

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE: AN EXPLORATION INTO DATING
VIOLENCE PREVENTION CURRICULUM

by

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ABSTRACT

In 2004 the Ontario Ministry of Education created the Safe Schools Action Team (SSAT) to advise on the development of a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention. When four years later in 2008 the SSAT re-engaged in order to review the issues of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour, recommendations were made for addressing these issues (Ministry of Education, 2008). One of the most significant dimensions of the SSAT report was their statement that the most effective method to learn about healthy relationships is through school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008). Taking the SSAT recommendation that the most effective method for educating adolescents on healthy relationships is through curriculum, the current study seeks to describe, from the teacher's perspective, experiences with and motivations for using curriculum advocating healthy relationships, specifically dating violence prevention programming. The purpose of this thesis is to examine four female Ontario Physical and Health Education teachers' personal and professional experience with teen dating violence and their knowledge about and use of dating violence prevention curriculum that has been approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The participants related their experiences with dating violence within their school communities and discussed how they approached these issues within their own classroom. The results of this study indicate that dating violence continues to be a prevalent issue for Ontario secondary schools, and there is a need for continued research into how to teach dating violence prevention in meaningful ways.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My interest in dating violence stems from my own personal experiences with dating violence, and has grown as I have discovered more about this important issue. As a senior in high school, I became involved in, what I recognize now as, an unhealthy dating relationship with a male partner. Over the course of our relationship, my partner would often use subtle psychological and emotional abuse to control and isolate me from my friends and family; making me feel guilty for going on outings with girlfriends as I would be leaving him “all alone.” My partner would continually threaten to commit suicide if I ever ended the relationship, claiming that I was all he had to live for. These threats caused strain not only in our relationship, but with my own friends and family as well. Eventually, the strain led to several arguments that involved minor physical violence including shoving with one particular incident resulting in my partner hitting me. While I was well aware that pushing and hitting were not part of a healthy relationship, I was so scared he would follow through on his threats of suicide, that I believed that this particular incident really was a “one-time thing.” Unfortunately, I did not have the strength to leave the relationship, and it lasted two years. During the relationship I did not confess to or seek help from anyone. I was embarrassed that I had gotten myself into this situation. I did not know how to remove myself from the situation while ensuring my safety as well as his. After being able to reflect on this part of my life, I believe if I had been able to receive information about dating violence and the various types of abuse that are involved: physical, sexual, and psychological/emotional, I might

have been able to recognize just how serious our problems were and realized that I was involved in a dangerous abusive relationship.

My interest in dating violence continued to develop as I became immersed in the education field. As a teacher-candidate, I heard, on more than one occasion, students use derogatory language and name calling to their dating partners, as well as conversations about the obligations to hang out with a dating partner to avoid upsetting him or her.

While I was a teacher-candidate at my host school, there was an issue of a female student stalking her ex-boyfriend. The situation escalated to the involvement of the local police.

While I was beginning to recognize that verbal abuse and psychological bullying were characteristics of dating violence, I also realized that no one in the school was addressing the issue of dating violence. After my teaching placement I knew that my personal experience with dating violence was not isolated, and that this was an issue shared by a community of adolescents.

Following my teaching practicum, I began to volunteer at a local women's shelter. I worked closely with the education coordinator at the shelter and was able to learn more about adolescent dating violence and abuse against women. Through the shelter, I came into contact with an anti-violence group that worked on educating the community on domestic violence as part of its mandate. At this time, the group was holding a contest for all the local high schools. The contest had students create short public service announcement video clips about healthy relationships. My involvement with this initiative was to create lesson plans built upon the winning video clips. The lesson plans were made into classroom-ready resources that would be used to help promote the contest, the anti-violence organization, and healthy relationships. This experience

allowed me to discover the resources and institutions available for those experiencing adolescent dating violence. I began to question, however, how and if they were being used, and to what extent schools educate adolescents about dating violence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to describe Ontario Physical and Health Education teachers' personal and professional experiences with teen dating violence and their knowledge about and use of dating violence prevention curriculum that has been approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education. To investigate this perspective on dating violence, I undertook a study consisting of individual interviews with four female Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers. This study explored the reported motivation behind the participants' use of dating violence curriculum in their classroom, as well as their views on whether or not there was a need to increase the profile of dating violence among students and staff, through the use of the available curriculum.

Five research questions guided the present study: (1) How do these four Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers understand adolescent dating violence? (2) In what ways do they believe that dating violence affects their students and themselves? (3) What knowledge and experience do these Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers have of available dating violence prevention programs? (4) What were the reasons to use a particular prevention program within these Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers' classrooms? (5) From their personal and professional experience with dating violence prevention curriculum, what recommendations would these four

Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers make to increase the awareness of dating violence and promote the implementation of dating violence prevention curriculum?

Definition of Key Terms

Terminology varies in research about violence in relationships. This study uses dating violence rather than intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence. IPV and domestic violence typically refer to adult relationships, whereas dating violence is more commonly used to describe violence within adolescent romantic relationships (Teten, Ball, Valle, Noonan, & Rosenbluth, 2009). Glass et al. (2003) defined dating violence as the “perpetration or threat of an act of violence by at least one member of an unmarried couple within the context of dating or courtship (same sex or opposite sex)” (p. 228). Dating violence can occur in both hetero- and homosexual relationships. This study uses the term dating violence within the context of opposite-sex dating relationships. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2000) uses the term “relationship violence” in the Health and Physical Education curriculum documents. “Relationship” is an ambiguous term that may include various partnerships; thus this study refrains from using the term “relationship violence.”

Dating violence refers to three categories of violent behaviour: physical, sexual, and psychological/emotional. Specific acts included within the physical subcategory involve “hitting, slapping, stabbing, choking, or otherwise physically assaulting one’s partner” (Teten et al., 2009, p. 923). Physical violence is force that is intended to harm or kill. Sexual violence is characterized as any unwanted and/or non-consensual sexual contact, as well as verbal sexual harassment (Teten et al.). Emotional abuse includes verbal intimidations and threats. Psychological abuse occurs when the perpetrator isolates

a partner from friends and family, asserts excessive power over decision making, shows severe controlling and jealous behaviour, and uses verbal put downs (Teten et al.).

With the specific acts of violence in mind, this study uses the Lavoie, Robitaille, and Hébert (2000) definition of violence; “violence is any behaviour that is prejudicial to the partner’s development or health by compromising his or her physical, psychological, or sexual integrity” (p. 8).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this thesis is based on the perspective of prevention. Dating violence curriculum should take the position of preventive programming to achieve effective results (Foshee et al., 1998; Noonan & Charles, 2009). Two levels of prevention have been identified in regards to dating violence. Primary prevention is achieved when the first perpetration of violence is prohibited. Secondary prevention occurs when victims stop being victimized or perpetrators stop being violent (Foshee et al.). Curriculum dealing with issues of dating violence can lead to primary prevention by altering norms associated with dating violence, decreasing gender stereotyping, and improving conflict management skills (Foshee et al.). To attain primary prevention of dating violence, most practitioners focus preventative programs on high school aged students. The developmental stage of adolescents provides an opportunity to form appropriate attitudes and behaviours surrounding dating violence, as adolescents are just beginning to form meaningful dating relationships (Cornelius & Ressguie, 2007). School activities can also lead to secondary prevention by changing beliefs about the need to help, and increasing awareness about the availability of services for victims and

perpetrators of violence (Foshee et al.). Typically, curriculum designers develop dating violence curriculum to address both primary and secondary prevention (Cornelius & Ressguie).

Rationale

Dating violence is recognized as a serious and prevalent threat for adolescents. It is difficult to determine just how many adolescents are affected by dating violence because many incidents of violence go unreported; however, several studies have estimated that up to one-third of adolescents may experience this type of abuse during an intimate partner relationship (Bergman, 1992; Black, Tolman, Callahan, Saunder, & Weisz, 2008; Wolfe et al., 2009). Dating violence has substantial consequences for the individuals involved, ranging from incidents of serious bodily harm (and possibly death), to serious psychological and emotional problems for the individuals involved (Ashley & Foshee, 2005). A number of studies have correlated experiences of dating violence with higher rates of eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, and decreased mental and physical health and life satisfaction (e.g., Ackard & Neumark-Sztainer, 2002; Coker et al., 2000). Banyard and Cross' (2008) secondary analysis of data collected from a survey administered to 9,791 Grade 7 to 12 students from 10 different school districts in Wisconsin associated dating violence victimization to negative school attitudes, thoughts of dropping out, and lower grade averages.

Adolescents are in a unique and crucial developmental period when dating behaviour first emerges. With courtship also comes the risk of abuse toward or by a dating partner. Given the key period in which adolescents first begin to date, it is

surprising that more researchers have not focused on the size and distribution of violence in adolescent dating relationships (Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004).

Exploration into the adolescent dating violence phenomenon is imperative since abuse in adolescent dating relationships is often the catalyst for a pattern for abuse in later adult relationships (Marquart, Nannini, Edwards, Stanley, & Wayman, 2007). To break the cycle of violence and address issues of dating violence, it would seem appropriate that adolescents be educated about the importance of healthy relationships and the dangers of violence earlier in their dating life.

The Ontario Ministry of Education through the Safe Schools Action Team, in their report, *Shaping a culture of respect in our schools: Promoting safe and healthy relationships*, stated that the most effective method to learn about healthy relationships is through curriculum (2008). This finding has encouraged the growth of dating violence prevention curricula. Wolfe et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study, over two and one half years, of 1,722 Grade 9 students from 30 schools within one school board in south west Ontario. This particular cohort of adolescent learners had participated in a dating violence prevention program as part of the health component of their physical education course. Incidents of physical dating violence were assessed using items from the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory. Participants' marked yes or no to actions they used within the last year towards a boyfriend or girlfriend. After analysis of pre- and post-program data, Wolfe et al. determined though participants' self-report, that there were lower rates of physical dating violence after the students had experienced the prevention program. The Wolfe et al. study supports the integration of

opportunities to learn about dating violence through course-based prevention programs that are part of a formal curriculum in existing secondary school courses.

Examination of the available resources that are accessible for Ontario high school teachers is necessary to ensure that secondary school students are provided with the information they need to understand the scope and implications of dating violence. Since the decision to include specific dating violence prevention curriculum lies with the teachers, to gain a better understanding of what motivates the inclusion of certain prevention programming, discussion with those teachers is necessary.

Overview of the Thesis

In the first chapter of this thesis, I introduced the topic and outlined the purpose of the study. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature that examines the prevalence and impact of dating violence, considers the causes of dating violence, discusses dating violence prevention programs, and describes adolescent influence in the creation of these programs. Lastly, I include a section on the role of teachers in the implementation of prevention programming. In Chapter 3, I provide the methods of the study, detailing the additional care accompanying the research due to the potentially sensitive nature of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of my discussions with each of my participants. The final chapter connects the findings with previous literature, presents the limitations of my study, and provides suggestions for future research. I conclude this thesis by reflecting on the course of my study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review literature that discusses dating violence and dating violence prevention programs. The literature review is divided into five sections. The first section addresses why dating violence is a relevant issue by exploring its prevalence rates and impact. The second section provides an overview of the causes of dating violence, while the third section summarizes existing dating violence prevention programs and their effectiveness. The fourth section discusses how adolescents play an influential role in creating dating violence prevention. The final section investigates the teacher's role in executing and creating dating violence prevention programs.

Prevalence and Impact

While research on domestic violence is vast, the literature focusing exclusively on heterosexual dating violence in teen relationships is only beginning to develop (Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004). It is difficult to determine a precise rate of adolescent dating violence, given that researchers are just beginning to focus on this phenomenon with many incidents of dating violence going unreported (Hanson, 2002). Statistics Canada released a report in June 2010, stating that in 2008, 23,000 incidents of dating violence were reported to police, accounting for 7% of violent crimes in Canada. There was an overall increase of over 40% for reported dating violence incidents between 2004 and 2008. Among adolescents aged 15 to 19, the police-reported rate of dating violence experienced by females was 10 times higher than the rate for males (Statistics Canada, 2010). While there was an increase in dating violence rates between 2004 and 2008, the number only relates to police-reported dating violence. Awareness of the issue may be

reflected in the increased numbers of reported incidents of dating violence. There is little known about the unreported incidents of dating violence. While dating violence represents only 7% of violent crimes in Canada, the steady increase in the number of dating violence acts between 2004 and 2008 is one reason to increase the awareness of dating violence among Canadian adolescents.

Experiencing dating violence either as a victim or a perpetrator of violence can lead to other unhealthy behaviours as seen in Ackard and Neumark-Sztainer's (2002) study. The researchers assessed the prevalence of dating violence and rape among 81,247 adolescents in Grades 9 through 12 from Minnesota. The overall rates of dating violence incidents were relatively low: 9% of females and 7% of males reported experiencing dating violence (Ackard & Newmark-Sztainer). The study was able to correlate encounters with dating violence to other unhealthy behaviours, in that experiences with dating violence were associated with significantly higher rates of binge-eating, fasting, diet pills, and vomiting. Dating violence also affected emotional well-being; those who reported incidents of dating violence had significantly lower levels of self-esteem and emotional well-being than those who had not experienced dating violence. Half the adolescents who reported one or more occurrences of violence in a dating relationship had attempted to commit suicide (Ackard & Newmark-Sztainer). This study is a good indication of dating violence prevalence, since there was a large sample size and high participation rate.

Similar to Ackard and Newmark-Sztainer's findings, Banyard and Cross (2008) conducted a secondary analysis of Teen Assessment Project (TAP) data, which were collected via survey to gain insight into community empowerment, intervention with

teenagers, and assessment of their needs in Wisconsin. Banyard and Cross used a convenience subsample of 2,101 participants to examine mental health and educational consequences of physical and sexual abuse by peers. Being a survivor of dating violence victimization was associated with greater mental health concerns, such as, depression, suicidal thoughts, and substance use, and negative educational outcomes including lower grade-point averages and thoughts of dropping out of school.

Callahan, Tolman, and Saunders (2003) also examined dating violence victimization and its effects on psychological well-being with similar results to Banyard and Cross (2008) and Ackard and Newmark-Sztainer (2002). Callahan et al. studied responses from 190 students aged 13 to 19 years from one Southern Michigan high school. Through self-administered questionnaires using a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale-2, respondents were asked questions about dating violence, the frequency at which they experienced violence or threat of violence, as well as the severity of their injuries. Psychological well-being was measured through a variety of scales: Trait Anxiety, Child's Depression Inventory Short Form, The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children. Girls reported significantly more severe and frequent dating violence victimization than boys. Although boys experienced dating violence less frequently than girls, boys who did have experience with dating violence differed little from girls in terms of the effects on psychological well-being. For girls, dating violence contributed significantly to posttraumatic stress and dissociation. More severe dating violence was significantly related to lower life satisfaction. For boys, dating violence contributed significantly to anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress. Callahan et al. proposed that these findings were significant as previous research had

suggested that girls were more likely to be negatively impacted from dating violence victimization; however, results from this study indicate that victims of dating violence, either boys or girls, are likely to have lower rates of psychological well-being. Age was a significant factor in dating violence victims' psychological well-being, as adolescents are at a crucial developmental stage, they are at a greater risk than adults for physical and psychological harm. The lasting effects of experiencing dating violence further support the need to address dating violence among adolescents.

Several studies have found significant correlations between dating violence victimization and lower levels of life satisfaction. Coker et al. (2000), for example, conducted a cross-sectional study of 5,414 high school students in Grades 9 through 12 in South Carolina to examine the rates of severe dating violence, in this case, defined as being hit, kicked, beaten, or attacked with a weapon. Estimates of forced sex, defined as someone using force to engage in sexual intercourse were also measured in this study; 14.4% of females and 9.1% of males reported having experienced some form of severe dating violence (either as victim or perpetrator). Of the sexually active females (n= 1510), 16.2% reported a forced sex experience. Similar to the findings of Ackard and Newmark-Sztainer (2002), dating violence victimization was associated with lower levels of health-related quality of life.

Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, and Kupper (2001) examined reports of psychological and minor physical violence in a nationally representative sample of adolescents in heterosexual romantic relationships. Ninety thousand students from Grades 7 through 12, aged 12 to 21, completed the survey; at-home interviews were also conducted for 20,000 of the respondents. The survey dealt with multiple health-related

matters, but researchers were able to extract important statistics about adolescent dating violence. Of those involved in a romantic dating relationship (n=7,493), 29% admitted to having experienced some form of psychological violence and 32% to having experienced some form of physical violence. Psychological and physical violence in heterosexual relationships was common: three of every 10 adolescents aged 12 to 21 experienced some type of violence victimization, and one in 10 was the victim of physical violence.

While the rates of experiencing dating violence vary among populations and the prevalence rate is fairly low, those individuals who experience dating violence are at greater risk for poorer quality of health and well-being. The studies collectively indicate that dating violence has the potential to harm the physical and psychological well-being of its victims with a possible lasting effect on their quality of life. Given the vital developmental stage of adolescence, it is imperative to educate teenagers on the risks of dating violence and the value of healthy dating relationships.

Causes of Dating Violence

Adolescent relationships develop the foundation for later adult romantic relationships (Crockett & Crouter, 1995). Thus creating healthy relationships during adolescence may reduce the rates of domestic violence. Understanding the cyclical behaviours during dating relationships is necessary in the prevention of dating violence. The 'Cycle of Violence' or the 'Cycle of Abuse' is most commonly seen in domestic violence scenarios in which the female spouse is being abused by a male partner. Walker (1980), in her work on battered women, discovered a pattern of behaviour among the abused women and developed a cycle to describe this pattern. Walker's cycle included

three phases: “tension building phase,” “acute explosive phase,” and “honeymoon phase.” The tension building phase consists of the abuser becoming more critical of the victim and more temperamental. Walker describes the abuser in this stage as rapidly losing control with minor forms of abuse taking place. The acute explosive phase is the point of abuse, either physically or sexually. This phase is considered the most dangerous and may increase in intensity every time a couple enters the explosive phase. After the abuse comes the honeymoon phase when the abuser typically feels remorse and apologizes for (in this case) his actions and commits to positive change. However, the tension begins to build and the abuser becomes aggressive, thereby returning to the tension building phase. The ‘Cycle of Violence’ has generated criticism and debate about the phases of violence and how to break the violent patterns. Despite critiques, Walker was progressive in her study of violence against women and challenged societal norms to gain an understanding of victims and perpetrators of violence; “the violence will only cease when every person, man or woman, stops defensively rationalizing and begins to understand just how such acts come about in our culture and why they continue” (p. 15).

Theories of intergenerational transmission of violence suggest that violence within the family is a strong predictor for partner abuse (Carter et al., 1988; Forsstrom-Cohen & Rosenbaum, 1985; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Rosenbaum & O’Leary, 1981). Social learning theory in the context of adolescent dating violence digs deeper to understand perpetrators’ use of violence in dating relationships. Social learning theory suggests that perpetrators learn how to be violent towards their romantic partners by observing the behaviour from an important other—parents or friends—and accepting that behaviour as the norm (Bandura, 1986).

As adolescents spend a significant amount of time with their peer group outside of the family, it is important to gain an understanding of how observing peer relationships can influence one's own intimate partner relationships. Arriaga and Foshee (2004) examined whether friend relationship violence or interparental violence had a greater influence in shaping standards of relationship violence in their study of 526 adolescents in the eighth and ninth grade in a rural community in North Carolina. Data were collected through questionnaires during two waves of collection set six months apart. Friends who were perpetrators or victims of dating violence and interparental violence were associated with an adolescent's experience as a perpetrator or victim of dating violence. While both variants were significant correlates of the participants' own perpetration or victimization, Arriaga and Foshee found that the effect of a friend's violent relationship was deemed more important by the respondents. Having friends involved in dating violence may convey to the adolescent that violence in a dating relationship is acceptable, therefore increasing the likeliness of experiencing dating violence.

Despite the findings of Arriaga and Foshee (2004), downplaying the influence of family violence on perpetrators of dating violence would be erroneous. Rizzo (2009) stressed the importance of family influence in the creation of healthy adolescent relationships, stating that family establishes the nature of close relationships. Adolescents who experience childhood maltreatment, low parental monitoring, and exposure to family violence are more likely to engage in unhealthy dating relationships and dating violence than those who are engaged within a positive family experience. Rizzo's views reflect results found in Wolf and Foshee's (2003) study of family violence and its correlation to anger expression styles in adolescent dating violence. Wolf and Foshee developed three

anger expression styles: constructive anger, in which an individual tries to make the situation better by calming down and discussing the issue that caused the anger; destructive direct, in which an individual behaves aggressively towards the person who caused the anger; and destructive indirect, in which an individual behaves aggressively towards a person uninvolved with the cause of the anger. Wolf and Foshee used previously collected data from self-administered questionnaires of 1,405 Grade 8 and 9 students from a rural North Carolina county. The survey included questions that measured experiencing and witnessing family violence and questions on violence in dating relationships, analyzed using an anger expression scale. Several correlations arose between experiencing and witnessing family violence and dating violence perpetration, with variation between males and females. Experiencing family violence (being a victim) was weakly associated with female dating violence perpetration and strongly associated with male perpetration. In contrast, witnessing (seeing a parent abuse another parent) was associated with female dating violence perpetration but not with male perpetration (Wolf & Foshee).

Adolescents who have experienced or witnessed family violence are more likely to have more destructive direct and destructive indirect anger expression than adolescents who have not witnessed or experienced family violence. Witnessing and experiencing family violence was not associated with constructive anger expression, the healthiest form of anger (Wolf & Foshee, 2003). These results reflect social learning theory, in that adolescents witness and learn certain behaviour, and mimic those actions believing them to be acceptable. Witnessing family's and friends' violent relationships therefore may increase the chances of becoming involved in an unhealthy dating relationship.

Inability to seek help appropriately may additionally be seen as a contributor to dating violence. Given the potentially serious consequences dating violence can have on an adolescent, it is imperative for both victims and perpetrators of dating violence to receive good help and positive support so the adolescents can transition away from the unhealthy behaviour. As dating violence may also be an incredibly personal and sensitive social dilemma, there are risks to seeking help. As research focusing on adolescent dating violence has increased, so has research looking at the help-seeking tendencies of its victims and perpetrators.

Seeking help for a problem, such as dating violence, has potential to be the immediate solution to the problem, or begin the process of healing and resolution. Help-seeking may lead to three categories of social support: emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance (Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Emotional supports provide a safe environment for adolescents to speak freely about their problem as well as encouragement, understanding, and acceptance. Informational help offers advice to aid in problem-solving, which can improve conflict negotiation and anger management. Instrumental aid assists with tasks needed for a solution and provides material services. For victims of dating violence, instrumental assistance can take the form of protection and medical services (Ashley & Foshee). Understanding and promoting help-seeking habits of adolescents involved with dating violence has benefits, not only for the medical care given to victims of severe dating violence, but for the emotional and psychological support (Ashley & Foshee).

Adolescents typically do not seek help for social (relationships, abuse), educational, and behavioural (substance use, gambling) problems (Collins & Barker,

2009; Rughani, Deane, & Wilson, 2011; Splevins, Mireskandari, Clayton, & Blaszczynski, 2010). Barriers perceived by adolescents to seek help include: the inability to recognize at-risk behaviour as a problem, issues of trust with potential help-givers, high value in self-efficacy, perceptions that professional help is not beneficial, concerns about privacy, and poor knowledge of available resources (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Collins & Barker, 2009; Rughani, Deane, & Wilson, 2011; Splevins, Mireskandari, Clayton, & Blaszczynski, 2010). Gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and age can influence an adolescent's tendency to seek help.

Like other social and behavioural problems, adolescents typically do not seek help when involved in adolescent dating violence (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Weisz & Black, 2009). Black et al. (2008) found that females are more likely than males to seek help for dating violence victimization, whereas Ashley and Foshee found that male perpetrators were more likely than female perpetrators to seek help. This difference may be attributed to societal norms whereby it is less acceptable for males to abuse females; therefore, male perpetrators' behaviour is seen as a more significant problem in need of assistance, and female victims may recognize behaviour as abusive and seek help (Ashley & Foshee, 2005).

When adolescents do reach out for help with dating violence scenarios, they are most likely to seek informal help (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Black et al., 2008; Foshee et al., 1996; Jaffe et al., 1992; Molidor & Tolman, 1998). Informal help is typically defined as a friend or peer. However, it is problematic when adolescents seek informal help from friends, as most adolescents are not trained to provide assistance with severe problems, and "may give inappropriate, victim blaming, and/or risky advice to their friends," which

may have further harmful consequences (Black et al., p. 752). Adolescents may seek help from friends because of the relationships and trust they have formed. In Wilson and Deane's (2001) study on adolescent help-seeking, six focus groups of 23 adolescents between the ages of 14 to 17 were conducted to gain an understanding of how to reduce barriers to help-seeking. When asked about seeking help for distressing and sensitive issues, the adolescents identified relationships as the most important criterion for selecting a helper. For adolescents to seek help for sensitive issues, like dating violence, their helper needs to be "friendly, individual, emotionally safe, genuine and confidential" (p. 356). These characteristics are most likely seen in peer relationships. As professional helpers (doctors, counsellors, teachers) may not have a close relationship with the adolescents, those involved with dating violence may not be able to trust professional helpers and may be less likely to openly discuss private and sensitive issues (Wilson & Deane, 2001). Teachers are in a unique position to help adolescents experiencing dating violence since close relationships can be formed in the classroom, which may encourage disclosure of abuse. Having a close relationship with a helper is imperative to secondary prevention as adolescents will share their experiences and seek help only if they feel safe and comfortable with their helper.

Implementing dating violence prevention programs in school can educate potential helpers of those experiencing dating violence. Prevention programs are an opportunity to learn more about dating violence and an unhealthy dating relationship. Participating in these programs may result in better help and guidance when adolescents seek help for dating violence.

Dating Violence Prevention Programs

In 2004, the Ontario Ministry of Education created the Safe Schools Action Team (SSAT) to advise on the development of a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention. Four years later in 2008, the SSAT re-engaged to review the issues of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour, with recommendations being made for addressing these issues (Ministry of Education, 2008). One of the most significant dimensions of the SSAT report was the statement that the most effective method to learn about healthy relationships was through school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008). The SSAT based this claim from results of research from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), as well as,

Province wide consultations with education stakeholders, parents, representatives of a wide range of community groups; police, Public Health personnel, Aboriginal groups, diverse cultural groups, special needs advocacy groups, crisis centres, sexual assault centres, and agencies that support [lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered (LGBT)] youth and youth with disabilities. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 5)

Schools and teachers must be aware of dating violence issues among their students to provide adequate information and guidance when teaching adolescents about healthy dating relationships. One method that educators could use to inform students about the complexities of dating violence is by incorporating dating violence prevention programs into their classrooms. Dating violence programs aim to reach either primary prevention; preventing abuse and unhealthy behaviours in relationships before they occur, or secondary prevention. Secondary prevention programs are designed for persons who are already involved with relationship violence and are successful only when the victim leaves the relationship or the perpetrator stops the abuse (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007). Programs can vary in the methods used and the length of time needed to complete the

program. Most dating violence prevention programming is designed for adolescents in high school or young adults in college or university. Dating violence prevention programs are typically created within the guidelines of school curriculum, although some programs have been created outside of the education field (Cornelius & Resseguie). This review focuses on dating violence prevention programs that were developed within North America, with the majority being developed in the United States (Cornelius & Resseguie).

Several researchers have recognized a connection between bullying and dating violence (Anagnostopoulos, Buchanan, Pereira, & Lichty, 2009; Fredland, 2008; Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, & Jaffe, 2009). Fredland suggests that there is a stage after school-age bullying yet before the occurrence of severe incidents of dating violence: a period of sexual bullying that she describes as “a dyadic process in which one individual [who has a sexual interest in another] inflicts repeated teasing, taunting, harassing or threatening behaviour towards the other individual” (pp. 100-101). Given the connection between bullying and aggressive dating violence behaviour, dating violence prevention curriculum has similarities to bullying prevention programs. The Ontario Ministry of Education has created a Registry of Bullying Prevention Programs: a library of Ministry-approved resources that teachers can access via the Ministry website (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). For a program to be included on the registry, the documents must have been evaluated, meeting specific criteria on a classification checklist. An example of a completed classification checklist for the dating violence prevention program “The Fourth R” can be found in Appendix A (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). Since few of the Ontario Ministry of Education approved prevention programs have been evaluated

critically, empirical research about other programs is necessary to understand the effectiveness of dating violence prevention curriculum.

Results of evaluation studies of dating violence prevention curriculum within classrooms appear promising. Lowe, Jones, and Banks (2007) conducted a comprehensive study of “Safe Relationships,” a collaborative effort by four anti-violence and health community agencies. The agencies developed a short-term prevention program consisting of four, one-hour curriculum lessons taught by members of the participating agencies. The program, which was conducted over the course of four days, included lectures, group activities, and films to educate teens about safe and non-exploitive dating and sexual behaviours. The program was divided into four sessions: the first session defined terms that would be used in subsequent sessions, such as, sexual assault, coercion, and personal boundaries; the session also introduced the need for assertiveness skills. The second session discussed laws surrounding sexual assault, the power of abuse in relationships, and the victim’s rights. The third session focused on healthy relationships and the development of personal boundaries. The final session reviewed material and helped participants of the program develop decision-making skills. Participants of the program were 106 Grade 9 students from two schools in a semi-rural county in the south-eastern United States. While the program was implemented in schools during health class, the presenters of the material were not teachers, but representatives of the agencies who developed the program and had been trained to deliver the prevention material. To test the effectiveness of “Safe Relationships,” the researchers used one pre-test and one post-test closed question questionnaire to evaluate changes in students’ knowledge about and attitudes towards sexual behaviour. For this

purpose, researchers developed the Dating Relationship Survey in response to time limitations and budget constraints (Lowe et al.). Because of attrition in the sample, evaluations of only 74 participants took place. Pre-test scores showed that students had a good understanding of the knowledge items as well as a low tolerance of inappropriate sexual behaviour before participating in “Safe Relationships.” Those who scored a moderate level of tolerance at the pre-test significantly decreased to a low level of tolerance for inappropriate sexual behaviour at the post-test. Despite the small sample size and the positive results of the pre-test, “Safe Relationships” was shown to educate adolescents who were either experiencing unhealthy dating behaviour or had attitudes that condoned violent behaviour in relationships. “Safe Relationships” may have achieved secondary prevention for those individuals. The dating skills program had a positive impact on students who had higher tolerance of aggressive behaviour at the pre-test, as well as a positive impact on students’ knowledge about sexual activity, sexual crimes, and sexual harassment. Lowe et al. stress the importance in increasing awareness of dating violence within schools and suggest that schools may be hesitant to approach the subject; “school personnel might wish they did not have to deal with dating and sexual behaviours among youth at school” (p. 85). The encouraging results of “Safe Relationships” might have stemmed from the educated staff who delivered the information, relieving staff members who were uncomfortable or uneducated with the subject matter, while still providing knowledgeable instructors for the students.

“Safe Dates,” created by Dr. Vangie Foshee and Dr. Stacey Langwick is a dating violence prevention program targeted for young adolescents in Grades 8 and 9. The evaluations of “Safe Dates” have been conducted by the authors of the program. “Safe

Dates” is the only evidence-based dating violence prevention program to be officially recognized by the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP), which is governed by the US Department of Mental Health and Human Services (<http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/safedates.page>, 2011). “Safe Dates” consists of ten, 45-minute sessions that are implemented by trained teachers during health class (Foshee et al., 1998). The goal of “Safe Dates” is to combine school and community activities to lead to the prevention of dating violence. Specifically “Safe Dates” aims to reach primary prevention by changing dating norms, addressing gender stereotyping, and developing conflict-management skills. “Safe Dates” also focuses on secondary prevention by altering cognitive factors associated with help-seeking behaviours.

Participants of the evaluation study were 1,886 Grade 8 and 9 students from 14 public schools across North Carolina. The evaluation took the form of a self-administered closed question questionnaire. Researchers determined the effectiveness of the program by contrasting the questionnaires from one group of treatment students who received the entire “Safe Dates” program, with a control group who participated in some of the program. The control group received only community activities, which included special treatment for adolescents in abusive relationships (hot-lines, support groups, and information for parents). The treatment group received both community activities and school activities that included a play depicting dating violence and prevention techniques, the 10-session curriculum of “Safe Dates,” and a poster contest. Data were collected from both groups before the intervention; the treatment and control groups were similar in demographics. The evaluation included measures assessing victimization and perpetration of psychological abuse, nonsexual and sexual violence, and the use of

physical violence in dating relationships. In addition, researchers examined each group's acceptance of prescribed and proscribed norms, perceived positive and negative consequences of dating violence, gender stereotyping, beliefs in the need for help, and knowledge of resources. At the conclusion of the intervention, the treatment group reported significantly less psychological abuse perpetration, perceived fewer positive consequences from using dating violence, used more constructive communication skills, and were less likely to engage in gender stereotyping than the control group. Follow-up questionnaires in comparison with initial questionnaires from the treatment schools showed 25% less psychological abuse perpetration, 60% less sexual violence perpetration, and 60% less violence perpetration against the dating partner (Foshee et al., 1998). Results from this evaluation show that "Safe Dates" may have some positive outcomes on the perception and tolerance of dating violence in adolescent dating relationships. Results may have been better compared with a no-treatment control group, so the "Safe Dates" program could be solely evaluated without the possible influence of the community activities.

Weist et al. (2009) conducted a three-stage evaluation of a Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention Project (SHAPP) that was implemented in one US state. The SHAPP initiative was to provide elementary, middle, and high school students with primary prevention programming focused on bullying, harassment, sexual abuse, rape, and dating violence. Thirteen jurisdictions across Maryland participated in the SHAPP program. Phase one of the evaluation was a critical review of the programs and curriculum that were being implemented in the SHAPP jurisdictions. Phase two of the evaluation included surveys completed by teachers, administrators, and staff members on

the best practices they were using. Lastly, focus groups were conducted with teachers, students, and parents. Results from each phase were compared to a middle school that was not involved in the SHAPP initiative. Through responses from the evaluation surveys as well as discussion in focus groups, teachers from the participating SHAPP schools were able to report positive outcomes from the initiative. Teachers saw, in their students, an increased awareness of what sexual harassment is and the consequences of perpetration, a decreased acceptance for sexual harassment, and improved response to incidents of sexual harassment. Teachers were able to observe after the intervention that, “students respected each other, students were friendly, [and] were involved in shaping their school community” (Weist et al., 2009, p. 118). This evaluation is unique in that researchers assessed teacher input and were able to show the importance of dating violence prevention curriculum. For dating violence prevention programs to be successful, they need to be fully integrated into school curricula (Meyer & Stein, 2004).

Most evaluations of dating violence prevention programs focus on attitudes, perceptions, and tolerance of violence in relationships. Cornelius and Resseguie (2007) suggest a need for researchers to consider actual changes in participants’ behaviour in addition to attitudinal transformations. While dating violence prevention has consistently worked to prevent abuse in relationships, programs should involve education about, and advocate for, healthy adolescent relationships (Cornelius & Resseguie). These studies show that the prevention of dating violence can be addressed through programs implemented within the public education system. Continued development of prevention interventions based on increasing public awareness of the issues relating to dating violence behaviour is still necessary to achieve lower rates of dating violence incidents.

Efforts need to continue to develop authentic and effective dating violence prevention programs, not only through program evaluation, but through communication with participants of the programs, the adolescents and the teachers.

Adolescent Influence on Prevention Programs

The goal of many research studies conducted on adolescent dating violence is to create more effective prevention curricula. Noonan and Charles (2009), for example, conducted a series of focus groups with adolescents to discuss beliefs and behaviours regarding dating violence. Findings of the focus groups were used to create effective messages to be used in prevention curricula. Seventy-two participants between the ages of 11 and 14 were divided into 12 groups of six people based on grade and sex. Discussion centred around unhealthy/healthy relationships, characteristics of middle school dating relationships, abuse in dating relationships, intervention in violent situations, and trusted sources of information and help with dating violence. Noonan and Charles, through discussions with these focus groups, found that unhealthy relationships were characterised by verbal abuse, name-calling, and yelling at each other. All groups, both male and female, reported low incidents of physical and sexual abuse and indicated that these types of abuse usually happen in “older ... more serious relationships” (p. 1095). On the topic of intervening in abusive behaviours, most of the participants struggled with intervening if the behaviours were being perpetrated by a friend. The focus groups overwhelmingly identified friends as the most trustworthy and credible sources of help for relationship problems, followed by older siblings. When asked if they would approach an adult for help with dating violence issues, the groups were hesitant due to

reasons of privacy and confidentiality. The female focus groups, however, stated that they would seek help from younger female teachers.

These discussions hold several implications for prevention programming. All of the participants did not support dating violence, so prevention curricula should include activities and programs to support these attitudes that reject violence (Noonan & Charles, 2009). Noonan and Charles also suggest that prevention curriculum needs a focus on minor acts of violence, such as verbal and psychological uses of violence: humiliation, control, and name calling. Because of the hesitation participants felt for intervening in incidents of dating violence, programs need to address skill building for bystanders to encourage intervention (Noonan & Charles). Studies like this one are important to understand the youth perspective on dating violence in that they provide a critical voice for tailoring prevention programs to meet the needs of the group most affected. Without an understanding of the views of those who are experiencing this phenomenon, prevention programs are in danger of not being effective.

Many of the studies conducted on adolescent dating violence have relied on similar methodologies, i.e., closed question questionnaires. The advantage to the questionnaires is the ability to quantify different forms of abuse and determine the prevalence in a population. The questionnaires also ensure the anonymity of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In contrast, Lavoie, Robitaille, and Hébert (2000) conducted a qualitative study with 24 Canadian adolescents between the ages of 14 and 19 to “cast a new light on aggression in teen dating relationships” (p. 6). The goal of this study was to assess the adolescents’ views of violence in dating relationships. The study consisted of four focus groups with five to six participants in each group. The

participants were recruited from a teen drop-in centre located in Quebec City. Unlike other studies, Lavoie, Robitaille, and Hébert were able to gather conceptual ideas from the individuals experiencing the phenomenon, and concomitantly focus on psychological violence in dating relationships. Study participants felt that the emotional violence was often times worse than the physical: “[constant criticism] that hurts ... just like a punch in the face ... it’s probably even worse” (p. 11). The qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions allowed for a thorough exploration into dating violence from the perspective of the adolescents, concluding that definitions of dating violence have to include emotional/psychological abuse. The recommendations extracted from this study indicate that prevention curriculum planners need a better understanding of how adolescents perceive and interpret dating violence (Lavoie, Robitaille, & Hébert).

Teachers’ Role

Given the unique nature of student-teacher relationships and the influential role a teacher can play in a student’s life, it is important that attention be given to how teachers understand and perceive dating violence, as well as how they respond to incidents of violence (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). Yet prevention curricula are developed with little input from the classroom teacher (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005). Further investigation into teachers’ perceptions of dating violence and motivations for implementing dating violence prevention is needed to gain a better understanding of adolescent dating violence.

Studies investigating the extent to which teachers implement dating violence prevention curriculum in their classrooms are scarce. Comparisons can be made,

however, with studies that examine the broader subject of violence prevention. Page, Marten, and Follett (1995) conducted a study of 400 randomly selected public high schools across three US states; 197 teachers (a response rate of nearly 50%) completed a violence prevention education questionnaire. Results from the survey were used to assess the extent to which high schools formally address violence prevention in school health education. Only 9.7% of the coordinators covered violence prevention “a great deal.” The most frequent response was “very little” with a total of 34.4%. Additionally, 24.1% stated that the extent to which violence prevention was taught in school health education was “not at all.” Of the topics that were covered when violence prevention was addressed in health education, youth suicide was the one most commonly covered. Date rape, sexual abuse, and rape were identified as the six most popular topics covered in violence prevention. This study showed that a high proportion of high schools did not include violence prevention in their health programs. What this study lacked was an understanding of why the health coordinators opted to implement violence prevention programming, as well as what determined the specific topics to be covered. Discussion with health coordinators would be necessary to expand this study.

A review of prevention programming conducted by Nation et al. (2003) identified principles of effective prevention programming. These principles relied heavily on the administrators of the programs, indicating that those who implement prevention programming have tremendous influence on the success of the program. Nation et al. developed nine principles associated with effective prevention programming by reviewing existing prevention program evaluations surrounding issues of substance abuse, risky sexual behaviour, school failure, and violence. Their analysis and the

identified principles can be generalized to adolescent dating violence. Nation et al. reviewed 35 journal articles, books, and book chapters that described the efficacy of prevention programs and devised a list of 252 characteristics of effective prevention programs. The nine principles of effective prevention programs were: comprehensive, varied teaching methods, sufficient dosage, theory driven, positive relationships, appropriately timed, socioculturally relevant, outcome evaluation, and well-trained staff. Educators are required to manipulate diverse teaching methods that focus on understanding the problem and increasing awareness for a program to be effective. Sufficient dosage, or intervention intensity, refers to the length of the program being implemented. Participants of the programs must receive enough intervention to have an effect and adequate follow-up to maintain the effects of the prevention programs. Attention must be paid to details such as timing and format when introducing the prevention program to facilitate its successful implementation. Nation et al. state that programs must be appropriately timed, starting “early enough to have an impact on the development of the problem behaviour” (p. 452). Teachers who are implementing these prevention programs would be responsible to ensure that they are appropriately timed and that there is sufficient dosage to ensure the effectiveness of the program. Nation et al. recognize the influence that teachers have on prevention programming stating that programs are enhanced when staff members are “sensitive, are competent, and have received sufficient training, support and supervision” (p. 454). Further investigation into teachers’ knowledge of prevention programming and experience with dating violence is imperative because of the integral role teachers have in the implementation of dating violence prevention and its subsequent effectiveness.

Summary

Dating violence is a prevalent social issue for adolescents that can have severe emotional, social, and physical consequences (Coker et al., 2000). Dating violence prevention programming has shown promising results in reducing the rates of dating violence (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007). Teachers have the opportunity to play a pivotal role in dating violence prevention, both as potential helpers to those involved with dating violence and as facilitators of dating violence prevention programming (Nation et al., 2003; Wilson & Deane, 2001). However, research is scarce on the way teachers specifically approach dating violence prevention in their schools, on the extent to which they find dating violence prevention programming to be an effective teaching tool, and on the methods they use to educate their students about healthy relationships. This literature review was intended to highlight the importance of addressing dating violence in adolescence, as well as to identify the gaps in the research in dating violence prevention programming. The next chapter describes how I explored four female Health and Physical Education teachers' experiences with dating violence prevention in their classrooms and school communities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methods used in conducting the present research study. The study was intended to examine Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers' personal and professional experiences with dating violence as well as to learn about their knowledge and use of dating violence prevention programs. Through the exploration of the participants' school community, personal, and professional experience with dating violence, the teaching and learning opportunities, the resources used, and their ideas to increase the awareness of dating violence, this study aimed to add to the limited research on adolescent dating violence prevention programming, thereby potentially improving Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers' experience teaching dating violence prevention.

I begin this chapter by explaining why I chose to use a qualitative research method to collect my data. My section on data collection reviews the procedures required to obtain ethics clearance from the university research ethics board. The process of data collection is then discussed, including information on the struggle to find participants and the amendments made to participant recruitment. A brief description of the participants and how they came to be a part of the research are noted. To conclude this chapter, I discuss the process involved in data analysis.

Choice of Research Method

This study employed an empirical examination of teachers' experience with adolescent dating violence and their understanding of dating violence prevention programs. The study was conducted using qualitative research methodology

incorporating individual semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions.

Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because it is primarily concerned with an understanding of a social phenomenon specifically from the participants' perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Given the complex and personal nature of dating violence, qualitative methods were appropriate because they facilitate studies with depth and detail, which are essential for understanding this social issue (Patton, 2002).

This study also employed the use of case study to collect data. Each participant represents one case, and each person's data are presented separately. The case study method is recognized as a rigorous and thorough form of qualitative analysis of a single entity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). While the method may lack conventional scientific procedure, it compensates by providing means for a rich analysis of context and detail (Yin, 2003). Case study research values specific, context-dependent findings and is not intended for generalization to other cases (Stake, 1978). This study used instrumental case study to examine a specific theme or issue, in this instance, Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers' understanding of adolescent dating violence prevention (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As this study used more than one case, my selected research approach can be defined as a collective case study, which allowed me to enhance my understanding of Health and Physical Education teachers' experience with dating violence prevention through a cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2005).

Data Collection

Procedures

To ensure my research followed the ethical guidelines, I was required to receive ethical clearance to abide by Queen's University's policy with respect to research on human subjects. The Educational Research Ethics Board (EREB) and the General Research Ethics Board at Queen's were satisfied by the protective measures that were included in my research. I provided participants with a Letter of Information, which clearly indicated the purpose and process of my research, the anticipated risks, and the voluntary nature of their participation (Appendix B). I also provided a Consent Form that was signed by each participant prior to the interviews (Appendix C). The Consent Form ensured that all participants had read and understood how they would participate in the study, how their confidentiality would be protected, and how they could withdraw from the study with no consequence. The names of the participants, as well as their schools, cities, and other identifiable features were given pseudonyms or omitted from this report.

Recruitment

To be eligible to participate in this study, participants had to be working Health and Physical Education teachers within the province of Ontario, preferably within the secondary school system. Participants also required some experience teaching health classes about healthy relationships and implementing dating violence prevention curriculum in their health programs.

Recruitment for this study initially took place at the Ontario Physical Health and Education Association (OPHEA) annual conference in Toronto, Ontario in October, 2010. Seidman (2006) suggests that determining the number of interviewees is dependent

on two criteria: sufficiency and saturation of information. The number of interview participants must be large enough so that, “others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it” (Seidman, p. 55). Interviewing too many participants could lead to repetitive information, where the researcher is not learning anything new (Seidman). Using Seidman’s criteria, I wanted to interview four to six participants, believing that the sample would be representative of the population of Health and Physical Education teachers, while providing detailed stories from the participants.

After receiving ethical clearance from the university, as well as permission from OPHEA, I attended the conference as an exhibitor. Email correspondence between OPHEA and me can be found in Appendix D. As an exhibitor at the conference, I had the opportunity to set up a display booth with information in poster and pamphlet form about dating violence and details about my study. After a series of presentations held by OPHEA, those attending the conference had the option to walk through and explore the exhibitors who were positioned in a large conference room. Other exhibitors at the conference included well-known businesses that were promoting a product or service to be used in Health and Physical Education classrooms. It was apparent during the set-up of my booth that this was not the ideal recruitment strategy, as I was competing for the participants’ attention with dozens of other companies. During the allotted exhibition time from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., I was able to discuss my research project with any interested Ontario Physical Health and Education teachers. Those who expressed some interest were provided with a Letter of Information and my contact information. During casual conversation at my booth, five teachers expressed keen interest and volunteered to take

part in the study; they too were given a Letter of Information as well as a Consent Form and were asked to provide their contact information.

After the conference an email was sent to each of the five teachers who had volunteered to participate in the research study. Only two of the five teachers replied confirming their participation, and communication continued to establish dates and times for interviews. To attempt to reconnect with the other three potential candidates, two additional follow-up emails were sent out; these too went unanswered, and so those candidates were withdrawn from the study.

As the OPHEA conference did not yield the desired number of participants, I applied for and received an amendment to my ethics so I could conduct participant recruitment via snowball sampling. This recruitment method allowed for a larger sample size and is commonly used for in-depth interview studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Snowball sampling was based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is used to select participants on the basis of being accessible or expedient (McMillan & Schumacher). Through this recruitment method, my teacher colleagues who did not meet the requirements of the study were able to recommend teachers who might be interested in my research. This was a long and stressful process, as I often relied on word of mouth and friends-of-friends to pass along my study information. Emails and phone calls were often never returned, or potential participants were not interested in volunteering for the study. From the start of my recruitment process with the OPHEA conference in October of 2010 to the final interview was a timespan of nearly 5 months. Snowball sampling, however, eventually did add another three candidates to the study, totalling five participants.

Participants

Of the five potential participants, I included only four data sets. One of the participants recruited through the OPHEA conference did not meet the eligibility requirements, as she had never taught or discussed dating violence prevention in her health classrooms; thus this participant was withdrawn from the study. Only female Health and Physical Education teachers opted to participate in this study. Their ages ranged from mid-20s to early 50s, as did their experience from a new teacher to an experienced teacher nearing retirement. The four participants of this study have been given the pseudonyms: Heather, Joan, Maggie, and Katie. Each participant is currently a Health and Physical Education teacher working within school boards across southern Ontario. Heather was introduced to this research project after a teacher colleague of mine forwarded information about my study to her. I contacted her via email, and she agreed to participate in the study. Heather is a young teacher in her mid-20s and had just received her first contracted teaching position. Joan was a casual acquaintance I had known for about one year while working a part-time job, unrelated to the education field. Joan met the eligibility requirements, and I asked her to participate in the study. Joan is a veteran teacher in her early 40s with 18 years of experience teaching Health and Physical Education and coaching various sports teams. Maggie was the only participant included in this study who was recruited through the OPHEA conference. Maggie is also the most experienced participant with over 30 years of teaching, Maggie in her mid-50s is near the end of her career and anticipated retirement within the next few years. I was able to recruit Katie through a mutual teacher colleague who had passed along her contact information. I sent her the details of the research project, and she agreed to participate in

this study. Katie in her early 40s is also a seasoned teacher with 22 years of teaching experience. Six years ago, Katie had opted to take a teaching position at a school that serves a lower income area and has a reputation for violence and substance abuse. Her experiences at this school prompted Katie to become involved with the study.

Research Interviews

Primary data for this study were obtained through interviews. Interviews were approximately 40 minutes, with only Maggie's interview falling short of this time length. The goal of conducting interviews was to seek an in-depth "view of experience or phenomenon of study" (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004, p. 52). Some questions were established prior to the interview and included introductory and background questions to establish rapport with the participant, as well as open-ended questions so participants were encouraged to share their own experiences (Patton, 2002). These questions (Appendix E) were drafted in consultation with my supervising committee and were designed to answer my research questions. The goal of the interview questions was to encourage the respondents' own perspective on dating violence prevention to emerge, gain insight into their experiences, and understand the reasons behind their decisions (Hannabuss, 1996). Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the participants the opportunity to discuss areas of their personal interests and give me the chance to collect data I might not have anticipated finding (Patton).

Interviews were scheduled at a time and place most convenient to the participant. Interview locations varied depending on the participant. Heather felt most comfortable in her own home, Joan opted for a quiet restaurant, while I met Katie and Maggie in their school offices after the instructional day. Prior to commencing the interviews, I collected

the signed Consent Forms, explained the structure of the interview, and reminded each participant that if she felt uncomfortable answering a particular question she was not required to do so and could withdraw from the study at any point. All of the interviews took place during the school year. All four participants were heavily involved in after-school clubs or sports, and scheduling conflicts arose on multiple occasions. All interviews were audio-recorded. At the time of the interview, I made hand-written notes and observations to supplement the audio recordings; these notes and observations aided in the data analysis. At the conclusion of each interview, I encouraged participants to seek counselling services provided by each of their school boards if they felt uncomfortable given the sensitive nature of adolescent dating violence.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and emailed to each participant, who was then asked to add or remove any information she felt necessary to ensure her interview was authentic. After I received approval from each of the participants for the accuracy of her transcript, I used each participant's data to create a profile for her. These profiles were also sent to the participants for their approval, which was given in each case.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis is defined as “a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 367). Standard methods of qualitative inductive analysis with coding were used for the interview transcripts to discover patterns, themes, and categories (Patton, 2002). The goal of classification was to facilitate

the search for meaning within a category (Patton, 2002). Using an inductive approach I organized my data derived from the transcripts of each participant into codes. Inductive analysis refers to the categories and patterns that emerge from collected data (McMillan & Schumacher). The codes were developed after reviewing participants' transcripts. Codes were then grouped into concepts for further analysis.

I began the data analysis by reading the interview transcripts several times, until they became familiar. Given the structure of the pre-determined questions, each interview generally progressed in the same way. First, participants provided personal demographics and discussed their school community. Next, they gave their own definition of dating violence and discussed their personal and professional experiences with dating violence. Participants then moved the discussion towards how they approached dating violence prevention in their health classes and the resources they used to educate their students. Lastly, they gave suggestions on how to increase the awareness of dating violence. I arranged each participant's profile to follow these general categories.

After the transcripts were read and I was comfortable with the data, I began to code. I started to code by marking statements that stood out and I found interesting, as suggested by Seidman (1998). I transferred these statements into a new Word document to isolate each code allowing for a closer analysis. The statements created five important issues: shared experiences and understandings of dating violence, Ontario Health and Physical Education resources, dating violence prevention in the classroom, supplementary resources, and the idea of dating violence being a feminine problem emerged as dominant themes. After determining major themes, I revisited the transcripts to find additional codes that fell into a theme but I might have not have identified as an

interesting statement during the first coding procedure. Each code or “bibbit” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989) was colour coded on each participant’s transcript to correspond with its theme. I then generated a chart with one column for each theme. I transposed statements from the colour coded transcripts to my chart, so I could examine patterns for each participant as well as conduct a cross-case analysis among participants.

Limitations

There are four limitations that may have influenced this study: the lack of empirical literature in this specific subject area, data collection strategies, and the limited sample size and the diversity of the sample.

While literature on adolescent dating violence has steadily increased in recent years, empirical research on prevention programs remains limited. There have been only a handful of critical evaluations of prevention programs. Some of the most notable evaluated programs are: Break the Cycle’s Ending Violence (Jaycox et al., 2006); The Fourth R (Wolfe et al., 2009); Reaching and Teaching Teens to Stop Violence (Weisz & Black, 2001); Safe Dates (Foshee et al., 1998); and The Safe Relationships program (Lowe, Jones, & Banks, 2007). Most of the dating violence prevention programs that have been critically evaluated are implemented by public health institutions separate from the school boards where they are executed. There is a significant amount of empirical research that explores how to improve dating violence prevention programs; however, the researchers seem to consider only the adolescent perspective. Thus no literature examines teachers and their role in the implementation of dating violence prevention programming. A lack of literature limited my own research in that I could not use previous studies and their methodologies as a guide for my work. By conducting this study, I have added to

the literature in this area, so that future researchers may be able to use my work to further explore experiences of Health and Physical Education teachers in implementing dating violence prevention programming.

The second limitation that challenges this study is my data collection procedures. I conducted one interview with each participant. Each respondent was able to give insight into each of my research questions and discuss how she approached dating violence prevention in her classrooms; however, I often felt there were insufficient data to develop extensive analysis of the participants' dating violence prevention strategies. This shortfall might have resulted from the sensitive nature of dating violence and the participants' hesitation to provide details about the situations they have encountered at their schools, as well as my novice research skills. As a new researcher conducting my first interviews, I lacked certain interview skills and might have missed prompts or follow-up questions that would have encouraged participants to be more descriptive in their responses. Future novice researchers should take into account the importance of strong interview skills and consider adjusting the research design to include a second interview or focus group to easily compare and contrast statements from the participants.

The third limitation dealt with the small sample size found in this study, this study was also limited to a female perspective. My struggles recruiting resulted in four female participants who were sufficient to fulfill the requirements of my research design; however, the female point of view might have limited the scope of this study. Additional participants would have increased the amount of data and might have offered a more extensive analysis of the information collected. In future research, an increased sample size as well as including male participants might add information-rich data. Researchers

should avoid following the initial recruitment method for this study, as the large conference setting did not allow for in-depth conversations and information to easily pass to potential candidates.

The final limitation is the lack of diversity in the sample. The four participants of this study were Caucasian and their school communities represented rural, suburban and inner city regions composed of mostly Caucasian students. The participants lived and worked in small cities that were not characterized by racial or social diversity found in large metropolitan cities. Given the differences in dating relationships among various cultures, the lack of ethnic and cultural diversity in this study may have limited the perspective from which dating violence prevention is discussed. Future research on teachers' perspective dating violence prevention should consider a more culturally diverse study.

In spite of these limitations, the participants of this study, offered unique perspectives on dating violence within their own school community. The analyses of their collected data form the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data gathered from the interviews of four participants (Heather, Katie, Joan, and Maggie). The interviews took place in a variety of settings and locations across Ontario, over the span of several months. The interview data have been used to create a profile for each participant, each of whom is presented individually. The profiles describe each interviewee's school community, personal and professional experiences with dating violence, teaching and learning opportunities associated with dating violence prevention curricula, and the resources the teachers used in their classroom. Also included are the participants' ideas and suggestions on how to increase awareness of dating violence in their school communities. Quotes are cited using 'I' to indicate the interview and the participants' pseudonym initial. For example excerpts from Heather's interview will be cited as, IH.

Heather

Heather is a young teacher at the beginning of her career, so youthful in appearance that it is a wonder that she is not mistaken for one of her own students. Standing barely over five feet, Heather has a slender athletic build. Despite her size, it is obvious that Heather has a huge personality. Our interview took place in her apartment, located in her hometown, not far from her parents' house. She greeted me with enthusiasm and made me feel very welcome in her spacious and comfortable home. After completing her Bachelor of Education degree at a large university in Toronto, Heather returned home to her parents' house an hour north of the city to begin her teaching career. To save money, Heather spent three years at her childhood home while she worked as an

occasional secondary school teacher at a school board in southern Ontario. After completing two Long Term Occasional (LTO) assignments, Heather moved back out on her own, while staying close to her family. The move was fairly recent; a few boxes lay strewn about the living room during the interview. Heather apologized for the mess and explained that she had got behind with the unpacking to focus on lesson planning and marking after school.

School Community

At 26 years old, Heather was in the first year of her first contracted teaching position. A part-time Physical and Health Education teacher, Heather taught at Cannon High School, a mid-sized high school of 1,300 students, located in a moderately sized suburb of a large industrial city in southern Ontario. Heather had been at Cannon High for two years, completing two LTO assignments before being awarded the permanent contract. Heather was familiar with the area and school board in which she worked, having grown up close to the school in which she teaches. She had vivid memories of competing against Cannon High as a member of various sports teams. “Cannon was always thought of as the rich school. It was the newest school in the board and had all these cool things that we didn’t in our own school” (IH, p. 2). Cannon retains the status of an affluent school and, according to the school’s website, offers many programs including horticulture, media and communication technology, and multiple athletic focus courses, from basketball to rugby.

With the addition of the sport focus courses over the last few years, and the school’s reputation for excellence on the rugby pitch, Heather recognized the school’s emphasis on athletics.

It seems that the events in this school are all fundraisers for some team, whether it be basketball or rugby ... there is always a strong following at all the games, perhaps more so at the boys' games, but our school loves sports and athletics and you can see that in the enrolment for phys. ed. classes. (IH, p. 3)

At Cannon High School, like all other Ontario schools, students were required to take Grade 9 "Healthy and Active Living" to graduate; all other Health and Physical Education courses were elective. Every health and physical education course at Cannon was single sex, with the exception of "Recreation, Fitness and Leadership," a Grade 12 level program. An increase in enrolment for the female Grade 11 course created a third section and opened up the opportunity for Heather to gain a contracted position. Heather was teaching one female Grade 11 class and one female Grade 9 class. All Health and Physical Education courses at Cannon High were taught by a teacher of the same sex, again with the exception of "Recreation, Fitness and Leadership."

Personal and Professional Experiences

Despite the large population of students enrolled in health and physical education, who should be learning through health curriculum about healthy relationships, Heather still believed that dating violence is a major concern at her school. Heather viewed dating violence as "an imbalance of power and control," taking various forms from physical to emotional abuse, and she recognized that dating violence "doesn't have to leave bruises" (IH, p. 5). Heather showed an understanding of the difference between domestic and dating violence, identifying dating violence as a function of "younger relationships" that occurred when the dating partners did not live together (IH, p. 4). While acknowledging that dating violence knew "no limits," Heather identified dating violence as a gender-based issue. "I think it's typically boys who are violent towards females" (IH, p. 5).

Heather was aware of dating violence at her school because of her own observations of “little spats” and experiences in witnessing “name calling” in the hallway (IH, p. 5). She also had anecdotal information from her teaching colleagues who had shared their stories about students’ experiences and requests for information. Heather herself had first-hand experience of students approaching her for help and advice about a dating situation. Heather attributed the students’ comfort level when sharing stories and asking questions to her youthfulness. “I think that it makes it easier for girls to talk more openly about what goes on outside of the classroom” (IH, pp. 5-6).

Heather described one such occasion. As the assistant coach of the junior girls’ basketball team, she noticed that one of her top players, Gail, was beginning to miss practices, a behaviour that was “uncharacteristic” for this girl. After making a comment to the student about her absences at one of the team’s games, another teammate suggested that Gail would only come to the next practice if she could “tear [her]self away from Johnny” (IH, p. 6).

After the game I had a chance to talk to her alone, and asked her about Johnny and if it was serious ... I feel like maybe I came on too strong, because I’m thinking, here is a great athlete, a great student, and she’s flaking, it’s not like her ... So I assumed the worst, that this boy was ... taking control of her life, and making her feel like she had to ditch practice to be with him. (IH, p. 6)

During this confrontation, Gail evaded Heather’s questions and assured her that nothing was wrong and promised to show up to all future practices. For the next few weeks, Gail still was not coming to practices, forcing Heather to bench Gail for an entire game.

A few days later, Gail approached Heather during her prep period and asked if they could talk. “My instincts were right, she talked to me about how she felt that she didn’t have a life anymore that all she would do is go to school and then hang out with

her boyfriend, and she wasn't happy" (IH, p. 7). Gail was afraid to break up with Johnny because she "didn't know if anyone could like her again" (IH, p. 7). Heather and Gail spent the better part of the period having a "comfortable" chat about healthy relationships; how you should feel in a relationship and what love should look like. Eventually, Gail ended things with Johnny with "no repercussions" (IH, p. 7).

Heather was glad she approached Gail about the relationship. "It let her know that I cared about her and was there if she needed to talk to me" (IH, p. 7). Heather claimed that this incident had a "pretty fairy tale ending" in that things between Gail and Johnny ended without any serious consequences, but she was thankful for the opportunity to talk to Gail about how controlling behaviours "were not a part of a healthy relationship" (IH, p. 7).

In spite of this incident, Heather remained sceptical, believing that many students did not feel comfortable talking to their teachers about issues in their dating relationships, "I'm not ignorant in thinking that not all students feel comfortable talking to their teachers, and I think a lot of girls experience more serious incidents of dating violence that I'm completely unaware of" (IH, p. 7). Heather knew that dating violence was a prevalent issue not only from these experiences with her students, but her own personal encounter with an unhealthy relationship. Without elaborating or providing expansive detail, Heather claimed that, during her undergraduate years, "I've been there too. I've been unhappy and uncomfortable in a dating relationship ... it was only when it got bad that I realized I had to get out" (IH, p. 10). When asked about what 'bad' entailed, Heather stated that she had been "pushed around" (IH, p. 10). Heather also admitted that a lot of her friends "talk about being involved in unhealthy relationships" (IH, p. 10).

Teaching and Learning Opportunities

In addition to curriculum expectations, it was Heather's own experience and observations in the hallways of Cannon High that encouraged her to include dating violence prevention in her health classroom.

I can see it going on in the hallways, and I just get a sense that our students could learn more about respect and how to be respectful in a[n]... intimate relationship. I try to talk about it as much as I can [because] I've experienced it myself. (IH, p. 10)

While dating violence was included in the Grade 11 curriculum expectations, Heather saw the opportunity to talk about these issues in every grade, and attempted to incorporate lessons on dating violence into her Grade 9 class as well; "conflict management, drugs and alcohol, sexuality ... basically everything ... we teach in health class in some way can be tied to dating violence" (IH, p. 8).

Heather described her approach to dating violence prevention as, "heavily based in discussion" (IH, p. 8). Discussion seemed to work well for Heather but she realized that this strategy might not be the best approach for all teachers because it could be difficult for students to share their personal feelings and for some teachers to negotiate and facilitate sensitive topics. In addition to issues surrounding dating violence, such as signs of an unhealthy relationship and what to do if you recognize that you or a friend is involved in an abusive relationship, Heather incorporated other important lessons. "[My Grade 11 class] spend[s] almost an entire week on dating violence, but also stereotyping, gender roles, and self-respect ... I feel [these] are all a part of the umbrella of dating violence" (IH, p. 8).

Resources

An activity that Heather had implemented during her dating violence prevention lessons was the articulation of a Teen Dating Bill of Rights. As a group, the class talked about what they should expect out of a dating relationship and came up with “10 things that every person has a right to feel in a relationship” (IH, p. 8). Characteristics included in the Bill of Rights that her students created were the rights to independence, trust, and respect.

Through discussion with a Grade 11 class she was teaching during her first LTO at Cannon, Heather came across a website called <http://www.loveisrespect.org>, an American website that offered information on various forms of abuse; a resource centre; and information on how to find help if you were involved in an unhealthy relationship. The class was discussing one episode of “Teen Mom” (a reality show produced by Music Television [MTV]), during which a teen mother was filmed hitting her boyfriend. Heather, who was unfamiliar with the show, found the program on-line via MTV’s website (<http://www.mtv.ca>). While reading about the show, Heather discovered the link to the www.loveisrespect.org website. The next day, Heather based a class learning activity on the website. “We went on the site as a class and just surfed around the site. [The class] had an activity sheet to fill out as they went” (IH, p. 9). Heather found this website to be a valuable resource because it was “up-to-date” and the references to a popular TV show were something with which her class was familiar and to which her students could relate (IH, p. 9).

Heather also used resources from a program called “End the Silence,” developed by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Woman and Children

(METRAC) in Toronto. “End the Silence” is an 11-page handbook created for young women that includes tips to create healthy relationships and activities to help recognize unhealthy dating behaviours. The material is available free of charge for download in portable document format (.pdf) via the METRAC website or can be purchased in hardcopy format and shipped at a small cost

(<http://metrac.org/resources/resources.htm#healthy>, 2011). Heather only used selected materials from the handbook, specifically the relationship quizzes, because she said they were “pretty interactive and the kids like them” (IH, p. 8). Heather found these resources while using the on-line search engine Google for ideas on including dating violence prevention in her lessons. “End the Silence” is recognized on the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Registry of Bullying Prevention programs

(<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyingprevention/registry.html>, 2011).

Heather and her colleagues relied mostly on the Internet when finding resources to support instruction about dating violence, with Heather noting that her department did not have “a lot of up-to-date resources in the office” and there was “not a budget” for purchasing new material, stating that she would use “anything that I can get my hands on, and it’s free” (IH, p. 12).

When asked about the effectiveness of the resources she used, and the implementation of dating violence prevention in her health class, Heather hesitated to give a firm answer,

It’s difficult to really know if you’re getting through to them. It’s the classic evaluation thing ... I give them a summative on the stuff, and most of them you know do pretty well ... and the summative is usually an assignment that has them describe warning signs and what they could say to a friend who was involved in an unhealthy relationship ... but outside of a summative, are they really taking what I say ... to heart. I struggle with that a lot. (IH, p. 11)

To make the resources and dating violence prevention more effective, Heather suggested that more time was needed to be thorough, and not just, “jam everything in because you know we only have this classroom for four days” (IH, p. 12). Recognizing her need for more time was “more of a curriculum change than [a change of] the actual resources” (IH, p. 12). Heather saw the set-up of health class as a barrier to learning.

The kids hate health. It’s the worst part of gym for them ... they hate not being able to play for a period, and I wish there ... wasn’t that mentality, I hate that health is a chore to most of the students. (IH, p. 12)

Heather felt that if health was not considered such a “drag,” the students would be more open to learning about topics like dating violence (IH, p. 12).

Heather admitted to being confused about the “laws surrounding dating violence” and suggested that a resource that “displays the legal repercussions that come out of hitting a dating partner” would be helpful (IH, p. 13). Heather indicated that she needed more information about her roles and responsibilities as a teacher so that she could respond appropriately. “When I see verbal or emotional abuse happening, what can we do? ... I mean outside of talking about our feelings, I feel like that sort of harassment has to be dealt with” (IH, p. 13). Heather reverted back to her experience with Gail and Johnny, and admitted to feeling like she “let the other side of it slide” (IH, p. 14). Heather did not seek out Johnny to talk about what Gail had told her in confidence, “what happens to the guy in that situation, he got dumped, and was never really told that what he was doing was inappropriate, ‘should I have done that?’” (IH, p. 13). Despite having a “supportive” and “accommodating” administration, Heather did not approach her vice-principals or her principal about the incident between Gail and Johnny, because she was respectful of Gail’s privacy and, between Heather and Gail, they had “sorted it out” and

come up with a reasonable solution (IH, p. 13). Yet Heather wondered if she had taken this situation to the male administration or another male teacher if they could have talked with Johnny, in a “non-confrontational” manner to help educate him about controlling behaviours in a dating relationship (IH, p. 13). Heather questioned at what point teachers should disregard a student’s privacy to provide assistance. “I know we have a legal obligation to report any suspicion of abuse ... but when talking about verbal and emotional abuse– which can be just as damaging, that line becomes quite blurred” (IH, p. 14). Heather wondered if a teacher’s legal responsibilities for reporting incidents of dating violence were something that could be discussed in resources about dating violence prevention.

When asked about her knowledge of what the boys discussed in their health classes on dating violence, Heather showed some concern.

It’s hard to say really what goes on in the boys’ classroom ... I just know some of the male [Phys. Ed.] teachers hate health just as much as the students ... so they want to be back out in the gym just as fast as the students ... so maybe there are some corners being cut. But I can’t say for certain just what happens with the male students. (IH, p. 14)

Although Heather was unaware of whether or not the boys were receiving as much information as the girls about dating violence prevention, Heather agreed that the most effective way to teach about healthy relationships and dating violence was to separate the sexes. By separating boys from girls when discussing these issues, “it’s more likely to open up communication streams” (IH, p. 14). Heather argued that younger girls in Grades 9 and 10 would most likely feel better sharing in a room of their own sex, than if boys were there as well. Heather realized that this approach had its downsides as it would be beneficial for boys to “hear what girls have to say about these issues” (IH, p. 15).

Increasing Awareness

While there were still obvious signs that dating violence was an issue in Cannon High, the school and the administration did not ignore issues of abuse and violence against women. Every December 6th the school held a memorial assembly to commemorate the massacre at École Polytechnique, the Engineering School at the University of Montreal. In 1989, Marc Lepine entered the university and killed 14 women and injured 13 others before committing suicide (Rosenberg, 2000). In a note found on his person, Lepine deemed his actions as a political movement against feminism (as cited in Rosenberg, 2000). In 1991, the federal government of Canada declared December 6th to be a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (Rosenberg, 2000).

Cannon High honoured this day with an assembly consisting of performances by students in the drama programme. Heather observed the inclusion of this ceremony as recognition of the issue of violence against women, but suggested that they could use that day as an opportunity to expand the subject matter to discuss violence in dating relationships. Heather recommended that inviting a guest speaker to talk to the “whole school” specifically about dating violence could be a way to increase the awareness of dating violence amongst staff and students at Cannon High, and something that the “students would really benefit from” (IH, p. 15).

Joan

I had known Joan for a little over a year; however, this conversation would mark the first time that I would have had an opportunity to learn about Joan and her career as a teacher. We met at a local pub in the small rural village in south eastern Ontario where Joan resided. There was a relaxed and comfortable feeling surrounding this interview since we were known to each other informally. Joan appeared to be at ease when talking about her career and her experiences with dating violence prevention.

Joan had been a secondary school teacher for the past 18 years. Joan was qualified to teach Physical Education, English, Special Education, and Guidance. Joan had begun her career in September 1993, as a Special Education teacher and, for the first seven years of her career, taught in six different high schools. Joan eventually ended up at Creekmore Vocational School teaching Physical Education and coaching the junior boys' rugby team. After a few years at Creekmore, Joan applied for a transfer to a school closer to her rural home.

School Community

Joan had spent the last 6 years at Westdale Secondary School teaching Physical Education, English, and Special Education. Joan also had coached a variety of different sports teams including rugby, girls' soccer, basketball, and badminton.

Westdale had a population of approximately 800 students. According to the school's website, the population was composed mostly of students who lived in surrounding rural villages and towns, and were bussed to school. On the website, the school claimed that the unique composition of the student population allowed for opportunities to interact with other students from a variety of backgrounds. In addition to

the traditional courses, the school offered an abundance of technological education programs, as well as numerous extra-curricular activities that ranged from sports teams and competitive cheerleading, to environmental clubs and leadership groups.

The Physical Education department at Westdale, of which Joan was a member, was comprised of six full-time teachers: three males and three females. Physical Education classes were separated by sex and instructed by a teacher of the same sex.

Personal and Professional Experiences

When I asked Joan if she could define adolescent dating violence, she only used one word to characterize this behaviour: “control” (IJ, p. 2). When probed further, Joan described that dating violence grew out of “insecurity leading to possessiveness and jealousy and control” (IJ, p. 2). Joan was quick to point out that control and dating violence could, “take [on] all forms, whether it be guys wanting to control the girls or the girls wanting to control the guys” (IJ, p. 3). Joan was hesitant to state whether boys or girls were more commonly the perpetrators of dating violence: “I don’t think one is any more or less than the other, I think that they just take different forms,” and it “come[s] down to the insecurity of the person wanting the control” (IJ, p. 3).

For students to become aware of dating violence, Joan suggested that students needed to be able to make a connection between bullying and dating relationships. Joan worried that unhealthy bullying behaviours were not recognized by her female Grade 10 Physical Education students. Joan mimicked her students’ attitude towards unhealthy behaviours. “He’s texting me 50 times a day, he’s just being cute, he cares about me ... they think it’s endearing ... he’s being sweet. I think is what some of them said” (IJ, p. 3). Joan also recalled how one of her Grade 10 students started to “hang out with” a male

Grade 12 student (IJ, p. 7). She noted that once the two students started dating “he was outside our class all the time, [and] she’s getting messages all the time” (IJ, p. 7). Joan worried that controlling behaviours, which had the potential to lead to unhealthy relationships, were not being recognized by her students.

Joan considered dating violence to be a major concern at Westdale. The school had been dealing with incidents of severe physical and sexual violence that occurred at parties over the weekends. Joan summarized the most recent situation.

A couple [of] ‘lurker’ type boys would go to these parties ... and the girls are ... being vulnerable by drinking so much they can’t control themselves or be aware ... and then they’re passing out but then the ‘lurker’ boys are stone sober. (IJ, p. 5)

It was alleged that the males physically and sexually assaulted the girls who had passed out from consuming too much alcohol, or who were not coherent enough to stop the perpetrator.

Joan considered drugs and alcohol to be important factors in the assaults associated with Westdale students. Joan noted the frequency with which she had encountered a female student who had had a negative sexual experience associated with alcohol. “If I had five bucks for every woman I know and every teen I’ve taught who’s lost their virginity because of alcohol ... I’d quit” (IJ, p. 13). Joan struggled with the role of the intoxicated female victim in these assaults.

The girls are innocently getting—well innocently in the sense that they—nobody asked to be assaulted, but not so innocently that they are putting themselves at risk ... I don’t think the assaults occur by let’s say a ‘roofie’ or a slipped drug, it’s [the victim’s] own consumption. (IJ, p. 5)

Joan wanted to bring lessons like this one to her health classroom, for example, discussions about the ways in which females could limit the risks they would encounter by taking responsibility for their own actions and making safe choices.

Teaching and Learning Opportunities

Joan was involved with an organizational committee at Westdale that delineated the Physical and Health Education curriculum expectations appropriate in each grade.

It's very grey, the whole thing of when you put [dating violence] in, when you talk about teen dating versus teen dating violence versus domestic abuse and spousal abuse ... we made a decision that we would do teen dating violence in Grade 11 and domestic violence in Grade 12 and talk about healthy, long-lasting relationships in Grade 12. (IJ, p. 10)

Joan was wary about including topics about sexuality and healthy relationships in Grade 9 health classes since "half of [the students] aren't even dating then" (IJ, p. 10).

Joan was able to find ways to discuss issues surrounding dating violence in different areas of curriculum. Joan had recently taught a unit on dating violence in her female Grade 10 Physical Education class, despite the topic "not really [being] in the Grade 10 curriculum" (IJ, p. 7). Joan used the curriculum guideline of a conflict management unit to address some of the issues of dating violence because she recognized a need for more discussion. "There is some nasty stuff going on [with] social networking and Facebook that could be covered [during this unit]" (IJ, p. 7). Joan also recognized the role that technology could play in incidents of dating violence stating that, "technology [has] changed [dating violence] significantly" (IJ, p. 3).

Joan discussed these and other issues throughout a unit that began with "just basically talking about relationships, and what is a healthy relationship and what is not a healthy relationship" (IJ, p. 5). The class completed "check lists" and "scale balance

activities” and determined what they considered important in a relationship; qualities like “humour, good looks, clothes, popularity, and [an interest in] sports” were ranked and the outcomes discussed in small groups (IJ, p. 5).

At Westdale, there was a weight room that overlooked the gymnasium. The set-up of the gym facilities reinforced the reason why Joan believed that you needed to separate sexes to educate students about dating violence.

I have a Grade 10 girls’ class and we’re in the gym below where the Grade 10 boys’ class is working out upstairs ... and can I get them to focus on anything I say? And can I get them to stop wearing the shortest shorts where their butt checks are hanging out? They are just so focused about does he like me, am I hot? And if they were in a health class together, would they say their true feelings? Not a chance. (IJ, p. 9)

During lessons about dating violence prevention, Joan was surprised by the naiveté of some of her Grade 10 students in recognizing the perpetrator of dating violence. Joan gave the class a dating violence scenario in which a boy was “cat-calling” to a group of girls. In the scenario, one of the girls giggled at his remarks, and the boy allowed himself to misinterpret her reaction as an invitation to “grope” her because it was “obvious she liked the attention” (IJ, pp. 5-6). When this scenario was discussed with her class, the reactions of the Grade 10 girls caused concern for Joan. “I was taken aback that they blamed her ... [The class] said that [the female in the scenario] didn’t say no emphatically enough” (IJ, p. 6). Joan used this experience as a learning opportunity and discussed who initiated contact and who was the aggressor in the scenario. Joan expressed hope that her students would acknowledge that a giggle was not permission for the male to put his hands on the female. By the end of the discussion, “some of them came back, but they still ended up blaming her” (IJ, p. 6).

The main objective of Joan's lessons on healthy relationships was to educate her students about how to identify unhealthy behaviour. "I want to get the word out there that yes, this is assault, this is harassment, this is wrong, it's against the law, this is not cute, this is not endearing and you don't have to take it" (IJ, p. 6).

Resources

Joan relied on resources to achieve her objective of educating her students to identify unhealthy dating behaviour. Her students accessed computers to complete various on-line activities. Joan developed a web-based scavenger hunt activity so students could "go on different [web]sites and pick different links to answer questions" (IJ, p. 10). The scavenger hunt was a culminating activity. The scavenger hunt led students to the website <http://www.athinline.org>. This website was an American site administered and maintained by the production company Music Television (MTV). Joan discovered this website while using the Internet search engine Google for information about dating violence and harassment via technology. Joan liked the layout of the website and the information it provided. "[It was] really good in terms of videos and talking about if you were to stand outside yourself and watch what was happening from the girl's perspective, would you recognize abuse? Would you see it as abuse?" (IJ, p. 10). A Thin Line had a strong focus on the ways in which technology could be used as a tool in harassment. The website also provided information on how to prevent this digital harassment, as well as resources adolescents could access to get help. Joan used Internet resources so her students could access the information again.

When they do a private exercise, when they find a website that they can go on any time they want, privately, and [be able to] re-read it without people laughing or judging at school. They can go home and I think they actually do read, and they actually think, 'Oh my God.' (IJ, p. 11)

Joan credited the website and the specific content about abusive texting with illustrating and clarifying for her students the nature of unhealthy behaviours.

I can see them in class 'cause there is a couple of girls that have these boyfriends that text them 60 times a day or a 100 times a day. [Their classmates] were going, 'you know Tiffany, James does that.' ... So there were some light bulbs going off. (IJ, p. 11)

Joan used a second website during her lessons on dating violence prevention. Her students logged on to <http://www.seeitandstopit.org>, an interactive website that educated visitors about speaking out against abuse. Joan again found this website by accessing the search engine Google. The American website was funded by the Ad Council and the Family Violence Prevention Fund but was created by teens in Massachusetts to “help prevent relationship violence” (www.seeitandstopit.org). Joan had her students review statistics presented on the website about the prevalence of abusive relationships and complete a corresponding quiz. Joan also used the Safety Plan resource provide by the website. Joan printed the fill-in-the-blank activity and administered it to her Grade 10 class. The Safety Plan outlined a strategy that the students could enact, if they ever found themselves in a dangerous situation with a dating partner. Joan allowed her students time to fill in the answers but did not discuss what the students had written down, because of the “personal nature of the activity” (IJ, p. 6). While Joan stated that the websites were “effective” in her classroom, she had some criticism of the resources. For example, Joan felt that the websites were “a bit wordy” and could have been pared down to essential information and on-line activities (IJ, p. 12).

In addition to web-based resources, Joan used educational videos as a teaching resource in her lessons on dating violence. Joan used video clips to give examples of abusive relationships and develop questions for her class to discuss after viewing the

various scenarios. Joan found these videos at the local health unit or by searching the catalogue at the local teacher resource centre.

Joan recalled one resource kit that included a video and worksheets entitled, “Jenna’s Story” (IJ, p. 8). The video depicted Jenna and her boyfriend, an adolescent dating couple. The boyfriend showed up everywhere Jenna was and ended up using abusive and derogatory language toward Jenna, calling her “a whore” and “a slut” and “a sleeze” (IJ, p. 8). The scenario included other controlling behaviour; for example, in one scene, the boyfriend accused Jenna of cheating on him because she was talking to some of her male classmates. After viewing the video, Joan’s class would discuss what they would do differently from Jenna, and to whom they would turn for help if they found themselves in a similar situation. Joan continued to use various videos, because she believed that they were effective tools to help students “visualize” unhealthy relationships; however, she felt that some of the videos were “dated” and agreed that videos that were “more recent” would be beneficial so that students could “relate better to material” (IJ, p. 12).

After Joan had taught her lessons on dating violence and healthy relationships, she believed that there was a “level of recognition” among her students that unhealthy and controlling behaviours were occurring in their relationships (IJ, p. 12). Joan believed that her students could relate to some of the situations, feelings, and emotions that were portrayed through both the websites and videos: “the whole notion of insecurity and being in control hit home” (IJ, p. 12).

Joan had also taught lessons on dating violence in some of the English classes she had taught at Westdale. In a Grade 10 applied level English course, during a novel study,

Joan had incorporated discussion on dating violence. Joan's class had read *Breathing Underwater*, a young adult novel written by Alex Flinn. *Breathing Underwater* was written from the perspective of a young man named Nick, who was abusive towards his girlfriend Caitlin. Nick was charged with assault and sentenced to counselling sessions and given a restraining order against Caitlin (Flinn, 2001). The novel outlined Nick's own abusive past and depicted his struggle with understanding why his actions against Caitlin were wrong (Flinn). Joan did not give specifics on the activities she had included during the study of *Breathing Underwater*, because it had been over two years since she had taught the novel. None-the-less, Joan remembered that *Breathing Underwater* had "provoked a lot of serious discussion" amongst her students (IJ, p. 8).

Joan relied on teaching resources to help educate her students about dating violence because she was "not an expert" (IJ, p. 13). Joan felt that up-to-date resources were needed in Physical Education offices at Westdale, so teachers could understand "how to approach" dating violence prevention (IJ, p. 13). In Joan's opinion, what the resources "really lacked" was information on "the law surrounding dating violence" (IJ, p. 14).

In addition to the dating violence prevention that Joan conducted in her own health classes, she had been a part of school-wide initiatives to educate students about healthy relationships. On December 6th of the previous school year, Westdale had held a ceremony to honour the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. The school had sponsored two seminars, one for all the female students and one for all the male students at Westdale. Joan had attended the female seminar, during which

a guest speaker had discussed her own experience with dating violence some 15 years previously.

She was in high school, had the cool boyfriend who was a hockey player and she was just so enthralled with him being interested in her, that she put up with more and more control issues, with him changing what she'd wear, controlling who she'd talk to, where she could go. (IJ, pp. 7-8)

Eventually, the controlling behaviour had turned to physical abuse resulting in a “broken jaw,” and the perpetrator had physically assaulted the girl’s mother (IJ, p. 8). Joan admitted that it had been a compelling story but hesitated to believe that the guest speaker had had a lasting effect on the audience. “I think they thought, well she’s old, that happened a long time ago, that wouldn’t happen to me” (IJ, p. 8). When questioned whether or not a younger guest speaker would have been more effective for the adolescent audience, Joan agreed that a younger guest speaker would have had a better chance at helping the female students realize that dating violence was a relevant issue.

The impact [of guest speaker] was that [dating violence] affected her whole life, you know she was just 17-18 when it happened but it’s still affecting her life, but the [the students] disassociate they really do, it can’t happen to me. (IJ, p. 9)

Increasing Awareness

Despite the school’s participation in activities that promoted healthy relationships and preventing violence against women, Joan believed there was still a need to increase awareness about dating violence at Westdale. “There always is [a need to increase awareness]. Everyone is always [thinking that] it doesn’t happen here. And it does, even on a subtle level it does” (IJ, p. 14).

Joan saw a need for educating the staff at Westdale about this social problem, specifically the male teachers. Joan considered the behaviours and personalities of some of the male staff members to be problematic.

Everyone knows, ok yeah there's a few racist people, and there's a few guys that get over zealous, and you know boys will be boys. I hate that mentality. I hate that male coaches, constantly protect these boys because they're great athletes. (IJ, p. 13)

Joan stated that Westdale's Physical Education Department, which was headed by a male staff member, had "always seen [dating violence] as a just a female issue, and until [it is seen as an issue for both sexes], it is never going to stop" (IJ, p. 13). Joan was not sure how to make that shift in viewpoint happen, but considered educating male staff members about dating violence as a good first step.

Until dating violence was recognized as an issue that affected males and females, Joan was committed to teaching prevention lessons as best as she could, and remained optimistic about how her lessons affected her students. "As an educator, you have to realize that you're not going to get everybody in the room, and you hope that ... one or two, three or four [will connect with the material] ... then that's great" (IJ, p. 13).

Maggie

I met Maggie during my first recruitment attempt at the Ontario Physical Health and Education Association (OPHEA) conference in Toronto. The recruitment poster on display at the conference caught Maggie's eye, and she was interested to learn more about the study. The next month I was able to meet with Maggie in a small town in eastern Ontario to conduct an interview.

Maggie had had a stable career in education for the last 30 years. Maggie obtained her teaching degree from a large university in southeastern Ontario in 1980, with teaching qualifications in biology and physical education. The summer following her graduation, Maggie had applied for the only permanent Physical Education teaching position

available near her home in eastern Ontario. Maggie had been offered the Physical Education teaching job at Nelson District High School, located in a quiet rural town about 40 minutes southwest of a large eastern Ontario city. For Maggie, it had been a perfect fit, and she had been at Nelson ever since, teaching Physical and Health Education, “the whole way through” (IM, p. 1).

School Community

Nelson District High School was located in a small rural town of 4 500 people. According to the school’s website, the town was comprised of many families that were involved in agriculture and other local businesses. The school population comprised of students from this town, as well as from neighbouring communities from which many students were bussed. The school’s website also described a housing development that was scheduled to be built over the next few years that would increase Nelson District High School’s enrolment from a current number of approximately 600 students.

Nelson offered standard curriculum courses along with co-operative education experiences. In addition to these program strands, Nelson had established a Life Skills program; a special education option that offered individualized programs for students who required functional independent living skills. According to the school’s website, Life Skills enabled students to develop skills in language and communication, numeracy, cooking, personal health and fitness, computers, safety, and social interaction. Students developed these skills by working with various employers throughout the community.

The small student population at Nelson meant the school had a small Physical Education department. In the department there were three permanent teachers: two males and Maggie (the only permanent female Physical Education teacher). Long-term

occasional positions were offered in the department in response to student demand. At Nelson, the Grade 9 course, “Healthy Active Living,” was an open-level mandatory course required for graduation. All other Physical Education courses were considered to be elective. Physical Education courses at Nelson District were single-sex classes, with the exception of the two Grade 12 courses: “Recreation, Fitness and Leadership” and “Exercise Science.” All single-sex classes were taught by a teacher of the same sex.

Personal and Professional Experiences

Maggie defined dating violence as a relationship in which, “one of the partners is exerting control on the other [partner,] who does not feel comfortable with the situation” (IM, p. 1). Maggie was firm in her belief that dating violence was not a new social concern. “I think it’s a continuing problem. I think it’s been [a problem] for as long as there have been males and females” (IM, p. 12). Maggie believed that the controllers in dating relationships were typically male, an identification created from existing stereotypes that perpetuated the myth that, “the traditional male is one that is in control and the female is the provided and the giver” (IM, p. 12).

Even after 30 years at Nelson, Maggie had never experienced a student seeking her help about a situation related to dating violence. Maggie commented that not being sought for help with a dating violence scenario might not necessarily be a positive outcome. “I honestly think that for the most part, people wouldn’t talk about [dating violence] if it was ... really going, because there would be a stigma, there would be a shame” (IM, p. 2). Maggie feared that the “natural reaction” for adolescents who were involved in an abusive relationship would be “to hide that they’re in an abusive situation ... it’s not something you go and broadcast” (IM, p. 2). Maggie appeared to be frustrated

that her students could be involved in an unhealthy relationship but would not seek her help. “The kids are too afraid to talk about it. ... I would rather know so I can do something to help” (IM, p. 2). From Maggie’s perspective, the result of the students being too uncomfortable to discuss dating violence had left the issue “under the radar” at Nelson District (IM, p. 2).

Staff at Nelson had recently been informed in a staff meeting that some students had participated in sexual acts during school dances. Members of the local health unit were invited by the principal of Nelson to attend the staff meeting to advise teachers and staff on an activity called ‘wheeling.’ Maggie described ‘wheeling’ as a game played by senior boys at school dances and stated that, “boys would come into a dance with a list of girls and as [the boys] got what they wanted, they would just strike that person off and move to the next person on the wheel” (IM, p. 2). The goal was to complete the ‘wheel’ of names before the end of the dance. Maggie was confused about the boys’ objective. “Does that mean they got what they wanted in terms of full sexual activity ... or were they just kissing?” (IM, pp. 2-3). Maggie acknowledged a discrepancy between the various acts, suggesting if the boys were looking for sex during a school dance then “that’s a problem” (IM, p. 3). Maggie felt, however, that if ‘wheeling’ was just “exploratory” kissing, then perhaps the concern stemmed from “a parent that’s being overprotective” (IM, p. 3). Maggie suggested that consensual kissing at a dance was bound to happen; however, if the attention given to the girls at the dance was “unwanted” then there was a bigger issue. As Maggie saw it, any unwanted sexual attention that ‘wheeling’ caused had to be dealt with by the staff at Nelson (IM, p. 3).

‘Wheeling’ was not the only sexual act with which Nelson had had experience in the last few years. ‘The Rainbow Club’ had become popular at Nelson about “two years ago” (IM, p. 3). ‘The Rainbow Club,’ Maggie described, was another sexual game for male students, played outside of school at parties or other social gatherings. “Guys would try to have ... different colour[s] of lipstick on their penis from oral sex” (IM, p. 3). Each colour of lipstick would represent a different female participant, with the goal being to, “get a rainbow up their penis” (IM, p. 3). ‘The Rainbow Club’ and ‘wheeling’ typically involved older male students targeting Grade 9 girls. Maggie was aware of the ways in which these activities showed unhealthy behaviour. “There’s an obvious use of power and control. The Grade 9 girls feel uncomfortable and new in the new school, and the senior boys take advantage of that. [It] is use of power abuse” (IM, pp. 3-4).

Teaching and Learning Opportunities

The aggressive sexual acts that Nelson had experienced were perpetrated by male students. Maggie was motivated to include dating violence prevention in her health classroom to educate females and to help them avoid becoming a victim of dating violence. “You see girls that are submissive or wanting to please. [I] feel strongly that females [should] be able to say, ‘this is ok, and no this is not ok” (IM, p. 5). Maggie considered herself to be a “positive role model” by showing her students “assertiveness” and “self-respect” (IM, p. 5).

At Nelson District High School, dating violence was “briefly touched on” in the Grade 9 sexuality unit but “only in [conjunction with] alcohol and drugs in Grade 10” (IM, p. 6). Dating violence in Grade 9 and 10 was only one section of a bigger unit, which created time constraints for the teachers. “What can we do for one period in Grade

9 and one period in Grade 10? We [can] just talk about it” (IM, p. 6) The in-depth healthy relationship unit was not taught until the Grade 11 Physical Education course.

Maggie considered health education to be “a great way to really get to know the kids” (IM, p. 4). When Maggie taught the Grade 9 sexuality unit, she strived to create “an open forum” (IM, p. 4). Topics such as relationship roles, dating situations, and proper terminology were covered through discussion. Maggie remarked that she would step outside of the curriculum guidelines to answer her students’ questions. “I will go off topic ... as much as the questions come my way, I’ll just take them and run with them” (IM, p. 5). Maggie stressed the importance of open communication between teacher and students when discussing important social issues like dating violence. “The girls can ask me anything, I don’t think in 30 years I’ve said, ‘No, I don’t feel comfortable in answering that question’” (IM, p. 5). Maggie suggested that, to create a safe learning environment, there needed to be a level of comfort between the students and teachers. She believed that communication was the only way to achieve this cohesive environment.

Despite Maggie’s efforts to create a positive health education classroom, her students were not always eager to participate in health class. “The girls, they don’t want to be in health class, they want to be in the gym, and they really don’t like the concept of having to work [on written assignments]” (IM, p. 6).

Resources

To make health class as informative as possible, while still keeping the students’ interest, Maggie used several resources to support her lessons about dating violence during both the one-day lessons in the Grade 9 and 10 courses, and the week-long unit in the Grade 11 course.

Maggie was eager to find new resources after teaching the Grade 11 course for the first time in years. Maggie looked for resources she could use to educate not only her students, but herself as well. “I’m in the process of learning. I’m like a beginner teacher right now, which is odd after teaching for 30 years” (IM, p. 9). When Maggie was planning her dating violence unit, she first consulted the OPHEA website to find any resources about sexual harassment and dating violence prevention. On the OPHEA website (www.ophea.net), Maggie found dating violence scenarios and “great packages of things that I was able to access” (IM, p. 5).

In addition to those resources, Maggie found a video produced in 2008 by Sunburst Visual Media entitled, *Relationships That Hurt: Dating Violence*. The video was accompanied with additional written information to help teachers create lesson plans. Maggie claimed that the video was “excellent ... It has a 20-minute video clip, and it has a pre-activity, an activity during the video, and an ‘after’ activity, and discussion questions from which I made the ... assignment” (IM, p. 10). Maggie used the video kit to create a culminating activity assignment for the Grade 11 course. To assess the students’ learning, Maggie had her class represent their knowledge of dating violence. To address the students’ apathetic approach to completing projects in health class, Maggie provided the class the opportunity to decide how to complete the assignment.

There’s lots of differentiation, they’ll be able to choose how they want to show me what they’ve learned, whether it be through a song, through a video, through role-play, through a whole series of different things [and] you can choose to do it in a group or individually. (IM, p. 10)

Maggie had found the video kit on-line and used the Physical Education Department budget to order the program. Maggie believed the purchase was necessary because “what [our department] had was out-of date, so old that even the hairstyles and everything else

[made it obvious it was out-of-date]” (IM, p. 10). Maggie stated that up-to-date videos were essential because “students would just roll their eyes at anything they couldn’t relate to” (IM, p. 10). Maggie supported the acquisition of new resources because “there is always something new that you’re to learn” (IM, p. 10). In addition to print and visual resources, Maggie contacted a local women’s shelter and had one of the employees come to talk to her class about women’s rights and sexual harassment. The guest speaker also represented ‘Where’s the Love?’, a new project in which Nelson District had recently become involved.

‘Where’s the Love?’ was a conference “all about dating violence and trying to raise awareness” (IM, p. 8). Maggie explained that Nelson was a part of the organizational committee for the ‘Where’s the Love?’ campaign. The committee organized the conference that would take place in a large eastern Ontario city. The conference would be attended by hundreds of high school students from across multiple school boards and would educate students about “new anti-violence initiatives” (IM, p. 8). The objective was that students would return to their schools, equipped with the knowledge learned at the conference, and would continue the anti-violence campaigns. Students at Nelson were encouraged to sign-up to participate and were provided with “free bussing,” but the school did not make the conference a mandatory event (IM, p. 8). Maggie believed that this project was a great way for Nelson to “increase the awareness” of dating violence (IM, p. 8).

Maggie believed that her lessons on dating violence had had an effect on her Grade 11 class. Even though her students had not approached Maggie directly for help with a dating violence situation, she had provided a “non-threatening situation” that

allowed her students to “talk about [abuse] in an open dialogue” with their classmates (IM, p. 7). Maggie observed that, “for some [of the students] who are experiencing [dating violence] they can hear what others are saying ... it might awaken them to the situation” (IM, p. 7). Maggie experienced this openness in her own classroom. During one of her lessons about dating violence, Maggie had realized that a student might have been in an unhealthy relationship. Her students had been completing a group brainstorm activity using chart paper to think about controlling behaviours, and, as Maggie had walked around the room, she had overheard a conversation among a few of her students,

One of the [girls] was saying, ‘he’s controlling.’ And she goes, ‘no, not really.’ And three girls around her were going, ‘yeah, he really is.’ And so it opened that door somebody, who, by the way, is a really well-rounded, comes from a great family, super super kid, and she doesn’t know that she’s in ... not a horrible abuse situation, but is more controlling than she thought it was. You could see sort of a light bulb go on. (IM, p. 7)

Maggie acknowledged that she had not known that this particular student had even been in a dating relationship. Maggie had not approached the student after she had heard this conversation, but had told the class after each lesson that she was available to talk about anything her students wanted to discuss.

Increasing Awareness

Maggie believed Nelson’s involvement with conferences like ‘Where’s the Love?’ was a “great start” to increasing the awareness of dating violence at the school. Maggie declared that “there is always a need to raise awareness respectfully” (IM, p. 11).

Maggie commented that awareness about dating violence should be targeted at the male students, especially within the Physical Education department. “They deal with bullying, but they don’t deal with sexual abuse” (IM, p. 11). Maggie considered the lack of dating violence prevention in male Physical Education class a “concern,” given that

males were “the perpetrators [of dating violence] for the most part” (IM, p. 11). Maggie believed that “the male Phys. Ed. teachers need to be the role models” to demonstrate respectful behaviour (IM, p. 11).

Maggie also believed there was a need to increase awareness of dating violence amongst the entire staff at Nelson District, not only for the Physical Education teachers. One idea that Maggie offered was to have an “interesting [Professional Development] session” (IM, p. 11). Maggie defined interesting as, “not being talked at ... being interactive, up-to-date and providing tools on how to incorporate prevention into the classroom” (IM, pp. 11-12). Maggie stressed that information in Professional Development days needed to be “applicable” for teachers and suggested that “up-to-date statistics that deal with what’s happening in this county” would be useful to teachers (IM, p. 12). Maggie believed that teachers, like students, needed to be educated about dating violence in a way that compelled them to want to learn more. “A PowerPoint presentation where a whole bunch of statistics and things are put up on the board, is not going to grab the attention of staff” (IM, p. 11).

Katie

Katie was a veteran teacher with an impressive resumé that spanned multiple subject domains such as music and special education. Katie had experience teaching various ages, from primary division to senior level classes. I was able to sit down with Katie in her department office one cold winter afternoon. Based on the energy with which she welcomed me to her school, as well as the resources and equipment that covered her office, it was clear within the first few minutes of meeting Katie that she had a passion

and enthusiasm for her job, school, and students. Katie was thankful to be included in this study, having heard of this research from a mutual colleague, and was eager to help in any way she could.

Over a 22-year career, Katie had taught in three different high schools and made the transition into her first teachable of Physical and Health Education. After 12 years in the P.E. (Physical Education) department at a high school located about 20 minutes outside of the moderately sized Ontario city in which she resided, Katie opted to take a position at a school located in the heart of the city. Katie had been teaching Physical and Health Education at Fairbrook Secondary School for the past six years, assigned to a number of different courses from Grades 9 to 12.

School Community

Fairbrook was a small school with less than 700 students enrolled in Grades 9-12. Fairbrook Secondary had what Katie described as a “distinctive profile” (IK, p. 1). Demographically, the school was located in an impoverished area of the city and faced challenges that surrounded students who were underprivileged. “You’ve got high crime, poverty, frustration issues in terms of lack of literacy, all the typical struggles of the poor” (IK, p. 3). Katie was aware of the school’s challenges before she made the transfer to Fairbrook, but admitted to being overwhelmed during her first year at the school, “I had no idea what it was going to be like once you ... land” (IK, p. 1).

The school offered a variety of focus programs that were aimed to prepare students for entry into the workforce or to attend college level programs. A number of the focus programs were accredited with the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), which allowed students to gain a head start towards a desired career, increase

opportunities for training and employment, and earn work experience hours in addition to high school credits (www.oyap.ca, 2011). The school's website detailed these unique programs. The programs available at Fairbrook were unique within the school board, and many students would opt to travel to Fairbrook to participate in a specific focus program.

Despite the multiple programs available to students at Fairbrook, Katie showed concern for the disadvantages the students at Fairbrook endured. Katie described many students who attended Fairbrook Secondary School as “damaged,” and she worried about the “fragmented feeling of this community where there isn't really a lot of social networking that happens and the lack of opportunity because of lack of money” (IK, p. 3). Katie felt that there was a division amongst students in the form of social cliques; athletes, academic stream students, workplace stream students, and other informal groupings did not interact or communicate, a situation that caused, in Katie's opinion, a noticeable tension. Katie described the struggles that students faced, coupled with the “fragmented feeling” in the school community, as a “powder [keg] ready to go off” (IK, p. 3).

Personal and Professional Experiences

Katie defined adolescent dating violence as

Not so much a conflict about dating, it is more about power and that ... they need to experience themselves in a way that is unhealthy ... the violence can be anything from verbal to emotional leading into last case scenario physical. (IK, p. 1)

During our interview, the phrase ‘dating violence’ was used in conjunction with heterosexual dating relationships. Katie considered dating violence to be a “huge concern” at Fairbrook, stemming from the hardships that students confronted in their home life (IK, p. 3). Katie suggested that many adolescents often entered into unhealthy

relationships because of “what they view at home” (IK, p. 1). Katie described how an unhealthy relationship at home could influence an adolescent dating relationship. “Kids see relationships in front of them breaking down or have already broken down ... or they may not see a relationship at all, so they don’t know what to do with their feelings” (IK, p. 3). Katie believed that adolescents who had witnessed abusive relationships at home could harbour many negative feelings toward intimate relationships. Mimicking a student’s feelings on experiences with abusive relationships, Katie stated, “I’m afraid, I’m frightened, I’m scared, I’m terrified because I’ve watched my mom and dad do this and that and that scares me” (IK, p. 5). Katie was aware that violence could become cyclical, and adolescents who witnessed unhealthy relationships at home were at risk of developing “negative patterns and behaviour that they will eventually take into adulthood” (IK, p. 3). As adolescents did not also know how to control or demonstrate their emotions in a healthy way, “little fights erupt” over dating relationships (IK, p. 3).

Katie was thankful for never experiencing dating violence in her personal life. “I don’t ever remember a time in my life ... where I ever felt threatened” (IK, p. 5). Katie attributed her healthy relationships to having a stable home life with parents who understood the importance of teaching their children about self-respect and how to deal with unhealthy behaviours.

My parents gave me that toolkit, to stand up for myself, to believe in myself and to not ever, ever take what someone says that’s directed at me, if it’s a negative thing and to not do something about it, and to know who to go to and what to say. (IK, p. 5)

At Fairbrook, Katie had had “many opportunities to engage ... and interact ... to help defuse [dating violence] situations” (IK, p. 3). Katie described most of the incidents in which she had been involved, i.e., “a lot of times,” as a result of a boyfriend being

abusive or “problematic” towards a female dating partner (IK, p. 3). Katie intervened during one scenario after being able to “see the [dating violence] behaviours” within a dating couple (IK, p. 3). Katie described how “a nice girl suddenly start[ed] to go into a protective mode ... and [was] scared when she [was] around that guy” (IK, p. 3). Katie had stepped in because she believed that it was the “right thing [to do]; to try and help” (IK, p. 3). Katie was hesitant to provide elaborate details when she described the dating violence scenarios that she had experienced or witnessed at Fairbrook Secondary seemingly because of issues of confidentiality; however, she admitted that she “had to deal with” a few “stalking scenarios” and that “police intervention [was] required” in certain cases (IK, p. 3). In spite of the lack of specific details, it was obvious from listening to Katie that Fairbrook had seen a lot of dating violence issues.

Katie knew it was her responsibility as an educator to intervene and assist her students whenever possible. She was also aware that there were limits to what she, as an individual teacher, could accomplish.

When it’s out of my league, and when really I need to step out of this because I’ve got all these other kids that I need to interact with and look after, when it goes beyond my capacity ... then I hand [the situation] off to ... the next level. (IK, p. 4)

After realizing that a situation might have reached a point where Katie could no longer provide the best assistance to a student, Katie felt comfortable enough at Fairbrook to contact her administration for help.

Katie described the administration at Fairbrook Secondary as “amazing” and a “great support” for staff and students. Katie praised them for dealing with dating violence situations effectively.

[Dating violence] is not you know shoved under, it's not put into a box and allowed to collect dust, it's dealt with very seriously, in a very caring and compassionate manner and both parties get dealt with ... in a way that's humane, and to try and move forward. (IK, p. 4)

Katie was thankful for such an approachable and respectful administration because of the extent to which students at Fairbrook were affected by issues surrounding dating violence. Katie acknowledged that both teachers and administrators played a vital role in helping to decrease incidents of dating violence: "there are kids that struggle with this, we have to deal with it" (IK, p. 4).

Teaching and Learning Opportunities

Dating violence at Fairbrook Secondary was addressed in Grades 11 and 12 as one topic in the Physical and Health Education curriculum developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Katie, however, was able to make connections to dating violence during the personal safety unit in Grade 9. Katie was critical of the placement of the topic of dating violence in the curriculum. "It's one of those topics that is ... saved for senior students, but we really need to be targeting the younger students as they come in, even before high school" (IK, p. 2). Katie recognized the connection between dating violence and bullying and suggested that, when talking to younger students in "Grades 5, 6 and 7 and 8," they needed to be aware of "how bullying translates into relationships" (IK, p. 2).

Katie used bullying and "power situations" as a starting point to discuss dating violence with all of her Physical and Health Education classes, using various scenarios that depicted an "imbalance of power" from "a boss and an employee," or "a mom and a child" to help her students recognize that one party is "trying to gain control and trying to gain power over someone else" (IK, pp. 4-5). After Katie's students became aware of dating violence she hoped that they would be better informed to recognize unhealthy

control behaviours and appreciate that “that’s how [dating violence] erupts” (IK, p. 5). After that connection was made, Katie would then discuss warning signs and red flags of dating violence with her students. Katie had typically taught all female Physical Education classes and developed her dating violence prevention lessons so she could “arm” the female students with the “strategies” and “tools” needed to remove themselves from unhealthy and dangerous situations (IK, p. 5). Katie claimed that girls were the ones who were more likely to be at risk for dating violence, in that “the boys don’t really tend to be in a situation where they’re going to be hurt” (IK, p. 5). Katie considered her approach to dating violence prevention in her health classroom as “problem solving” (IK, p. 5). After her students were presented with a dating violence scenario, Katie would begin by “breaking it down” and talking with her students about the power and control issues as a reason for the abuse, and then together find a healthy solution to the problem (IK, p. 5). With this approach, Katie hoped that the skills the students acquired inside the classroom were transferable and could be used in their everyday lives. “The next time it happens, if it happens to them or to a friend, they’ll know how to react and respond” (IK, p. 5).

Katie had attempted to make lessons on dating violence as “active” as possible, by having her students work in “small groups” and using power scenarios. Katie facilitated discussion by using thought-provoking questions, such as, “what do you do in this scenario if somebody treats you like this?” (IK, p. 5). Katie felt that working in small groups was important so students did not feel “isolated” and would be able to listen to multiple ideas (IK, p. 5). She believed that creating a safe classroom environment was imperative to ensure learning for all students and had adapted her learning activities to

create such an environment. Katie would incorporate activities into her lesson plans but would allow the students to determine when they would participate, “[with] role-playing scenarios, not getting the kids to role play they’re not very comfortable in doing that” (IK, p. 4). Katie would read the role-play scenarios herself, without forcing her students to act out the scenarios. In addition to problem-solving activities, discussion, and role-play scenarios, Katie used examples from television shows, as well as “things that happen in the community,” to help make sure that her students understood the prevalence of dating violence issues (IK, p. 6).

Given the aggressive and stalking behaviour exhibited by some male students witnessed by Katie while teaching at Fairbrook, she believed that talking only about the emotional abuse that arose with control behaviour was not enough for the students to learn. Katie ensured that the physical “escalated stuff gets dealt with too” (IK, p. 6). Katie had taught her female students how to protect themselves if they found themselves in a dangerous situation.

I teach them self-defence, so they can ... kick ass, and know that they can kick ass ... being able to kick and punch and scrap because a lot of these girls they like to think that they’re tough but really, physically they’re not. (IK, p. 6)

While being able to teach her students how to defend themselves, Katie acknowledged that physical contact and fighting might not be the answer to ending dating violence, but she insisted that it was important for girls to know that “if [they] have to protect [themselves], [they] know [they] can do it” (IK, p. 6).

Katie also discussed how students were not only learning about relationships from health class, but they were also getting “input from their parents, or the boyfriend or girlfriend who’s at home. They’re getting input from their peer group. They’re getting

input from the media which tells them a lot of lies about what relationships are all about” (IK, p. 9). To teach students effectively about healthy relationships and dating violence, Katie believed that she needed to earn the respect of her students. “If they don’t respect me as a person then they’re not going to listen to what I have to say” (IK, p. 9).

Resources

In addition to the dating violence prevention that went on within Katie’s own classroom, she had taken part in prevention initiatives held at or sponsored by Fairbrook. The school implemented a one-day program for Grade 9 and 10 boys and girls. The guest speaker, a woman whose daughter was killed by her boyfriend, addressed the students in the auditorium. After the presentation, teachers facilitated smaller workshops in classrooms around the school. The program also came with an informational video that teaching staff could use in their classroom. Unfortunately, the name of this particular program had escaped Katie. It was clear, however, that the program had left an impression on Katie as she could remember how the program was used at Fairbrook.

It’s the kind of thing where you really have to prep the students beforehand and then lead them in, [as well as the] staff because the video is highly emotional. ... I met the mother [the guest speaker]. She led a workshop for staff at the health unit and that was very powerful. ... But it came as a package, it came with breakdowns, worksheets ... there’s some really effective pieces, where you got into small groups and [had] conversations ... [the students] were guided through some of the more difficult questions. (IK, p. 7)

Katie connected with the material being presented and volunteered to take part in additional training on adolescent dating violence and how to communicate with students about abusive relationships. Katie suggested that the program was effective because the emotions of the guest speaker and the video presentation were “pretty powerful” and caught the students’ attention (IK, p. 7).

Although the students were captivated and emotionally moved the day the program was put into practice, any shift in paradigm that caused students to look at healthy relationships with a new perspective was difficult to track. Katie stated that it would be “pretty tough to have some quantifiable [data] to work with” (IK, p. 9). Katie remarked that it was “very difficult to measure [the effectiveness] because their dating life is still pretty secretive ... to know what conversations they’re having is pretty sacred” (IK, p. 9). Katie compared lessons on dating violence to lessons in sexual health: “[Teachers are] hoping, crossing fingers, praying that the delivery of the information on contraception ... is actually sinking in” (IK, p. 9).

When asked about how this particular program could be improved, Katie firmly stated that “more staff training” would be beneficial (IK, p. 8). The staff members at Fairbrook were given some training prior to the day the program was implemented. Katie suggested that there was a need for “consistency” when teaching about dating violence as some teachers had varying opinions or feelings about dating violence. Past experiences might also affect a teacher’s willingness to participate in school initiatives, and Katie believed in teachers’ rights to decline facilitating such emotional programs. Katie was firm that additional training and “a good screening” process would assist with this problem.

If you have a Phys. Ed. teacher who may not even want to deal with this, they don’t want to get into it, because they’ve got some baggage from their past, I can understand that, but you got to still teach it, you’ve got to get those ideas across to these kids ... so full staff training, a screening for staff who want to just opt out. (IK, p. 8)

Katie also saw a need for a follow-up, for both staff and students, after this particular module to discuss the day’s events and deal with any lingering questions or comments.

Katie considered a follow-up as an improvement to the program. “You can always get better ... you can always change it up to make it fresh or to make it better” (IK, p. 8). Katie believed it was important for staff members who were educating students about dating violence to take a serious and consistent approach to prevention programs. “[This is] not just a one-shot deal, not a one-off where, OK you go to a workshop and ‘tick’ you’ve jumped through that hoop” (IK, p. 11). Teachers needed to acknowledge that dating violence was an “on-going conversation” to “get better at delivering the right message” (IK, pp. 11-12). Katie further thought that teachers and the education system had made strides when it came to educating students about dating violence.

There’s got to be a hook for the guys to get involved in it ... change it up, instead of dating violence ... change the whole slant of it, for them to become better guys. Make it accessible for the guys, so they learn some skills that make them realize that, hey if you behave in this [positive] manner, you’re actually going to be like a rockstar, you’re going to be *the* guy, that those girls that you like, they’ll want to be with you rather than bonehead over here. (IK, p. 11)

Katie believed that this idea could be a positive approach to dating violence prevention, but realized that other teachers might not feel the same. “Maybe it’s not that way for other people, maybe they think [the extreme feminist] is the way you have to approach it” (IK, p. 11). Katie felt that an anti-male campaign was “highly problematic,” and, while there were males who exhibited unhealthy behaviours, there were “great guys” out there for females to get to know (IK, p. 11). Katie believed that resources could teach female students strategies on how to “pick the right guy and to realize that he’s not going to change if he’s damaged unless he gets help from somebody other than them” (IK, p. 11).

Increasing Awareness

When asked if there was a need to increase the awareness of dating violence at Fairbrook, Katie felt that at her school staff and students “deal with it so much” that

awareness of the issues was not the problem (IK, p. 9). Katie saw a need for a shift from awareness to prevention. “You need to move beyond awareness into strategies to actually stop behaviours” (IK, p. 9). Katie considered the teaching staff at Fairbrook to be on the front line for dealing with “emergency situations” involving dating violence, but there were still many unanswered questions that she herself had when confronted with these events.

But really how do you sit down with a couple and talk to them about their behaviours, and say look we care about you as people, what do I do with this? Instead of maybe just shipping them off to the adolescent care worker or someone else. (IK, pp. 9-10)

These are tools that were not only for teachers who worked at Fairbrook, but would be beneficial for all teachers because dating violence was “in every high school” (IK, p. 10).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to describe four Health and Physical Education teachers' understanding of dating violence and to describe their reasons for including curriculum about healthy relationships as a component of their health programs. By comparing and contrasting the participants' profiles, I was able to identify several similarities and differences among the four teachers. After a thoughtful analysis, five principal themes emerged as the key elements of the data from the four female Health and Physical Education teachers. Specifically, I address the participants' shared experiences and understandings of: (i) dating violence, (ii) the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum documents, (iii) dating violence prevention in the classroom, (iv) the use of supplementary prevention resources, and (v) dating violence as a feminine responsibility. Each principal theme was divided into sub-themes for further examination.

In this chapter, I have taken the data provided by the participants and connected it with extant research in the field of adolescent dating violence. I then address the limitations and directions for future research, recommendations for practicing dating violence prevention, and my final thoughts on the study.

Examination of Major Themes

Defining Dating Violence

During the individual interviews, the participants were questioned about their prior knowledge of dating violence, as well as the ways in which first-hand experiences in their own school community influenced their approach to teach dating violence

prevention. Each of the four participants articulated her own definition of dating violence, shared experiences of dating violence, and commented on incidents of dating violence within her school.

Each participant in this study provided her definition of adolescent dating violence. The four definitions were similar in that each participant viewed adolescent dating violence as a form of control or power exerted by one person over another individual. Heather, Joan, Maggie, and Katie believed that specific acts of dating violence stemmed from a dating partner's need for control within a dating relationship. Joan further commented on how the perpetrator of dating violence can often be insecure in himself, which leads to jealousy and then controlling behaviours. To expand upon their basic definition of dating violence, the participants further identified dating violence as a manifestation of any or all forms of abuse: physical, sexual, and emotional, as we see from Heather's statement, that dating violence does not always leave bruises. They described fully the risks of becoming involved in an unhealthy dating relationship (e.g., physical or emotional harm) and shared explicit and actionable strategies to assist their students in identifying unhealthy situations and making good decisions to create healthy relationships. These extensions, coupled with their definitions of dating violence, indicate that the participants had existing knowledge about dating violence and were educated, to some degree, on how to prevent dating violence situations.

The participants' definitions of dating violence are consistent with definitions found in current literature on dating violence. Ely, Dulmus, and Wodarski (2002) defined dating violence as, "physical assault or acts of bodily harm, including psychological and emotional abuse, verbal or implied" (p. 34). However, the participants' definitions went

beyond the manifestations of dating violence and focused on the motives of the perpetrator of dating violence. While there are few studies that examine the motives of adolescent dating violence perpetrators, the participants' beliefs about control are congruent with the findings of Kaura and Allen's (2004) study of 648 undergraduate students. The study used the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale and the Relationship Power Scale in a dating violence survey to find that "dissatisfaction with relationship power is a significant predictor of dating violence perpetration" (p. 584).

Experiencing Dating Violence

To varying degrees, each participant in this study had some experience with dating violence in her school. Heather discussed how she had witnessed one female student changing her behaviour and lifestyle to accommodate her male dating partner. Katie briefly mentioned a stalking scenario that had required police intervention at her school, while Maggie's school community had had problems with sexual games involving senior male students taking advantage of younger female students. Joan's school was struggling with violent date rapes that occurred outside of school. Whether the participants were directly involved with the dating violence situations or were only aware of the incidents via staff meetings, the four teachers knew that their schools had first-hand incidents of dating violence. The uniqueness of the dating violence situations described by the participants suggests that dating violence is a prevalent issue that affects both physical and psychological safety, albeit in different forms across schools.

All four participants believed that dating violence was an issue in her school community. Heather and Maggie expressed specific worry that dating violence was a bigger concern than staff at their schools generally realized, principally and unfortunately

because students were not seeking help. Each participant, however, talked about the importance of creating a safe classroom environment in which the discussion of healthy relationships could be openly considered and promoted. All the participants were positive about their schools' response to dating violence by confronting the issue in their health program. Participants continued to educate students about healthy relationships and, by so doing, affirmed their role as potential helpers to victims of dating violence.

Studies that examine dating violence typically focus on incidents of physical and sexual dating violence. Little is known about the prevalence rates for psychological and emotional abuse in adolescent dating relationships. Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, and Kupper (2001) examined incidents of minor physical violence (e.g., pushing or shoving) and psychological abuse (e.g., name-calling, threatening with violence) in adolescent dating relationships and found that 29% of the 7,493 adolescents who were involved with dating relationships reported they had experienced some form of psychological abuse.

Heather's and Maggie's concern that adolescents do not seek help is consistent with literature on adolescent help-seeking for dating violence. Ashley and Foshee (2005) conducted a study involving 225 victims of dating violence and 140 perpetrators of dating violence. Self-administered questionnaires showed that 60% of the victims and 79% of the perpetrators did not seek help for dating violence situations. Those who did seek help consulted only close friends and family (Ashley & Foshee). The participants' discussion about dating violence indicated prior knowledge of the social problem. The participants' definition and their concerns about the rate of occurrence and adolescents' apprehension to seek help are all congruent with literature about dating violence.

Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum Documents

All of the participants of this study were required to meet the expectations of the Health and Physical Education curriculum outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2000). The prescribed curriculum played a vital role in how the teachers structured their classes and regulated what topics would be included and what information would be addressed in each specific grade and course. Two frustrations about the Ontario Ministry of Education's Health and Physical Education curriculum expectations emerged from the participants: the placement of dating violence prevention within the curriculum and the limited time available to address all of the required topics.

To obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, all students are required to successfully complete a one-credit course in Health and Physical Education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). At the schools represented in this study, students were strongly encouraged to fulfill this credit in Grade 9 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). Thus Health and Physical Education courses offered after Grade 9 were optional. All four participants in this study indicated that the curriculum expectations to teach students about dating violence appeared within the Grade 11: Health and Physical Education courses, naming "Healthy Active Living" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000) as their reference point. The overall teaching expectations for dating violence (referred to as "relationship violence" in the Grade 11 "Healthy Active Living" course) are found within the "Healthy Living" strand primarily under the subheading, "Personal Safety and Injury Prevention." This section requires students to describe various types of violence; demonstrate an understanding of relationship violence; recognize the signs of relationship violence; and know strategies to prevent and eliminate violence in

relationships (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 11). Given that there is an intimate and often sexual nature to this issue, dating violence is also often considered a topic under the subheading, “Healthy Growth and Sexuality” in the Grade 11 curriculum. The curriculum expectations are the same for both male and female Health and Physical Education courses.

There was consensus among the four participants that the placement of dating violence prevention in the Grade 11 course was problematic. In Maggie’s small rural school, lack of enrollment for the optional Grade 11 course habitually caused the course to be cancelled. Cancelling the Grade 11 course concerned Maggie, as students could potentially never learn about healthy dating relationships if they opted not to continue taking Health and Physical Education courses after Grade 9. Katie was also critical of the placement of dating violence in the curriculum and suggested a need to start educating younger students about dating violence and healthy dating relationships. Although dating violence prevention was not a health topic before Grade 11, Katie and Maggie, as well as Joan and Heather, found ways to incorporate it in earlier grades, to ensure students were being educated on the subject by using related curriculum expectations. Maggie, Heather, and Katie discussed how they were able to include issues of dating violence in the context of units about personal safety and sexuality in the Grade 9 “Healthy Active Living” course. Maggie and Joan were additionally able to connect dating violence prevention to the Grade 10 “Healthy Active Living” course through units such as ‘drugs and alcohol,’ and ‘conflict management.’ Only Joan showed hesitation when considering teaching issues of dating violence to Grade 9 students. She felt that students 13-14 years old might be too young to understand the significance of the issues, and believed that

students might not be dating at so young an age. Given that the four participants found it necessary to manipulate the Ontario curriculum guidelines to include discussions of dating violence prevention earlier than intended, the placement of dating violence prevention in the Ontario curriculum guidelines may be inappropriate.

The participants' concern surrounding the inappropriate placement of dating violence prevention education relates to literature surrounding the age at which adolescents engage in romantic relationships as well as youths' first sexual intercourse experience. Furman (2002), a leading researcher on adolescent romantic relationships, states that romantic relationships are central in the lives of adolescents. Romantic relationships influence the development of adolescents as these relationships can be a great support system, or can put the adolescent at-risk of potential harm (Furman, 2002). In a longitudinal study of 200 tenth graders, Furman, Low, and Ho (2009) found that the majority of 15 to 16 year olds had had some experience with dating relationships. These results are consistent with findings from Laursen and Williams (1997) who reported that tenth graders spent more time with a romantic partner than with mothers or friends.

Not only were the participants of this study critical of the placement of dating violence prevention within the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum continuum, they also commented on the limited time that they were expected to spend on this topic. In spite of being able to include dating violence prevention education in the Grade 9 and 10 courses using a circumventive rationale, the participants were able to touch on dating violence only briefly. For Heather and Maggie, only one class (i.e., approximately 70 minutes) was spent on dating violence when they were able to incorporate the topic into the broader units in the Grade 9 and 10 courses. The language

used by Joan and Katie also suggested that only a brief time period was available for discussing dating violence prevention in courses that did not require specific teaching on the subject. For the Grade 11 course, more time was allotted. Heather's class spent five classes discussing dating violence, but still she felt rushed in her delivery of the subject matter.

Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers are required, through the curriculum expectations mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education, to cover a variety of physical activity skills as well as healthy living skills in each Health and Physical Education course. In 1999, when the Ontario Ministry of Education instituted significant curriculum reform, the Health and Physical Education curriculum was subjected to some major changes, which included a decreased emphasis on skill and an increased emphasis on lifelong learning in health and physical activity (Bowins & Beaudoin, 2011). After the creation of the new curriculum policy documents, several studies reviewed the effectiveness of implementing the new curriculum in schools. One such study conducted by Fraser-Thomas and Beaudoin (2002) examined challenges posed to Health and Physical Education teachers and administrators from Nova Scotia and Ontario after implementing new curricula into their classrooms and schools. Teachers and principals who participated in the study found there was "difficulty incorporating all of the curriculum objectives" into the Health and Physical Education classroom due to the fact that there was limited class time to include each objective. Like the participants of the present study, the informants in Fraser-Thomas and Beaudoin's (2002) study were frustrated by the number of health-related objectives that were required to be incorporated into their programs.

Dating Violence Prevention in the Classroom

The majority of my conversation with the participants of this study revolved around their general approach to teaching their students about dating violence and the prevention strategies discussed with their classes. Before detailing the specific resources and activities they used in classes on dating violence, the participants discussed broadly the structure and atmosphere of their health classes. Three sub-themes emerged as important factors that the participants confronted when teaching dating violence prevention. Among these sub-themes, participants discussed the importance of single-sex health classes and their ability to foster discussion, the difficulty in assessing student learning, and the strong and necessary connection between bullying and dating violence.

The four participants in this study taught single-sex female Health and Physical Education classes with dating violence prevention occurring during designated health periods in a standard classroom rather than the gymnasium. Maggie's students struggled with the transition from the gym back to the classroom, while the tone and language of the other participants suggested that their students had a negative attitude towards the health component and would rather be active in the gym. Given the intimate and often sexual nature of dating violence, the participants believed a classroom exclusively for female students was the most effective way to educate their students on this topic. Joan and Heather believed that female students were more likely to engage in open conversation without males present. Maggie and Katie, like Joan and Heather, relied on discussion and an open dialogue to approach topics like dating violence and believed that single-sex classrooms supported a comfortable environment for their students to share their thoughts and feelings about dating violence.

Being able to teach students in a single-sex classroom allowed the participants to create an environment conducive to discussion. The participants identified that the most important teaching strategy for teaching dating violence prevention was the ability to facilitate and encourage discussion. Through whole-class discussion, the participants were able to introduce and teach various topics from dating violence including: warning signs, how to help a friend in a dating violence situation, and what to do if you find yourself in an unhealthy dating relationship. Katie was the only participant to comment specifically on the use of small group and partner work as a means to afford more intimate discussion.

While discussion played a significant role in each teacher's teaching strategies, Joan was the only one who reflected on how discussion in the classroom gave her an opportunity to re-evaluate her effectiveness as a sexual health educator. Joan's students believed incorrectly that a female was at fault for the acts of violence that had occurred between a dating couple. In the example given to her class a male verbally harassed a female after she had giggled at a sexual joke. Joan's class believed that the female's giggle provided the 'go-ahead' for continued derogatory language and harassment. After this discussion, Joan realized she had to go back and review some key points about dating violence prevention, and emphasize that it was never OK to harass an individual. This experience was a turning point in Joan's dating violence prevention teaching and, after this discussion, she focused on controlling behaviours for the duration of the unit.

The Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum makes no recommendation to separate classes by sex to teach Health and Physical Education. The decision to separate sexes for Health and Physical Education classes lies with individual

school boards. Teachers can access the Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education (2008) for advice on teaching sexual health. This document, like the Ontario curriculum, does not suggest a separation of classes by sex, but states that “effective sexual health education should be provided in an age-appropriate, culturally sensitive manner” (p. 11). The participants’ preference to teach single-sex classrooms supports Cohen, Sears, Byers, and Weaver’s (2004) study of elementary and middle school sexual health teachers in New Brunswick, where the researchers found that over half (53%) of the participants were more comfortable teaching sexual health in a single-sex environment. Of those participants who preferred the single-sex classrooms, 58% were female teachers. Cohen, Sears, Byers, and Weaver attributed the female teacher preference to single-sex classrooms on the self-reported lower comfort level in teaching sexual health also found in the study. While the four participants of the present study indicated their preference for a single-sex health classroom, their responses do not support Cohen et al.’s attribution to a teacher’s lower-comfort level. They considered the single-sex classroom to be an advantage only to the students, believing that it would serve as a comfortable learning environment. These views also contradict the findings of Strange, Oakley, and Forrest (2003) who conducted a study of 3,355 English secondary school students aged 15 to 16 years. A questionnaire and subsequent focus groups revealed that 41% of the girls surveyed preferred to receive their sexual health education in mixed-sex classes. However, 34% of the female participants preferred sexual health education in single-sex classrooms, and 25% wanted a combination of mixed- and single-sex classrooms, depending on the topic. Despite many of the participants wanting mixed-sex classrooms, during focus groups, participants explained that boys’ behaviour in sexual health classes

was often “disruptive” and would contrast with the girls’ seriousness. Strange, Oakley, and Forrest (2003) also found that the female students who preferred single-sex classrooms did so because the boys’ disruptive behaviour often included sexist comments and criticism of the female students resulting in the girls’ being “unwilling or unable to participate in the lessons” (p. 204), a condition that is less likely to arise in a safe and comfortable single-sex learning environment.

When asked about assessing student learning on dating violence, three of the four participants struggled with identifying whether or not their students had learned or grasped the information that they were given about dating violence prevention. Maggie, Heather, and Joan discussed specific examples of summative assignments (performance-based activities) students were given to assess learning, while Katie did not comment on assessment when describing her dating violence teaching technique. Maggie assessed student learning in her dating violence prevention classroom by administering a summative assignment that asked for specific responses to questions based on the curriculum. Maggie allowed her students flexibility in the presentation of the assignment, by letting them choose the format through which they presented their knowledge of the topic issues. Heather and Joan gave their students specific written assignments that tested them on the information that was presented in class. Their assessment had a dual focus: the warning signs of dating violence and how to help a friend who had become involved in a dating violence situation. Despite using contemporary assessment practices that would measure student learning, Heather and Joan showed concern about whether or not their students were really “getting the message” about dating violence prevention. Joan hoped that she would reach as many students as she could, while Heather was worried

that, despite teaching her students about controlling behaviours in a dating relationship, her students would disregard those lessons at the opportunity to be in a dating relationship. The apprehensive nature of the participants' discussion about the appropriateness of traditional assessment methods suggested doubt in their ability to effectively assess student learning in dating violence prevention.

The teachers' concern that their students would disregard the important message to which they were introduced in health class, once they were confronted with an unhealthy situation, relates to what motivates a person to act in a certain way, or why individuals do something they know is not beneficial to their well-being. Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on how an individual's behaviour is self-motivated or self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT developed from studies comparing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; intrinsic motivation is the act of participating in an activity or behaviour, only because the activity or behaviour is interesting and satisfying in and of itself. Conversely, an individual is extrinsically motivated when there is a purpose or goal for engaging in the activity (Deci & Ryan). Researchers have identified three psychological needs that motivate an individual to engage in certain behaviours: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Competence refers to the need to feel effective and capable in the activity or behaviour, autonomy is the universal desire to be an agent of one's own life, and relatedness is the need to belong and feel connected to other persons, groups, or culture (Deci & Ryan). While adolescents may understand that being involved in an unhealthy relationship is not beneficial to their well-being, they may be motivated to participate in an abusive relationship because certain psychological needs are being met. A study conducted by Patrick, Knee, Canevello, and

Lonsbary (2007) examined each psychological need and its role in relationship functioning and well-being; 1,918 participants who were involved in romantic relationships completed the Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationship Scale to determine the connection between need fulfillment and individual and relationship functioning and well-being. Competence was positively associated with self-esteem and vitality, autonomy was positively associated with self-esteem, and relatedness was positively associated with vitality, giving evidence for the role of need fulfillment in relationship functioning and well-being. A second study further explored the association between need fulfillment and relationship functioning by examining these processes in 66 dating couples. Both dating partners' need fulfillment positively affected relationship functioning. Specifically, when both partners experienced relatedness, the relationship became more intrinsically rewarding. Relationship well-being may therefore be negatively affected when one of the dating partners has a greater need for relatedness. The last study examined the relationship between need fulfillment and relationship quality. One hundred twenty participants in heterosexual dating relationships completed questionnaires and were required to complete a diary record after each disagreement that occurred in their relationship over a 10-day period. Individuals who had greater need fulfillment had more autonomous or intrinsic reasons for being in their relationship. When analysing specific needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), the need for relatedness was the strongest predictor of higher satisfaction and commitment in relationship functioning. The need to feel connected to another individual was the most important need being fulfilled during relationships. This study relates to unhealthy adolescent dating relationships, because individuals may become involved in these

relationships because the psychological need of relatedness is being fulfilled, despite their other needs, competence and autonomy, being discounted.

The participants of this study were concerned that students would become involved in unhealthy dating relationships, even after they had been educated about the dangers of dating violence. Self-determination theory helps to understand why adolescents engage in risky behaviour, even when they are aware of the potential risks.

All of the participants of this study recognized that dating violence goes beyond physical forms of abuse, and can often include demeaning and controlling behaviours. Two of the participants made the direct link between bullying and dating violence. Joan and Katie stated emphatically that dating violence is an extension of bullying. Joan worried that her female students who were educated about bullying were still not recognizing bullying behaviours within the context of a romantic dating relationship. Katie suggested that, when teaching younger students in primary grade levels about bullying, there should be discussion about how bullying translates into relationships.

In a study conducted by Pepler et al. (2006) that examined bullying in adolescence among 961 elementary school students and 935 high school students, participants completed a modified Safe School Questionnaire to “obtain a self-report on bullying behaviours in school” as well as a modified AAUW Sexual Harassment Survey (p. 379). A connection was found in that adolescents who reported engaging in bullying behaviours were more likely to harass peers sexually and more likely to be physically aggressive in romantic dating relationships. Similarly, Connolly et al. (2000) administered questionnaires to 196 identified bullies in Grades 5 through 8. The Dating Questionnaire was used to gather information on the bullies’ mixed-sex activities, dating,

activities, and relationship status. Bullies started dating at an earlier age and were involved in “more advanced forms” of dating than non-bullies. Bullies experienced more physical and social aggression with their boyfriends or girlfriends than their non-bully peers. Students who participate in bullying behaviour in their childhood may be more likely to continue these behaviours later in their adolescence in that bullying behaviour seen in adolescence can take the form of relationship abuse and sexual aggression (Connolly et al., 2000; Pepler et al., 2006). To prevent dating violence, education on the evolution of bullying behaviours is necessary. Educating children not only about bullying but how bullying can transition into dating violence and sexual harassment may prevent bullying behaviours.

Using the correlations between bullying and dating violence may help Health and Physical Education teachers, like those in this study, educate their students on controlling behaviours. As most students receive anti-bullying education in elementary school, for high school teachers to make connections between bullying and dating violence may activate prior knowledge for the students so they are more familiar with healthy social behaviour. Anti-bullying awareness may prove to be an effective tool in dating violence prevention.

Supplementary Resources

The Ontario Ministry of Education Registry of approved Bullying Prevention Programs (dating violence prevention programs are included on the registry) was the starting point to my investigation into the resources used by Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers when teaching their students about dating violence. Only one of the four participants (Heather) had used a resource found on the Registry. Indeed, none of the

participants was familiar with the registry of suggested programs, and their language and tone indicated surprise that there was such a website.

It was clear after analysis of the data that the participants did not use a full curriculum or any complete program for dating violence prevention. Instead participants of this study used individual supplementary resources as single activities to educate their students about dating violence prevention.

All of the participants in this study relied on supplementary resources in addition to their prior knowledge of dating violence to teach prevention lessons. Without the aid of the Ministry's website, the participants found these resource materials through their own efforts. While the specific tools used to educate students about dating violence prevention varied across participants, there were three common elements: the search for resources, links to popular culture, and the lack of critical thinking about the appropriateness of the resources used in the classroom.

The four participants of this study had unique ideas and strategies for incorporating dating violence prevention into their health classrooms. Each teacher was able to provide some information about one teaching resource they found helpful when discussing dating violence prevention, such as, Internet websites, videos, activity sheets, guest speakers, and school-wide workshops. Three of the participants (Heather, Joan, and Maggie) found the resources they used in their classroom by accessing on-line search engines. Maggie started her search at the Ontario Health and Physical Education Association website where she was able to find examples of dating violence scenarios as well as a video resource package. Maggie also found contact information for a local women's shelter on-line and was able to connect with the employees at the shelter, one of

whom presented a guest lecture to her students. Heather discovered her resource material using Google. Heather used Internet searches as she believed the resources her department had were out-of-date and would not engage student learning. Like Heather, Joan used Google to find interactive electronic resources. Like Maggie, Joan extended her search into her local community. Joan visited her local health unit where she was able to borrow an educational video about dating violence. Joan found additional material at her school board's teacher resource centre. Heather, Joan, and Maggie did not rely on existing resources either they or their department had, but used Internet searches to find new and current resources to use in their lessons about dating violence prevention.

Finding relevant materials has been identified as an integral part in teachers' instructional planning (Turner & Reidling, 2003). When the Ontario Ministry of Education changed its curriculum in 1999, no one could have predicted the advanced technology teachers could manipulate to find and use information that would help fulfill curriculum expectations. The Internet, through search engines such as Google, has increased the availability of resources for teachers in a multitude of formats and has decreased the need for paper materials (Perrault, 2007). Like the participants of this study, teachers are using the Internet to find appropriate resources for instruction (Hedtke, Kahlert, & Schwier, 2001; Perrault, 2007; Recker, Dorward, & Nelson, 2004; Williams & Irwin, 2003). The participants' use of the Internet to find dating violence prevention material could also be attributed to time constraints, as seen in Recker, Doward, and Nelson's (2004) study that examined science and mathematics teachers' use of the Internet to access learning resources. That study used case study methodology to follow eight teachers as they accessed various on-line search tools to find relevant

materials. The respondents reported that using the Internet to find resources, favouring Google as their on-line search engine, increased their overall productivity to plan lessons. These results are similar to those found in Williams and Grimble's (2003) study that surveyed 164 teachers from 15 departments on their knowledge and awareness of their school's library media centre (SLMC). Specifically, the researchers were interested in teachers' knowledge and use of the electronic resources found within SLMC. These resources included on-line encyclopaedias, and databases and indexes to which the school subscribed. Teachers believed resources found in the SLMC were more reliable, but preferred to use the "open" Internet through search engines like Google and Yahoo as they were easier to use and time-efficient.

In addition to how the participants of this study were able to find their supplementary resources, similarities arose in the content of the materials. Heather, Joan, and Katie all commented on the value of including up-to-date information. Participants were able to incorporate current information through various media outlets and discussion about popular news stories to which their students could relate. Heather discovered one of her key resources after a discussion with her class about an American reality television series entitled *Teen Mom*, produced by Music Television (MTV). The show, as the title suggests, follows the lives of teenage mothers and their struggles to cope with motherhood, relationships, and education. One of the mothers featured on the show, Amber, was filmed verbally and physically abusing her boyfriend; repeatedly hitting and kicking him. Amber was later charged with domestic battery (Stelter, 2010). After Heather's class discussed this particular episode, Heather accessed MTV's website (mtv.ca) to learn more about the show. From the website, Heather found links to dating

violence prevention websites that contained resources she used in her class. Joan was also able to find valuable resources from websites produced and maintained by the popular production company MTV. Joan came across websites such as www.athinline.org during her on-line searches but was surprised to realize that this website was maintained by MTV. Keeping resources current and linking dating violence to popular culture was a strategy also used by Katie who discussed incorporating examples of dating violence from television shows to help her students understand the prevalence of dating violence. While Maggie did not mention specific links to popular culture in her interview, she did discuss the need for resources to be up-to-date so the students could better relate to the material. The teachers who used media from popular culture did so to help their students recognize dating violence and to reinforce the potential severity of this issue.

Literature surrounding media and dating violence is minimal but suggests that media may influence adolescents by providing examples of how to act in romantic relationships (Manganello, 2008). Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park, and Verberg (2002) conducted a study of 100 adolescents aged 13 to 16 years to examine the sources of information teens access to learn about dating. Media, specifically television, was considered a sought-after resource of information placing fourth of 10 possible resources; higher on the list than teachers. These results are comparable to those of Lavoie, Robitaille, and Hébert (2000) who conducted five age- and sex-separated focus groups consisting of a total of 24 Canadian adolescents aged 14 to 19 years. Questions surrounded love, adolescent heterosexual dating relationships, and violence within those relationships. Participants identified, among other factors, two socially oriented explanations for violence: peer group influence and the influence of pornography.

Respondents suggested that perpetrators of violence learned about interactions of violence from media sources such as pornography. One participant in the female aged 15 to 19 group stated, “It’s because they see it too much in the magazines or movies ... that’s the way it is in the magazines so that’s how it has to be in real life” (p. 23). If adolescents are receiving their information about dating from media outlets such as television, and they are consistently viewing abusive relationships, it may prove beneficial to have teachers identify unhealthy behaviours in relationships found in media’s popular culture to further educate students.

Heather implied that she would use whatever dating violence prevention resource she could, as long as she could access it, and it was of no cost to her or her department. Lack of funding for resources also restricted what resources Joan was able to use in her classroom. With the participants’ dependence on Internet searches and no money to purchase new material, the participants were limited as to what they could use in the classroom. When participants discussed resources used, the language and tone from the participants was ambivalent. Joan and Katie had difficulty remembering names and details of resources they had used in their classes.

The participants of this study lacked critical thinking or reflection about the resources they incorporated into their lessons. There appeared to be no criteria for selecting a resource outside of the cost and accessibility. None of the participants discussed who or why the documents were created. While there was some reflection about the effectiveness of the resource in terms of its ability to engage and interact with students, there was minimal, if any, discussion of whether or not the information provided by the resource material was accurate. The quality of the resource, according to

these participants, relied mainly on its ability to engage students, and not on the information being presented.

Printed materials, such as textbooks and supplementary curriculum material, are becoming increasingly popular in the Health and Physical Education classroom (Devis-Devis, Molina-Alventos, Peiro-Velert, & Kirk, 2011). The participants of the present study did not use textbooks, but relied on printed material to fulfill curriculum expectations. Careful selection of the resources teachers use in the learning process is imperative because curriculum materials “may determine not only what but also how teachers teach and what and how students are expected to learn” (Watts-Taffe, 2006, p. 107). The majority of the resources selected by the participants of this study, such as the video-kit purchased by Maggie, were developed by private corporations. The motives behind private corporations in their development of dating violence prevention materials or any supplementary curriculum resources are unclear; profits cannot be ignored when considering the purposes of these resources.

Cohen, Raudenbush, and Loewenberg Ball (2003) consider educational resources to be any purchased material with the potential to foster learning. These resources can be as small as books and access to membership only websites, or physical buildings such as libraries. Cohen, Raudenbush, and Loewenberg Ball argue against the view that access to resources creates opportunities for learning; instead they add to literature that suggests it is not the resource that fosters learning, but *how* the resource is used. Cohen, Raudenbush, and Loewenberg Ball admit that this is an often repetitive or obvious viewpoint on educational resources, but extend their argument to suggest that the instructor who administers the resource might not effectively use the material to create

learning opportunities. The researchers state, “If the importance of resource use is obvious, it remains to be understood” (p. 120). The participants of this study acknowledged the importance of effective resources, stating they needed to be current so their students could better relate to the material being presented. They did not however focus their entire lesson plans on dating violence prevention or on any one document. The teachers of this study manipulated resources to how they believed they would benefit their students most.

A Feminine Responsibility

All four of the teachers who participated in this study were female, and strongly identified with their gender, which resulted in a feminine viewpoint on dating violence. The language of the participants throughout the interviews indicated that dating violence was a social phenomenon that largely rested with the female population. The participants identified dating violence as a female problem through their perceptions of the perpetrators and victims of dating violence. There was further evidence that showed a desire for males in the participants’ school community to recognize the importance of dating violence prevention; this desire was seen through discussion on the role of male health teachers and the need for increased education for the male student population.

The participants of this study broadly defined dating violence as an imbalance of power and control of one dating partner over another. The participants’ language suggested that the majority of dating violence scenarios occurred during heterosexual relationships. In fact, none of the participants of this study discussed dating violence within homosexual relationships. Their definitions of dating violence were gender-neutral; suggesting that either dating partner could commit an act of dating violence.

While their definitions were gender-free, all of the specific dating violence incidents that were discussed during interviews were acts committed by male adolescents toward females. Maggie believed that boys were typically the perpetrators of dating violence, which stemmed from traditional gender-roles; males being powerful and aggressive and females being weaker and docile. Heather also believed that it was typically boys who were more violent towards females, as did Katie who claimed that the majority of the incidents of dating violence in which she had been involved were the result of a boyfriend being abusive towards his girlfriend. Only Joan indicated that females could be the perpetrators of dating violence and believed that the frequency in which boys and girls committed acts of dating violence were not any more or less than the opposite sex, just that the acts took different forms.

There were further similarities in how each of the teachers approached dating violence in her lesson planning. When conducting lessons on dating violence, the participants of this study focused on primary prevention; preventing perpetration of violence within a dating relationship (Foshee et al., 1998). Heather and Joan included discussion and activities that focused positively on healthy relationships, without identifying perpetrators of violence. Students in their classes were asked to complete tasks that allowed them to think critically about what they believed to be a healthy and loving relationship and the qualities they would look for in a dating partner. The language used by Heather and Joan to describe these lessons suggested that the responsibility to create and identify healthy relationships was held by females and not something mutually discussed between the two dating partners.

All of the participants in this study largely used their dating violence prevention

programming to teach their students how to identify unhealthy and controlling behaviours, and conversely, what to do if they found themselves within a dating violence situation. Most of the examples of dating violence the participants used in their classroom were acts perpetrated by the male dating partner. This teaching perpetuated the idea that females were the victims of dating violence and must be educated to protect themselves against violence. Katie exhibited this view by teaching self-defense to her female students so they would be able to protect themselves from abusive males. Katie also commented that boys were not in a position to be hurt. The language of the participants of this study consistently suggested that females were more at-risk for harm in dating violence situations.

There is much debate on the rates of perpetration of dating violence committed by males and females. It is suggested that discrepancy around perpetration rates may be a result of the ambiguous definition of dating violence, which includes a plethora of acts from threatening language to rape (Lewis, Travea, & Fremouw, 2002). Archer (2000) completed a meta-analytic review of 82 studies that examined sex differences in physical aggression in heterosexual dating partners. The vast majority of the studies that were analyzed by Archer defined acts of physical aggression using the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS), which included: throwing an object at a romantic partner, pushing, shoving or grabbing, slapping, kicking, biting, hitting with a fist or object, and threatening the use of and/or using a weapon against a dating partner. Archer examined the frequency in which these acts were committed across the various studies, as well as the injuries that resulted from physical aggression. After analysis, Archer concluded that females were significantly more likely to commit acts of physical aggression towards their partners

than males, but males were significantly more likely to cause bodily harm to their partner during conflict. Archer's study examined heterosexual relationships from a wide range of age groups from 14 years to 40 years. Conversely, Marquart, Nannini, Edwards, Stanley, and Wayman (2007) conducted a study of 20,807 white adolescents from rural communities across the United States who were currently enrolled in Grades 10 through 12. Participants completed the Community Drug and Alcohol Survey that asked a variety of questions relating to drug and alcohol use in addition to several other issues. Questions around dating violence were geared towards victimization and asked if the participant had ever experienced a dating partner hitting, pushing, or threatening. Sixteen per cent (16%) of the sample had been a victim of dating violence, and girls were 3.5 times more likely to be a victim of dating violence than boys. These results are more congruent to the findings of this study, in that acts of dating violence discussed were perpetrated by males.

One of the more surprising and unexpected aspects of this study was the perception of male Health and Physical Education teachers displayed by some of the participants. Joan showed considerable hostility when discussing the male Health and Physical Education teachers at her school. Joan believed that the male coaches would often protect boys who were perpetrating acts of dating violence because they were valuable athletes. Joan strongly stated that boys needed strong male role models to influence positive behaviour and suggested that some of the male teachers at her school would use inappropriate and sexist language themselves, which she believed would have a negative effect on their students. Joan was frustrated that the male Health and Physical Education teachers considered dating violence a female issue that did not need to be extensively covered in male Physical Education classes. To increase the awareness of

dating violence, Joan considered educating male staff members as a necessary action. Heather, like Joan, was wary of the male Health and Physical Education teachers at her school. Heather wondered if male Health and Physical Education teachers were taking health classes seriously or if they were cutting corners, and suggested that the teachers disliked being in a traditional classroom as much as their students. Katie had similar concerns to Heather and discussed how all staff members who were educating students about dating violence needed to take their position seriously. Katie stressed that dating violence was not one brief lesson and suggested that some of the teachers at her school were not having serious on-going discussions with their students about dating violence. All of the participants in this study believed that teachers had the potential to be positive role models for students who could influence their dating relationships. The male Health and Physical Education teachers who did not approach adolescent dating violence successfully and with seriousness accentuated the idea that dating violence prevention was only a female problem.

In addition to educating students in the arts, technology, and academics, it is generally accepted that teachers exhibit sound moral characters and help guide their students to become morally and socially accountable citizens (Lumpkin, 2008). For teachers to be effective role models, they must exhibit moral values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Lumpkin (2008) suggests that Health and Physical Education teachers are in a unique position to become role models for students, given the nature of the course and the opportunities to teach moral values through sport and gamesmanship. When teachers fail to represent themselves as positive moral characters it can be observed by the students and have the potential to influence them in a

negative way (Lumpkin, 2008). Rikard (2009) advocates the need for teachers to exhibit caring behaviours and suggests that teachers' influence is the second most important influence on a student's life, second only to parents'. By showing caring behaviours teachers can improve the well-being of students by increasing self-confidence and self-esteem. The participants of the present study recognized the importance of displaying caring behaviours and strong moral values to have positive influence on their students. They suggested that some male Health and Physical Education teachers were not effective role models, which could jeopardize their students.

In spite of most high school Health and Physical Education courses being separated by sex, the curriculum remained the same for both sexes. Some of the participants of this study, when asked about what male students were learning in regards to dating violence prevention, were ambivalent in their responses; unsure of what goes on in male Health and Physical Education classes. Maggie suggested that there needed to be an increase in dating violence prevention education for male students at her school because she believed they were only learning about bullying behaviours and not getting necessary information on sexual and relationship abuse. Heather did not know whether or not male Health and Physical Education students at her school were receiving as much or the same information as the female students. While Joan did not specifically discuss the quality of dating violence prevention education male students at her school were receiving, the tone and language she used when discussing male teachers indicated that there was room for improvement. Katie spoke in detail about educational programming for male students. She believed that there needed to be a positive approach to dating violence prevention that did not create an "anti-male" image; she was cautious about

using resources that might portray all men as manipulative and controlling. Katie suggested that male students needed to be empowered to effectively learn about healthy dating behaviour. To become empowered, male students should learn skills and manners to be a positive male. The lessons taught by Heather and Joan that focused on developing healthy relationships did not dwell on males as abusers, but attempted to challenge students to think about what a healthy relationship looked like. While Katie was the only participant to provide specific ideas on how to improve dating violence prevention for male students, all of the participants insinuated that an examination into what males were actually learning in their Health and Physical Education courses was necessary to ensure that curriculum expectations were being met.

Boys are often victims of dating violence; however, boys are far less likely to seek help or report having experienced dating violence (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Educating boys about the dangers of becoming involved with an unhealthy dating relationship is equally important as educating girls. Dating violence prevention programs for adolescents have been shown to promote healthy relationship knowledge and reduce attitudes of tolerance towards dating violence (Antle, Sullivan, Dryden, Karam, & Barbee, 2011; Avery-Leaf et al., 1997; Foshee et al., 1998, Wolfe et al., 2003). All of the critically evaluated prevention programming has been administered to both male and female students. The positive results of the implementation of the prevention programming shows that the material within the programs is suitable for both male and female students; thus males do not necessarily need specialized programming to increase awareness of adolescent dating violence. In recent years, however, there has been an effort to increase male participation in programs and initiatives to end violence against

women, and a growing realization that to end violence against women, men must become partners in prevention (Flood, 2011). Flood suggests that males are needed in efforts to prevent violence against women, not only because of the predominance of male perpetration of violence and the roles masculinity has in violence, which both have a negative undertone, but for more positive reasons. Males become (and should be) involved in prevention efforts to confront and admonish gender stereotypes, show support and respect for the women they love, and stand up for ethical and moral principles. Flood suggests that men also suffer for violence against women,

Men's violence against women expresses and maintains men's power over women, men in general also pay a personal price for this violence. Violence against women fuels women's distrust and fear of men, and hurts the women whom many men love. (p. 360)

Flood's comments about male involvement in violence prevention are congruent with Katie's ideas of creating a positive way to include boys in dating violence prevention found in the present study.

Summary

These results give insight into the experiences of four female Health and Physical Education teachers, as they approached dating violence prevention with their students. Each teacher had unique experiences and methods for educating students about dating violence; however, there were similarities in their understanding of what dating violence is and how they can assist with preventing dating violence through education in their health classroom. Some of the similarities include: the need to educate students in Grade 9 about the risks of dating violence, having resources that are easily accessible and of no cost for the teacher or school, the need to separate the sexes to ensure learning, the need for an increase in males' education of healthy relationships, and the desire to have

positive male role models within the school community. These similarities can be used to provide greater understanding of dating violence prevention resources and have the potential to improve the resources that are made available to Health and Physical Education teachers. Teachers' perceptions of dating violence prevention programs are imperative in creating a resource that can realistically be used in the health classroom.

Recommendations for Practice

From talking with the participants of this study, as well as my extensive reading of the literature, there are five implications for practice: the need to create awareness for dating violence, building a respectful classroom and school environment, the importance of using appropriate resources to educate adolescents about dating violence, revising Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum guidelines so issues of dating violence are addressed in Grade 9 and educating teachers about specific dating violence resources. These implications may help foster learning and help prevent dating violence.

To increase awareness of dating violence within their schools, all of the participants saw a need for the whole school to participate in prevention. Whole school initiatives, such as assemblies or workshops to educate both students and staff, may be effective tools. Teachers wanting to increase the awareness of dating violence in their schools are encouraged to discuss with their administration various strategies to promote healthy relationships. Katie spoke highly of her administration and its actions towards dating violence prevention. Health and Physical Education teachers are encouraged to communicate and develop a consistent approach to dating violence, despite the division of the sexes in health class. Participants of this study discussed how having strong male

role models in male Physical Education teachers would encourage positive behaviour among male adolescents.

This study also found that building a respectful classroom and school environment is essential to providing effective dating violence prevention. The participants found that, by separating sexes and being age-appropriate in their lesson planning, they encouraged discussion enabling them to assess students' understanding of the information being presented. Creating a safe classroom environment may additionally promote open dialogue so those experiencing dating violence can feel comfortable to ask for help.

All of the participants required the use of some supplementary resources to teach dating violence prevention. Finding and implementing appropriate resources may help educate adolescents about unhealthy dating behaviours. While dating violence prevention programs are available for purchase, the teachers of this study were able to create their own lesson plans and activities via free on-line websites and local resources, such as health units and teacher resource centres. The participants of this study recommended that materials be up-to-date so the students could relate to the information being presented. Heather and Katie found good results in discussing dating violence issues that arose in popular culture and local media. The Ontario Ministry of Education should increase promotion of the Registry of Ministry of Approved Bullying Prevention Programs so teachers are aware of available resources.

The Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum guidelines have recommended that issues of dating violence be taught in the Grade 11 course, "Healthy Active Living." The participants of this study have suggested that the majority of students

in their school communities only take one credit of Health and Physical Education in Grade 9. Those students who do not continue with Health and Physical Education are at risk for not receiving any formal education about dating violence issues. By moving dating violence prevention to the Grade 9 curriculum, there is a greater chance that more students will receive instruction about healthy dating relationships.

Lastly, one recommendation for practice that could potentially increase awareness of prevention resources would be to have teachers complete a professional development program using a dating violence prevention curriculum, such as the Fourth R, before taking the program into the classroom. This may help teachers feel more comfortable with the content of the resources, and encourage conversation with their colleagues about the pedagogical implications for included the resources in their own classrooms.

For the most part, teachers will have their own approach to dating violence prevention. Although the curriculum and expectations for the topic are included in Ontario policy documents, the degree to which the expectations are addressed and the depth of instruction lies with the teachers. Ultimately, the more teachers approach and talk about dating violence in the classroom, the more they might prevent abuse in adolescent dating relationships and encourage those who are struggling with violent relationships to seek help.

Directions for Future Research

This study adds to the limited body of research about dating violence prevention curricula, and may be a catalyst for future studies about the teachers' role in the implementation of dating violence prevention programs. More research is necessary to

understand how dating violence prevention curriculum is implemented in high school classrooms, and what can be done to help teachers to enact the intended curriculum on this topic. This study is also beneficial as it adds to the few Canadian studies that examine dating violence prevention programs.

This study was limited in both the gender of the participants as well as with cultural diversity. A future study investigating male Health and Physical Education teachers' perceptions of the issue and instruction about dating violence, or a cross-case study that investigates male and female teachers' perceptions in larger school communities with a more diverse student population would be beneficial to gain an understanding of how dating violence prevention is represented in Health and Physical Education classrooms. An investigation into dating violence prevention programs that are implemented in co-ed Health and Physical Education classrooms would aid in determining the advantages or disadvantages of co-ed dating violence prevention. Similarly, studies integrate dating violence prevention programs teachers from different disciplines such as the social sciences, English and the sciences may be beneficial to see if dating violence prevention is better placed in other areas of education. Another sample population that could prove to add to the body of literature surrounding teachers' role in dating violence prevention education is teacher candidates. A study that examines the syllabi for Bachelor of Education Health and Physical Education courses could investigate whether dating violence prevention is a component of the teacher preparation program and what resources, if any, teacher candidates learn about before entering health classrooms.

These studies would add to the body of literature about dating violence prevention implementation and help in understanding what strategies are most effective for teachers and students.

Personal Reflections

As a victim of adolescent dating violence, I was interested in understanding the ways in which our education system works to prevent this social phenomenon. This study was a personal healing process that allowed me to gain insight into my own experiences with dating violence and gain an understanding of why individuals become involved and cannot leave an unhealthy dating relationship. I learned from this research project that my experiences were not isolated and that adolescent dating violence was a prevalent issue for today's youth. What compelled me to conduct this study was a desire to learn how to educate students and increase the awareness of dating violence. From this study, I gained insights as a researcher and as a teacher. As a researcher, I became aware of the prevention programs that are available to Ontario teachers, as well as the lack of research conducted on teachers' ability to effectively implement programs and prevent dating violence. This research has shown me that teachers do not need to follow prescribed dating violence prevention programming to begin to educate students about dating violence. What is necessary is that teachers become aware of the problem and be encouraged to include dating violence prevention in their health programs.

From a teacher perspective, I believe that schools have a unique opportunity to educate and prevent adolescent dating violence. It is my understanding through the data that I collected for this thesis that dating violence is a prevalent issue throughout Ontario

secondary schools, and that teachers, especially Health and Physical Education teachers, are in a position to be proactive in the prevention of unhealthy relationships. Resources should be made readily available and at no cost for the teachers or the school, to encourage teachers to incorporate dating violence prevention in their classrooms. Continuing to discuss healthy relationships in Ontario classrooms may lead to decreased rates of dating violence and could be a contributing factor in breaking the cycle of violence.

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APPENDIX A: REGISTRY OF BULLYING PROGRAMS CHECKLIST

The Fourth R (#4)

KEY ELEMENTS OF A SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM	Present in Submitted Program	Absent in Submitted Program	Comments
The program defines bullying.	√		
The program identifies different forms of bullying.	√		
The program addresses specific issues identified in schools.	√		
The program focuses on healthy relationships, and explains the bullying dynamic.	√		
The program includes training materials and guides for educators, students, parents, and school staff on the issue of bullying and on bullying prevention strategies.	√		
The program takes a multi-faceted approach: school-wide education (targets the whole school community and is embedded in the curriculum); routine interventions (specifies strategies for students involved in bullying and victims of bullying); and intensive interventions (identifies supports for students involved in repeated bullying and victimization, with possible recourse to community/social service resources).	√		
The intervention strategies address peer processes that can promote prevention and stop bullying.	√		
The program is systemic (it involves parents, peers, classes, staff, and the wider community), and is ongoing (it is integrated into daily classroom activities in reading, art, and other curriculum elements).	√		
The program includes interventions and support for students who are bullied and those who bully.	√		
The program helps to develop protocols for safe reporting of bullying incidents.	√		
The program has an evaluation component.	√		
The program has safe intervention programs for bystanders.	√		
The program promotes a healthy social school environment.	√		
The program promotes development and/or improvement of students' social behaviour.	√		

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Teacher,

I am inviting you to participate in a research study, entitled *Breaking the Cycle of Violence: An Exploration into Dating Violence Prevention Curriculum*, being conducted through Queen's University. The study was granted clearance by the General Research Ethics Board for compliance with the tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans, and Queen's policies.

The aim of this letter is twofold. First, it will describe the purpose and method of the research study. Second, it will request that you agree, in writing, to participate in the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine Health and Physical Education teachers' personal and professional experience with adolescent dating violence and their knowledge and use of dating violence prevention curriculum that has been approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education. This study will explore the motivation behind the participant's use of dating violence curriculum in their classroom, as well as their view on whether there is a need to raise awareness of the issue of dating violence among students and staff, through the use of the available curriculum.

Your participation would involve a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The interview, which will be audio-recorded, will last approximately 60 minutes and be held at a time and in a place convenient to you.

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be an active high school Physical Health and Education teacher, employed in a school board within Ontario. Individuals with experience using a dating violence prevention curriculum that has been recognized on the registry of bullying prevention programs by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and first-hand and/or professional experience with dating violence is preferred but not essential.

While there are no physical, economic or social risks to you associated with participation in this research, given the sensitive nature of adolescent dating violence however, there is some psychological and emotional risk. In order to assist with this potential risk, counselling information and contacts will be provided for you at the time of the interview if you require further support.

Agreement on your part in no way obligates you to remain a part of the study. Participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you choose to withdraw you may request that all or part of your data

be destroyed. Any question asked during the interview that you find objectionable or discomforting you are not obliged to answer.

All your responses will be kept confidential. At no time will your actual identity be disclosed. You will be assigned a code name; any reference in publications to you or what you say at any time during the study will be to the code name only. Note that data will not be used for secondary analysis.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Sarah Runciman at sarah.runciman@queensu.ca or 613.532.3308 or my supervisor, Dr. Lynda Colgan, at 613.533.600 ext. 75553 or lynda.colgan@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613.533.6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Runciman
Master of Education Candidate

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

- I agree to allow Sarah Runciman to conduct one sixty minute interview to benefit the study entitled *Breaking the Cycle of Violence: An Exploration into Dating Violence Prevention Curriculum*, conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.
- I have read and retained the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Should I decide to withdraw from the study I may request that all data associated with my participation is destroyed.
- I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of this study.
- I understand that a copy of each publication resulting from the research will be mailed to me.
- I have read and signed one copy of the *Consent Form*. I have returned the signed copy and retained one copy for my records.
- I am aware that any questions about study participation may be directed to Sarah Runciman at sarah.runciman@queensu.ca or 613.532.3308 or my supervisor, Dr. Lynda Colgan, at 613.533.600 ext. 75553 or lynda.colgan@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613.533.6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Please sign one copy of this Letter of Consent and return to Sarah Runciman prior to the scheduled interview. Retain the second copy for your records.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS *CONSENT FORM* AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Full name (Please Print):

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- Please provide either an email address or postal address in the space below if you would like a copy of a report on the findings of this study.

APPENDIX D: EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH OPHEA

Subject	M.Ed participation in conference.
From	<sarah.runciman@queensu.ca>
Date	Friday, September 3, 2010 11:05 am
To	conference@ophea.net
Cc	exhibitors@ophea.net

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sarah Runciman and I am a second year Master's of Education student at Queen's University in Kingston. My thesis work is focused on adolescent dating violence and the subsequent dating violence prevention curriculum that is available to Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers. It is my hope to be able to interview a few Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers about their experiences using dating violence prevention curriculum in their health classes, and the OPHEA conference seems like the best way to contact these individuals.

I was wondering if it would be possible to distribute a Letter of Information to those attending the OPHEA conference in October. The Letter of Information would include details about my study and the interviews, as well as my contact information. Those who are interested in participating can contact me further. This letter (along with my study) will be approved by the Graduate Research Ethics Board at Queen's before it can be distributed.

If distributing this Letter of Information along with other conference material is problematic, I would be very interested in renting a table as an exhibitor during the conference, and would like additional information about available booths and cost.

Thank you so much for consideration in this matter. I have also attached a brief outline of my intended area of study, for your review. I hope to be able to add to the growing literature about this important topic.

Sarah Runciman
sarah.runciman@queensu.ca
613-532-3308

Subject	RE: Renting a table.
From	Lauren Nickol <exhibitors@ophea.net>
Date	Thursday, September 9, 2010 1:23 pm
To	sarah.runciman@queensu.ca

Hi Sarah,

I did forward your other email on, did anyone get back to you? If you would like to register for an exhibitor table the registration is all available online here: <http://www.phecanada.ca/Toronto2010/eng/exhibitors.html> We currently only have Thursday night spots available as our Friday is sold out.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks!
Lauren

-----Original Message-----

From: sarah.runciman@queensu.ca [mailto:sarah.runciman@queensu.ca]

Sent: September 9, 2010 11:43 AM

To: exhibitors@ophea.net

Subject: Renting a table.

Hi,

My name is Sarah Runciman. I sent an email out last week that discussed my role as a Master's of Education student at Queen's University, who is working on a thesis about dating violence prevention curriculum. I feel many members of OPHEA, especially those Physical and Health Education teachers, would be interested in my study.

I would like to rent a "not-for-profit" table during your conference to set up information about adolescent dating violence and the subsequent prevention curriculum, as well as additional information about my research, for those who express an interest in participating with my study.

I would take any available space on any date and would only require one electrical outlet (and if that's not available, I can make due without!).

If there is still space available, please contact me at your earliest convenience with additional information.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sarah Runciman

613-532-3308

sarah.runciman@queensu.ca

Subject	RE: M.Ed participation in conference.
From	Conference <conference@ophea.net>
Date	Monday, September 13, 2010 8:30 am
To	sarah.runciman@queensu.ca
Cc	lauren@ophea.org

Hi Sarah:

Sorry for the delay but we would be happy to have you include an insert in the bags. We would have to charge for this as a “silent exhibitor” which would be \$195 plus taxes. Otherwise, there are booths available on Thursday if you’d prefer an exhibitor booth and they cost \$310 plus taxes.

If you’d like to register, please go to
<http://www.phecanada.ca/Toronto2010/eng/registration.htm> to register.

If you have any other questions, you can connect with Lauren who is also cc’d on this email.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question	Purpose
1. Please describe your career as a Physical Health and Education teacher.	Establish participant's background as a PHE teacher. Assist in making the participant comfortable with the interviewer.
2. How would you define adolescent dating violence?	Identify perceptions about dating violence. Answer research question one.
3. Would you consider dating violence to be an issue of concern at your school? Why or why not?	Identify beliefs on how dating violence affects staff and students. Answer research question two.
4. Please describe any personal experience with dating violence.	Establish connection between the participant and dating violence. Answer research question four.
5. What motivated you to include dating violence prevention curriculum in your health program?	Identify reasons for including prevention programming. Answer research question four.
6. What specific dating violence prevention programs have you implemented in your classroom?	Identify the resources used. Answer research question three.
7. How was the dating violence prevention curriculum effective in your classroom?	Identify the strengths of the prevention curriculum. Answer research question five.
8. What would you change about the dating violence prevention curriculum you have used?	Identify the limitations of prevention curriculum. Answer research question five.
9. How did your students benefit from the implementation of dating violence prevention curriculum? Or conversely, how did the curriculum not benefit your students?	Identify the effectiveness of the prevention curriculum. Answer research question five.
10. Please describe any other dating violence prevention programs of which you are aware.	Identify knowledge of prevention curriculum. Answer research question three.
11. Do you believe there is a need to increase the awareness of dating violence among staff and students at your school? Why or why not?	Identify perceptions about the scope of dating violence. Answer research question five.
12. How would the dating violence prevention curriculum be able to increase awareness of the issue?	Identify the resources as a tool for increasing awareness about dating violence. Answer research question five.
13. Please describe how you would increase the awareness of staff and students about the issues of dating violence.	Identify recommendations for increasing awareness about dating violence. Answer research question five.