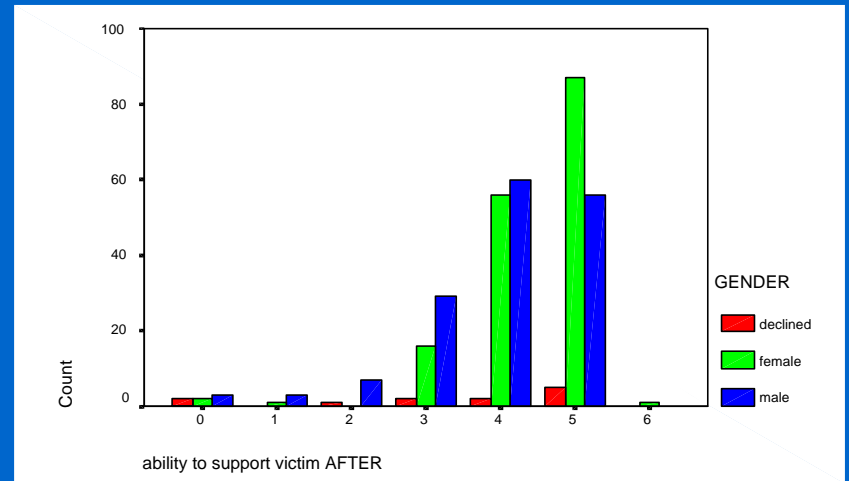
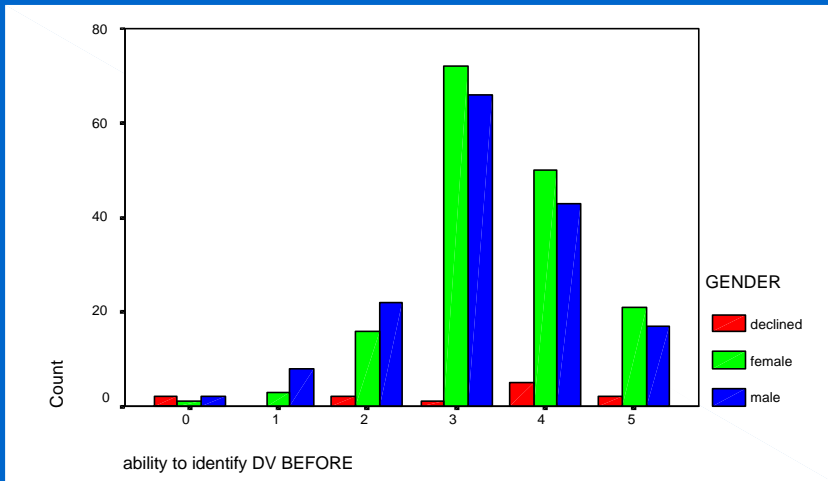
## Results

- The paired T-test showed a statistically significant difference in **pre- and post-sensitivity scores**. (two-tailed  $t = -19.460$ )
- The Wilcoxon signed ranks tests showed a statistically significant difference in both pairs of before/after scores for the ranked variables:
  - **ability to identify abuse** ( $z = -12.043$ ) and
  - **ability to support the victim** ( $z = -12.135$ ).

All tests were conducted at an alpha level of .05.

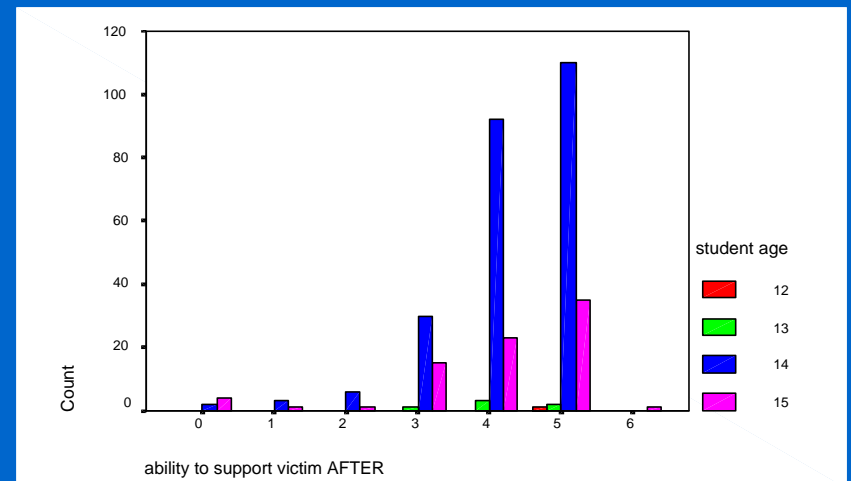
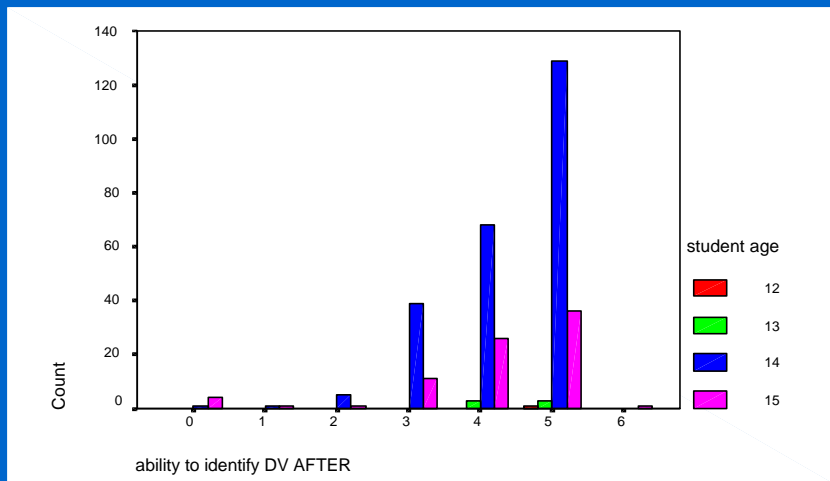
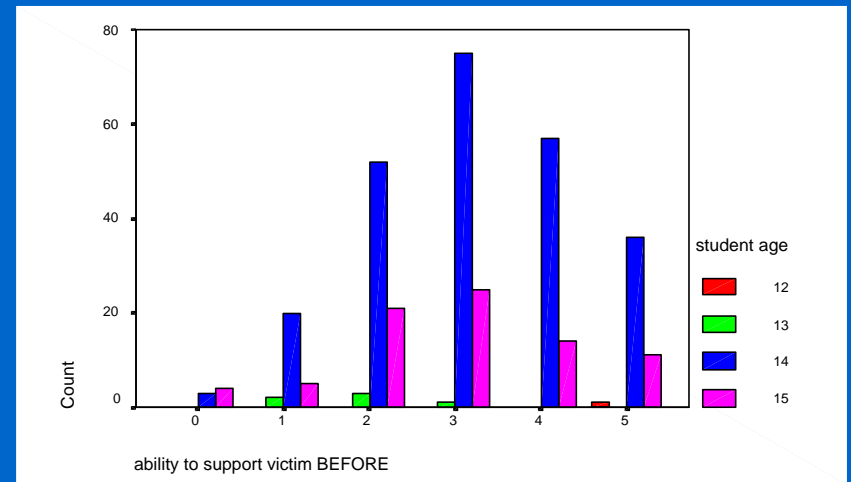
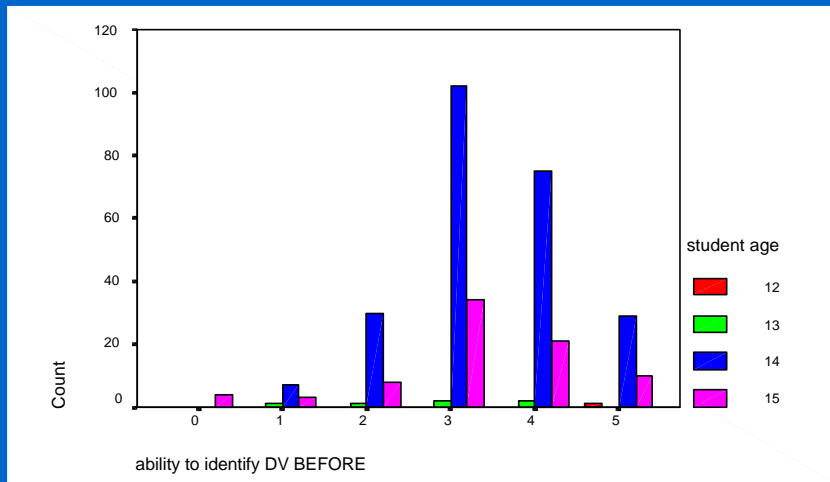
# Quantitative Evaluation

## Sub-Analysis by gender



# Quantitative Evaluation

## Sub-Analysis by age



# Quantitative Evaluation

## Discussion

- A statistically significant difference was found consistently in both the parametric and nonparametric tests of significance, indicating the demonstrated effectiveness of the program in increasing ability to identify abuse and in supporting the victim.
- While patterns did differ by both age and gender, within both subcategories the overall effectiveness of the program held on these two measures.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Research Design

It was felt by SNBW staff that quantitative data was insufficient to properly evaluate the efficacy of this program, as the data gathered and analyzed from the participant feedback forms provided data on immediate impact only.

Therefore, a qualitative evaluation effort was undertaken to evaluate at a six-month interval the long-term outcome on the program's participants, utilizing six focus groups of previous participants to determine what each remembered, and what long-term effect (if any) could be directly related to the presentations.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Methodology of Data Collection

- Six focus groups were conducted at Mt. Pleasant High School, with the assistance and coordination of faculty member, with whom the evaluator and SNBW staff conferred regarding logistics and recruitment.
- Incentives for participation included donuts, sodas, and cookies, as well as community service/class credit given by the faculty members, but the incentives had little to do with recruitment efforts.
- The majority of the focus groups were comprised of 4-6 students each, with one exceptionally large group of 9, which had to be repeated as most of the responses garnered in that particular group were hampered by the boisterousness of one individual participant.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Focus Group Recruitment

- A fair mix of gender, socioeconomic status and academic achievement levels was desired, so as to not skew the responses.
- Recruitment was not done randomly, but faculty members at the school picked students to attend, to guard against self-selection bias were the focus groups made strictly voluntary.
- Concerns of parental release were assuaged with the faculty member's coordination of recruitment.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Focus Group Questions

1. What do you remember from the presentation(s)?
2. What did you like/dislike most about it?
3. What was the most useful/least useful of the activities?
4. How would you describe your ability to identify abusive relationships before/after the presentation?
5. How would you describe your ability to help others in abusive relationships before/after the presentation?

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Focus Group Questions, (Con't.)

6. Did this presentation change your relationship with someone you know in an abusive relationship? If so, how? How useful was the presentation in helping you think about that?
7. Did you give away the SNBW card to anyone? If not, do you still have it?
8. Is the business card youth-friendly? Is there a better way? What do you want to have?
9. Did the presentations appear to have a gender/heterocentric bias? If so, how could it be done differently to eliminate that bias?
10. Has this presentation changed the way you view dating relationships? If so, how?

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Summary

One of the major questions to be measured in this evaluation was whether the program enabled the participants to better identify and then aid someone in an abusive relationship.

Participants felt that after the presentations, they were more able to empathize with the victim and understand her predicament, as well as to link her to resources.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Retention of Information

Things most participants remembered six months after the workshops included:

- the cycle of violence,
- SNBW's shelter services (and the fact that the location of it was kept confidential),
- the warning signs of abuse, and
- the ambiguity in not always being able to identify whether or not a situation was abusive.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Key Findings

- Many of the participants felt the presentations were too focused on male/female relationships and that gay/lesbian students in the classroom may have felt alienated, as their concerns were not addressed. This was not unsolicited feedback, however, as one of the evaluation questions asked this specifically.
- Many of the participants agreed that the presentations had changed the way in which they viewed dating relationships, as it had made them more cautious in their choice of a mate.
- Many but not all of the students remembered the business card; a few had given it away to someone they had known in an abusive situation; however, once that card has been given away, there is nothing left to refer to later.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Key Findings, (Con't.)

- One student related that she spoke to her mother after hearing this presentation regarding a mutual friend who was being victimized--both the mother and the student then talked to the woman, gave her the SNBW card, and she subsequently left her abusive relationship and obtained a restraining order.
- Many participants felt that the card is useful and serves a purpose, but is more adult-specific and that another medium should be explored for teens to keep on hand for future use (suggestions were: key chains, magnets, bookmarks, pens/pencils, notepads).

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Long-Term Outcomes

A positive long-term impression was made on the minds of these adolescents, many of whom are just beginning to become involved in dating relationships.

Six months after the conclusion of the program, students were less likely to rush into a romantic relationship, and reported having become more cautious in their choice of a mate as a direct result of this program.

Moreover, several students had referred others in abusive situations to services, indicating that they had a lasting increase in their ability both to identify abuse as well as to support victims, the two primary evaluation questions.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Recommendations

- Staff/volunteer training on making workshops more interactive (several students complained of lecturing, lots of statistics, and the boredom associated with too many facts -- and the resultant loss of retention of information).
- Research and purchase items that teens would be more likely to keep (rather than a business card), as this evaluation has shown that teens are receptive to the information, but are likely to lose a business card.
- Expand the program to be better able to serve other schools in Santa Clara Valley with this vital information.

# Qualitative Evaluation

## Recommendations, (Con't.)

- Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that all speakers speak directly about same-sex battering and present material in such a way that any gay/lesbian students in the classroom are not alienated or tokenized.
- Ensure that presenters speak not only about battering in the adult population, but stress teen dating violence, to more directly address issues affecting their age group and life experiences, which was likely done in some but not all of the presentations.

# Overall Evaluation

## Limitations

The limitations of the evaluation research presented here are obvious:

- this particular program's success cannot be generalized to all prevention programs, as many utilize different curricula and methods; and
- it is at least theoretically possible that the entire ninth grade of one high school may not be reflective of the populations of other high schools.

# Overall Evaluation

## Significance

The significance of this inquiry is also equally obvious:

- this program is indeed effective in raising awareness of abusive relationships in teens, and
- it is in adolescence quite often that such relationships begin.

**As a method of prevention of future victimization, a program such as this is quite necessary for the health and well-being of tomorrow's young adults.**