September 2018 Webinar

The Impact of Relationship Education on Predictors of Adolescent Dating Violence

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PRESENTER:

Rachel Savasuk-Luxton, PhD
Research Specialist & Master Trainer
Changing Attitudes: The Impact of Relationship Education on Predictors of Adolescent Dating Violence

Rachel Savasuk-Luxton, Ph.D.
Research Specialist & Master Trainer

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Relationship Skills for Teens and Young Adults
Adolescent Dating Violence

• Adolescent dating violence (DV) has become a significant public health concern

• Over 70% of adolescents report having a romantic relationship by age 18\(^1\)

• Sets the foundation for future relationships\(^2,3\)
Predictors of Adolescent DV

• **Two key attitudes:**
  • DV acceptance (DVA)
  • Traditional gender role beliefs (GRB)

• **DVA**
  • Violent and aggressive behaviors are acceptable under certain circumstances\(^4\)
Predictors of Adolescent DV

- **Traditional GRB**
  - Operate as scripts\(^5,6\)
  - Differentials of authority and power
  - Gender intensification hypothesis\(^7\)
Sociodemographic Differences

- **Gender**
  - Males more traditional and more accepting of DV than females\(^8,9\)
  - Theory of gender and power\(^10\)

- **Race/ethnicity:**
  - African American males more traditional and more accepting of DV than European American adolescents\(^11\)

- **Socioeconomic status (SES):**
  - Lower SES adolescents more traditional and more accepting of DV than higher SES adolescents\(^12\)
Theoretical Framework: **Intersectionality**

- Research should move beyond singular demographic identities

- Socialization differs by intersecting identities\textsuperscript{13,14}

- **Current evidence:**
  - GRB vary by the intersection of gender and race\textsuperscript{13,14}
  - DVA varies by the intersection of gender and race\textsuperscript{15,16}
Relationship Education and Violence-Related Attitudes

- RE programs focus on healthy relationships and skills training\textsuperscript{17,18}
- **Research to date:**
  - Significant change in DVA following RE participation\textsuperscript{19,20}
  - Support for the malleability of GRB following RE\textsuperscript{21,22}
- Lessons on mutual respect and principles of healthy relationships may help
The Current Study

**Hypothesis:**
1. RE participants will report less DVA and less traditional GRB than non-RE participants.

**Research Questions:**
1. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by gender, race, and SES independently?
2. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by the two-way interaction of these identities (i.e., gender x race, gender x SES, and race x SES)?
3. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by the intersection of all three identities (i.e., gender x race x SES)?
Sample

- **Total sample (N = 2,167)**
  - Participants \((n = 1,645)\); Comparison \((n = 522)\)
  - 58% girls; 42% boys
  - 58% White/European American; 42% Black/African American
  - 38% lower SES, 52% higher SES
  - \(Mage = 15.66\) years
Measures

- **DVA**\(^{17}\):  
  - 2 items \((\alpha = .91)\); Pre- and post-test  
  - E.g., “In today’s society, slapping a spouse or dating partner is understandable under some circumstances”  
  - 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*

- **GRB**\(^{23}\):  
  - 3 items \((\alpha = .91)\); Pre- and post-test  
  - E.g., “Ultimately a woman should always submit to a husband’s decision”  
  - 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*

- **Demographic characteristics:**  
  - Gender \((0 = \text{male}, 1 = \text{female})\); race/ethnicity \((0 = \text{White/European American}, 1 = \text{Black/African American})\); SES \((0 = \text{lower}, 1 = \text{higher})\)  
  - RE participant \((0 = \text{no}, 1 = \text{yes})\)
Hypothesis 1: Change in DVA and GRB for RE Participants vs. Non-Participants
Change in **DVA** for RE Participants versus Non-Participants

- **Pre Dating Violence Acceptance**
- **Post Dating Violence Acceptance**

Graph showing the change in DVA for RE Participants and Non-Participants.
Change in **GRB** for RE Participants versus Non-Participants

**Gender Role Beliefs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Gender Role Beliefs</th>
<th>Post Gender Role Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RE Participant</td>
<td>Non-Participant</td>
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</table>

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Research Question 1:
Independent effect of gender, race, and SES on change in DVA
Change in DVA by Gender

Pre Dating Violence Acceptance  Post Dating Violence Acceptance

Males

Females

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Research Question 2:  
Impact of Gender x Race on change in GRB
Change in GRB based on Gender x Race interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Gender role beliefs</th>
<th>Post Gender role beliefs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, White</td>
<td>Female, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, White</td>
<td>Male, Black</td>
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</tbody>
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Summary of Findings and Discussion

• **DVA**
  - Significant differences between RE participant and comparison group
  - Females *decreased*, males *increased*
    - *Identification with social norms regarding male power?*
  - No difference in change patterns by *race* or *SES*.
Summary of Findings and Discussion

- **GRB**
  - No difference in change patterns between RE and comparison group.
  - Black males became less traditional; Black females became more traditional
  - No change for White males or females

- Interaction of gender, race, and SES was not related to change in either outcome.
Limitations and Future Directions

**Limitations**
- Lack of randomization
- Immediate post
- Low scores on both measures
- Measurement of SES

**Future Directions**
- More research on intersectionality
- Account for class-level factors and participant-facilitator “match”
- Longer-term longitudinal and randomized control design
Practical Implications

• Infusion of messages regarding unhealthy relationship behaviors throughout programming
• Early assessment of group needs
• Participant-facilitator match\textsuperscript{26}
• Incorporate unit on gender role beliefs (e.g., male power and privilege)
• Use of critical self-reflection for educators
Acknowledgments

• Drs. Francesca Adler-Baeder and Megan Haselschwerdt

• The Alabama Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Initiative (www.alabamamariage.org)
  – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant #90FM0006

References


References


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Self-Regulation Skills to Support Healthy Relationships for Youth

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