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**Teenage Partner Violence: Young
People's Views on Awareness,
Prevention, Intervention and Regaining
One's Sense of Wellbeing**

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Abstract

Violence and abuse between partners in teenage intimate relationships has been increasingly recognised as a prevalent but hidden issue that can impact negatively on wellbeing and future life chances. Whilst most existing research has focused on the prevalence, impact and risk factors for teenage partner violence (TPV), or on the evaluation of prevention education programmes, the current study sought to gain young people's own views on what they thought could be helpful with regard to awareness, prevention, intervention and regaining a sense of wellbeing following the experience of an unhealthy relationship. Data were gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Participants included 310 mainstream school pupils aged 14-18, including 161 girls and 149 boys, and 4 women from a domestic violence prevention organization. A thematic analysis of the findings resulted in four over-arching themes that encompassed several sub-themes. Participants felt there needed to be increased awareness and understanding of TPV amongst adults and YP themselves; there should be greater access to relevant, regular and interactive education and information; there should be opportunities to talk to someone; and there should be opportunities and support to build self-esteem. The findings have implications for the approach taken towards TPV in schools and it is suggested that educational psychologists may be well placed to share relevant information with teachers, YP and parents.

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Summary

There is growing awareness of the prevalence of teenage partner violence (TPV), that is violence and abuse between partners in intimate teenage relationships, and of the effects of TPV, which can include mental health problems, self-harm and suicide. There is limited awareness and understanding of the issue amongst adults and in many schools, Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is inconsistent and does not meet the needs of young people (YP) in today's society, with the increased pressures of social media and the Internet. Some domestic violence intervention programmes implemented in schools have been evaluated but conclusions have been limited. One issue is that boys have been found to disengage from the programmes, which are usually gender-based, as they feel they are 'sexist'. Increasingly, studies of TPV have found that, at least in cultures that subscribe to Western values on the emancipation of women, both males and females can be perpetrators and victims of TPV.

Whilst most research on TPV has looked at prevalence, impact or the evaluation of prevention education programmes, the current study asked YP, including 310 school pupils aged 14-18 and four women who had sought help from a domestic violence prevention organization, for their views on awareness of TPV and what they thought could be helpful in terms of prevention, intervention and regaining one's sense of wellbeing following an experience of TPV. Questionnaires (with open questions) and semi-structured interviews were used and thematic analysis (TA) applied to the entire data set. Results indicated that there was confusion amongst YP over healthy/unhealthy behaviours; there was a desire for more awareness and understanding amongst adults and YP themselves, more relevant, regular and interactive education and information, someone to talk to confidentially and help to build confidence and self-esteem.

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Part One – Major Research Literature Review

Teenage Partner Violence: Young People’s Views on Awareness, Prevention, Intervention and Regaining One’s Sense of Wellbeing.

Introduction

Partner violence in teenage intimate relationships has been recognized in recent years as a significant, but hidden, child-welfare issue that impacts negatively on wellbeing and future life chances (Cutter-Wilson & Richmond, 2011) and has been linked to depression, self-harm and suicidal ideation (Baker, Helm, Bifulco & Chung-Do, 2014; Nahapetyan, Orpina, Song & Holland, 2014). Whilst it has been recognized in the USA as a major issue in the lives of young people (YP) for the past twenty years, it is only very recently that it has begun to be recognized in the UK.

In 2009, a major study into the incidence and impact of partner violence in teenage intimate relationships (Barter, McCarry, Berridge & Evans) revealed for the first time the extent of the problem in the UK and in 2012, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics) found that in the year preceding the survey, young people aged 16 to 19 were more likely to suffer partner abuse than any other age range.

In 2013, the U.K. government widened the definition of domestic violence and abuse to include ‘coercive control’ and to involve 16 and 17 year olds. It is currently defined as:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate

partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional” (Home Office, 2013, p.4)

This definition does not distinguish between ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’ and there is no presumption that intimate partners live together.

Various terms are used in the literature to refer to the phenomenon of violence and abuse between partners in an intimate relationship. When referring to violence in adult relationships, domestic violence (DV) or intimate partner violence (IPV) are terms that are commonly used, both in the UK and the USA, with the term IPV perhaps reflecting the fact that these days, many intimate partners do not live together.

In the USA and Canada, the term commonly used when referring to violence and abuse within teenage intimate relationships is ‘teenage dating violence’ (TDV), while terms such as ‘intimate partner violence in adolescent relationships’ and ‘adolescent partner abuse’ are also used. As suggested by Barter et al. (2009), the term ‘dating’ is not commonly used in the UK and implies a degree of formality that does not necessarily reflect the diverse range of intimate relationships experienced by YP. The UK government refers to ‘teenage partner violence’ (TPV) (Home Office, 2013) and this term will be used throughout this paper, with ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’ being taken to refer to the same phenomenon. However, when reporting others’ research findings, the various terms may be used interchangeably. Young people (YP), ‘teenagers’ and ‘adolescents’ will be used to refer to people under the age of eighteen.

Barter et al.’s (2009) study contributed to raising awareness of TPV in the UK and to publications on the topic being promoted and supported by the UK government, including television campaigns and guidelines for teachers (Home Office, n.d.)

However, it has been claimed that TPV remains a “hidden” issue in society, and that there is still little awareness or understanding of the situation (Home Office, 2013, p.4) This claim is supported by Reynolds and Shepherd (2011) who suggest

that awareness of adolescents' vulnerability to abusive dating relationships is limited, both among adults and also among young people themselves.

Theoretical significance and rationale of the topic

According to the Home Office (2013), extending the age range with regard to DV to include 16 and 17 year olds has made the need to conduct research and evaluation on preventative education even more urgent.

However, whilst there have, for many years, been calls for the government to introduce compulsory sex and relationships education in schools, it remains a non-statutory subject and the implementation and evaluation of preventative education has been problematic and inconclusive (Stanley, Ellis & Bell, 2011).

This situation may be due in part to the complexity of the issues involved and controversies regarding the theoretical underpinnings of the topic. Theoretical approaches to DV and IPV have traditionally been based on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and feminist, gender-based theories. However, these approaches have increasingly been challenged. Alternative theories, such as Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1988), have recently been promulgated by researchers (e.g., Shorey, Cornelius & Bell, 2008) in an attempt to answer some of the questions that Social Learning Theory cannot.

An increasingly controversial area is regarding gender, namely whether TPV, as well as IPV in general, should be viewed as a predominantly male to female occurrence, or whether violence is perpetrated, and experienced, by both males and females. These ideas are underpinned by feminist/patriarchal theoretical approaches on the one hand and approaches that view aggression as a mutual occurrence on the other.

A theoretical understanding of TPV is significant with regard to devising and implementing appropriate approaches to prevention and intervention. This situation will be explored through the examination of theories of IPV and TPV, alongside relevant research findings.

Relevance of the topic to psychology, educational psychology and the role of the educational psychologist.

There has, to date, been little research on TPV in the educational psychology literature but it could be suggested that the home, school and wider society may play a part in TPV (Connolly et al., 2010; Foshee et al., 2008) and that the educational psychologist (EP) is in an ideal position to make a positive contribution. Further, according to the British Psychological Society (2002), the primary focus of EPs' work should always be on the wellbeing and needs of young people.

Whilst it is believed by many that schools and other educational institutions are vitally important for teaching about healthy relationships, Gallagher (2014) suggests that there are significant barriers to achieving this and that, "Educational psychologists are well placed to address these issues at a systemic level within schools through promoting the teaching of healthy relationships to all young people" (p.61).

Introduction to the remainder of the research

The current study seeks to examine awareness, prevalence and impact of TPV, as well as protective and risk factors, including relatively new influences related to the role of technology in the lives of YP. It has been found that the Internet and social media are providing new platforms for abuse and that many adults have little awareness and understanding of the issues involved (Baker & Carreno, 2015).

Underlying theoretical approaches will also be examined.

Introduction to the literature review

Key sources

A literature review was conducted through extensive database searches of PsychINFO, ERIC, Scopus, Google Scholar and the Web of Science using the terms: teenage; adolescent; gender; intimate partner violence/abuse; teenage partner violence/abuse; teenage dating violence/abuse; adolescent dating violence/abuse.

Electronic searches using the World Wide Web were also used to search for UK government and school policy information and to access the websites of charity and helping organisations, as these often contain the most up to date information on relevant issues.

The focus of the literature review was an attempt to understand the current situation with regard to TPV, including awareness, prevalence, impact and previous and existing measures aimed at prevention and intervention.

Areas to be included and excluded

The literature review includes research into violence in intimate teenage relationships in general; it was not extended to cover particular difficulties experienced by YP in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships, the relationships of people with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties or physical disabilities, or those with specific conditions such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Evidence suggests that violence and abuse is also prevalent in the intimate relationships of individuals in these groups and that there may be additional or different issues involved. For example, Halpern et al. (2004) found the prevalence of psychological and physical intimate partner violence between adolescents in same-sex relationships to be comparable to heterosexuals. However, an examination of the specific issues encountered by these groups was considered to be beyond the scope of this study.

Where possible, research based in the UK has been sought for this literature review. However, as a much greater amount of research on the topic has been generated in the US and as such findings have been found to be similar to those generated in the UK, these findings will also be included.

Literature Review

Prevalence of TPV in the UK

In 2009, research carried out by the University of Bristol and the NSPCC (Barter et al.) into the incidence and impact of partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships in schools in England, Scotland and Wales, was the first study to reveal the issue as a major child welfare concern in the UK.

Their study involved 1353 YP, evenly split between girls and boys aged between 13 and 17, three quarters of whom were aged 15 or older. The research examined the prevalence and impact of physical, emotional and sexual violence, using questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires contained a series of multiple choice questions, to which participants were required to choose a response from, 'No', 'Once', 'A few times', 'Often' or 'All the time.'

Regarding physical violence, participants were asked, "Have any of your partners ever used physical force such as pushing, slapping, hitting or holding you down?" (P.44) and regarding severe physical violence, they were asked, "Have any of your partners ever used any more severe physical force such as punching, strangling, beating you up or hitting you with an object?" (p. 45). In total, 25% of the girls and 18 % of the boys reported having experienced physical partner violence and 11% of the girls and 4% of the boys reported severe physical violence.

Regarding the impact of the violence, participants were asked to select how the violence made them feel from a list of options. 'Negative impact' included

'scared/frightened', 'angry/annoyed', 'humiliated' and 'upset/unhappy', while 'no impact' included 'loved/protected', 'no effect' and 'thought it was funny.' (p.46).

While the frequency of experiencing physical partner violence was similar between girls and boys, it was found that there was a much greater difference in the impact experienced, with 76% of girls reporting a negative impact on their wellbeing, compared to 14% of boys. However, it could be suggested that caution should be taken when interpreting these results, as is discussed in the 'impact of TPV' section of this report.

In relation to emotional violence, participants were asked, "Have any of your partners ever?" and were required to note the frequency of any that were relevant from several statements that included: 'Made fun of you', 'shouted at you/screamed in your face/called you hurtful names', 'threatened to hurt you physically unless you did what they wanted' and 'used mobile phones or the Internet to humiliate or threaten you.' 72% of girls and 51% of boys reported experiencing some kind of emotional violence from their partner (p.57).

Regarding sexual partner violence, the questions asked were: "Have any of your partners ever pressured you into kissing, touching or something else?", "Have any of your partners physically forced you into kissing, touching or something else?", "Have any of your partners ever pressured you into having sexual intercourse?" and "Have any of your partners physically forced you into having sexual intercourse?" In total, 31% of girls and 16% of boys reported some kind of sexual partner violence, with younger girls and boys as likely as older ones to have been affected.

It was also found that many of the girls in the study had older partners and that they were much more likely to report higher levels of all forms of violence than those with same-age partners.

Interestingly, with regard to perpetrating physical partner violence, 25% of girls and 8% of boys reported doing so, with 5% of girls and 2% of boys reporting the use of severe violence. Participants were asked to choose *why* they had used violence from a selection of reasons. These included 'Negative reasons' (to hurt them, due to their behaviour, jealousy, to impress others, to get what I wanted, anger, to humiliate them, drinking/drugs), 'Messing around' and 'Other' (p.75).

Negative reasons were reported by 45% of girls and 33% of boys and 'messing around' was chosen by 43% of girls and 56% of boys.

Participants were asked a further question relating to their perpetration of physical violence, namely, "Did you mostly act this way due to self-defence?" (p.76) and 44% of girls and 33% of boys replied that they did.

Emotional violence perpetration was explored using the same eight questions as for emotional victimization. Combining all forms of emotional violence revealed a perpetration rate of 59% for girls and 50% for boys. In response to *why* they had used emotional violence, 45% of girls and 38% of boys reported that it had been for 'Negative reasons'.

In a second study by the University of Bristol and the NSPCC (Wood et al., 2011), that focused on the experiences of violence in the intimate relationships of 'disadvantaged', or vulnerable YP, an even higher level of partner violence of all kinds was reported in the relationships of participants. For example, over half the girls and a quarter of the boys reported experiences of physical violence (Wood et al., 2011). It was found that many participants viewed some forms of physical, sexual and emotional violence, such as controlling behaviour, as a normal part of intimate relationships and it was suggested that this normalization of violence made it difficult for them to recognize the seriousness of their experiences, making it less likely that they would seek help (Wood et al., 2011).

Impact of TPV

In both the above studies (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011), the authors concluded that in general, TPV had a much more negative impact on girls than on boys. However, it could be suggested that caution be taken with regard to this conclusion. The report of the school study (Barter et al., 2009) suggests that the questionnaire surveys were held in classrooms and that despite noting that the questionnaire contained "sensitive questions" (p.19), no mention was made of an attempt to provide personal space for pupils to complete them. Indeed, the report states that in one session, the researcher had noted, "A great deal of laughing and

talking between male respondents” (p.71). Further, when asked by an interviewer whether boys and girls want the same thing in relationships, one boy replied, “I think it is the same really, but I think that a lot of boys wouldn’t admit it, especially to their friends” (p.157).

It could therefore be argued that while girls may have been comfortable talking openly with their friends about the impacts of violence on them, boys may have felt less able or unable to do so because of perceived peer pressure to conform to gender stereotypes. Indeed, Barter et al. (2009) suggest that, “male peers are characterized as responding in a manner that seeks to constrain deviations from the accepted “hard” masculinity, where feelings, especially signs of emotional vulnerability, are unaccepted” (p.157).

Jessica McCarrick (2015) argues that the impact of partner violence on men should not be underestimated but that entrenched views of gender stereotypes, including notions of masculinity, may prevent males from talking about the impact of violence on them. It has been found that women’s violence can induce fear in men and is often experienced as extremely distressing and sometimes life-threatening, with male victims suffering both socially and psychologically (e.g. Hines, Brown and Dunning, 2007; Hines and Douglas, 2010).

There is increasing awareness of the negative impact of TPV, both physically and mentally, short and long term (Brown, Brady & Letherby, 2011; Kulkarni, 2009). It has been found that TPV increases the risk of depression, suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress disorder and coerced pregnancy (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Holmes *et al.*, 2007) and long term impacts have been found to include smoking and drug usage, binge-eating, high depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (Ackard, Eisenberg & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007).

Whilst there is a dearth of information on the impact of TPV on academic achievement, it could be suggested that as children with higher levels of wellbeing, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in

school (Gutman & Vorhaus, 2012), TPV is likely to impact negatively on academic success.

It has also been found that over time, some women seem to internalize their abuser's worldview, including perceiving themselves as not being entitled to respect, which may be one reason why many young women who have experienced TPV continue to experience IPV as adults (Enander and Holmberg, 2008). Similarly, in Reynold's and Shepherd's (2011) study of young women's experiences of TPV, participants talked about a loss of identity and about not feeling like themselves anymore.

Reynold and Shepherd (2011) further suggested that TPV had a negative effect on the young women's relationships with their families. Participants described how parents had expressed disappointment, shame or despair and that there had been constant arguments about the situation. Consequently, participants described feeling rejected and/or marginalized by their families at that time and chose not to tell anyone in their family about the abuse they were suffering to avoid further friction or to protect their family from further worry.

While there is still little research available on the male experience of TPV, it may be possible that such experiences may also be relevant to boys and men, especially in the light of Hines and Malley-Morrison's (2001) findings on the psychological effects of IPV on men.

Teenage Mothers

In Wood et al.'s (2011) study of disadvantaged YP, teenage mothers were found to have experienced particularly high levels of violence in their intimate relationships and almost all had experienced controlling behaviour. However, Brown, Brady & Letherby (2011) have claimed that teenage pregnancy is rarely understood as an outcome of non-consensual sex.

It has been suggested that little attention is paid, by health and social care professionals and by academics, to the evidence that teenage girls who become pregnant often have partners much older than themselves (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011) and that emotional abuse is often felt to be a result of the power differential related to age (Brown, Brady & Letherby, 2011). The 'Next Steps' document, concerning the UK government's teenage pregnancy strategy (DfCSF, 2007), acknowledges that more than a quarter of fathers with teenage partners are over 25 years old.

Wood et al. (2011) found that many teenage mothers were concerned about the way they were stereotyped negatively in society and felt pressured to stay in a violent or unhappy relationship because they did not want the additional negative label of being a *single* teenage mother. Some also felt they had no choice but to stay in a violent relationship, especially those with no or little family or friendship support, as the alternative was to live in poverty and isolation. Many were afraid to seek help from agencies, fearing that their child would be taken away.

Theoretical perspectives on TPV

Psychological theory might contribute to a better understanding of some of the issues embedded in these findings. In their study on violence and abuse amongst rural and small-town youth, Robinson and Ryder (2014) suggest that whereas most research into teenage dating violence has in the last decade focused on prevalence and programme evaluation, and has relied heavily on generalisations taken from research into IPV and DV, for an enhanced understanding of violence that occurs in intimate adolescent relationships, more nuanced theory-driven research is required. They argue that power and relational abuse should be considered from a psychodynamic and sociological, or psychosocial, perspective and that an open mind should be kept to the gendered nature of the violence.

The 'gender perspective' and 'gender inclusive' approaches to IPV.

The 'gender perspective' (Felson, 2002, 2010), or feminist approach, to IPV has long been influential in terms of public policy and has dominated the study of IPV (e.g. Debonnaire & Todd, 2012; Dobash & Dobash, 2004). The gender perspective claims that men's violence to women arises from patriarchal values that motivate men to try to control women's behaviour, using violence if necessary.

Similarly, the evolutionary mate-guarding view, which holds that male sexual jealousy and a desire to control their female partner's behaviour is associated with a proprietary male mindset, implicates male controlling behaviour as a cause of IPV (Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2014).

In contrast to this view, an increasing number of researchers have advocated a 'gender-inclusive' approach to IPV, avoiding preconceptions that it must necessarily be male to female. In support of the gender-inclusive approach, numerous studies have found that women are as likely as men to be physically aggressive towards their partner and that individuals are often both victim and perpetrator within the relationship, suggesting a level of mutuality in IPV (Archer, 2000; Straus, 2011). For example, Swahn, Simon, Arias and Bossarta (2008), in their examination of a large youth violence survey, found that whereas perpetration of violence toward to peers was more prevalent for young men than young women, IPV was more prevalent for young women than young men.

Another finding that supports a gender-inclusive approach to IPV is that in same-sex female relationships, as in gay, bisexual and transgender relationships, levels of IPV are as high, if not higher than in heterosexual relationships (Ard & Makadon, 2011; Barter et al., 2009; Straus, 2006).

There are also studies that have found more social acceptance of women's physical aggression to partners than men's (e.g. Sorenson & Taylor, 2005) and Bates et al. (2014) suggest the possibility that women's aggression to male partners may be disinhibited compared to that towards other women.

Many studies have found that as well as physical aggression, control and controlling aggression is also characteristic of both sexes (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2009; Hines & Douglas, 2010). Bates et al. (2014) surveyed undergraduate students at a UK university, all of whom had been in a romantic relationship. They found that women were significantly more physically and verbally aggressive to their partners than men were and that women reported perpetrating significantly more controlling behaviour than men did.

Felson (2010) has criticized feminist analyses that suggest that IPV has a different etiology from other types of aggression and should be studied independently of general aggression. He and others (e.g. Dutton, 2012) have argued that IPV should be studied within the context of violence in general, claiming that IPV has similarities with other forms of violence and criminal behaviour. Bates et al. (2014) outline several examples of studies that have found an overlap between IPV and other forms of aggression. For example, Connolly et al. (2000) found that adolescents who had bullied peers whilst at school were more likely to also use physical aggression towards their partners.

A limitation of Bates et al.'s (2014) study, acknowledged by the authors, relates to the sample used, which was a Western undergraduate student sample. One difficulty is generalizing across cultures; sex differences in IPV-related aggression differ in cultures that do not subscribe to Western values on the emancipation of women. For example, it has been suggested that cultures in which there is more gender equality tend to have the most parity in IPV perpetration (Archer, 2006).

Bates et al. (2014) also point out that their findings relating to sex differences in IPV perpetration would undoubtedly be different to studies using samples from more specific samples such as from a shelter or prison which they argue are “biased in favour of extreme female victimization and extreme male perpetration” (p.53). Whilst it could be suggested that many of the arguments that are supportive of the gender approach are based on research using such samples,

Bates et al. (2014) note that there are few studies of the opposite sample because of a lack of availability of male victims.

McCarrick (2015) claims that the view of IPV in society has been strongly influenced by gender stereotypes and forty years of campaigning for women's rights and support in DV situations. The idea that women could also be perpetrators was, and continues by many to be, controversial and research into IPV has provoked tension between researchers and campaigners (McCarrick, 2015).

Whilst they do not deny that males can experience DV, organisations such as Womens Aid argue that there are more female victims and that the nature of the violence against them is more severe. They are concerned that a gender-neutral approach would divert much-needed funds and facilities away from women and would deter vulnerable women from seeking help there (Womensaid, n.d.).

Johnson (1995, 2006) developed a theory of IPV that distinguished between different types of IPV. His influential typology of IPV drew a distinction between dangerous forms of male violence motivated by the impulse to control, termed 'Intimate Terrorism' (IT), that is the use of controlling aggression against a partner in the absence (or infrequent use) of controlling behaviour from that partner, and less dangerous forms of aggression, less motivated by controlling impulses and perpetrated similarly by both sexes.

Adherents to this view maintain that male power and control should be central to our understanding of IPV and that female perpetrated IPV needs to be evaluated within this context (e.g., Loseke and Kurz, 2005). Indeed, it is claimed by many that women use violence mainly in self-defence or in retaliation against an abusive male partner (Barter et al., 2009; Loseke & Kurz, 2005; Wood et al., 2011). However, it has been found in empirical studies that self-defence or retaliation are among the least-cited reasons provided by women for their use of IPV (e.g. Hines and Malley-Morrison, 2001).

Hines and Douglas (2010) assert that Johnson formulated his theory relating to patriarchy by drawing on the existing literature on IPV but without considering the experiences of men who suffer severe IPV and controlling behaviour from their female partners as, at the time, no such research existed. However, Hines and Douglas' (2010) large-scale study of men who sought help for IPV victimization challenges Johnson's ideas and the gender perspective of IPV. It was found that men sustained very high rates of psychological, sexual and physical IPV, injuries and controlling behaviour, the pattern of which was similar to Johnson's (1995) notion of 'intimate terrorism.'

McCarrick (2015) argued that whilst current statistics of DV suggest that the majority of perpetrators recorded by the police are male and their victims predominantly female, many men may be prevented from reporting IPV because of feelings of shame and emasculation. She highlighted the huge pressure on boys and men to conform to male stereotypes and suggested that it is seen by many as a weakness to admit to being upset or hurt by a girl.

McCarrick (2015) also suggested that the traditional feminist view of IPV is still dominant throughout the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and that CJS statistics underestimate the rate and severity of female-perpetrated IPV towards men. In addition, George (2007) claimed that there is extreme prejudice against men, including more men being put into the CJS if counter charges are made against them. McCarrick (2015) found this to be a common experience for men and one that led to many men being reluctant to report the abuse they suffer for fear of being accused of violence themselves.

Further, Hogan et al (2012), who researched counsellors' experiences of working with male survivors of female-perpetrated IPV, found that the lack of recognition in society that men can also be affected by IPV influenced the willingness of clients to identify themselves as victims of IPV.

Bates et al. (2014) argue that the origin of IPV does not lie in patriarchal control but that the use of controlling behaviour and aggressive acts are associated with a

generally coercive, aggressive interpersonal style that can originate early in development.

Social learning theory

In addition to gender-based theories, attempts at theorizing DV and IPV have traditionally drawn on Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977). According to SLT, children who have experienced harsh or aggressive discipline from their parents learn that aggressive behaviour is a legitimate way to respond to interpersonal conflict. Therefore, they may model their parents' behaviours when they are confronted with conflicts with intimate partners, either by adopting an aggressive interpersonal style themselves or by repeating patterns of victimization and subordination learned in childhood (Feiring, Rosenthal & Taska, 2000).

It has also been suggested that SLT may contribute to an understanding of how adolescents who have experienced violence in their home environment may find it harder to recognize violence in their own intimate relationships, as for them such behaviour has been normalized (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999).

Whilst much of the research that has examined the role of the family of origin in considering factors related to involvement in intimate partner violence has drawn on SLT, which focuses on inter-personal factors, this approach has been questioned.

For example, while hostile or harsh parenting has been found to be associated with an increased risk of involvement in intimate relationships characterized by aggression and violence during adolescence (Tyler, Brownridge & Melander, 2011), Sutton, Simons, Wickrama and Futris (2014) did not find a direct relationship between inter-parental aggression and dating violence perpetration or victimization for either men or women, as might be expected according to SLT; instead they found that the relationship between inter-parental aggression and sons' and daughters' dating violence was indirect through hostile parenting.

In addition, Dutton (2012) suggested that SLT does not account for intra-personal processes, cognitions and beliefs, that may work to sustain abusiveness and it has been suggested that an alternative theoretical perspective that may be more useful in addressing intrapersonal processes related to dating aggression is Attachment Theory (Sutton et al., 2014).

Attachment theory

Attachment theory holds that through experiences of early parent-child interactions, an individual develops an internal 'model' or 'template' that affects and guides expectations, beliefs and behaviour in future relationships (Bowlby, 1988).

Attachment has been categorized into different 'styles' that differ in degree of security (Ainsworth, 1978). These patterns have been described as:

- 'secure', whereby the individual is confident that the parent will be available, sensitive and responsive to his/her needs and is therefore able to form positive relationships with others;
- 'anxious-resistant', whereby the individual is uncertain whether the parent will be available and responsive and tends therefore to be clingy and anxious, a pattern promoted by a parent being available on some occasions but not on others and by threats of abandonment used as a means of control;
- 'anxious-avoidant', whereby the individual, as a result of constantly being rejected by the parent when seeking comfort, expects to be rebuffed when seeking care and so tries to live life being emotionally self-sufficient, without being dependent on the love and support of others; and
- 'disorganised', the most extreme style, whereby the individual demonstrates erratic behaviour and seems to lack any coping strategy, a style believed to result from abuse or extreme neglect where the child has been treated in an erratic and unpredictable way (Bowlby, 1988).

The concept of an internal working model provides a possible explanation for the influence of attachment experiences on later intimate relationships. Even though Bowlby (1988) held a dynamic view of human development, claiming that the effects of insecure attachment in infancy could be mediated by subsequent experiences, he also claimed that attachment styles are inclined to be self-fulfilling and therefore relatively stable throughout life.

Howe (2011) suggested that in intimate relationships, individuals with insecure-anxious attachment styles tend to start off a relationship by being very romantic but self-doubt and old anxieties about the reliability and availability of the other person eventually surface. These anxieties trigger attachment behaviours based on anger and threat, followed by vulnerability and abject apology. Such individuals tend to question their partner over who they have seen and spoken to, what was said and why; they are constantly afraid that their partner will leave.

According to Howe (2011), individuals who have suffered childhood relational trauma, abuse or neglect often have a disorganized attachment style that develops into a 'fearful avoidant' pattern as they get older. As children, they develop strategies that are often controlling and coercive to help them adapt to and survive environments that are erratic, unpredictable and often dangerous. However, when they attempt to function in everyday environments, their behaviour becomes problematic. Howe (2011) claimed that the behaviour of disorganized-controlling adolescents is often intense, impulsive, dysregulated and extreme and the stress of relating with intimate partners is likely to provoke unresolved issues from childhood.

However, although there is evidence in support of these claims, findings are inconsistent (Loh & Gidycz, 2006). For example, it has been found that some individuals who are classified as securely attached also perpetrate violence and may hold beliefs that support the use of aggression against an intimate partner (Schwarz, Hage, Bush & Burns, 2006). In addition, Grych and Kinsfogel (2010)

found that some children with early insecure attachments characterized by violence do not repeat patterns of abuse in their own romantic relationships. They suggest that rather than attachment style being viewed as a mediator of IPV, it might be better understood as a risk or protective factor.

Theoretical perspectives on adolescence

Other theorists have described particular difficulties faced by adolescents and emphasise the nature of adolescence as a time of psychological upheaval, a search for identity and susceptibility to peer pressure.

For example, Anna Freud was interested in the processes of the ego, that is the part of the psyche involved in rational thought, or “coping with the external world and integrating competing urges within the self” (Stevens, 1983, p.1). She viewed adolescence, and particularly puberty, as a time of severe psychological upheaval, when basic instincts and drives become stronger and the integrity of the ego is threatened (Mayes and Cohen, 1996).

Erikson (1968) also portrayed adolescence as time of psychological upheaval and conflict. He used the term ‘identity crisis’ to describe what he believed to be a commonly experienced phenomenon in adolescence, when young people are struggling to create a personal identity. He suggested that it is at this time, when one’s sense of self comes under intense pressure and young people are uncertain of their own views, that they are more vulnerable to peer pressure and negative influences.

Further, Brown (1999) described intimate adolescent relationships from a developmental-contextual perspective. He identified distinct phases of romantic development, namely ‘initiation’, ‘status’, ‘affection’ and ‘bonding’ and suggested that romance in adolescence first emerges as an identity issue; in the initiation phase, young adolescents need to balance awakening sexual drives with larger identity needs, such as being accepted by peers. During the status phase,

adolescents become aware that romantic relationships provide feedback on one's image and reputation among peers. At this stage, the influence of peers is extremely strong and may influence whom a YP dates, as well as how a YP behaves. In the affection and bonding stages, adolescents become more focused on the partner and are gradually less influenced by peers.

While each of the theoretical approaches offers valuable perspectives on IPV, it has been argued that that none captures adequately the complexity of IPV (Bell & Naugle, 2008).

In an attempt to accommodate this complexity, some researchers have adopted an "ecological systems" approach (Banyard et al., 2006; Foshee et al., 2008), where IPV is viewed as a result of the involvement and interaction of "multiple negative societal and individual circumstances" (Connolly et al., 2010, p. 470). It has been suggested that Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is helpful in conceptualising the multiple influences that may contribute to IPV (Connolly et al., 2010).

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1977) acknowledged the reciprocity between the individual and the social context in development, and his ecological model of development (1998) illustrates the complex layers of factors that influence individual behaviour.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), at the most proximal level to the individual, there are 'microsystems' that refer to individual attitudes, actions and relationships that exist within a given social setting, such as family, school, peer group and neighbourhood. Microsystems interact to form the 'mesosystem,' which may be conceptualized as being the interrelations between the various microsystems within which an individual develops. These systems are nested within the 'exosystem', which consists of the community setting in which the family is embedded. Elements in the exosystem indirectly affect, or are affected by,

the individual's actions. The most distal ecological setting is the 'macrosystem,' which encompasses societal and cultural factors such as norms, expectations and values, socioeconomic status and ethnicity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

It is important to understand that the influence of factors in the different systems is not uni-directional; there is a reciprocal influence between the different systems and between the individual and the other systems.

In 1986, Bronfenbrenner introduced the idea of the 'chronosystem' to his ecological model. The chronosystem refers to continuity and change in the social context and individual characteristics across the life course and emphasized the relevance of studying the effects of prior life events on subsequent development (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

Connolly et al. (2010) claim that, according to this model, development is viewed as a dynamic process in which an adolescent's actions reflect the interaction between individual dispositions and the social environment. As Henrich (2006) claimed, "Children and adolescents develop within an interactive web of social contexts" (p.1085).

Differences between TPV and adult IPV

In Kulkarni's (2006) research into young mothers' experiences of intimate partner violence, it was found that whilst many of the experiences of young mothers resembled those of adult women, there were also distinct differences. A major difference was that many young mothers experienced abuse, including physical abuse, not just from their partner but from their partner's family.

Involvement of the partner's family in the relationship was also found in Reynolds and Shepherd's (2011) study into IPV amongst adolescents. Participants talked about feeling manipulated and pressurized by the partner's family to stay in the relationship, even when the family was aware of the abuse that was taking place.

The authors of the study suggest that these pressures are largely absent in studies of older women subject to IPV and that adolescents expressed a need for adult affirmation that they had often not received in their own families.

It has been claimed that adolescents are likely to experience extreme pressure to conform to social norms of intimate heterosexual relationships and to conform to gender-role expectations in order to be accepted by their peers (Wolfe et al., 2003).

The Influence of modern technology

A significant part of a typical adolescent's day revolves around the use of technology, such as mobile phones and the Internet, to communicate with others (Madden et al, 2013b). However, in their study into the role of technology in adolescent dating relationships and dating violence, Baker and Careno (2015) found that throughout young people's relationships, technology use, including texting and social network sites, was associated with causing jealousy between partners and facilitating controlling behaviours.

Similarly, in a study into teen dating violence and self-harm (Baker et al., 2014), participants in a boys' focus group described how social media, such as Facebook, created distrust in relationships that led to controlling and anxiety-fuelled behaviours.

Further, for those young people who are in a violent relationship, technology may provide an extra way in which partners can exert control (Barter, 2009), enabling partners to abuse each other even when they are not together (Baker & Carreno, 2015). Zweig et al. (2013) found that one in four adolescents has reported being a victim of cyber dating violence and it is becoming evident that adolescents use technology, especially mobile phones, to threaten, harass and stalk intimate partners (Korchmaros et al., 2013).

A further impact of modern technology is the ease with which YP can access pornography. Mobile phones now play a significant role in enabling YP to access pornography anywhere, including in school (Rothman, Kaczmarzky, Burke, Jansen & Baughman, 2015). Horvath et al. (2013) found that a significant number of YP access online pornography, some of which is violent and sadistic, whether deliberately, being shown by friends or by accidentally coming across it while using the Internet.

In addition, while 'sexting', defined as the "exchange of sexual messages or images...creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images" through mobile phones and the Internet (Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone & Harvey, 2012, p.6) is becoming increasingly common amongst YP, Ringrose et al. (2012) found that although young people chose to participate, they often felt that they could not choose not to do so; it was found that sexting was often coercive.

Risk factors for TPV

Individual risk factors for TPV have been found to include low self-esteem, depression, poor body image, low school achievement and drug or alcohol use, while contextual risk factors include lower family incomes, social isolation, acceptance of violence in the wider social circle, partner using alcohol or drugs, experiencing or witnessing violence and/or sexual abuse from parents and endorsing traditional gender stereotypes (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005). High risk factors have also been found to include family violence (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011) and having aggressive peer networks, an older partner and a same-sex partner (Barter et al., 2009).

Several such factors may interact to increase vulnerability and to make it more difficult to access informal or professional support to leave an abusive partner (Reynolds & Shepherd, 2011)

It has been found that a common risk factor for experiencing TPV is a lack of awareness or knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like and of what constitutes abuse. Amongst disadvantaged teenagers, Wood et al. (2011) found that many young people had had little experience of how positive, committed relationships were built, how to show love and commitment without jealousy or mistrust and how to resolve conflict.

In their study into IPV in adolescence, Reynolds and Shepherd (2011) found that when women tried, retrospectively, to explain why they felt they had become trapped in an abusive relationship, they had great difficulty. However, they identified three recurring themes. Firstly, participants suggested that in adolescence they felt disconnected from positive relationships and experienced a lack of self-esteem. Secondly, they struggled to understand relationship experiences during early adolescence. Absent parental figures and/or negative relationship experiences with parental figures seemed to be particularly problematic. They suggested that it would not have been helpful to talk to friends as the friends were also inexperienced and would not have been able to understand. Participants described themselves as being confused about their own and others' social behaviour, and being ill-prepared to recognize their boyfriends' behaviour as abusive when it first happened through having limited previous exposure to healthy relationships between men and women. Thirdly, the participants referred to feelings of powerlessness and not feeling good enough as increasing their vulnerability to IPV.

Protective factors for TPV

Sutton et al. (2014) argue that it is important to foster healthy attitudes toward, and beliefs about, relationships as a protective factor against dating aggression, beliefs regarding emotional regulation, how to disagree with a partner in healthy ways and positive conflict resolution strategies.

It has also been suggested that a protective factor for experiencing TPV might be having an alternative source of self-esteem so that the relative importance and status of obtaining and keeping a boyfriend is minimized (Barter, 2009).

Help seeking

Many studies have shown that YP typically do not seek help for TPV. For example, Barter et al. (2009) found that 43% of girls and 64% of boys told no one. If they did seek help, it was almost exclusively from friends (53% of girls and 37% of boys). Only 8% of girls and 7% of boys told a parent, carer or sibling and only 3% of girls and 5% of boys told an adult who was not a parent or carer.

In Reynold's and Shepherd's (2011) study, in spite of what they were going through, the participants described how they maintained, with considerable effort, competent facades at school or college.

While friends may sometimes lend emotional support, it has been suggested that their advice may not always be helpful. For example, Barter et al. (2009) found that friends' inappropriate views may normalize or perpetuate violence by, for example, suggesting that violence is a girl's fault for flirting.

Several reasons for young people not seeking help for TPV have been highlighted. It has been suggested that violence is normalized in the lives of some YP, to the extent that they do not recognize their experience as abusive (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011). Helm et al (2015) found that although monitoring and controlling behaviours by one or both partners led to relationships becoming unhealthy, often no attempts were made to end the relationship as adolescents often viewed these behaviours as irritating but not abusive. Similarly, Williams (2012) found that jealousy and controlling behaviours may not be viewed as abusive by adolescents who reportedly often believed that such behaviours show that their partners love them.

Other reasons that deter YP from seeking help include fears of not being taken seriously, being afraid of their partner's response if they found out, not wanting the perceived stigma of being a victim of TPV, or not thinking there was anyone they could talk to. In addition, there was a reluctance to go to the police for fear of increasing the problem and nothing being done to help (Barter et al., 2009).

Wood et al. (2011) found that some young people viewed help-seeking as a weakness and thus a further blow to their self-esteem, while others mentioned cultural difficulties such as not being able to tell anyone of problems in a relationship as they were not supposed to have an intimate relationship before marriage.

In addition, Gallopin and Leigh (2009) found that many YP would not tell an adult in school as they believed that teachers and other school staff gossiped about pupils and could not be trusted to keep confidentiality. Further, Rees et al. (2011) concluded that social workers' responses to TPV were inadequate. They found that young people felt they could not rely on social workers because of a lack of interest in their problems and concerns about confidentiality.

Gallopin and Leigh's (2009) study also highlighted a concern by pupils about the lack of awareness of adults of the seriousness of teenage dating violence, the lack of knowledge about the issue on the part of adults and about the lack of any school policy addressing the issue.

Leaving an abusive relationship

According to Enander and Holmberg (2008), leaving an abusive relationship is better understood as a process rather than a single event. In a qualitative study of the processes undergone by adult women who have left abusive male partners, they identified three overlapping leaving processes: 'Breaking Up' which discusses the turning point and actual break up, 'Becoming Free' which covers emotions,

including the often strong emotional bond to the partner, and 'Understanding' which talks about understanding and interpreting the experience.

It is unclear whether adolescents share similar barriers to leaving abusive partners as adolescent intimate relationships tend to have a much shorter duration than those experienced by adult women (Reynolds and Shepherd, 2011). However, Chung (2007) found that some young women seem to experience great commitment even to quite short-term relationships.

In their study into IPV in adolescence, Reynolds and Shepherd (2011) found that all participants had experienced 'pivotal moments' that had marked the start of their recovery process. These were described as sudden moments of realization that the abuse and the relationship could not continue. This realization did not lead to a sudden and complete end to the relationship for any of the participants, but, as with adult women, marked the beginning of the process of leaving. However, it has been found that adolescents may be at increased risk for mental health consequences during the break-up of a relationship (Baker, 2014; Baker et al., 2015).

Prevention/intervention measures

DV prevention programmes

In the USA, despite TPV having been recognized for at least two decades and high levels of TPV being highlighted, it has been claimed that there is still significant uncertainty about effective intervention methods (Cutter-Wilson & Richmond, 2011) and in the UK, Fox, Corr, Gadd & Sim (2014) noted that although a number of school-based domestic abuse prevention programmes have been developed and some have shown promise, there is limited evidence regarding the effectiveness of these programmes.

A major difficulty in the development and implementation of prevention programmes concerns the issue of gender. In the case of many DV prevention programmes that are delivered in mainstream schools, the initiative for such programmes has often originated in external organisations such as Women's Aid or crime partnerships (Stanley, Ellis & Bell, 2011) and a gendered approach to IPV underpins many existing prevention education programmes (Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Capaldi, 2012). For example, in their study carried out with YP in the UK to evaluate a DV prevention education programme, Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) reported that, "Facilitators highlighted that perpetrators of domestic abuse were more likely to be male than female, and the programme content reflected this...it is important to raise children's awareness of the gendered nature of domestic abuse" (p.37).

However, given the research previously presented in the current paper that questions the gendered approach to TPV, it could be suggested that this approach to prevention education requires reappraisal. Indeed, in their study, Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) found that the programme was viewed as "sexist" (p.37) by some pupils and that as a result, boys appeared to reject the programme's messages and become disengaged with the lessons.

Whitaker et al. (2006) found that the majority of programmes aimed at preventing dating violence did not discuss the theoretical orientation guiding the development and implementation of the programme and suggested that more work was needed on the theoretical basis for interventions.

Lundgren and Amin (2015) carried out a review aimed at identifying effective approaches to preventing violence among adolescents in heterosexual relationships. Whilst the approaches they surveyed were also gender based, and whilst they lament a lack of robust evaluation amongst studies, they highlight three promising approaches. These included school based dating violence interventions targeting younger adolescents and addressing factors such as healthy relationships, non-violent conflict resolution, communication skills and help-seeking; community based interventions to form gender-equitable attitudes

among boys and girls; and parenting interventions aimed at addressing child maltreatment which is a risk factor for later perpetration or experience of IPV.

Lundgren and Amin (2015) suggest that overall, programmes with longer term investments and repeated exposure to ideas delivered in different settings over time appear to have better results than single awareness-raising sessions.

UK government/school approaches to the prevention of TPV

A recent Ofsted report (Gov.UK, 2013) found that sex and relationships education (SRE) was inadequate in over a third of schools and in half of secondary schools. It was reported that in primary schools too much emphasis was placed on friendships, leaving pupils ill-prepared for physical and emotional changes during puberty, which many begin to experience before they reach secondary school. In secondary schools it was found that too much emphasis was placed on ‘the mechanics’ of reproduction and too little on relationships, sexuality, the influence of pornography on students’ understanding of healthy sexual relationships, dealing with emotions and staying safe.

The report (Gov.UK, 2013) claimed that these findings were of great concern as, “Failure to provide high quality, age-appropriate sex and relationships education may leave young people vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and exploitation” (p.4). It highlighted comments made by pupils in response to the question of what would have made sex and relationships education more useful. A year 12 girl suggested, “Rape culture. What to look for in a healthy relationship” and a year 10 boy responded with, “The influence of the media such as porn on people’s views of sex and the human body” (p.12-13).

Currently, the only aspects of SRE that are compulsory for most schools are those that are part of the national curriculum for science and include reproduction, sexuality and sexual health (Gov.uk, 2014). Apart from these aspects, schools are

encouraged to use PSHE lessons to teach about sex and relationships as they feel is appropriate.

However, many barriers to the delivery of SRE have been identified. For example, with time pressure on teachers to complete academic programmes of work and to cover a number of different topics in PSHE sessions, schools can struggle to allocate sufficient time to SRE (Maxwell et al., 2010). In addition, as PSHE is a non-examination subject, it can be perceived by teachers and pupils as being a lower status subject and consequently both parties invest less effort and interest compared with other academic subjects (Formby et al., 2011).

A major difficulty that was identified (Gov.UK, 2013) was that too many teachers lacked expertise in teaching sensitive and controversial issues, which resulted in some topics such as sexuality, mental health and domestic violence being omitted from the curriculum.

The UK government published a guide for teachers on TPV (Home Office, n.d.) that outlines safeguarding policies and procedures that should be followed when a young person discloses abuse. However, as research has found that young people very rarely disclose abuse to adults (e.g. Barter et al., 2009), it could be suggested that such guidelines may be impractical.

Summary of the literature review

The picture that emerges from the literature review on TPV is that many YP are entering and trying to navigate the complex world of intimate relationships with little awareness, understanding, guidance or support. The two studies by the University of Bristol and the NSPCC (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011) provided an indication of the scale and gravity of the issue of TPV in the UK. Various strategies to combat TPV have been promulgated, such as SRE being made a compulsory part of the National Curriculum and prevention programmes being delivered in schools. Most of the existing research has focused on prevalence,

causes and impacts of IPV, or on evaluation of intervention programmes. However, to date, there has been little conclusive evidence on what might be effective with regard to the prevention of TPV.

Gap in the research and the rationale for the present study

According to Robinson and Ryder (2014), DV prevention education programmes have relied heavily on generalisations taken from research into adult DV. It might therefore be suggested that such programmes may not always address the reality of YP's lives, especially as the pressures of social media and the Internet, which play a major role in the lives of YP, may often not be understood by adults.

Barter (2009) found that YP did not feel that their views were taken seriously or acted on by professionals. She suggested that reasons for this may include a general lack of awareness of TPV and low reporting rates, adults viewing YP's behaviour as experimental and holding the view that peer abuse amongst YP is less harmful than abuse between adults. She claimed that as a consequence, professional practice may not be reflecting or responding to YP's own concerns, fears or wishes with regard to TPV.

As stated in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to have their views considered on any matter that affects them (Unicef, 2012) and Wood et al. (2011) concluded that any intervention for TPV should reflect young people's own views, experiences and ideas.

As it has been found that young people typically do not tell anyone if they are experiencing abuse and if they do seek help, it is almost exclusively from friends (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011), it could be argued that before any strategy for prevention or intervention is decided upon, it is necessary to gain an understanding of what would be most helpful to young people, from their perspective.

The purpose of this study is to listen to YP's views in order to gain an insight into their awareness and understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships and their ideas on what could be helpful, with regard to TPV, in terms of prevention, intervention and regaining a sense of wellbeing after an experience of TPV. A thorough search of the literature did not reveal any research in which YP were asked directly what they thought could be helpful with regard to TPV. Therefore, the current study aimed to address this gap in the research by asking young people directly for their views. Based on recent research findings (Hines, 2007; McCarrick, 2015), a neutral approach to gender was adopted in the study.

Research questions

The research questions included both multiple-choice and open questions.

The multiple-choice questions sought to find out participants':

- levels of confidence in their understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship;
- levels of confidence in knowing how to help a friend suspected of being in an unhealthy relationship;
- perceptions of how often they had received information at school on healthy relationships;
- thoughts on why someone might get into an unhealthy relationship;
- thoughts on why someone might be abusive towards his/her partner;
- thoughts on who he/she would be most likely to tell if concerned about his/her relationship; and
- thoughts on why someone might not tell anyone/seek help if he/she felt his/her relationship were unhealthy.

The open questions sought to gain participants' views on what they thought might be helpful with regard to TPV, without the restriction of pre-determined ideas and limited responses. The questions asked what participants thought might:

- help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship;
- be helpful in preventing abuse;
- be helpful for someone who was being abusive towards his/her partner and wanted to change;
- be helpful for someone who was experiencing abuse; and
- be helpful for someone to feel better about himself/herself following the experience of an unhealthy relationship.

9942 words

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Part Two - Empirical Study

Abstract

Teenage partner violence (TPV), that is violence and abuse between partners in teenage intimate relationships, is prevalent and impacts negatively on wellbeing and future life chances. While research to date has largely focused on the prevalence and impact of TPV, and the evaluation of prevention education programmes, the current study gains the views of 310 school pupils aged 14 -18 and four women who had sought help from a domestic violence prevention organization on what they think could be helpful with regard to awareness, prevention, intervention and regaining one's sense of wellbeing following an experience of TPV.

Summary of the literature

TPV is increasingly recognized as a hidden but major child welfare issue that impacts negatively on all aspects of a young person's life and has been linked to depression, self harm and suicide (Baker, Helm, Bifulco & Chung-Do, 2014; Nahapetyan, Orpina, Song & Holland, 2014).

While TPV has been recognized for the past two decades in the USA, it was only in 2009 that the issue was highlighted in the UK, when Barter et al.'s study on partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships revealed the prevalence of TPV in the UK, suggesting that emotional, physical and sexual violence was common in the intimate relationships of teenagers.

In 2013, the U.K. government widened the definition of domestic violence (DV) and abuse to include 'coercive control' and to involve 16 and 17 year olds, declaring that lowering the age made research into preventative education even more urgent. The current definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional” (Home Office, 2013, p.4).

While several theoretical perspectives have been drawn upon in attempts to explain TPV, including gender-based theories (e.g., Johnson, 1995, 2006), Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1988), none has been able to account for the complexity of TPV; rather, it has been claimed that TPV may be viewed more accurately as the result of the combination and interaction of a number of factors (Connolly et al., 2010).

A major controversy in the study of TPV is the ‘gender’ question, namely whether males should be viewed predominantly as perpetrators and females as victims. While proponents of this approach acknowledge that women can be aggressive towards their intimate partners and men can also experience IPV, they argue that the impact of violence is greater on women than on men and that women’s violence is mainly carried out in self-defence (Barter et al., 2009). However, it has been found that the impact of IPV on men can be physically and psychologically damaging (Hines & Douglas, 2010) and that self-defence is not often offered as an explanation for women’s violence towards their intimate partners (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). Further, McCarrick (2015) has suggested that the true extent of male victimization may be hidden as boys and men may not tell anyone about their problems due to gender stereotyping and stigma in society.

Whilst TPV may not be a new phenomenon, it has been suggested that modern technology such as mobile phones, social media and the Internet have introduced new issues for YP to negotiate, including pressures and expectations related to the easy availability of pornography (Baker & Carreno, 2015).

Despite such findings, there appears to be a lack of awareness in schools and in society in general of the prevalence of TPV and of the seriousness of the issue in the lives of many YP. One of the reasons for this may be because it has been found that YP typically do not tell anyone about their problems and if they do, they confide almost exclusively in friends (Barter et al., 2009).

An Ofsted report (Gov.UK, 2013) found that sex and relationship education (SRE) in schools required improvement in almost half of secondary schools and that,

“Failure to provide high quality, age-appropriate sex and relationships education may leave young people vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and exploitation” (p.4). However, there appears to be a lack of clarity over what SRE should look like.

DV prevention education programmes have been implemented in schools, both in the US and in the UK, but these have either not been evaluated robustly or they have encountered serious problems. A major issue has been that while most of the programmes have been based on the traditional gender-based view of DV (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Capaldi, 2012), where males are usually perpetrators and females are usually victims, this approach has been rejected by boys, who have considered the programmes to be “sexist” (Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014, p.37).

While most DV prevention education programmes are based on adults’ conceptualisations of the needs of YP, a thorough literature search did not reveal any research on what YP themselves felt would be helpful with regard to TPV. However, according to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Unicef, 2012), children and YP have the right to give their opinion on matters that affect them.

Against this backdrop, the present study aimed to obtain YP’s own views on awareness of TPV and on what they thought might be helpful with regard to prevention, intervention and regaining a sense of wellbeing after an experience of TPV.

Research questions

The final research questions included both multiple-choice and open questions. The full questions can be found on the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

The multiple-choice questions sought to find out participants’:

- levels of confidence in their understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship;

- levels of confidence in knowing how to help a friend suspected of being in an unhealthy relationship;
- perceptions of how often they had received information at school on healthy relationships;
- thoughts on why someone might get into an unhealthy relationship;
- thoughts on why someone might be abusive towards his/her partner;
- thoughts on who he/she would be most likely to tell if concerned about his/her relationship; and
- thoughts on why someone might not tell anyone/seek help if he/she felt his/her relationship were unhealthy.

The open questions sought to gain participants' views on what they thought might be helpful with regard to TPV, without the restriction of pre-determined ideas and limited responses. The questions asked what participants thought might:

- help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship;
- be helpful in preventing abuse;
- be helpful for someone who was being abusive towards his/her partner and wanted to change;
- be helpful for someone who was experiencing abuse; and
- be helpful for someone to feel better about himself/herself following the experience of an unhealthy relationship.

Epistemology and the research paradigm

'Ontology' is a theory of the nature of reality, of what exists. For example, 'realists' believe that reality exists 'out there' and can be objectively described and understood; 'critical realists' also believe that there is a 'true' reality but that each person interprets this through his or her own influences and constructions; whereas for 'relativists' there are multiple realities which are a result of individuals' or groups' constructions. The researcher's ontological position informs

his/her epistemological position regarding the acquisition of knowledge. 'Epistemology' is concerned with the theory and nature of knowledge and considers the question, "How, and what, can we know?" (Willig, 2013, p.4).

One epistemological position is 'positivism', which holds that there is a direct relationship between events, objects and phenomena in the world and our perception and understanding of them. Positivists believe that it is possible to describe accurately what is 'out there' and that the goal of research is to produce objective knowledge that is impartial, unbiased and free from personal involvement by the researcher. An opposing epistemological position is extreme 'relativism,' which holds that objective facts are an illusion and that knowledge is constructed by each individual through a unique personal framework (Willig, 2013).

Between these two positions lies 'social constructionism' (Burr, 1995), an epistemological approach that acknowledges the influence of observers, including their beliefs and biases, on what they are observing, as well as the influence of historical, social, cultural and linguistic factors. Therefore, what we perceive is not a direct reflection of our environment but should be understood as one interpretation of this environment.

A characteristic of social constructionism as an epistemological approach is that results may be more easily influenced by the researcher's own biases and idiosyncrasies. Whilst it is not possible to completely prevent this, it is helpful for the researcher to be aware of it (Willig, 2013).

As social constructionism assumes that each person constructs his/her own version of reality and that the ways in which the world is understood are historically, culturally and socially relative, it seems an appropriate paradigm in which to try to understand individuals' subjective views on TPV.

Identification and selection of the sample

As previous research by Barter et al. (2009) had highlighted TPV as a problem in the lives of teenagers aged 13-18, the current study attempted to survey a similar age group.

In addition, young women who had sought help from, and were still involved with, a DV prevention organization were also identified as being able to contribute valuable insights based on personal experience of TPV.

Young men with experience of TPV were not represented due to logistical issues.

Year 10 and 12 pupils were asked to take part in the survey. These groups were chosen due to issues of timing related to public examinations and the wish to not adversely affect the groups taking examinations.

Participants

School

Participants were year 10 pupils in two schools and year 12 pupils in a different two schools. Pupils were aged between 14 and 18. A total of 310 pupils took part, 161 girls and 149 boys.

DV prevention organization

Four women took part in the study. Three of the women were in their twenties but their exact ages are not provided in order to protect their anonymity. Pseudonyms are used throughout this study.

Methodology

Preparation for contact with schools

Before approaching the schools, the principal educational psychologist (PEP) of the service in which the research was completed was given a copy of the proposed research and asked for his consent.

Contact with schools

A gatekeeper letter (Appendix 2) was sent by email to the head teachers of the four schools. This was followed by phone calls, further email exchanges and face to face meetings with relevant members of staff in order to make arrangements. As opt-in consent was required for year 10 pupils, a parental consent letter (Appendix 3) was sent to the relevant schools.

School-based questionnaire surveys and interviews

Surveys

Schools were asked in advance to provide rooms where there would be enough space for pupils to sit individually and have some privacy while writing. This varied between schools.

In the case of year 10, a parental consent form had been sent home one week beforehand.

Class teachers or pastoral workers stayed in the room while pupils completed the questionnaires. They were asked to note if anyone left the hall or appeared distressed and if so, to offer assistance. Pupils were informed that this would happen.

A short powerpoint presentation was made by the researcher, based on the information contained in the information sheet (Appendix 4). Pupils were informed at several points throughout the presentation that they were not obliged to take part and that they were free to leave at any time without asking and without giving any reason. They were also given the names of staff members they could go to speak to if they felt upset/unsettled. At the end of the presentation, the year 12 pupils were invited to take part in the second part of the research, namely the individual interviews, referred to as 'conversations'. Schools did not consider it appropriate for year 10 pupils to be interviewed.

Information sheets were given out and pupils were invited to ask questions. Pupils were then given consent forms (Appendix 5) and the questionnaires to complete.

After completing their questionnaire, they put the questionnaire in a sealed box and the consent form in a separate box. They were handed a debrief sheet (Appendix 6) with names and numbers of helplines and organisations.

Interviews

The same afternoon, the individual interviews were held in a private room. Space and time was limited and pupils had been offered time slots of 10-15 minutes. In total, three pupils volunteered to take part, two male and one female.

Before each interview, the researcher reminded the participant of the conditions and limits of confidentiality. Each conversation was recorded with a digital voice recorder. The rationale for its use, as explained in the information sheet and presentation, was again explained to the participant and his/her consent for its use was obtained. The participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 7) before beginning.

Interviews with participants from the DV prevention organization

Although all the women had been offered the opportunity to meet somewhere anonymous, they all chose to meet at the organisation's offices as they said they felt safe and/or comfortable there.

Each interview lasted for approximately 45-60 minutes and took place in a private counselling room. The research and the interview procedure was explained and participants were given an information sheet (Appendix 8). Participants were informed of the conditions of anonymity and limits of confidentiality, as well as issues relating to the transcription and disposal of data and their right to withdraw information they had provided. They were then given a consent form (Appendix 9). Interviews were recorded (after agreement by participants) on a small digital voice recorder. The semi-structured interviews were based on the questions from the school questionnaires.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used in order to reach a large sample.

Questionnaire construction

An initial draft of the questionnaire was constructed to address the questions arrived at from the literature review. The questions were cross-referenced with points highlighted as being of major concern in the government document created for schools, 'Expect Respect: A Toolkit for addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5' (Gov.UK, 2010). The questions were also discussed with the researcher's supervisor.

A brief description of what constitutes a healthy relationship and an unhealthy relationship was included on the front of the questionnaire which included

examples to help clarify what was meant by 'unhealthy'. These examples were also taken from 'Expect Respect' (Gov.UK, 2010). The main questions were open-ended in order to gain YP's own views in more depth.

Ethics approval

Ethics approval was sought and agreed by Cardiff University.

Pilot study

A pilot survey was carried out with year 12 pupils, including 3 girls and 3 boys, in one of the schools.

The six pupils sat around a table with the researcher, who explained the nature and aims of the project. It was explained to the pupils that they were not required to complete the questionnaire but to think about how they would complete it and identify any possible issues with the questions. A very full and informative discussion took place.

After the pilot survey, the pupils were given a debrief sheet and the name of a pastoral tutor they could go and talk to if needed.

It was decided not to do another pilot survey with year 10 pupils as it was felt necessary to ask the same questions to all pupils in order to make comparisons between the different ages.

As a result of the pilot survey, further amendments to the questionnaire were made. For example, it was suggested that a rating scale would be more familiar to YP and would be more accurate than using 'rarely'/'sometimes.' In addition, it was suggested that using the word 'interviews' would be intimidating for pupils and that 'conversations' would be a more suitable word.

Validity and reliability of instruments

Cross-referencing information from previous research findings with information from the government document, 'Expect Respect' (Gov.UK, 2010) was carried out in order to increase the validity of the questionnaire, while piloting it with the year 12 pupils tested its reliability.

Ethical issues and procedures for dealing with confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent.

The PEP advised that it was a requirement of the LEA to gain consent for the research from the Chief Education Officer. An outline of the proposed research was sent to him and consent was received.

As recommended by the PEP, the head of the local school counselling service was also contacted and advised of a potential increase in the number of referrals from the schools where the surveys would take place.

The Ethics Committee had refused permission for group interviews or focus groups; only individual interviews were allowed. However, the contact individuals for both year 10 groups did not allow individual interviews because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Consequently, no interviews were held with year 10 pupils and only three year 12 pupils volunteered.

Issues of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were given careful attention at each stage of the research, as detailed on the information sheets and consent forms.

Qualitative design

Transfer/transcription of data

The questionnaire responses were systematically transferred onto the computer and collated (Appendix 11). Every response to the open questions was copied verbatim. Each interview was transcribed manually onto the computer (Appendix 12).

Thematic Analysis (TA)

Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used across the entire data set, that is the open questions on the questionnaires and the interview transcripts. Whilst TA is not tied to a particular theoretical approach and has been described as “essentially independent of theory and epistemology” (p.78), the researcher must still choose and make explicit his/her theoretical and epistemological position (Willig, 2013). The present study is based on social constructionism, taking a critical realist position.

Willig (2013) suggests that TA is particularly well suited to research questions about “people’s conceptualisations or ways of thinking about particular social phenomena” (p.59). It was also considered appropriate for this study as analysis can be carried out across a variety of data, including questionnaire and interview data.

TA can focus on different types of meaning, including ‘manifest’ meaning that reflects the explicit content of what a participant has said and ‘latent’ meaning, where the researcher attempts to interpret what the participant means by what he/she has said (Willig, 2013).

In addition, TA may involve an ‘inductive’, or bottom-up, approach, where the researcher approaches the data without a pre-conceived coding frame and the themes are firmly grounded in the data; or a ‘deductive’ approach that uses a pre-

determined template to code the data. It is also possible to use a combination of both approaches, whereby a pre-conceived template is used as a starting point in coding the data, but identification of new themes may be integrated to generate a comprehensive TA of the data (Willig, 2013). A combination of the two approaches was used in the present study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.82). They also point out that themes do not simply ‘emerge from’ the data, but are actively constructed by the researcher.

TA was conducted using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide. Firstly, the entire data set was read several times and key points and potential themes were noted. Each questionnaire and transcript was then worked through systematically, coding each segment of the data. The researcher began to identify and label themes, then cluster themes and eventually came up with over-arching themes that appeared to capture the main ideas from across the data.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Fig.1

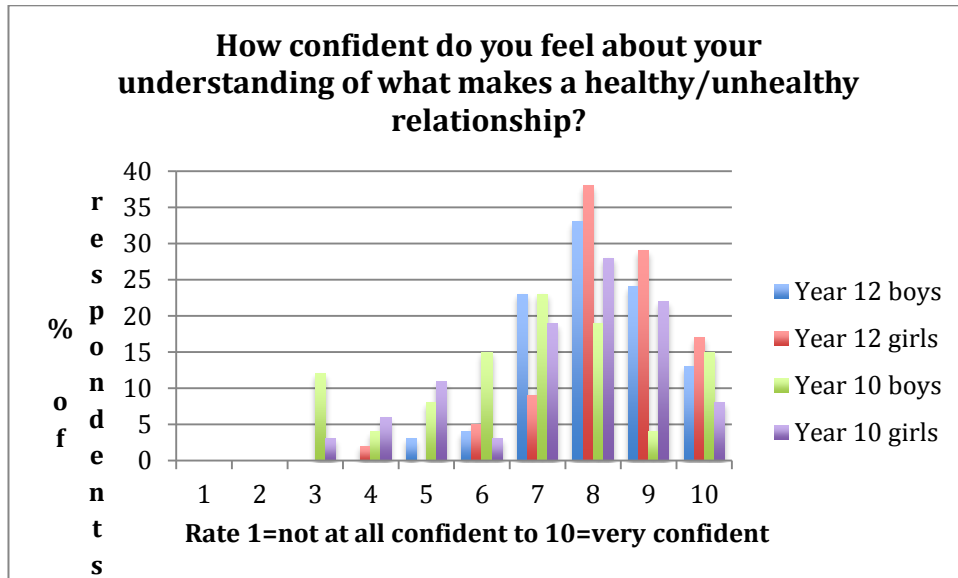


Fig. 2

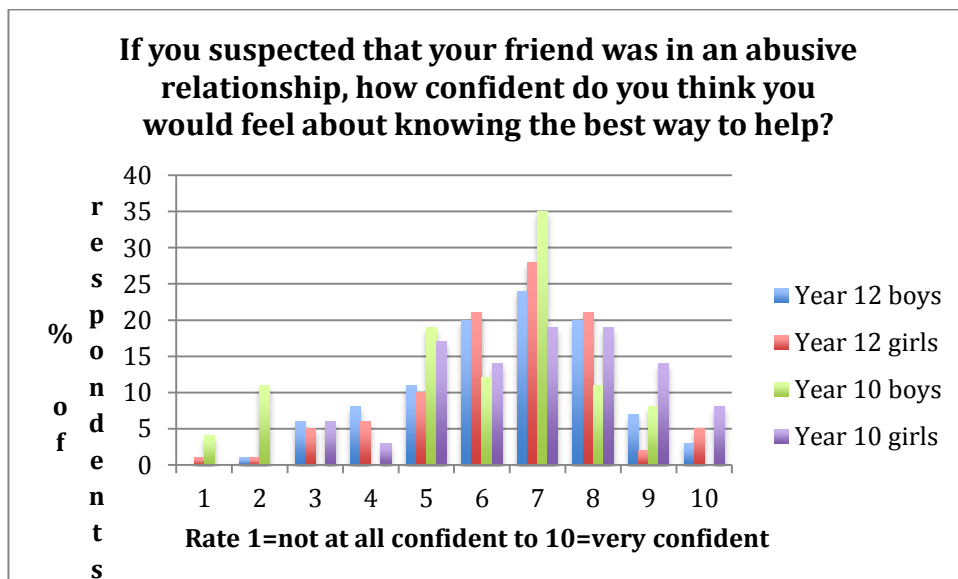


Fig. 3

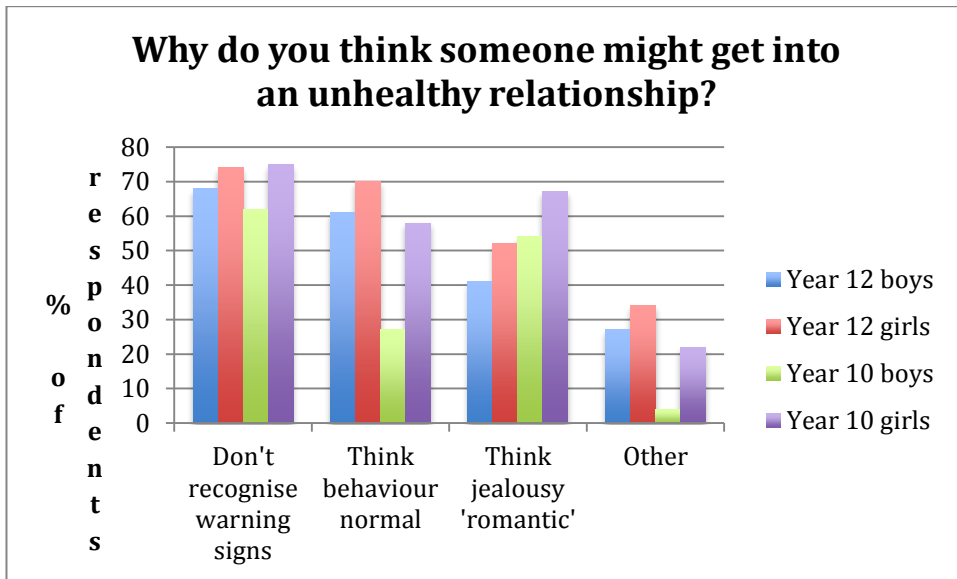


Fig. 4

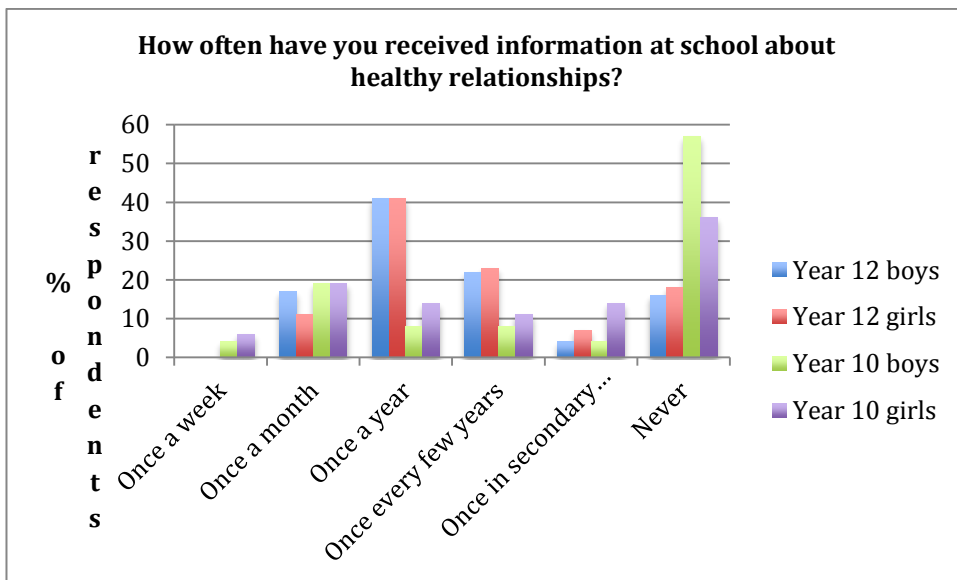


Fig. 5

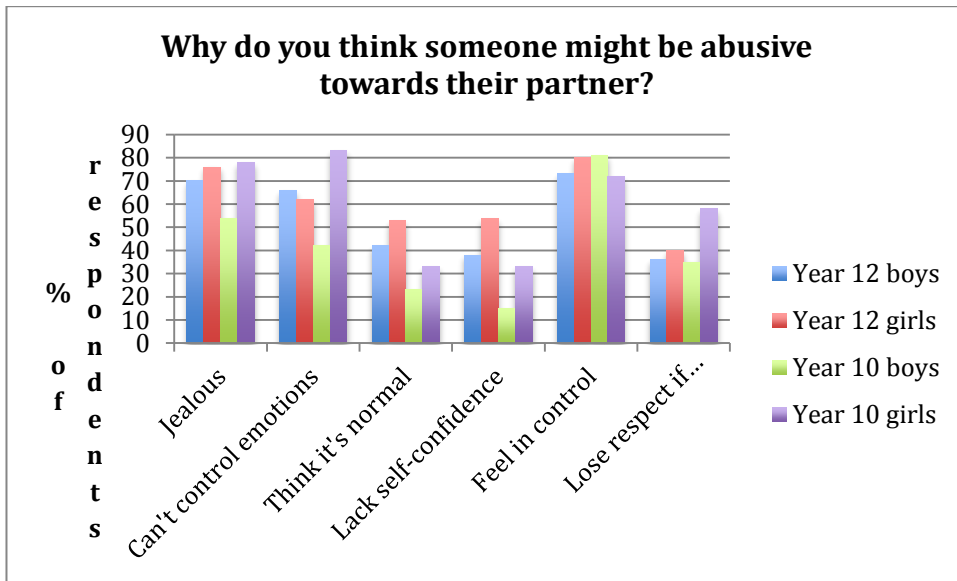


Fig. 6

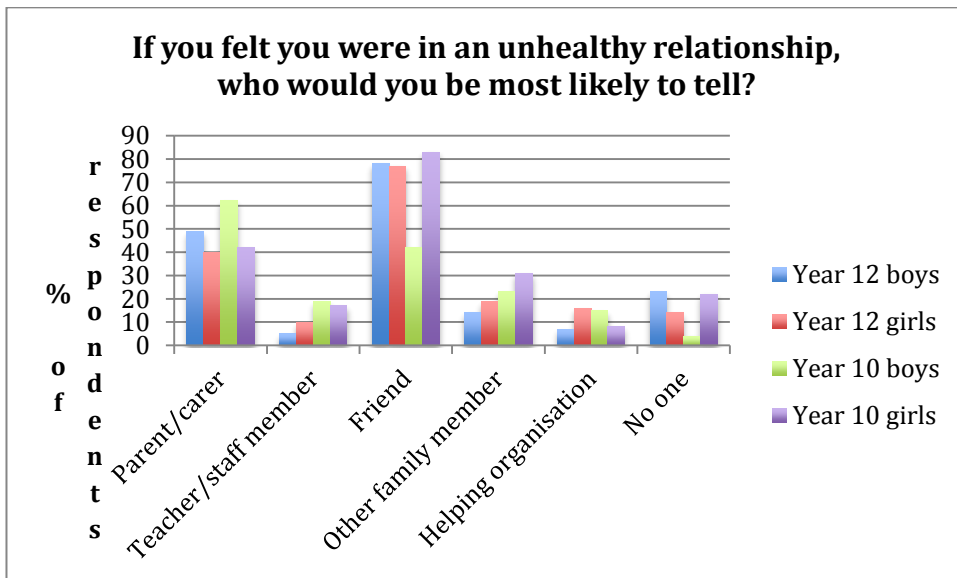
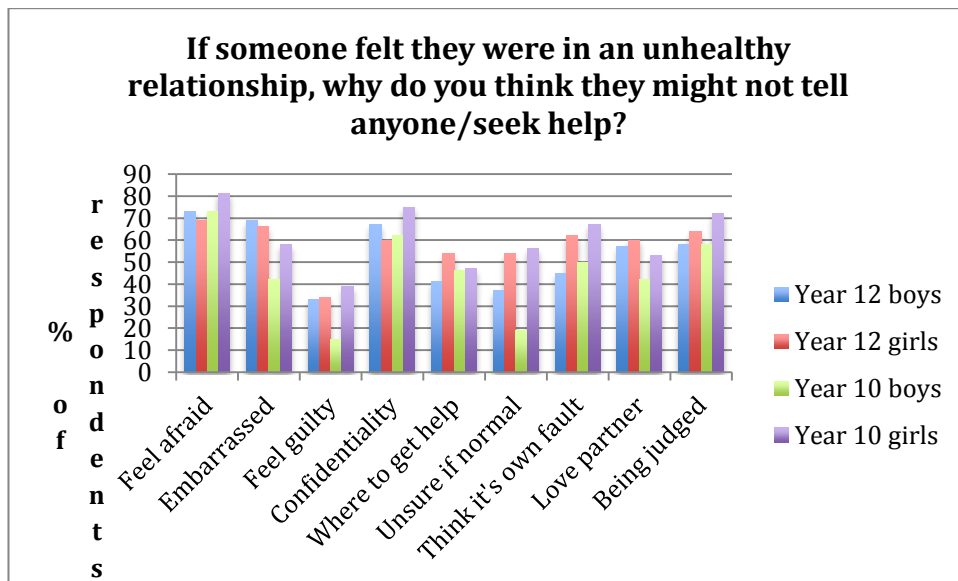


Fig. 7



Qualitative Results

As the qualitative results comprised hundreds of individual responses, it was considered impractical to include them in this section; they can be found in Appendix 10 and 11.

Over-arching and sub themes were identified as a result of a TA of the entire data set. To avoid repetition, these are combined with the discussion.

Themes and discussion

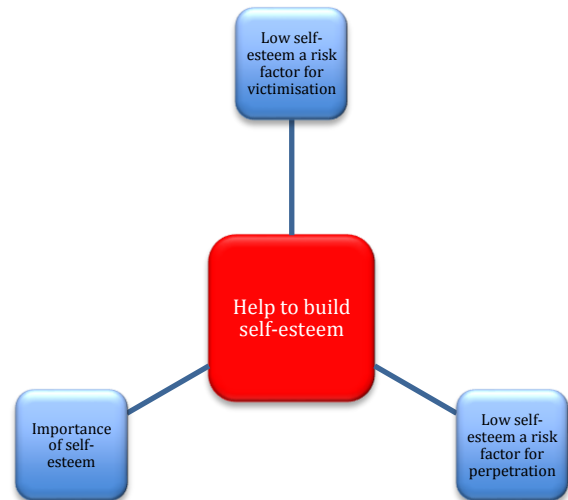
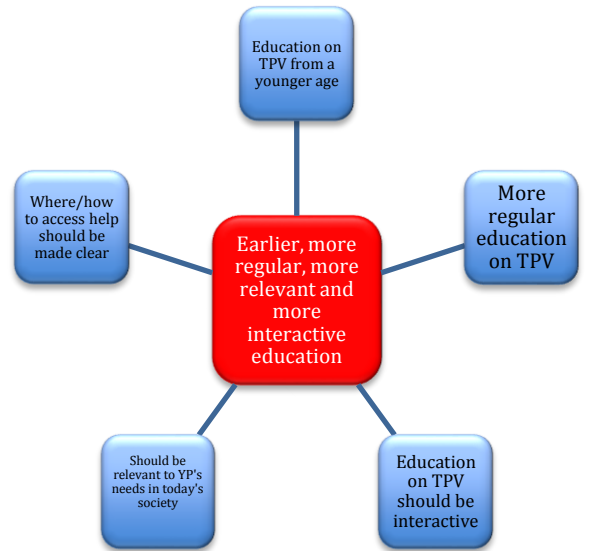
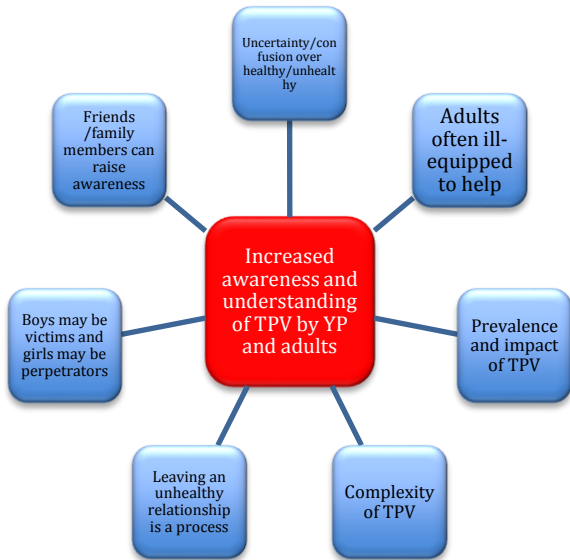
Introduction

Across the data, it was found that the same over-arching themes appeared important in relation to all the research questions. Therefore, to avoid repetition, the research questions are not answered individually; rather, where a theme is particularly relevant to a specific research question, this is highlighted. In addition, themes were not split by boys/girls in the questionnaire answers as there was no apparent major difference in the types or frequency of responses.

The following themes appeared to be central to YP's views on awareness of TPV and of what might be helpful with regard to prevention, intervention and regaining one's sense of wellbeing when an unhealthy relationship ends. There was a great deal of similarity between the responses of the school pupils and the women from the DV prevention organization. Four over-arching themes were identified, incorporating several sub themes.

Pseudonyms are used when referring to the participants from the DV prevention organization.

Thematic Map



1. Increased awareness and understanding of TPV by YP and adults.

A major theme across the data was that there was a lack of awareness and understanding amongst adults and YP themselves of many aspects of TPV and that awareness and understanding of these issues needs to be increased.

1.1 *Uncertainty and confusion over what may be considered healthy and unhealthy.*

Whilst many YP rated their understanding of what makes a healthy relationship highly (fig.1), this finding should be taken cautiously as it appeared from subsequent questionnaire responses that participants may have interpreted this question as meaning their understanding after reading the introductory information to the survey. Indeed, in the responses to the open questions and in the interviews, many YP indicated that they felt confused and uncertain as to what was healthy, or 'normal', and what was not. This finding concurs with Barter et al.'s (2009) findings.

"You know how people get jealous...and it's okay...sort of...but like...when is the point when it's not okay?" (yr 12 girl).

"If they hit you, obviously that's not okay, but...you've got the evidence...whereas the mental stuff...no one can see that...it's sort of trapped inside you...you just thinks, am I just taking this wrong, or...is he really doing this, or...for a long time I felt like I was going crazy" (Lauren, talking about first relationship aged fifteen, 168-178).

This was particularly difficult for YP who had grown up without seeing examples of healthy relationships. Amy was in an unhealthy relationship from the age of twelve for four and a half years:

"I didn't really have any awareness...I didn't learn about it in school...I thought it was the norm...my mum was in an unhealthy relationship as well, so...I wasn't brought up around knowing what was a healthy relationship" (Amy, 13-24).

Some YP viewed certain behaviours as an expression of love, rather than as controlling behaviour.

“He was very spontaneous at first...and I liked that...he’d phone me up and say like, ‘get dressed, I’m taking you out!’” (First relationship, aged fifteen) (Lauren, 31-32).

1.2 Adults are often ill equipped to help.

It was apparent that although many YP would like the support of parents and teachers, they felt that adults were often not equipped to help as they lacked awareness and understanding of TPV.

“It’s a huge issue which is not highlighted enough in school, by parents or in the media” (Yr 12 girl).

“She’d go there (to speak to teacher) but she’d find it pointless...She didn’t get any help...It’s not his fault but I just don’t think he understood” (Yr 12 pupil talking about a friend).

1.3 Awareness of the prevalence and impact of TPV

Participants felt that there was a lack of awareness of the prevalence of TPV and the debilitating and potentially devastating impacts on YP’s lives.

“Schools make out that stuff like this doesn’t happen when it does. Schools should stop assuming it doesn’t happen because we are young” (Yr 10 girl).

“He controlled everything I did, even in school...he was in the year above me...but he wasn’t in classes with me...but he was always looking in the windows...so if I said one word I was frightened it would go back to him and he was watching me and listening to what I’d say” (Amy, 254-260).

“After that happened (sexual abuse from ex-partner while in yr 11), she had a really bad case of anxiety and depression...she wouldn’t eat and she didn’t go out at all” (year 12 pupil talking about a friend).

“I dropped out of college...’cos he was constantly on my case about boys in the classroom and things like that” (Lauren, 383-386).

1.4 Awareness of the complexity of TPV

Participants also suggested that there is little understanding amongst adults, or YP, of the complexity of TPV, including confusing emotions that may make it difficult for individuals to judge whether or not their relationship is healthy and to 'just leave' an unhealthy relationship.

In the present study, participants in the questionnaire survey indicated that they thought there were many reasons why someone might not seek help if he/she felt the relationship was unhealthy, including 'love' for the partner (fig.7).

" Being so obsessed with your partner that you're willing to look past his failures...if you're so kind of absorbed with him that you don't mind him being a bully" (year 12 boy).

1.5 Awareness that leaving an unhealthy relationship is a process.

According to Enander and Holmberg (2008), leaving an unhealthy relationship should be understood as a process rather than as a single event and this was apparent in the present study:

*"When you're coming out of like a turbulent relationship...like you're going to have dips and you might think, oh maybe it wasn't that bad...or maybe I've built it up in my head to be worse than it is...so I think you need someone to be like no, you don't deserve that...to keep on reminding you, like it **will** get better" (Zoe, 336-342).*

"From something so powerful, it's very difficult to move on. There is not much to do other than comfort them. If they attend classes, it's always in their head and will haunt them for a long time" (Yr 12 boy).

Further, it has been found that adolescents may be at increased risk of mental health consequences during the break-up of a relationship (Baker et al., 2015), and it could be suggested that it would be beneficial if schools and parents were aware of the need for support at this time.

1.6 Awareness that boys may be ‘victims’ and girls may be ‘perpetrators.’

It was interesting to note that throughout the current study, both in the surveys and the interviews, very few participants alluded to a gendered nature to TPV. It may have been that they were responding in a ‘politically correct’ manner, but there seemed to be an acknowledgement by most participants that both boys and girls were affected by TPV. This was the case even with the four female participants from the DV prevention organization.

*“I think you need to go on **both** being the perpetrator and the victim...I remember this relationship...and the girl...she’d always slap him across the face...openly in front of us...he’d never retaliate, he’d always back down...she was like oh I was just angry and I just lash out...we were about, um, fifteen then” (Zoe, 380-398).*

“She (ex-partner’s mother) was violent towards his (ex-partner’s) father...if he were to turn round to her and call her a name back...she’d call the police and say, um, verbal abuse and whatever” (Lauren, 299-323).

Taking these findings into account, it could be suggested that educational approaches to TPV should avoid approaches that portray males as the main perpetrators of TPV and focus instead on mutual respect, positive methods of conflict resolution and working on understanding oneself and building one’s own confidence.

1.7 Friends or family members can raise awareness

Many participants said it would be helpful for close friends or family members to make them aware of unhealthy behaviour if they were concerned about their relationship as it was not always easy to recognize by themselves.

“I found out that it was wrong...only through other people telling me...my friends in school...other family members...made me open my eyes to see what was wrong and why I was being treated like that” (Amy, 31-47).

It was also suggested that an individual may not realise that his/her behaviour is unhealthy and that friends or family should try to make him/her aware.

“Have a quiet and subtle word about what they are doing towards their partner” (year 12 boy).

“Make them see what they are doing is bad and show them different people they can see about anger management” (year 12 boy).

However, it is cautioned that judgement be applied to the individual situation as although suggested by many participants, this may not be appreciated by all.

2. Earlier, more regular, more relevant and more interactive education and information on TPV.

Although a ‘theme’ in a TA does not necessarily depend on the frequency of occurrence of an item (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the number of participants who expressed the desire for more education and information was striking. Across the data, there was a strong impression that YP feel they are inadequately prepared for intimate relationships and that the little education they felt they had received (fig.4) did not meet their needs in today’s society, a finding that resonates with a recent Ofsted report (Gov.UK, 2013).

2.1 Education and information on TPV from a much younger age.

It was felt that SRE starting at 16 was too late as many YP are in relationships at a much younger age and some of the most vulnerable may have already left school by the age of 16.

“Discuss this topic at a younger age as at 16/17 many people have already experienced an abusive relationship” (Yr 12 boy).

2.2 More regular education and information on TPV

Whilst DV prevention education is often delivered in schools as a single awareness-raising session, or as a single block of lessons, it was felt by many that this approach may not be effective in dealing with TPV as it may raise awareness temporarily but may not increase understanding. Participants felt that *regular* exposure to education and information was important.

“Especially with vulnerable girls...they can lose everything at such an early age...their confidence...being easily led by someone else... ..so yeah... not just once a year...or when they’re sixteen and leaving school...this needs to be... regular” (Sarah, 447-452).

“More school organized talks and PSE lessons on these issues, rather than concentrating on...smoking and drugs all the time – these minor issues may be just as important!” (Yr 12 boy).

2.3 Education on TPV should be interactive

Many participants suggested that it was equally important to have regular opportunities to discuss issues surrounding TPV, in addition to receiving information.

It was suggested that discussions on the issue might be particularly helpful in helping individuals to recognize unhealthy aspects of their own behaviour.

“A lot of people might not even realize that they’re...that they might have anger issues but if they could relate to something that someone says to them they might be like, oh hang on...that’s how I feel or that’s how I’ve reacted before and then they might actually realize that they’ve got that in them” (Zoe, 275-279).

2.4 Education on TPV should be relevant to YP’s needs in today’s society.

Participants felt that education should cover issues such as early warning signs, consent, peer pressure, gender stereotypes portrayed in the media and the pressures of social media and the Internet. For example, YP do not always realize

that coercion is a form of abuse and it might be helpful if this were made more explicit.

“It wasn’t so much like he forced me into it (sex)...but it was like, um...he’d make me feel guilty if I didn’t want to do it...he wouldn’t speak to me and things like that...he was still making me do it” (Lauren, 152-160).

Peer pressure was felt to play a major part in why some YP get into, or stay in, an unhealthy relationship.

“Want to feel a part of friendship groups by also having a boyfriend/girlfriend” (year 12 girl).

“Want to be in a relationship because all their friends are, so take anything” (year 12 male).

Increasingly, it appears that there are pressures on YP regarding sexting and expectations that arise as a result of easy access to pornography.

“It (pornography) presents the wrong sort of relationships that people should be having with each other...like a lot of it can be very violent on the web...if they (children) think that that’s a normal way of being with a woman or a man...like a lot of it’s hard core...and not respectful to your partner...and if you’re thinking that’s normal...then that’s obviously going to affect the way you are” (Zoe, 207-213).

It has been argued that due to the normalization of pornography and ease of access to it via mobile phones and the Internet, attempts to regulate and restrict CYP’s access to it are likely to have limited effectiveness (Bryant, 2009). Instead, Stanley et al. (2016) suggest that educational approaches should attempt to promote a critical understanding of pornography that acknowledges its lack of congruence with real life experience.

2.5 Where and how to access help for TPV should be made clear

It was also felt that awareness should be raised on where and how YP could get help. In the questionnaire survey, over 40% of all pupils responded that a possible reason for why YP might not seek help was that they may not know where to get help (Fig 7).

“To be given a lot more education and help in school – not just helpful Childline numbers in planners” (Yr 12 boy).

“He always said to me...you can’t leave me...where you gonna go...what you gonna do...you got no one...and you think...this is it, I’m done for...I’m in this relationship for ever” (Lauren, 452-455).

“I think if people know that they can get help and they’re not on their own...and they don’t have to deal with it on their own...then I think that would be a great help” (Zoe, 315-317).

It could be suggested that it would be helpful for the profile of TPV to be raised in schools and for a ‘whole school approach’ to be taken, as has been advocated for promoting other aspects of social and emotional well-being in schools, so that YP are clear about the avenues of help available to them. In addition, information could be made more accessible through leaflets available to pick up anonymously in schools, with details of helplines and helpful websites.

3. Opportunities to talk

3.1 A desire for someone to talk to for support/advice

Many participants suggested that they would like to be able to talk to adults who are able to provide them with support and advice. Asked what he felt was particularly relevant for young people, a year 12 boy said:

*“How much they would desire someone to talk to, I think...someone who’s, um, **open** to talk to, whether it’s an older pupil or a teacher.”*

3.2 Confidentiality

Despite the desire to talk to someone, very few participants in the questionnaire survey said they would tell or seek help from a teacher or other member of school staff (fig.6).

*"I don't think there's enough support in schools...that they **are** able to talk to people" (Amy, 304-305).*

A major barrier to YP seeking help was found to be concerns around confidentiality, with survey participants choosing this as one of the main reasons for not telling anyone or seeking help for TPV (fig.7). This resonates with Gallopini and Leigh's (2009) finding that members of school staff were not trusted to maintain confidentiality and Barter et al.'s (2009) findings that only 3% of girls and 5% of boys told an adult who was not a parent or carer about relationship difficulties.

3.3 Counselling

Many participants suggested counselling as being helpful, especially for someone experiencing TPV or trying to regain a sense of wellbeing following a negative experience. In response to the survey question of what might be helpful for someone who was being abusive to his/her partner, the response was almost exclusively supportive, with many participants suggesting counselling to help the person understand his/her own issues. However, it was felt that counselling sessions should be more easily and regularly accessible in school.

"I think every school should have a counsellor...or somebody that someone can go and talk to" (Amy, 208-209).

3.4 Regular reassurance that the abuse was/is not his/her fault.

In particular, YP felt that regular reassurance that the abuse was not his/her fault was important.

"Letting them know...that they haven't done anything wrong and that it isn't their fault" (Yr 12 girl).

"Being shown that it shouldn't be like that and that it's not their fault if they want to get out of it" (Yr 12 boy).

“What’s been important is...people telling me that it’s not my fault” (Sarah, 247-248).

3.5 Friends are not always equipped to help.

As with Barter et al.’s (2009) findings, it was found that many young people do not tell anyone about relationship problems, or that they tell only friends (fig.6). However, it was clear that whilst YP value their friendships, they felt that friends were often not equipped to help them.

“They (friends) are not educated...nobody knows what to do. Either they learn about it at home...but lots of people’s parents are in unhealthy relationships” (Amy, 325-326).

3.6 Parents, with support, may be a valuable source of help

It was interesting to note that, contrary to Barter et al.’s (2009) finding that only 8% of girls and 7% of boys would tell a parent/carer if they felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, in the present study, at least 40% of the girls and an even greater number of boys suggested in the questionnaire survey that they would seek help from a parent/carer (fig.6). This may suggest that, while YP feel that parents lack awareness and understanding of TPV, if information regarding TPV were shared between school and home, this might help parents/carers to support their children.

4. Help to build self-esteem

Many participants felt that a lack of self-esteem was a risk factor for both victimization and perpetration with regard to TPV and that help to improve one’s

self esteem would be helpful in relation to prevention, intervention and regaining one's sense of well-being following a negative experience.

4.1 Low self-esteem as a risk factor for victimization

"When I got out of the first relationship (from age 12 to 16) ...my confidence was really low...and my self-esteem and my self-worth and belief in myself...um, I think if I'd had help with that...then I would have been able to maybe not get into another relationship like that again" (Amy, 110-114).

4.2 Low self-esteem as a risk factor for perpetration

"Often people who are abusive have internal issues (control issues, trust issues, deep insecurities)" (Yr 10 girl).

"I look at him now and he's still in unhealthy relationships...he's clearly not happy within himself...he's not happy with the people around him 'cos he can't trust them" (Amy, 332-334).

4.3 The importance of self-esteem

Self esteem was a major theme and was mentioned frequently in relation to avoiding TPV and especially in relation to being able to leave an unhealthy relationship and regaining one's sense of wellbeing.

"So it was...through... starting to believe in myself...and getting my confidence back...that I was able to leave that relationship" (Amy, 36-38).

Barter et al. (2009) suggested that a protective factor against experiencing TPV might be having an alternative source of self-esteem so that the relative importance and status of having a partner is minimized. Indeed, when asked what might be helpful with regard to regaining one's sense of wellbeing, many questionnaire respondents suggested finding new interests and hobbies.

With regard to education, it could be suggested that a focus on mutual respect, conflict resolution and emotional literacy, combined with opportunities to discuss

issues openly and to talk to someone confidentially when necessary, could be helpful in building self confidence and self-esteem with regard to TPV.

Summary of the findings

The views of YP gained in this study indicate a strong desire for raised awareness and understanding of TPV; for more regular, more relevant and more interactive education and information; for regular opportunities to discuss issues with others and to talk about private issues with someone in confidence; and for opportunities and support to help build self-esteem. It has been claimed that as PSHE is a non-examination subject in schools, it may be perceived by teachers and pupils as being less important than mainstream subjects and is often afforded less effort and interest (Formby et al., 2011). However, based on the findings of the present study as well as on previous research, it could be suggested that a focus on relationships is a vitally important part of YP's education and should not be sidelined.

It could also be suggested that as educational responses to the rapidly moving challenges of the Internet and social media need to be dynamic, it would be helpful if YP were involved in the construction and delivery of sex and relationship education programmes.

Strengths and limitations of the research

Strengths

It is felt that one of the strengths of the research is the combination of participants, which added a richness to the data. The school pupils were able to give their views on current concerns, especially with regard to technology and current awareness of TPV in schools, while the women were able to provide perspectives based on experience. Even though they spoke retrospectively of their experiences, there were many similarities with the pupils' views.

Another strength is the number of participants involved, which may lend a degree of ecological validity to the findings.

Limitations

One of the limitations is the lack of male participants with experience of TPV; the original aim was to have an equal number of men as women, in order to gain a more balanced picture. However, this was not possible as men did not come forward to take part.

Another limitation is that the school samples were all from the same area and there was little cultural or ethnic diversity; findings may have differed if carried out with a more culturally and ethnically diverse group.

Unique contribution

A thorough literature search revealed no studies in which the views and suggestions of YP had been sought in this way. It is felt that these findings provide a valuable addition to the existing literature.

Further research

In the light of the results, it is felt that the male experience of and perspective on TPV is much needed and would help to inform prevention and intervention approaches. In addition, it would be useful, if difficult, to speak to YP who had been abusive in a relationship, to try to understand their behaviour and what they feel could be helpful for them.

Practical implications for educational psychology, psychology, education and the practice of educational psychology.

The findings of this research suggest that TPV may be understood as a result of many interacting factors and that the situation with regard to gender is not clear-cut. As the majority of DV prevention education programmes delivered in schools have been based on the gender approach, this may have major implications for the way TPV is approached in schools; for example, it could be suggested that education on the topic might be more appropriately positioned within an emotional literacy/wellbeing framework.

The findings also suggest that although TPV appears to be prevalent and can have a serious impact on the lives of YP, it has also been found that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue amongst teachers and parents, as well as amongst YP themselves. Educational psychologists (EPs) may be in an ideal position to share information regarding TPV with schools and with parents, through written information, training, talks or discussions.

5965 words

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Part Three – Critical Appraisal

Introduction

This critical appraisal is presented in two sections, the first containing reflections on the process that led to the researcher's contribution to knowledge and the second being an account of the development of the research practitioner, including some of the challenges encountered during the process.

Section 1 – Contribution to knowledge

Inception of the research topic

The area of domestic violence (DV) was of interest as a result of previous work experience at an organization that offered support for female victims of DV. The conceptualisation of DV promulgated by the organization was based exclusively on the traditional gender stereotype approach (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004), which positions females as victims and males as perpetrators.

Many of the female clients who sought help from the organization were young women who reported experiences of abuse and violence in their intimate relationships dating back to their early teens. A frequently reported experience was that if they succeeded in extricating themselves from one violent relationship, they often entered another relationship that became violent. The question of why some women became involved in, and remained in, such relationships was intriguing.

In addition to offering support for female victims of DV, the organization also offered courses for male perpetrators, some of whom were teenagers. Most had been obliged to attend a course as a result of a court order. Whilst they often did

not deny using violence in their relationships, what was striking about the men's accounts was their personal histories, which often included neglect, abuse, loss, absent parents or parents who had experienced mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency. The stereotypical image of the perpetrator of DV as aggressive and controlling appeared incongruent with the accounts of many of the men. It was interesting to note that some of the more recent studies of intimate partner violence (IPV) drew on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) as a possible contributory factor in IPV (Sutton et al., 2014), rather than on traditional gender based theories. This resonated with the experiences shared by the men at the DV organization. These perceptions contributed to my interest in the area.

Initial exploration of the literature relating to DV revealed two recent UK based studies (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011) that suggested that although it was a new area of research in the UK, intimate partner violence in teenage relationships was a highly prevalent but hidden phenomenon that could have a damaging impact on mental and physical health. Further reading revealed that most of the existing literature on teenage partner violence had been conducted in the USA and focused on prevalence and impact (Nahapetyan, Orpina, Song & Holland, 2014), or the evaluation of existing domestic violence prevention education programmes (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Capaldi, 2012). However, there remains significant uncertainty about the effectiveness of such programmes.

In the studies by Barter et al. (2009) and Wood et al. (2011), it was found that young people typically did not tell anyone about their experiences of abuse in their relationships and that if they did tell anyone, it was usually restricted to friends. It was also found that there was a general lack of awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding TPV amongst adults.

It therefore seemed likely that CYP held knowledge and understanding of TPV that adults did not have access to. In spite of this, a further search of the literature revealed no studies in which CYP's own views had been sought on prevention or intervention with regard to TPV. This situation, in addition to the information contained in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

(Unicef, 2012), that states that children have the right to express their views on matters that involve them, contributed to the inception of the research topic for the present study.

Selection of participants

As Barter et al. (2009) suggested that TPV was most prevalent amongst CYP between the ages of 14 and 18, this was the age range targeted for the present study. Due to anticipated difficulties in gaining parental consent for pupils under the age of 16, the original intention was to limit the study to pupils aged 16 and above, in years 12 and 13. However, it was considered that some of the most vulnerable pupils might leave school at 16 and that they would therefore not be afforded the opportunity of contributing their views. Also, as Barter et al. (2009) had found that CYP aged 14 were as likely as those aged 18 to experience TPV, it was considered appropriate to include the full age range.

Pupils were not asked to disclose on the questionnaire, or in the interviews, whether or not they had experienced an unhealthy relationship. Whilst this might have been interesting, in terms of being able to compare the views of those who had, and those who had not, experienced an unhealthy relationship, it was considered inappropriate to ask potentially vulnerable CYP to disclose their personal experiences of TPV. Rather, the questionnaire focused on perceptions of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

In addition to surveying school pupils, it was decided that valuable information might be obtained by interviewing some of the young women who had sought help from the DV organization. These women had first-hand experience of TPV and it was considered that it would be useful to compare their views with those of the school pupils. The combination of pupils' views and those of the women from the DV organization was very valuable, as there was a great number of similarities in their responses. It is felt that this combination added a richness to the thematic analysis and an originality to the study as a whole.

Literature review – inclusion and exclusion criteria

A literature search was conducted using PsychINFO, ERIC, Scopus, the Web of Science and Google Scholar. The terms searched for included: teenage, adolescent, gender, intimate partner violence/abuse, teenage partner violence/abuse, teenage dating violence/abuse, adolescent dating violence/abuse. Google was also used to search for UK government and school policy information and to access the websites of charity and helping organisations, as these often contain the most up to date information on issues relating to TPV.

The first literature trawl included only the most up to date papers, from the past five years and from English speaking countries, mainly the UK and the USA. However, the search was widened as a result of following up further papers sighted that appeared to be of interest.

There was an emphasis on finding UK based research as this was considered most appropriate with respect to the potential for generalization. However, as the majority of the existing research appears to have been carried out in the USA, some of these papers were included. Whilst it would appear that many aspects of society and culture are similar within the UK and the USA, it is important to note that generalisations should be adopted with caution due to the possibly diverse and different research groups/basis.

Although it is clear from the literature that violence and abuse are prevalent in intimate relationships across a wide spectrum of groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships (Halpern et al, 2004), this research sought to look in detail at typically developing teenagers. This was because in the case of each of the other groups, there are additional or different issues involved and it was decided that it was beyond the scope of the present study to be able to describe adequately the various issues faced by these groups. Similarly, the relationships of YP with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties, physical

disabilities and those with specific conditions such as autism spectrum disorders were also considered to be beyond the scope of the current study.

Epistemology and methodology

Epistemology - Social constructionism

Social constructionism (SC) assumes that each person constructs his/her own version of reality and that the ways in which the world is understood are historically, culturally and socially relative (Burr, 1995). An important assumption of SC as a research paradigm is that the prior life experiences and pre-conceived ideas of the researcher will inevitably influence the research in various ways (Willig, 2013). This may include the initial focus of research topic, as the researcher will usually choose a topic that is of interest to him/her and in which he/she may already have experience (and pre-conceptions); it may include what evidence the researcher takes to be relevant to the chosen research question(s); in semi-structured interviews, the prior experiences of the researcher may influence which aspects of the interviewees' responses are picked up on and questioned further; while conducting a thematic analysis, these prior experiences may influence the choice of responses the researcher selects as constituting meaningful chunks of information (Braun & Clarke, 2006); and in drawing conclusions, the researcher may still focus, often unconsciously, on results that resonate fundamentally with him/her.

Participants will be influenced by their own life experiences and pre-conceptions, as well as by social and cultural factors. It was interesting to see, for example, how many pupils suggested that counselling might be helpful for someone who was experiencing TPV, even though most of them had probably never experienced counselling or possibly did not really understand what it involves; counselling has become a socially and culturally accepted way to deal with problems, especially psychological and mental health problems. Similarly, I have been more convinced by the research supporting the gender-neutral approach to TPV than that

supporting the gender based approach (in cultures that have more gender equality) and I have questioned the extent to which my personal life experiences have influenced this conclusion. For example, except for the experience of working in a counselling role with victims of DV, I have never been exposed to DV and throughout my university and adult life, my personal experience has been of gender equality.

In the interviews, the researcher's and participants' prior life experiences, pre-conceptions and expectations, as well as the dynamics of the interaction between interviewer and interviewees, will impact on the information that is exchanged. It is important to understand that the resulting transcript of the interview is one possible version of events; if the same two people discussed the same questions on another day, a different version of events may have been constructed between them.

Because of the subjective and inter-subjective nature of the information gathered, it is difficult to generalize findings. However, by conducting a TA across the whole of the data set, more ecological validity may be given to the resulting themes, in that similar issues of concern, such as uncertainty over what may be considered healthy, or normal, in a relationship, a desire for more information, opportunities to talk and help with self esteem, seemed important to so many participants.

Methodology – Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen as the approach most suited to this study as analysis can be carried out across a variety of data, including questionnaire and interview data. In addition, Willig (2013) suggested that TA is particularly suited to exploring ways in which people conceptualise social phenomena.

TA also allows the researcher the flexibility to combine an 'inductive', or bottom-up, approach, where the researcher approaches the data without a pre-conceived

coding frame and the themes are firmly grounded in the data, and a 'deductive' approach that uses a pre-determined template to code the data. A combination of the two approaches allows the researcher to generate a comprehensive TA of the data (Willig, 2013), and this was attempted in this study.

Consideration was given to various approaches to qualitative research before deciding on TA. For example, grounded theory was considered because of the flexibility of being able to gather more data in order to answer questions that arise about themes and theory during the analysis of the data already collected. This approach requires that a model or theory be produced that fits all the data. Grounded theory is particularly pertinent in emergent areas of research in which there is little theory already developed. However, in the area of TPV, there are competing theoretical bases that are already well developed and therefore thematic analysis was considered a more appropriate approach.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was also considered. This approach attempts to understand and present an account of how an individual constructs and experiences events in their lives, from the participant's own perspective. Whilst this approach would have been interesting to gain an insight into how the women from the DV organization experienced events in their lives, this was not the aim of the present research; rather, the study aimed to have relevance for CYP in schools and ultimately, to be of practical value.

Discourse Analysis (DA) was also considered to be unsuitable as this is concerned more with the *ways* people use talk in social situations, rather than the content of what they talk about. In addition, this approach could not accommodate written questionnaire responses, even in the case of open questions.

Ethical concerns

Parental consent

Opt-out consent was considered as it was felt that this approach might be beneficial in terms of sample size. However, opt-in consent was required for pupils in year 10, aged 14 and 15, by the ethics committee, due to the sensitive nature of the present study. This may have led to a reduction in the number of year 10 pupils who participated in the research, since many of the parental consent forms that were sent out were not returned. However, an alternative explanation is that either the parents of this age group, or the YP themselves, did not wish to take part in the study.

It may be considered important that the voice of CYP is sought, since it has been found that girls as young as thirteen have experienced IPV and that many young people have had intimate relationships by the age of 14 and 15 (Barter et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2011). In addition, as Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should have the right to give their opinion on matters that affect them (Unicef, 2012), in order to be able to gain the voice of this younger age group, it may be important for further research to be able to adopt an opt-out approach to participation.

Pupil consent

Informed consent was obtained through a whole class approach with year 12 pupils. However, at the end of the session, an ethical dilemma was raised by one pupil in particular, who stated that although the option to leave the room was clearly articulated by the researcher, peer pressure would mitigate against individuals who did not want to take part in the research actually leaving at that point. This highlights a serious ethical issue, which should be addressed in any further research. In hindsight, it would have been more appropriate to have offered clear information on the research topic at an individual level prior to the

group session, which might have better allowed individuals to assert their right to non-participation.

Section 2 – Critical account of the research practitioner

The impact of other people's schedules on the research process

A significant difficulty encountered that was not anticipated was the extent to which the research process would be affected by other people. For example, many individuals did not reply to emails or return phone calls, while others promised to help with certain aspects such as recruitment, but later withdrew their offers. Regarding the year 10 surveys, both schools requested that the surveys be carried out during the final two weeks of the summer term, claiming that there would be fewer demands on the pupils' time and more time would be available to obtain parental consent. However, shortly before the final two weeks, both schools asked to postpone until the autumn term. Consequently, it was not possible to analyse the results of the surveys during the summer break.

The importance of fostering positive working relationships

In addition to being flexible and planning ahead, an important aspect of learning gained from conducting this research is the value of building and maintaining positive working relationships. For example, although the head teachers of the four schools were initially contacted by letter, not one replied. In all four cases, it was eventually through introductions made by individuals with whom I had previously worked, mainly the SENCOs, that it was possible to gain access to someone with the authority to grant permission to carry out the research.

The value of previous positive working relationships was particularly significant when attempting to recruit participants from the DV organization. The director of the organization was very enthusiastic about the research and offered assistance willingly, encouraging other members of her team to do so also. Of particular value was the relationship with a support worker with whom I had worked regularly and who worked directly with the women who sought help from the organization. As trust had been engendered through previous encounters, she was instrumental in enabling the interviews to take place, by explaining the research to the women and allaying any concerns they had.

In contrast, I had no contact with anyone who worked with men involved with DV. Frequent attempts were made over an extended period of time to recruit male participants, but ultimately without success.

Difficulties in recruiting male participants

In addition to the lack of a working relationship with someone who may have been able to offer assistance in recruiting male participants, a major difficulty was that, in contrast to the provision for women, there appear to be very few organisations that offer support to men affected by DV.

I eventually managed to secure, via a support worker in an organization that offered support to men, the agreement of two young men to be interviewed. However, both men cancelled on the morning of the arranged interviews and despite email and telephone communication with the support worker since, it appears that they have not returned to the service.

Potential unforeseen consequences

While this situation was frustrating from the practical perspective of a researcher, it also raised an important ethical consideration, namely whether or not the drive

towards involving the men in the research in itself affected their involvement with the organization. It transpired that the two men had only recently become involved with the organization and it could be suggested that arriving at the point of being able to approach such an organization may have been extremely difficult for them (McCarrick, 2015). To have been asked at such an early stage in their involvement with the organization to take part in research may have been inappropriate. In any future research, it may be more ethical to ensure that potential participants have established relationships within the organization and that they feel able to decline a request to take part in research if they so wish, certain in the knowledge that their support at the organization would not be adversely affected.

Re-framing setbacks

The failure to recruit male participants, despite extensive endeavour, has reinforced the notion that conducting research is rarely straightforward and that obstacles and setbacks are encountered frequently. Whilst not being able to carry out the research as originally planned, namely by interviewing an equal number of male and female participants who had had experience of DV, has been frustrating, it has been helpful to re-frame this setback in terms of using the information to inform the 'limitations' and 'ideas for future research' sections of the study.

The personal discovery that there appear to be so few organisations offering support to men in relation to DV is interesting, particularly in light of the research surrounding male victims of IPV (Hines, 2010; McCarrick, 2015), that suggests that many male victims of IPV do not seek help because of the paucity of support available for men.

Difficulties with questionnaires

On glancing through the responses to the questionnaires at the end of the survey with the first group of pupils, it was noticeable that in response to the question, 'How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship?' many YP had rated their understanding very highly. However, many also wrote that they had not been aware of the issues beforehand but had learnt a lot from taking part in the survey. It was impossible to determine whether individual participants had rated their understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship *before* taking part in the survey, as had been intended, or *after* having read the information provided. This concern also appeared to apply, possibly to a more limited extent, to the second part of the question, with regard to knowing how to help a friend.

This situation reveals the difficulty in anticipating participants' understanding of and reaction to questions. Despite carrying out a thorough pilot survey, this issue was not raised. It also highlights the fact that although pilot surveys are valuable, they may not expose all potential difficulties with a questionnaire. With future research, it may be beneficial to carry out pilot surveys with more than one group of participants in order to increase the number of critical perspectives.

On examination of the questionnaire responses following the year 12 surveys, another potential issue became apparent. Question 2 on the questionnaire asked respondents how often they had received information on healthy relationships at school and many of the answers to subsequent questions suggested that more education and information on relationships should be provided by schools. This raised the concern that question 2 may have influenced these answers.

Following a discussion of this issue in supervision, the positioning of the question regarding the frequency of information received at school was changed for the year 10 surveys; the question was moved to the end of the questionnaire. Although there may be no certainty due to the smaller sample size, the positioning of the question did not appear to have a major impact on the types of responses. For

example, in response to the question, ‘What do you think might be helpful in preventing abuse in teenage relationships?’, while the word ‘school’ was not always mentioned, the desire for more information on relationships appeared to be of equal importance for the year 10 pupils as for those in year 12.

“Making sure they know the signs of abuse in teenage relationships” (year 10 girl)

“Give them help and advice on having a healthy relationship” (year 10 boy)

Transcribing the data

Transcription of the data from the interviews and the open questions on the questionnaires was time-consuming and often frustrating. However, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of transcription is a valuable opportunity to familiarize oneself with the data and allows the researcher to begin to identify patterns of meaning, while developing a thorough understanding of the data.

Writing up the research project

One of the difficulties in writing up this study concerns the nature of TPV as a fast moving area of research. At the time of the conception of the study, TPV was still a relatively “hidden” issue in the UK (Home Office, 2013, p.4). However, in the past three years, data on TPV has evolved rapidly. On-going reading of the emerging literature has led to an increasingly complex picture of TPV and it has been necessary to re-write significant parts of the study in an attempt to present the relevance of the results more appropriately in light of recent research findings. For example, McCarrick’s (2015) findings regarding male victims of IPV provided increased support for the gender-neutral approach to TPV.

Development as a researcher

One aspect of learning gained from undertaking this research project, which would be given careful consideration if conducting research in the future, is the amount of reading that is necessary prior to submitting the ethics proposal. Despite extensive reading and a belief that I had a solid overview and understanding of the issues, further reading following submission of the ethics proposal revealed additional research that would have been beneficial to explore in more detail before submitting the proposal. In particular, I felt I had not grasped the significance of the gender debate adequately and this had affected the questions asked on the questionnaire. Due to tight timescales, it seemed impractical to re-work the questionnaire in order to accommodate questions regarding male victimization, but such questions may have enhanced the relevance of the results of the study to the current knowledge base on TPV, especially in the light of McCarrick's (2015) findings on male victimization.

Another area of learning has been in relation to the importance of carrying out a pilot survey. In previous research projects, pilot surveys I have carried out have not had a major impact on the questionnaire being tested. However, in relation to the present study, the pilot survey was invaluable and had a major impact, with several changes being made to the questionnaire as a result of it. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, pilot surveys are not infallible and cannot guarantee the absence of any further issues.

A particular area of personal development as a researcher has been in understanding the importance of careful examination of the details of studies, in order to understand exactly what has taken place, the circumstances in which the research has taken place and the implications this may have for the findings, rather than accepting the reported results at face value. An example of this is the NSPCC and Bristol University research into TPV (Barter et al., 2009). The authors concluded that although boys could also experience TPV, the impact on girls was much greater. However, close examination of the research revealed that the interviews, in which girls had described the harmful effects of violence on them

and boys had reported that girls' violence towards them had no or little impact on them, had been carried out in single-sex group interviews. Whilst it may indeed be the case that for the boys in the sample, the violence had little or no impact on them, in the light of research on peer pressure to conform to gender stereotypes (Brown, 1999), a possible alternative explanation may be that these boys were too embarrassed to admit to being hurt by a girl in front of their peers.

Similarly, whilst studies supporting the gender-based approach to TPV quote official statistics on partner violence and typically find that, overwhelmingly, men are perpetrators and women are victims, these studies typically do not include research on men's experiences of IPV, which highlight the many reasons that prevent men from reporting their experiences, such as the attitudes of the officials who collect the statistics (McCarrick, 2015).

Potential application of findings and relevance for service users.

This study contains the views, gained from open as well as multiple choice questions in a questionnaire, of 310 secondary school pupils from four mainstream comprehensive schools. It also contains the views of four women who had sought help from a DV organisation, three of whom were in their twenties at the time of the interviews and all of whom had attended mainstream comprehensive schools. While the views of the women from the DV organization were informed by personal experience of TPV, their accounts were retrospective and may not reflect the current situation in schools. In contrast, while the school pupils had current experience of the school system, it was not possible to determine whether or not individuals' views were based on personal experience of TPV. However, the finding that there was a very high level of similarity between the themes that appeared important to the two groups lends ecological validity to the results of the study.

Given the potentially damaging impact of TPV on YP's mental and physical health (Nahapetyan et al., 2014), as well as the apparent lack of awareness of the issue in schools, it is suggested that the results of this study could usefully be shared with

head teachers, teachers and other members of school staff, possibly through INSET training sessions. In addition, parents and carers could also be involved, with talks and discussions offered in school.

Future directions

A logical and very important extension to this study would be an attempt to gain the views of young men who have experienced unhealthy relationships, as was the original intention of this research. Despite the barriers to achieving this, such as the lack of DV organisations offering support to men, such research would be valuable in terms of increasing awareness of the issues affecting boys and men, and informing prevention and intervention approaches more accurately.

In addition, it would be very informative to be able to interview YP, girls or boys, who have been abusive towards a partner in an intimate relationship, in order to gain their perspectives on their own behaviour and their views on what they feel could/could have been helpful for them.

Personal feelings about the research

Carrying out this research has been an intense experience and at times overwhelming, but I feel I have learnt a great deal, not only about the subject matter but about the whole research process. On the whole, despite the limitations already mentioned, I am pleased with the study. Although I was not able to gain the views of young men who had experienced TPV, which I feel would have enhanced the research, I feel that the findings are of value. In light of the limits of generalization, I feel that the findings of the study could be usefully shared with schools and parents. In addition, I feel that the insights and understanding of the issues surrounding TPV that I have acquired through the process of carrying out this research, will inform my practice post-qualification.

4980 words

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Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship = an intimate relationship with a partner of the same or opposite sex (boyfriend/girlfriend) for any length of time.

Many young people find themselves in relationships they don't feel comfortable with. Some don't feel sure about what is healthy/normal in a relationship and often don't know what to do if they are in an unhealthy relationship.

Are you: Female Male How old are you? _____

Healthy relationships include: mutual respect, trust, honesty, support, compromise, fairness, equality, privacy and good communication.

Unhealthy relationships often involve issues of power and control and can include different kinds of abuse - emotional, physical and sexual. Some common signs of abuse are when a partner:

- is very jealous and possessive
- gets angry when you want to spend time with your friends
- checks your phone, email, Facebook and twitter accounts
- is always calling, texting or BBMing you to check where you are and who you're with
- calls you names, laughs at you or puts you down in front of other people
- gets aggressive - hits, shoves, slaps you
- threatens to harm you - or self
- pressures you to do things you are not comfortable with sexually

Sometimes people feel unsure whether their partner's behaviour is acceptable/normal or not. For example, if a partner:

- tells you they want you to spend all your time with them because they love you
- says it's your fault they hit you because you wound them up and 'made' them do it

- insists it's normal to go further sexually because you've been together for a long time

(It is important to note that these behaviours are not normally found in a healthy relationship).

1. a) How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship?

Very confident Quite confident Not very confident Not at all confident

b) If you suspected that your friend was in an abusive relationship, how confident do you think you would feel about knowing the best way to help?

Very confident Quite confident Not very confident Not at all confident

c) What do you think could help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship?

2. How often have you received information at school about healthy relationships (including sexuality and consent, the influence of pornography and social media, dealing with emotions and staying safe)?

- Once a week Once a month Once a year Once every few years
 Once in secondary school Never

3. a) Why do you think someone might get into an unhealthy relationship? (Tick any/all that are relevant)

Don't recognize the warning signs Think partner's behaviour is normal
 Think jealousy and possessiveness are 'romantic'

Other _____

b) What do you think might be helpful in **preventing** abuse in teenage relationships ?

4. a) Why do you think someone might be abusive towards their partner?
(Tick any/all that are relevant)

Jealous Can't control own emotions Think it's normal Lack self-confidence Makes someone feel in control Think they will lose respect if they are attentive and supportive

b) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is **being abusive** towards their partner and wants to change?

5. a) If you felt you were in an unhealthy relationship, who would you be most likely to tell? (Tick any/all that are relevant)

Parent/carer Teacher/other member of school staff Friend Other family member Helping organisation No one

Other _____

b) If someone felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, why do you think they might not tell anyone/seek help? (Tick any/all that are relevant)

Feel afraid Feel embarrassed Feel guilty Don't trust anyone to keep information confidential Don't know where to get help Not sure if partner's behaviour is normal or not Think it's own fault Love/loyalty to partner Worry about being judged/thought badly of

Other _____

c) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is already **experiencing** abuse in a relationship

6. When an unhealthy relationship ends, what do you think might be helpful for someone to move on from the experience and feel better about themselves?

Thank you for taking the time to help with this study!

If you are concerned about the issues raised in this questionnaire, you will find some useful contacts for support in the debrief sheet that you will be given when you hand this in.

Appendix 2 – Gatekeeper Letter

School of Psychology

Cardiff University

Tower Building
Park Place

Cardiff
CF10 3YG

Date

Head teacher

School

Dear _____

I am a trainee educational psychologist studying at Cardiff University, currently on placement in _____, and am planning to conduct a research project on teenage healthy relationships.

Recent research has shown that many teenagers lack awareness of healthy v unhealthy relationships and that abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) is very common in teenagers' intimate relationships, often impacting negatively on wellbeing and academic achievement.

It has also been shown that if young people do realise that they are in an unhealthy relationship, they often do not know what to do about it and typically they do not tell anyone or ask for help. In addition, it has been found that awareness and understanding of this issue is also very limited amongst parents/guardians and schools.

In this study, I am hoping to find out teenagers' own views and ideas on what they think could be helpful, in terms of prevention and intervention.

On an agreed day, I would carry out a questionnaire survey and pupils would be invited to take part in individual semi-structured interviews to explore the ideas in more depth.

Issues of anonymity and confidentiality would be treated with great care and parental consent would be required.

It is hoped that the information obtained from this study will contribute to an understanding of what might be helpful for young people experiencing abuse in their intimate relationships. At the end of the project, I would be very happy to

share the findings with you, which would hopefully be helpful in understanding the best way to support pupils in your school.

I would be very grateful for your support with this project and would welcome the opportunity to come and discuss it in more detail with you. If you are interested, please contact me on GriffithsAD4@cardiff.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3 – Parental Consent Form



Dear Parent / Guardian

Re: Research project – ‘Healthy Relationships’

I am a mature student at Cardiff University, studying for a doctorate in educational psychology, and am doing a research project about teenagers and healthy relationships.

Recent research has shown that many young people lack awareness of healthy v unhealthy relationships and that abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) is very common in teenagers’ intimate relationships. Research has also shown that if young people do realise that they are in an unhealthy relationship, they often do not know what to do about it and typically they do not tell anyone or ask for help.

Awareness and understanding of this issue amongst young people, parents/guardians and teachers is still very limited. In this study, I would like to find out teenagers’ own views and ideas on what they think could be helpful, in terms of prevention and intervention. It is hoped that the information gathered will contribute to a better understanding of what could be done to help teenagers and the findings of the project will be shared with the school (all information will be anonymous).

Questionnaire survey

Pupils will be given an information sheet about the project and if they would like to take part in the questionnaire survey, they will be asked to sign a consent form. They will not be asked to give any information about their personal experiences. They will be told that they don’t have to take part and that if they do, they can still change their mind and leave at any time.

Questionnaires will be anonymous. Pupils will be asked not to write their names on the forms, or any information that could identify them. No one apart from the researcher will see the questionnaires and once the information has been transferred, the questionnaires will be destroyed.

After the questionnaire survey, pupils will be given an information sheet with details of organisations that help with teenage relationship related problems. A member of the school pastoral staff will also be available if any pupils would like to speak to someone.

I would really appreciate your support with this project. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at GriffithsAD4@cardiff.ac.uk or ask the school to give me a contact number and I will phone you.

If you are happy for your daughter/son to take part in this research project, I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and ask your son/daughter to give it to (SENCo's name) by (date). I will only be able to ask those pupils with a signed form to take part in the project.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

Parental consent to take part in questionnaire survey

I, _____ (name) give
permission for

_____ (pupil's first and surname) to
take part in the

Healthy Relationships research project. I am

(relationship to pupil) and I have parental responsibility for him/her.

Appendix 4 – Pupil Information Sheet

Research Project – ‘Healthy Relationships’

Thank you for volunteering to take part in this research project. Please read the following information and feel free to ask any questions.

Recent research has shown that many young people lack awareness of healthy v unhealthy relationships and that abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) is very common in teenagers’ relationships. Research has also shown that if young people do realise they are in an unhealthy relationship, they often don’t know what to do about it and typically they don’t tell anyone or ask for help.

In this study, I would like to find out teenagers’ own views and ideas on what they think could be helpful, in terms of prevention and intervention. I hope that the information gathered will contribute to a better understanding of what could be done to help teenagers and the findings of the project will be shared with school (all information will be anonymous).

Part 1 – Questionnaire Survey

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If, at any point, you decide you no longer want to take part, you are free to leave without giving any reason. You don’t have to answer any questions you don’t feel comfortable with and you won’t be asked to give any details of personal experiences.

All information obtained will be anonymous. Please don’t write your name or any personal information on the questionnaire. The researcher will be the only person to see the questionnaires and once the information has been transferred, the questionnaires will be destroyed.

If you would still like to take part in this project, please complete the consent form attached to this information sheet. When you have finished filling in the questionnaire, please put the consent form in the tray, fold the questionnaire and put it in the sealed box with the slit in the top, and keep the information sheet.

Part 2 – Individual conversations

After the questionnaire survey, I will be inviting year 12 pupils to take part in individual conversations to discuss the questions in the questionnaire survey in more depth.

In order to capture all the details of the conversations, I will record the interviews with a voice recorder. As soon as possible after the interviews, I will transcribe all the information onto paper and destroy the recordings. All the information written down, and any used in the final report, will be anonymous. If you decide you no longer want to take part in the conversation, you will be free to leave at any time. In addition, you have the right to ask for your information to be withdrawn at any time up to the point when the information becomes anonymous.

I would be very grateful for volunteers to take part in the conversations. In the questions, I will not ask anything about your personal experience, except in response to something you decide to share. As in the questionnaire survey, the focus will be on what can be done to help.

IMPORTANT: Limits of confidentiality

What you say will be confidential UNLESS it suggests serious harm to yourself or another person. In this case, the school’s safeguarding policies will be followed which will mean sharing what you have said with other relevant people. If this is considered necessary, you will be told that what you have said needs to be shared, unless telling you would put your welfare or that of someone else at serious risk.

Thank you!

Researcher: Angela Griffiths, Doctorate in Educational Psychology training, Cardiff University.

Appendix 5 – Pupil Consent for Questionnaire

Pupil consent form for questionnaire survey

Healthy Relationships

The aim of this study is to find out teenagers' views and ideas on what could be helpful, in terms of prevention and intervention, with regard to healthy/unhealthy intimate relationships.	Please tick
1. I confirm that I understand the purpose of the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.	
3. I agree to take part in the survey	

Name

Date _____

Signature

Appendix 6 – Debrief Form



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Debrief sheet

Thank you very much for taking part in this research!

The purpose of this study was to find out young people's views and ideas on healthy and unhealthy relationships and what might be helpful in terms of prevention and intervention.

If you have found any of the issues worrying or upsetting, a member of the school pastoral staff will be available to talk to after this session.

If you are currently affected by any of the issues, please remember that:

- * You are not alone. Lots of teenagers are affected by similar issues.
- * Abuse is not your fault. Your partner may blame you for their behaviour but they alone are responsible for their actions.
- * Abuse tends to get worse over time, so the earlier you get help, the better.
- * If you are worried about a friend, let them know you are worried and are there if they want to talk. Give them time, don't judge or tell them what to do but encourage them to seek help.

IMPORTANT: Limits of confidentiality

What you say will be confidential UNLESS it suggests serious harm to yourself or another person. In this case, the school's safeguarding policies will be followed which will mean sharing what you have said with other relevant people. If this is considered necessary, you will be told that what you have said needs to be shared, unless telling you would put your welfare or that of someone else at serious risk.

If you feel you need extra support, you can ask about a referral to the school counselling service. In addition, the organisations overleaf can be contacted for support.

Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about what happened today. You can either do this in person today, or by contacting me (Angela Griffiths) at GriffithsAD4@cardiff.ac.uk

If you are dissatisfied after discussing your concerns, please contact the School of Ethics Committee directly using the e-mail address psychethics@cf.ac.uk

LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE



ChildLine is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a ChildLine counsellor about anything -no problem is too big or too small. If you need to speak to a counsellor straight away, please call us for free on 0800 1111. www.childline.org.uk or send an email via website.



The Respect not Fear site was developed by the Nottinghamshire domestic violence forum, in consultation with young people. The site contains games and advice which can help you think about your relationships, or you can make a pledge to find out what you can expect in a relationship and what shouldn't be tolerated. The Respect not Fear App is free and provides you with games such as the pyramid and respect'o'meter, it also gives you instant access to important information and support services. Click [here](#) to download the app.

www.respectnotfear.co.uk



Broken Rainbow offers support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence. It also aims to raise awareness in the LGBT community and elsewhere of the impact of homophobic, trans-phobic and same sex domestic violence on the lives of LGBT people. Broken Rainbow runs a Helpline staffed by highly trained operators, experienced in the specifics of LGBT domestic violence, with many coming from frontline services. They understand the issues you'll face and go through extensive training to provide you with the best possible support.

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

help@brokenrainbow.org.uk Phone: 0300 999 5428

Appendix 7 – Pupil Consent Form for Interviews

Pupil consent form for interview

Healthy Relationships

The aim of this study is to find out teenagers' views and ideas on what could be helpful, in terms of prevention and intervention, with regard to healthy/unhealthy intimate relationships.	Please tick
1. I confirm that I understand the purpose of the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. I am also free to request that my contribution to the discussion is withdrawn - up to the point of anonymity when it becomes unrecognisable.	
3. I agree to take part in the survey	

IMPORTANT: Limits of confidentiality

What you say will be confidential UNLESS it suggests serious harm to yourself or another person. In this case, the school's safeguarding policies will be followed which will mean sharing what you have said with other relevant people. If this is considered necessary, you will be told that what you have said needs to be shared, unless telling you would put your welfare or that of someone else at serious risk.

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix 8 – Information Sheet for Women



Research Project – Healthy Relationships

I am a mature student at Cardiff University, studying for a doctorate in educational psychology, and am doing a research project on healthy and unhealthy teenage intimate relationships.

Recent research has found that abuse (physical, sexual and emotional) is very common in young people's intimate relationships and that many young people don't tell anyone and don't know what to do or where to turn for help.

I am trying to find out young people's own views on what they think could be helpful, in terms of prevention, intervention and feeling better about oneself following the experience of an abusive relationship.

I am particularly interested in finding out the views of young people who have had personal experience of unhealthy relationships. This information will hopefully contribute to helping other young people in the future.

What would happen:

If you would like to take part in this project, it would involve meeting with me for about an hour in a place where you would feel comfortable to talk. I would ask a small number of questions so that you would have plenty of opportunity to give your opinions and ideas on each answer.

To be able to talk more naturally, I wouldn't want to take notes but I'd like to capture everything you say, so I would digitally record the conversation. As soon as possible after the meeting, I would transcribe all the information onto paper and destroy the recording. All the information written down, and any used in the final report, would be anonymous. There would be no names of people or places, or of anything else that might identify you.

In the questions, I would not ask anything about your personal experience, except in response to something you decide to share with me. The focus will be on gaining your ideas on what you think could be helpful.

You would not have to answer any question you didn't feel comfortable about and you would be free to end the conversation and leave at any time. The meeting could be one to one or you would be welcome to bring a friend.

Anything you said in the meeting would be confidential, unless there was a serious risk of harm to yourself or another person.

Any participation in this project would be entirely voluntary and you would be free to stop taking part at any time without having to say why.

I would really appreciate your help with this research project. If you would like to take part, or if you would like to ask any questions before deciding, please email me on _____ or give the person who contacted you permission to give me your phone number and I will call you back. You do not need to say whether you are going to take part in the project or not.

Thank You!

Appendix 9 – Consent Form for Women

Consent form for interview

Healthy Relationships

The aim of this study is to find out women's views and ideas on what could be helpful, in terms of raising awareness and of prevention and intervention, with regard to healthy/unhealthy intimate teenage relationships.	Please tick
1. I confirm that I understand the purpose of the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. I am also free to request that my contribution to the discussion is withdrawn - up to the point of anonymity when it becomes unrecognisable.	
3. I agree to take part in the survey	

IMPORTANT: Limits of confidentiality

Information gathered will be confidential UNLESS a young person discloses something that suggests serious harm to themselves or another person.

Name

Appendix 10 – Questionnaire Responses

Thesis questionnaire results

School A (Year 12, mostly 16 and 17 year olds, a few 18 year olds)

105 girls, 103 boys

Total 208

1. a) How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship? 1= not at all confident, 10 = very confident.

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents				2		5	11	39	27	21
Percentage (%) of respondents				2		5	10	37	26	20

MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents					4	5	25	34	21	14
Percentage (%) of respondents					4	5	24	33	20	14

- b) If you suspected that your friend was in an abusive relationship, how confident do you think you would feel about knowing the best way to help?

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents	1	1	5	7	10	22	30	20	2	7

Percentage (%) of respondents	1	1	5	7	10	20	28	19	2	7
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MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents		1	5	8	12	20	27	22	5	3
Percentage (%) of respondents		1	5	8	12	19	26	21	5	3

c) What do you think could help someone to **understand and recognize** the signs of abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- The way a person acts around you on their own; if a person is being forced to do something; No trust, constantly worried when they're out; physical contact without consent.
- How they are treated by the other person, and the behavior change since they've been with them.
- More information given in schools. Eg. Self-help books, extracts available to pick up anonymously; videos etc given to everyone in classes/assembly **SHOULD NOT BE TRIGGERING**.
- Talk to them about the situation they are in.
- I don't know 11
- Talk about other ways in which people can be involved in an unhealthy relationship, other than just physical abuse.
- If they are told/aware of what the signs are.
- If they are informed of what the signs are before.
- People of the same age who have been through the same thing coming into school for PSE lessons, etc. Teenagers can relate to each other, not adults.
- Work shops in school
- Teaching via speakers in places like school to make people more aware.

- I don't know because you can't get through to them because they are 'in love' or think they are.
- Talking and LISTENING – no judgement.
- Using an obvious example of what an abusive relationship is and help compare real life to it.
- Videos and leaflets on abusive relationships
- NSPCC website
- To read about it, talk to family/friends, go to an organization for advice.
- Watch a programme from someone else's point of view
- Communication
- Educate people on different signs of abuse in a relationship, make people more aware.
- Being informed about the various signs that signify an abusive relationship (by teachers) in school/work/leaflets/videos.
- Being educated about what's healthy and what isn't, learn about it in health classes.
- Talks in schools/youth clubs
- A person of power sits down and talks to them one to one.
- The media should have more coverage on TEENAGE abuse within relationships, not just adult domestic abuse.
- If they are being harmed/mistreated, telling them that it is not normal within the relationship.
- Educating them with what an abusive relationship is and telling them that people can help or give them a way out of the relationship. Also, making people aware of the signs so that the person can associate with them and not be in denial.
- Way their partner acts around them
- If the person was made more aware of what an unhealthy relationship consists of.
- Raising awareness of what makes a healthy relationship v unhealthy. Eg. Campaigns like the 'justatampon' one.
- Highlight all problems to them – a friend or teacher/parent makes them aware.
- Show them a healthy relationship and compare it to an abusive one.
- If we were taught to look for the signs of abuse in school. (We currently aren't).
- Have classes in school to make them aware and websites/call centres for advice too.
- Talks at school/colleges that indicate the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Talking to people who have been in similar situations and understand what they are going through.
- Maybe show them a good relationship and see if they realize on their own.
- Unhappiness, frightened to disappoint the person or disagree with their opinions.
- Seeing an abusive relationship taking place, eg. On a TV show, then realizing that is happening to them.

- If someone asks you to do something you're not comfortable doing and persists in making you do it. (Doesn't have to be anything severe).
- Education in schools, posters around a town, information website, internet pages.
- Talk to them about it or give them a website address to look at to see what is defined as abuse, so they can see for themselves if speaking isn't helping.
- More awareness in the media and talks in schools.
- A second hand opinion. Someone who has no bias or prejudice to evaluate the situation.
- Seeing someone else in an abusive relationship and recognizing they're going through the same thing.
- If people are educated on people's behavior when involved in an abusive relationship.
- Talks given by parents and teachers about general relationships, not just the 'sexual' aspect of them, as well as talks on self worth and abuse. (age 17).
- I am not really aware of what help is available so don't want to share the wrong advice that can maybe have a negative impact.
- Seeing what a healthy relationship is like and then comparing it to their own. Become more aware of what is unhealthy.
- Explain and give examples to help them see the behavior in a different light instead of the person in the relationship seeing the behavior as normal because they 'love them'.
- By giving them more awareness such as lessons in schools teaching what the signs are of an unhealthy relationship and how you can get help.
- If they often get jealous and they mentally hurt you as well as physically.
- Maybe posters up around schools and public places listing what is healthy and what is not, like smoking signs/posters. So that people are aware.
- By making people more aware of what an abusive relationship can do to a person and then they can recognize the signs of an abusive relationship.
- Talks/presentations in school.
- Guidance from their parents, teachers, school counselor, doctor or police.
- Have a PSE lesson dedicated to the signs of abuse and how to tell someone/get help.
- More adverts on TV to show the signs. More awareness in schools/colleges.
- Tell them what a healthy relationship is and make them understand.
- Ask them to evaluate their relationship and make them ask themselves are they happy or not.
- Talking to others who may be in a similar situation and that other person may be able to see if they think that something is not right then they'd make that person aware of it.

- Make them ask themselves “am I being undermined? Am I truly happy?” Show them videos and past examples on abusive relationships. Intervention. Talk with people who have previously been abused in relationships.
- Changes in behavior, understanding how and why the relationship has changed.
- If you feel uncomfortable, afraid of your partner.
- Better education on what an abusive relationship is and what they could do about it.
- Education at school about what is acceptable/not acceptable and how to deal or what to do about it if you find yourself or somebody else in this situation.
- Tell them what an abusive relationship is.
- Research and talks/lectures by professionals.
- If they were spoken to by a member of staff about the signs of an unhealthy relationship or watched a video on it, not just about physical but emotional abuse in PSE so they could relate it to their own relationship.
- Regular lessons in school or assemblies discussing what is an unhealthy relationship.
- For them to become aware of how much of their partner’s behavior is abnormal. Allow information on abuse to become more informative and viral.
- If they feel unhappy most of the time. Also, if they tell someone about their relationship the other person could help identify any warning signs.
- How much effort each person puts in. eg. Not cancelling arrangements and seeing each other as equals.
- Sitting down with them and helping them to talk, making them realize that the relationship isn’t natural by using examples and supporting them.
- Tell them that it isn’t right, also to remind them of all the signs that their partner shows of being abusive and offer help.
- Having talks like this would help a lot.
- There should be more awareness for young people. Eg. In school to teach them from an earlier age what to look out for.
- Explain the signs to them, discuss (if they are in a relationship) the signs in their relationship.
- Learning about various signs, etc. beforehand through teaching inside and outside school (media). Learning about abuse in a relationship early on in school.
- Use examples of other relationships that you feel are healthy and compare, nicely, different aspects of them and how theirs is abusive.
- Being able to have them talk openly about anything and making them see that if you wouldn’t take similar abuse from a stranger, don’t take it from a partner.
- The way the person affected acts around their partner, if they feel tensed at the mention of him/her.
- The Internet – helplines.

- Awareness posters around schools/colleges.
- Looking it up.
- Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse, the way the person is being treated.
- To see healthy relationships around them as they would notice a difference in their relationship.
- Making people more aware in the first place via things like this questionnaire.
- Information given by school, for example via PSE lessons and leaflets being available.
- Regular information from schools about the signs of healthy vs unhealthy relationships. As a school, in my time, I've never had information about unhealthy relationships – what they entail, how to deal with them, etc.
- A list like the one on the previous page, telling us in detail the signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- More information given about subject by school.
- They are not happy as a whole, they always seem to be sad. They never come out with friends anymore because partner doesn't trust them.
- Tell them and help them recognize that their partner is wrong in what they're doing.

MALE

- Marks from being bitten
- An awareness lesson on healthy relationships to make people more aware of the effects and to learn the warning signs.
- If they have bruises and scars.
- Trust being misplaced; being forced into a situation you felt uncomfortable.
- An informative video shown in school.
- Don't know/not sure 14
- More information on healthy relationships to help people understand.
- If they feel unhappy about what is happening in their relationship.
- Reading information like on the front of this booklet (questionnaire).
- Awareness lesson and videos supplied to students.
- Maybe ask what the opposite person says but that might put them in danger so I would tell them straight if it's abusive or not.
- I think that it should be taught in schools as it currently is but they should stress the point that abuse is not rare. People should look for it if something feels 'off' about someone.
- School assembly on the subject
- If they feel hurt whether physically or psychologically, it could be a sign of abuse.
- Being unhappy and scared of partner
- PSE classes which look at causes of domestic abuse, etc. to help notice the worrying signs.

- If they feel uncomfortable tell them to look at things on the internet.
- If they are unhappy, if they have been hurt.
- Talking to people who are not biased. I.e. Not friends with you or your partner, in order to distinguish what is caring and what is controlling, etc.
- Websites, private consultations with someone their own age, as it can be intimidating speaking to someone older than themselves.
- Primarily being in more than 1 relationship as this allows for comparison and realization. Also, talking to friends about their relationship.
- The way their partner acts.
- By explaining to them what a healthy relationship consists of.
- Through school system – movie clips about abuse.
- You could tell them that you think they are being abused.
- Raising awareness about what is an abusive relationship and what isn't.
- If they aren't happy with things in the relationship.
- By telling them what is seen to be abusive and letting them know their situation is similar.
- Talking about it, sometimes it helps to hear things out loud rather than keeping it in your head.
- Ask a friend for input and advice, ask for opinion of relationship.
- Asking for advice from teachers or possibly using the Internet.
- Psychologist.
- Educational film - not cheesy.
- If they feel physically or mentally drained after spending time with the partner, or they feel guilty about everything they do for the partner, or if one of them is overbearing.
- Education in schools and advice from parents.
- Signs – physical abuse. Eg. Bruising, mental abuse – touchy, reacting differently around others.
- If they felt badly treated, if they had injuries, etc.
- To look out for the examples on the previous page and see if it occurs to them.
- PSE sessions in school on the issues with abusive relationships.
- It is for them to decide. If they are too stupid to realize then what is the point.
- Common sense.
- Awareness of expectations of healthy relationships from a young age.
- To inform and educate in teenage years, show the consequences of an unhealthy relationship and show a positive example so they would know the difference.
- Comparing other people's relationships to their own.
- More talks about relationships and maybe information packs provided to students by the school to help raise awareness and educate them.
- Comparing to other relationships, if they feel happy about their relationship, if both people in the relationship meet eye to eye.

- If the person in the relationship is unhappy or hurt (physically and/or mentally) then this is a clear sign of abuse. The person may be scared to say certain things.
- Information provided from videos or leaflets, etc.
- If they are not happy, if they feel forced to do things they don't want to.
- Being taught what to look out for.
- Things like this questionnaire. They're not going to completely know without being told.
- More awareness. Many people are unaware of the behavior shown during an unhealthy relationship.
- Education on what is healthy and what is unhealthy within a relationship, giving them a chatline or website to contact with advice.
- Previous awareness maybe from schools etc that may outline the signs of abuse in a relationship. Advertisements on TV will also expose signs of abuse in a relationship.
- Seeing it from third person view.
- Try to compare their current relationship to the ideal healthy relationship, trying to show where things don't match.
- Depression, physical and emotional abuse.
- If you see and speak to the person often, you will realize a change in mood and behavior because you already know how this person usually behaves.
- Television adverts, feature in PSE lessons.
- Check if the person is feeling unhappy or sad quite frequently.
- Speaking to a trusted adult for advice.
- Ask them subtly for signs of possessiveness by their partner and make them aware of the effects of that.
- If said person had a recent change in behavior or general change in attitude.
- Display examples of other such relationships and common abusive actions within such relationships in order to provide a comparison for people.
- If the person in the relationship was continuously upset or emotional due to the relationship or had physical damage. Eg. Bruises in some cases.
- Signs of sadness/depression, acting differently to usual.
- Talk to said person about their relationship or discuss what is meant by a healthy/unhealthy relationship.
- Speak to them and maybe refer them to someone else they could talk to.
- A change in a person's behavior, personality or even physical appearance.
- More information in school.
- Discuss with friends, research on internet, one to one sessions with couples.
- If the other partner is very controlling, passive aggressive and how protective they are of you.

- Often they believe that it is what's socially expected in a relationship as they have had no other examples. They would need to be told outright what's good and bad and allow them to use this information to gauge how healthy their relationship is.
- An intervention. Sit down and talk to the person who is being abused in the relationship.
- Comparison of their relationship to someone else's whose is healthier and better.
- Teaching in schools, ie. As a part of PSE.
- Physical/verbal abuse, regular unhappiness.
- Noticing a change in behavior.
- An intervention.
- If they are being controlled or any violence towards them.
- Not sure – try talking to them about the signs of good/bad relationship.
- More emphasis on education and teaching them what constitutes an unhealthy relationship in particular.
- Comparison to a supposedly healthy one.
- Have teaching in school at a youngish age so people know, as they grow up and go through relationships, what's right and wrong.

2. How often have you received information at school about healthy relationships (including sexuality and consent, the influence of pornography and social media, dealing with emotions and staying safe)?

	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Once every few years	Once in secondary school	Never
FEMALE	0	7 (7%)	39 (36%)	29 (28%)	7 (7%)	23 (22%)
MALE	0	17 (17%)	37 (36%)	25 (24%)	5 (5%)	19 (18%)

3. a) Why do you think someone might get into an unhealthy relationship?

	Don't recognize the warning signs	Think partner's behavior is normal	Think jealousy and possessiveness are 'romantic'	Other
FEMALE	77 (73%)	74 (70%)	54 (51%)	37 (35%)
MALE	70 (68%)	59 (57%)	39 (38%)	28 (27%)

Other:

FEMALE

- Having feelings for the person even if feelings aren't returned; scared to leave due to threats
- Scared of being alone; low self worth (think they deserve it); worried/concerned for their partner and wanting to help them.
- Don't want to face reality. Hear about it but never think it will happen to them.
- Behaviour of adults around them.
- Like the person too much.
- Know the signs but feel 'in love'/'strongly' with that partner and therefore stay in the relationship
- Feel afraid to leave the relationship 2
- Because they think they can change their behaviour.
- Persuaded to think it's okay by the partner.
- They love the person so they don't realize what they are doing to them is not normal.
- Just want the stability
- Primary socialization
- May believe they deserve no better.
- They don't care and need someone, anyone.
- Jealousy and possessiveness are romanticized by films and we think it's cute until you realize it's abusive.
- They are in love with them too much.
- Too scared to say no.
- They love them so overcome it.
- They stick with the 'love' they think they deserve.
- They 'love' them and don't want to leave.
- They may fear the other person's reaction if they weren't to be with them or peer pressure from friends.
- Scared to leave.
- They don't understand how to say "no" to starting signs and it becomes a habit. They become accustomed to abuse. They are desperate for somebody else's love because they don't know their own worth.
- Scared of saying no to them.
- Pressure.
- Because they blame the problem on health issues or the partner's past experiences and the effects it has on them.
- Feel pressured to accept their partner's aggression – it's 'their' fault.
- Possibly fear of being alone and never having a relationship again.
- They are unaware the relationship they are getting into is unhealthy and by the time they realize they have too much of an emotional connection to change.
- They 'love' them too much to leave them.
- The partner may be manipulative and make the person think it's not unhealthy.

- Like being in an unhealthy relationship.
- Their behavior wasn't abusive at the beginning.
- Want to feel a part of friendship groups by also having a boyfriend/girlfriend.
- Some people accept all the bad things because they don't believe they can get better and can't imagine someone else with their abusive partner.
- They think that person can change.
- All or nothing.

MALE

- Past memories may keep a couple together
- Too scared to do anything
- Too scared to do anything, attached to the abusive person
- Not being confident and saying what they need.
- Desperation/the belief they don't deserve a healthy relationship.
- Put up with it because they love them.
- Think they are the one in the wrong
- Pressure of being in a relationship
- Too much hassle to end the relationship.
- It develops over time without them realizing.
- Scared to leave.
- If it grows over time, abusive behavior might begin to be seen as normal and it's therefore dismissed.
- Desire other aspects of the relationship and sacrifice 'health'.
- If the relationship changes, meaning the people aren't the same with each other any more.
- Too infatuated with someone to realize that they aren't a nice person.
- Doesn't start off being unhealthy.
- Want to be in a relationship because all their friends are, so take anything.
- Might want to try and make the relationship work even though it is unhealthy.
- They need/want to be in a relationship
- Care for them.
- Are too immature to recognize what is healthy/unhealthy (not enough experience).
- They may believe they are 'in love' with the other person.
- Love the person too much to care.
- Often don't know what's normal in a relationship.
- Might just be so in love that it's blinding to them.
- Pressure on young people to be in a relationship outweighing the discomfort.
- Think they're being too sensitive.
- Because they fell in love.

- A person changes.

b) What do you think might be helpful in **preventing** abuse in teenage relationships?

FEMALE

- Educate teenagers about signs in school; educate what's right and wrong; support people who have been affected; invade if someone is being abused.
- Make sure others are aware they are in a relationship such as parents/friends.
- Teaching warning signs; building self-confidence by teaching what they deserve to be treated like.
- Having more information given in school, so that people can understand and see warning signs straight away.
- Don't know/not sure 7
- Awareness to both people in the relationship – boys and girls.
- Teach them that possessiveness is not ok and show them the consequences on the victim and the person delivering the abuse.
- Making teenagers aware of unhealthy relationships and the signs.
- Having talks in school about what is right and wrong to act in a relationship.
- More education of what exactly is abusive because a lot of people don't consider controlling what your girlfriend wears as abusive, etc.
- Lack of social media, PRIVACY in situation.
- Raising awareness of forms of abuse, giving plenty of opportunity to talk to someone.
- More help offered which isn't like counseling because it makes people nervous and feel abnormal.
- Explaining to both sexes how to behave and have mutual respect in a relationship.
- Support groups, awareness through lessons in form.
- Having more talks and assemblies about the subject.
- Advice from counselors
- Warning teenagers of the signs of abuse
- If they had someone to talk to other than family and friends (might judge them or not believe them) like if they had someone to ring on the phone who was anonymous.
- More awareness
- Give out information on abusive relationships in school so they know what is right from wrong.
- More awareness of the topic in schools to help show the signs and promotion of help services available.
- Shouldn't get into one at a young age.
- Be given more information about the signs of an unhealthy relationship.

- Educate people about what the difference is between a healthy relationship and an unhealthy relationship so that teenagers are more aware.
- More informative sessions about abuse in relationships in schools
- Consequences being taught to teens, taught how to treat others.
- Harsher punishments and better education.
- Making people more aware of what a healthy relationship is.
- Talking to young people about how to approach the situation rather than just telling them there are support lines.
- Educating the teenagers, making help much more accessible and available.
- Talk to someone about it.
- If they had someone to talk to about it.
- Raising awareness of the signs to look out for.
- More information on recognizing warning signs.
- Less sexism in the media, etc.
- Make sure they are aware of options. Eg. Being single is OK.
- If teachers weren't sly and spread rumours more people would be willing to seek help in school.
- If teenagers were taught about forms of abuse (emotional/physical) they may be prevented from acting in this way.
- Let people be aware of the warning signs, like classes in school, so they can get out of it.
- Providing more information to younger teenagers and making numbers/websites known.
- More education about healthy relationships.
- There is a lot on TV and media showing abuse as a good thing. Cut it down maybe.
- Information given on what abuse is, however large or small the case may be.
- Teachers and parents speaking about them more so teenagers are aware.
- Inform more people about what abuse in a relationship is as the people doing it (abusers) may not even know they're doing it. (age 16).
- Raising awareness of what counts as an abusive relationship.
- Education in schools/workplace, awareness information sheets.
- More talks about it in school, with videos and websites that go into greater detail for both boys and girls, so both are equally aware of what counts as abuse.
- Educate teenagers on how they should treat their partner by making it more obvious as to what is/isn't acceptable.
- Spotting the signs early.
- More talks and information about relationships from school as lots of teens are in relationships from ages of 15 (ish), clarification on an abusive relationship and what it involves.
- Teaching about the smaller aspects of abuse, not physical. Correct the education system and presentation of women – it does not matter what a woman wears, if she says no she is not asking for it.

- Education and more awareness of help available.
- Making sure they always have someone to talk to so they can see it's not normal and leave the relationship.
- Provide more talks in school about the law and consent.
- Giving teenagers more awareness of the importance of abusive relationships – providing more information within schools.
- If we have some lessons on how to act in a relationship, how to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship and how to solve it, so people our age are educated.
- Making them understand what a healthy relationship is and what it feels like so when they are in an unhealthy relationship, they will know.
- More information on what is an abusive relationship so people understand what is normal and what is not.
- Talks about what is right and wrong, more media coverage on how abuse is wrong. The media is sometimes promoting abuse and this should stop.
- Having a support unit in school where you text in (don't have to see the advisor face to face as it puts people off) and receive advice from fellow students (anonymous students).
- Teaching teenagers early in life the signs that their boyfriend/girlfriend could be abusive.
- I think it's natural as you need to have experience to learn.
- I think it should be taught in schools more often. They should focus on what are the warning signs and what can be done to get help.
- Having plenty of people who teens can talk to and letting them know that there is help out there and that they shouldn't feel scared to talk to other people.
- Teaching people to understand warning signs and how to say "no" to anything they are uncomfortable with. Teach teenagers how to love themselves and understand their worth. Teach them to withstand peer pressure and idea of having to follow norms such as having to be with someone even if they don't like them.
- Understanding of unhealthy relationship and signs of what is unhealthy.
- More awareness of unhealthy relationships raised in schools.
- More information on dealing with and recognizing an unhealthy relationship.
- Educated what is right and wrong in a relationship, and what abuse is.
- More education.
- Make sure teenagers know all the signs.
- More professional talks so teenagers understand what it is and can see possible warning signs. And more anonymous counseling sessions for people who want to know more.
- It's a huge issue which is not highlighted enough in school, by parents or in the media. People should be taught things like not letting you go out with your mates and a boy telling you what to wear is not normal, romantically jealous or caring is possessive and could lead onto other problems.
- Raising awareness.

- School talks on the subject. Tell someone confidentially. Allowing the teenager to feel as if they are in a comfortable environment rather than the one in their home/wherever the abuse is.
- More PSE lessons in school solely focused on healthy relationships, warning signs of abusive relationships and the importance of consent for sex.
- Encourage people not to rush into a relationship. “Slow and steady wins the race”. Also you have to ask the question, “do I want to be with the person for the rest of my life?”
- More awareness lessons about unhealthy relationships in classes, and compulsory one on one chats with a professional once a year. Co-operation not compulsory.
- Show teenagers what an abusive relationship looks like and also warn them of any signs.
- Realisation of what abuse is as many teenagers don't know.
- Raising awareness as some people think that it's 'normal'. More information in school/media.
- Raising awareness during the lower years of comprehensive school as people are getting into relationships at a very young age and don't realize that what their partner is doing is unhealthy. Eg. Excessive jealousy.
- Further learning about the subject, and teaching of warning signs and normal behavior.
- Understanding what abuse is. Many do not know all of the different aspects of what abuse is and how to spot and prevent it.
- Treating people how you want to be treated and being a respectable human.
- Educate them first on the signs and make sure they know it's okay to be single.
- Depends on the type of partner the person had gone for and their personality.
- Consequences of this enforced.
- Knowing about abuse.
- Talks in school and from parents.
- Teenagers need to learn what abuse is and whether they are being abused and report it.
- More guidance counselors in schools to give them someone to talk to.
- Making teenagers more aware of what is abuse and what is not. Some young people may assume it's normal and perhaps base their actions on what they see in magazines/on TV, etc. I think it can be prevented by showing the signs, etc. and ways to identify it on TV/in magazines.
- More awareness of it without the glamorous light of media relationships.
- More awareness of the signs of abuse and information about how to remove yourself from an abusive relationship.
- Providing us with more information about how to help someone who we believe is in an 'unhealthy relationship'. Possibly more on this in PSE lessons.

- More information given about what an unhealthy relationship is. Many teenagers think that their relationships are normal because they don't know any different. In reality their relationships are unhealthy.

MALE

- Counselling, respect others
- Making people more aware; more counselors in school that pupils can talk to; teaching pupils from a young age that abuse on women or men is wrong.
- Teaching communication skills in school more frequently.
- Information on healthy and unhealthy relationships from a young age.
- Improving the confidence of teenagers to tell someone.
- More awareness
- Don't know 11
- Awareness lessons to understand
- More awareness on what an unhealthy relationship looks like and just show them the harm.
- Stressing the point that very unhealthy and abusive relationships should never be tolerated by anyone.
- To wait till a more mature age to engage in a relationship
- Advice, help through apps or online
- Give more information about it to young people.
- A wider recognition of the word 'abuse' and more details about agencies or charities that can provide more help.
- More awareness in schools
- Educating teenagers more about abusive relationships and telling them where they can go for help.
- Adverts on TV and Internet sites and social media.
- Counselling, telling somebody
- More teaching for parents/carers.
- Educating them about healthy relationships
- Better support
- Teaching people how to prevent abuse and be a nice person in the relationship
- More education about what is a healthy relationship and what isn't.
- More information being presented about relationships.
- Show them what a unhealthy relationship is like. Eg signs like possessiveness.
- Not emotionally or physically hurting each other.
- Providing information in schools and home etc. from a young age as to what is the appropriate way to treat other people.
- More education.

- Knowing the warning signs.
- Educating people on the warning signs and being very open about how it could affect them.
- Making sure teens know what is wrong in an unhealthy relationship so they know when they see signs of it in their own.
- Helping both partners to realize the correct morals a healthy relationship may have and identify the difference between abuse and love.
- Making them more aware.
- Education.
- Better schooling from secondary schools.
- More information within schools.
- Making information on the subject more available.
- Education from parents and schools on the warning signs.
- Make teenagers understand what a healthy relationship is and signs of an abusive relationship. They might be in an abusive relationship themselves and not even know it.
- Don't get in a relationship with someone that is abusive or has previous convictions.
- To inform as many people as possible of the signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- Educating people on how to deal with or get out of abusive relationships.
- Encouraging teenagers to see the signs, realize it's wrong, and to move out of the relationship, rather than stay in it.
- Why intervene?
- Encouraging people to become more open in regard to their relationships and relationship difficulties.
- More awareness.
- Educating young men and women on what's right and what's wrong.
- Learn about the signs and consequences of abuse.
- More school organized talks and PSE lessons on these issues, rather than concentrating on major issues such as smoking and drugs all the time – these minor issues may be just as important!
- Online anonymous chat rooms with helpers (not just random people) and PSE lessons in school on warning signs.
- Educate teenagers about these signs. Health and sexual education classes fail to mention these types of things – abuse in relationships, etc.
- More education on the topic.
- Education on the subject.
- Educating people on what counts as abuse so they learn to recognize the warning signs.
- More awareness of the signs and behavior so people around the relationship can see and more anonymous support in place so people can ask for help.
- Education. Giving teenagers an organization to contact.
- Make them more aware of the signs of abuse. Websites that teenagers can look at, which highlight abusive relationships.
- Awareness and portraying clearly healthy and unhealthy relationships in the media.

- Get support to end the relationship as soon as possible.
- Making sure teenagers understand what makes a healthy relationship.
- I think that social media has a large impact on relationships, causing jealousy.
- Make the person in the relationship aware of their partner's behavior from a mutual perspective and give them confidence to believe that they are also in control of the relationship.
- More education on the matter.
- Train teachers in warning signs, obviously physical signs but also keep an eye on body language and other indicators of mental health. If rumours abound, perhaps investigate.
- Making teenagers aware early what an abusive relationship is like and how to deal with it early on. Making sure everyone knows relationships are voluntary and they are in control.
- There could be informative leaflets available at schools or posters on display.
- Making people aware sooner of how to spot an unhealthy relationship.
- Communication to teenagers to give them information on what they could do to prevent these types of relationships.
- Getting strong support from family and friends.
- More surveys like these.
- More education about what makes a healthy relationship.
- Assembly in school to show what is wrong, couple's parents meet up and discuss, people in relationships learning that they need to say enough is enough for their own sake.
- Awareness of problems and signs of an abusive relationship.
- More lessons to help people with an abusive mind-set.
- Making people more aware of abuse in relationships and have more places or people to go and see if you feel you are in one.
- The teaching of abusive pornography, so as to stop children and teenagers developing these theories as they grow older.
- Education of the signs of an unhealthy relationship and how it is important to avoid them (not just identify).
- Understanding the signs of an unhealthy relationship before it's too late.
- Educating people on warning signs.
- Online help organization.
- Giving talks in schools about such things. Eg. During PSE lessons.
- Educating people much more frequently. Being able to speak openly about it unashamed.
- Wider access to support.
- Information and help.
- Stop expecting everything to be perfect from the start so you know when the relationship is turning abusive.
- Support from school.
- Educating people on what's right and wrong from a young age and at least once a year. That way the information will stick with them as they get older.

4. a) Why do you think someone might be abusive towards their partner?

	Jealous	Can't control own emotions	Think it's normal	Lack self-confidence	Makes someone feel in control	Think they will lose respect if they are attentive and supportive
Female	80 (76%)	65 (62%)	56 (53%)	58 (55%)	84 (80%)	43 (41%)
Male	70 (68%)	68 (66%)	40 (39%)	37 (36%)	73 (71%)	35 (34%)

Other (not included in questionnaire):

FEMALE

- It is the way they saw their parents acting and don't know any different.

MALE

- Ignorance and a lack of morality and common decency.
-

b) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is **being abusive** towards their partner and wants to change?

FEMALE

- Have counseling sessions for abusive partner; go on breaks until the partner has sorted out their actions; communication within the relationship; evaluate if they're worth investing time.
- Get support/advice from someone you trust
- Counselling – why what they are doing is wrong, how they should and shouldn't act, underlying problems why they're doing it.
- Go to counseling or talk about their issues.
- Counselling
- Don't know 8

- Talk to them and reassure them. Also talk to the partner for them to understand why they act the way they do and how to overcome the problem.
- Show them the damage they are causing their partner and what they are being like.
- Go to classes on how they should act and what is acceptable.
- Therapy/counseling, support from friends.
- Show them – with examples – what they're actually doing to their partner.
- Make them aware of consequences
- Receiving support through things like counseling to make them aware of their actions and they can try to reduce these irrational thoughts.
- Counselling and advice within school.
- To take a step back from the relationship and focus on changing themselves.
- Take anger management as some abuse is anger related. Seek help either from partners, friends or companies associated with helping abusive people.
- Someone anonymous who they can text or ring
- Advice, counseling, etc.
- Guidance and support from anyone and everyone they are close to, counseling.
- Counselling to help figure out why this person exhibits this behavior and to help them come to terms with why they are having these feelings.
- Get out of the relationship
- Get advice from a specialist.
- One to one talks with an experienced worker in unhealthy relationships
- Support from peers and specialists, someone who is friendly and understanding.
- Rehab
- To be single and improve their own behaviour before committing to a relationship.
- Telling them what they are doing isn't normal – educate them.
- Go and see someone and talk about it.
- If they had some form of counseling and if they were made aware of the consequences.
- Support. Eg. Counseling, E-mentoring (online).
- Counselling
- Knowing that they aren't alone and are safe if they get out of the relationship
- Nothing. People don't change, just suppress actions.
- Support from school (and possibly therapist) to help them learn to deal with the problems that are causing them to act in this manner.
- Give them examples of a healthy relationship that doesn't include abuse – sexually, violently, mentally or emotionally.
- Counselling sessions/group talks. Someone to talk to so they can try and figure out why they are being abusive, and try to sort out the problems.
- Talking to people about changing and sessions which help them to change and educate them as to why it is wrong.

- Ultimatum – change or live alone, make them realize they are a monster.
- Support on how to control emotions, being told what types of abuse there are.
- Punish them. Take away their partner (don't let them see them) and then they will see how much they miss and love the other.
- Talk to someone about what abuse actually is. Break up with the person they're abusing if they're unhappy.
- Talk to someone neutral who can advise them on how to change their behavior.
- A friend to talk to, someone who has been through it themselves, counselor, Internet.
- Have them talk to someone about it (parent/professional) so they can address their problem and learn to deal with it.
- Find someone they can talk to and help them change, less peer pressure.
- Counselling, medical, psychological help.
- Realise that they will lose their partner eventually unless they stop abusing and therefore if they really cared, they would find a way to stop.
- Having a member of staff they can talk to in school. Being educated in how to deal with the situation.
- Talking to someone . ie a professional to help resolve this problem.
- Constant support from people who won't judge their actions. Need to realize it's not normal.
- Explain to them the possible dangers in the future that they could do to their partner, support them if they want to change their behavior.
- Create groups/counseling for people who can talk to someone about their abuse in a relationship to help gain advice about how they can improve.
- To go to anger management classes.
- Counselling or a mentor to talk to.
- To make them understand how their actions have affected another person and hurt them. They need to learn that their actions do have consequences and what they are doing is wrong.
- Counselling.
- Counselling/guidance fro professionals. Wouldn't suggest parents as the teenager had to learn abusive action from somewhere.
- Being able to get help. Eg. From adult/clinic.
- Classes/group gatherings of people suffering the same abusive issues and people who want to change. Group members would motivate each other to change.
- Help the person be separated.
- Maybe suggest counseling to them and look at why they are being abusive and what can stop it.
- Let them know about professionals that they can talk to and show them that maybe they shouldn't be in a relationship.
- Control their anger and emotions, understand that it is not okay to treat someone abusively, understand root of jealousy and controlling behavior (eg. Were they abused themselves/do people treat them badly?)

- Make them understand how they are treating the person and how it is affecting the partner – ways of coping with emotions/jealousy.
- Support from somebody who knows a lot about these issues.
- Counselling, talking about their problems with their partner.
- Counselling so that they can talk to someone about their emotions and how they could deal with them better.
- Support centres.
- Help from professionals.
- To speak to people who can try and understand the situation and help them to try and get to the root of the problem.
- Counselling, anger management.
- Seek professional help. They will understand and allow the abusive person the room to change into the person they desire. They feel they have no way of escaping their daily habits and so they vent their frustration on the person they love.
- Don't really know, perhaps some counseling sessions but someone who is being abusive may be reluctant to go to counseling.
- Find another way to express their emotions. Eg. through a sport. Film their behavior, as many people don't know what they are doing until they see it. Then play it back to them and see what they think.
- Help made available inside and outside school. External help on person's own time may make them feel more comfortable in admitting their emotions.
- Tell them how they feel and tell the partner if they don't change then they will leave them.
- Watching videos about the subject will really hit home and I think makes you realize what you are doing.
- Make them realize that what they are doing is wrong. Then show them the effect their actions have had on other people involved. After this, support provided they want to change.
- Counselling services.
- Understanding why they do what they do. Most of the time that I have seen problems occur due to lack of trust and unresolved issues and problems that aren't dealt with so they spill over into abusive behavior. Eg lack of trust and controlling.
- Leaving the relationship and taking time for themselves to change.
- Tell them to calm down and focus more on building their relationship. If it's not working there's no point being in it.
- Receive help from professionals such as certain helplines.
- Going to speak to a person they trust, confiding in them and seeking further advice.
- Counselling, having support from family and friends, taking a break from the relationship.
- Support and help.
- Advice on how to help them without making them feel in the wrong and them getting more angry.
- To think about how much they're hurting the one they 'love' and discover why they are doing it if their feelings are so strong towards the other person.

- They can research and make themselves aware of what is and what is not abusive in a relationship. They may 'blur' the two and may be unsure. If they ensure their knowledge of a clear difference then they can focus on positively changing their behavior.
- Having options available to speak to someone with the knowledge it will be confidential.
- Counselling/help/support from others around them. Eg. Parents, family, friends.
- Showing them what their actions can lead to. Having their partner tell them how they feel, and if there's still no sympathy, then the abusive partner should move on – alone.
- Learn more about what it means to be in a healthy relationship and learn the effects of their actions on their partner.
- Counselling but first recognizing that they are being abusive themselves. They need to get help.
- Start by learning that what they have done is wrong and the effects that they have done.

MALE

- Counselling 2
- Anger management course; one to one discussions; they need to feel that what they do is wrong.
- An intervention with partner and families.
- Being told what they are doing is wrong, as long as they understand it.
- Some sort of help from a specialist.
- Someone who is knowledgeable about this topic to talk to them and help them.
- It's difficult to change somebody or yourself. They would need to gain an understanding of their effects on those around them.
- Advise counseling or have a quiet and subtle word about what they are doing towards their partner.
- For them to think about the effect it's having on the person they're with.
- Help centre like a rehab; therapy and being told how to act properly because they probably are not sure how to act.
- Make them see what they are doing is bad and show them different people they can see about anger management.
- Extra support from school/family/medical help
- Reassurance that it was fine before.
- Let them know that what they are doing is wrong.
- See the doctor
- Counselling and mental health check/support

- Somewhere to go where they can talk about it and not feel judged so that they can fix the issue.
- Counselling sessions 2
- Ask someone for advice
- I don't know but help should be made available.
- Websites or online anonymous live chats/forums, private conversations with someone of own age.
- A sex doll, something to get anger out upon.
- Somebody to talk to. If they are having a problem, that person could sort it out.
- Support groups and easier access for people to talk to guidance counselors, programmes on TV about it.
- Attend classes on anger management.
- To be able to speak with a counsellor etc. or someone who can support them.
- For them to get help or to break up.
- Have sessions with any sort of advisor or professional to target their weaknesses and be taught the correct way of treating another person.
- Help in school or from friends.
- Therapy sessions or jail.
- Talking to them, helpline, police.
- Don't know/not sure 12
- Getting advice from someone who has got out of an abusive relationship.
- Gets advice from parent/friend, or end the relationship until they are able to control own emotions.
- Something that can help them control their feelings.
- Support group.
- Talking to someone about it.
- Someone to talk to about it.
- Help and advice from their partner, instead of splitting up, help them to stop being abusive.
- Leave them, and learn to control the emotions, see a doctor, seek help from a parent or guardian.
- To speak to someone who can help them and find out how to change what they are doing.
- Talking to people about what they do and any reasons for this behavior.
- Need to be told that it's okay to come forward and be guilty of this, and that fixing it now will help them later in life, in marriage, etc.
- To end the relationship.
- A slap from the partner they have been abusing, which in a way is abuse but it may be justified and may 'slap some sense into them'.
- An opportunity to talk to professional people about it.
- They need to see the damage first hand so they can change, they need to know it's not normal behavior.
- Someone to talk to.
- A personal, one to one talk with counselors.
- Take time apart from one another/see other people for a short time/help from a chatline.

- Maybe talk to a friend to help them out or a person in a non-abusive relationship.
- Sessions with a trained therapist who can discover the underlying causes of the abuse and make efforts to solve them.
- See someone who can help you.
- End the relationship and focus on improving themselves before entering another one.
- Explain to them the consequences of their actions.
- Show them the effects that their behavior has on the partner and maybe tell them of legal implications to scare them to stop.
- Help and counseling to help reinforce positive behavior. I also think it may be hard to change someone's behavior as they may think it is normal.
- Talking to an adult or friend.
- Provide opportunities where they can speak to someone in private to express their emotions and feelings.
- A help line for advice.
- Tell them to release their anger in another manner.
- Counselling, not being in a relationship until they sort themselves out.
- Reassurance that their partner is respectful of them.
- Education.
- Unsure – attempt to address the underlying cause for actions in the first case. However, the wide range of possible causes makes it difficult to describe exact method.
- To show how they are making their partner feel, how not to act with someone. How to deal with emotions of jealousy and disappointment.
- There should be official support available as people may not want to tell someone they know closely.
- Support them through it, make sure they feel confident talking to you so that you can persuade them to take further action.
- Someone to talk to and get information on how to change.
- Ads on TV.
- More opportunities to talk about their actions in school/other organisations.
- One to one discussions as to why they are abusive, relationship talks with couples as to what is wrong and what can be done.
- Having many more talks in school.
- Anger management and emotional control classes.
- Talk to someone who specializes in abusive relationships and also take an anger management course to calm and suppress their anger.
- People that are there for them whenever they need it. People that have a healthy relationship so that the comparison makes people think.
- Better advertising for adults who can help. Eg. Learning coaches. They should know who they can talk to with a sympathetic and education-based outlook.
- Try and speak calmly to their partner about how they feel. If partner continues, seek help from parents or relevant help.
- Removing them from contact and sending to a ward until they feel they are normal and not a psychopath.

- Don't know – maybe talk to them about what they are doing and how they're being abusive to their partner.
- To know they can get help and that it isn't about being judged on your past – it's about what you do going forward. Also, to not be afraid to ask for help.
- Have a break from the relationship so they can think about things.
- Seek help immediately, whether it be a doctor or a family member, just saying you want to change won't do anything. Look up organisations that can help.

5. a) If you felt you were in an unhealthy relationship, who would you be most likely to tell?

	Parent/carer	Teacher/other member of school staff	Friend	Other family member	Helping organisation	No one	Other
Female	40 (38%)	10 (10%)	84 (80%)	23 (22%)	12 (11%)	16 (15%)	2 (2%)
Male	50 (49%)	6 (6%)	82 (80%)	15 (15%)	4 (4%)	23 (22%)	5 (5%)

Comments:

FEMALE

- Teachers are sly (would tell no one).
- I would end it if I was with a partner. If not I would call child services.
- Close/best friend.

MALE

- I would break off the relationship immediately/would not be in such a relationship in the first place or allow for such a relationship.
- A friend who has no contact with other friends/partner.
- The person I'm in a relationship with.
- My pets. Eg. Dog.
- Sort it out myself.

b) If someone felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, why do you think they might not tell anyone/seek help?

	Feel afraid	Feel embarrassed	Feel guilty	Don't trust anyone to keep information confidential	Don't know where to get help	Not sure if partner's behavior is normal or not	Think it's own fault	Love/loyalty to partner	Worry about being judged/thought badly of
Female	71	72 (69%)	37	65 (62%)	58	55	68	65 (62%)	67 (64%)

	(68%)		(35%)		(55%)	(52%)	(65%)		
Male	72 (70%)	73 (71%)	34 (33%)	70 (68%)	43 (42%)	41 (40%)	43 (42%)	57 (55%)	61 (59%)

Other:

FEMALE

- Worried if you seek help, they will over-react or judge for being in the relationship in the first place.
- Don't trust teachers to keep confidentiality.
- Think they can change them.
- Think their partner may hurt them.

MALE

- Enjoy relationship
- Not realizing that they should get out of the relationship or do something about it.
- Ashamed they had let it happen.
- They may want to sort it without interference.

c) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is already **experiencing** abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Receive support from friends/family; encourage them to have a break from their partner; ensure abusive partner receives counseling sessions.
- To share it with someone you trust
- Individual help on how to get out of relationship; gain understanding of 'normal' and 'right' behavior.
- Try and get out of the relationship if abuse is very serious, or try and speak to someone about their problems.
- Increased awareness
- Realisation they aren't the only one and it's okay to share information and they won't be judged.
- Talk to someone and understand they don't deserve to be treated the way they are.
- Help them to get out of the relationship.
- To leave their relationship.
- Education in PSE, talks from people who have been through it.
- Having someone to talk to, not going near/seeing partner.
- Talk to responsible adult with experience in matter.
- Tell them to stop seeing that person because they deserve better.
- Someone to confide in and won't judge.
- Don't know/not sure 16
- Having someone to talk to
- Seek help from adult they trust

- Support
- Someone to speak to, somewhere to go.
- Having a friend to talk to or stay at to get out of the relationship.
- Organisations available and support in schools.
- Confidential help and advice, and a good friend.
- To know where and who to get help and advice from.
- Friendly advice and to speak to their partner about it with someone else in the room.
- Anonymous helplines to seek advice that doesn't involve police etc without consent
- Have someone to confide in who is not judgemental.
- Find someone who treats them properly.
- To tell someone or to get more information
- To get help/talk to someone
- Talk to someone
- If they had someone to talk to about it.
- Talking about it, being taught about it in school and knowing who they can go to.
- More information on recognizing signs, school advice in assemblies, etc.
- Giving them options for help
- Ejaculation, hobby such as gym.
- To reach out and find help. They may find this difficult but it is necessary for their safety.
- Give them advice and support on how to get out of it before it gets worse.
- An opportunity to chat with someone who can help, anonymously.
- GET OUT. Just leave. Don't look back!
- Awareness, to talk to someone.
- Show them the consequences of an abusive relationship. Eg. Jail.
- More information on how to get help.
- Someone to talk to.
- Give them ways of talking to someone (professional) who can help them to get stronger and realize that they can leave that person. Make them aware that it's not 'normal'.
- More support in/out of school. Be encouraged to end relationship if it doesn't improve.
- Advice, counseling, leaving the relationship if it doesn't stop, tell someone.
- Let someone know, get everything off your chest.
- Receiving information on how to protect themselves and places where they can talk freely.
- Support and numbers.
- To have questionnaires like this to find out more information without their name being used and more talks in schools that give advice and information on what to do in an abusive relationship. (age 16).
- For them to know that it is not healthy and they can and are able to get out of the situation.
- Talking to someone.

- To understand that they have a choice to end the relationship, that they also have control over their lives. They have the freedom to be in a healthy relationship.
- Professional advice on how to deal with the abuse, including education on how it's not normal.
- Seek help from a professional.
- Help from family/friends.
- Having someone to talk to and help them stop the abuse.
- Comforting them if they need help.
- To understand they have the power to leave and that they are worth more than how partner treats them.
- Telling someone about how they feel in a confidential way as it will help them express feelings without the fear of information that is personal spreading.
- Support from pastoral worker or something similar.
- Leaving relationship, talking to partner about how they feel, telling someone about it.
- Education on how to get out of the relationship safely.
- Knowledge of ways out
- Get out of the relationship.
- For teachers and parents to highlight problems like this so children can try to avoid them or talk more openly about them.
- Support available from all aspects of their life.
- Get help immediately, it can be of any form – tell a friend, just seek advice.
- I don't know – perhaps talk to a friend or call the domestic abuse helpline, or terminate the relationship.
- Someone in a higher authority knowing the signs and providing comfort and an opportunity to get help.
- Telling someone and seeking help.
- To talk to their parents, communication is key when dealing with an abusive relationship.
- The most important thing would be for them to tell someone. Then, more advice helplines/centres for them to chat to people and get help.
- Knowing what is abusive and where to get help. Some do not know they are in an unhealthy relationship or don't know what to do or who to see.
- Telling them it's not normal and they should leave immediately.
- To just leave the relationship. Chances are if he hits you now or doesn't respect you now, he won't in the future and could get abusive towards their children.
- Tell someone, show them love and care.
- Counselling, leaving the relationship, turning to family for help.
- Advice on how to stop and help the other person without upsetting them.
- Talk about it.
- To break up with the person.
- Being made more aware of how it can stop and of people to talk to.
- If someone else suspects, they should approach the person and try to talk it through.

- Know that the relationship they're in is unhealthy and there are ways for them to get help.
- Understand more about where to get help and also to build up confidence about confronting partner.
- For them to understand it's not healthy and for them to be informed.
- Help them identify the warning.

MALE

- Contact someone to help them. Eg. Police
- Talking about it with friends they can trust.
- Maybe explain that being with that person is wrong.
- Make them aware that there is help available.
- Useful support
- Separate from their partner and potentially move away.
- Tell someone
- Get help; talk to someone
- Either sort things out with a counsellor or ask them if it's worth being in the relationship.
- To get away from it. It can have permanent effects on the victims and it's not worth trying to change people.
- Telling family and making the right decisions to stop it.
- Give them information
- Call a helpline or see the doctor
- Leave abusive partner, potentially get restraining order if they won't stay away.
- Having an outlet where they can regularly talk about their feelings.
- Don't know 10
- Break up with partner, seek help
- Advice on how to break up without upsetting partner.
- Confidential legal support/advice.
- Counselling
- Help to realize it's abuse.
- Information on how to get help. Eg.adverts.
- Being able to talk to someone, having lessons on what to do.
- Support through family/organization.
- For them to break up.
- Help to cut off the relationship
- Someone trustworthy to talk to.
- Someone to help them.
- Police, the abusive partner's parents (may listen to their own parents better).
- Show them what the outcome could be if they stayed.
- That they know they can get help and that they're not alone.

- Speak to a friend or end the relationship.
- Making them aware of what is happening to them.
- Help from parents and specialists.
- Leave the relationship.
- Talking to someone who knows the situation.
- Find others who are in the same situation as them, they can share feelings.
- Leave the person who is abusing, tell a parent/teacher.
- To talk with someone who can help them.
- To talk to people they trust and try their best to get out of the relationship.
- Coming out of that relationship as soon as possible, and knowing that's the right thing for them.
- Differs for every person. Why would there be a single response to each individual.
- To leave said relationship immediately.
- Realising that it's not normal and they shouldn't be treated like that. Having support of family members and friends who they feel closest to.
- They need to be removed from the situation for their own health.
- To have someone to talk to and help the abuse stop.
- Possibly ask someone for some help.
- Showing that the person they're with has changed, meaning that they're with someone else.
- Leave the relationship or tell the abusive partner how you feel.
- Talking to people about it and breaking up with partner if possible.
- Tell them that if they can't sort it out, to get out of the relationship.
- Be offered people to contact anonymously (through a website or note) to ask for advice.
- To get them out of the relationship ASAP. Explain to them they aren't in the wrong and provide help and support.
- Talking to someone to get advice on what to do.
- Support. Give them the knowledge to differentiate between a healthy and unhealthy relationship.
- Someone to talk to.
- To end the relationship, get away from the abuser.
- Leaving and cutting off contact with partner until they mature and seek help.
- To talk to someone like a close friend.
- Support from people around them, advice from school.
- Be confident in seeking help from peers they can trust.
- The necessary support from family and friends.
- Support and an acknowledgement that it is difficult to understand other people's relationships. Attempt to understand their point of view and encourage them to seek healthy relationships.
- To get help and support to know they don't have to deal with it. They are young and can end it.
- More information leaflets/awareness of available support should be available.

- For them to talk to someone even if it is not a professional so they don't feel alone.
 - Someone to tell them what to do.
 - To contact some form of help and to get out of the relationship.
 - Contact organization against abuse/authorities depending on degree of abuse.
 - More opportunities to talk to people – school/other organisations.
 - One to one talks.
 - To be encouraged to talk to someone.
 - Therapists.
 - Talk to someone or just get out of the relationship.
 - Making them realize that they don't have to do this, they have a choice in the matter and that they deserve better, but they have to come to the realization by themselves.
 - Support from teachers/adults. Sessions where they can properly discuss their feelings/experiences.
 - Find confidential help, tell someone you trust.
 - Offering a way out.
 - Stand up for themselves and confront their partner.
 - Talk to someone online.
 - Talk to a family member about it or someone they trust.
 - To know that it is NOT normal, to be given a lot more education and help in school – not just helpful Childline numbers in planners.
 - Help from friends/family.
 - To leave the relationship 2
 - Check to see if their behavior is normal and if it's not tell someone. It's not worth staying silent, get help.
6. When an unhealthy relationship ends, what do you think might be helpful for someone to **move on** from the experience and feel better about themselves?

FEMALE

- Reassurance that they weren't worth it; support in the decision; when time comes to move on, help them look for a new relationship.
- Not be in a relationship for a while; be around good friends.
- Self-help groups – people in similar situation (might be helpful for some people); counseling to get over person; should be taught why they DO NOT deserve it; be surrounded by positive people and things.
- Have someone to talk to and make sure that they have support from people around them.
- Support from family and friends.
- Realise they can do better and have support from friends and family.
- Counselling and coming to terms with the way they have been treated.
- Boosting their confidence, find someone who treats them well.
- Make sure they don't let anyone control them.

- Therapy, distance from previous partner.
- Keeping busy, being around friends.
- Reinforce 'not their fault', educate friends on how to help as most people would seek help from friends but they are usually the least qualified to help in the matter.
- Counselling to make them see that they didn't deserve that.
- Surround themselves with people.
- Support from friends
- Focus on themselves
- Don't know/not sure 10
- For them to know that they are now safe.
- To talk about it and use it to create more awareness.
- Go on holiday to free the thoughts and relieve stress.
- Talking with counselors to help them come to terms with it.
- Supportive friend and school, a specific teacher to go to.
- Go out with friends, get some advice from specialists.
- Try something different like a new activity.
- Spend time with friends and stay away from anything that may remind them of their previous abusive partner.
- Gain confidence by support and finding new interests and what consists of a healthy relationship.
- Being introduced to others with similar experiences.
- To learn now to be single and independent.
- To know there are places to go and people to talk to.
- Spend time with family/friends, go away somewhere, enjoy spending time with different people.
- Talking about it.
- New hobbies, good friends.
- Helping them understand that everyone is different.
- Hobby. No support from teachers, they make you feel worthless.
- To be able to talk about the experience/abuse with a non-judgemental party (perhaps a therapist?).
- Go out with friends and family and block their ex from all social media and text messages so they get no contact with them at all and can forget about them.
- Counselling sessions, love from friends/family.
- Friends and family support.
- A holiday, to give a chance to remove themselves from the situation, to stop using social media.
- Completely detach themselves from the abuser.
- Counselling.
- To not see the person again, to be distracted.
- Talk to someone and hang out with friends.
- Spend more time with friends/family and worry less about relationships until they meet someone better.
- Not get into a relationship for a while, go on holiday with friends.
- Stay single for a while and realize their independence.

- Not get into any other relationships straight away, stay single and work on themselves. Once they are ready then they meet someone they can see what a healthy relationship is like.
- Support from different sources – friends/counselors.
- An organization/somewhere in school they can go to to gain help and advice on what they should do to move on.
- Go to classes/therapy to help them get over it.
- To be around the people who love and support them and for them to be told that it's not their fault.
- Counselling, help from friends/family, not jump into another relationship – take time for themselves to evaluate/overcome the abusive trauma.
- Distract self. Eg. Go on a short holiday, etc. Delete partner's number, facebook, etc.
- They would need their friends and family for emotional support and maybe professionals for help.
- Get someone else.
- Spend more time with family and friends and not be in a relationship for a while.
- Focus attention into activities. Ie. Giving back to community, education, pursuing career, etc.
- Talking to someone who understands what they have gone through and being helped by teachers in certain situations.
- Hang around with your friends.
- Start talking to new people.
- Counselling/therapy.
- To be shown that the relationship wasn't healthy and they deserve better.
- Support available from family, friends, teachers, counseling.
- They will always have the guilt of abusing their partner. Whatever they decide, the main point is – they should be able to forgive themselves first.
- Being around people who care for them, such as friends.
- Comforting and support.
- Surround themselves with friends and family.
- Time to heal, having time alone, balancing time well, definitely talk to their mum.
- Having their loved ones near and being able to move on to new things.
- For them to understand that it wasn't their fault and that their partner's behavior wasn't normal. Also that other people aren't like that so they shouldn't be afraid.
- Talking through with friends and family. Telling next partner about past experiences.
- Talk to a counselor/friend to understand why the person did what they did and what they can do in the future.
- Having friends around to keep them busy and to talk about it and help rebuild their confidence.
- For them to know it's not their fault and nothing would have come out of it anyway. They need to understand that this isn't a relationship anymore,

there's no common 'ship' that you're both sailing, it's more like being trapped.

- Support from their friends and family is very important. They should spend time with them and also give appropriate advice.
- Spend time with friends doing what they enjoy doing and try new things to meet new people.
- Vacation.
- Support from family and friends and try to tell the person it isn't their fault.
- Advice is needed.
- Spend more time with friends.
- Talk to people about experiences, take up new hobbies to be proactive. Understand what is abusive behavior to avoid future problems.
- Possibly counseling to help them deal with any confidence and trust issues they might have.
- Know that it isn't their fault – there are others out there to experience healthy relationships with.
- Delete everything, burn everything.
- Talk with other people who have had same experiences.
- Find someone who will treat them right.
- Teach them the signs of an unhealthy relationship.

MALE

- Not stay in contact with the other person anymore
- Time will show that they are better without them; it is a life lesson unless pain is involved.
- Spend time with friends.
- Friends will be very important in tough times.
- Spend time with friends to help forget.
- To take a while to cope with the past and to leave dating for a period.
- Spend time with good friends, maybe find a new, nicer partner.
- Not sure/don't know 17
- To tell them that there are better people and that someone will truly love you when they show you respect and compassion.
- Take their time and understand that they do not deserve to feel how they do. They feel the way they do due to manipulation.
- Help organisations, building confidence with family/friends
- Go out with friends, talking to another person.
- Spend time with friends and family, enjoy themselves.
- Sleep with someone more attractive.
- Have a good time with friends to try and forget.
- Find a new partner.
- Exercise, meet new people, learn that not everyone is like that.
- Confidence rehab with people who have been through the same thing.
- Break from relationships.
- Support from family

- Taking up a new hobby.
- More support from friends and family.
- Time with friends.
- To find someone who is loving and cares about them.
- Keep busy through sport/extra curricular activities.
- A fire to put all of their partner's stuff in, a night out, a friend.
- Therapy.
- Let go of old items that might remind them of it.
- Possibly counseling or support from family and friends.
- Someone being there for them to support them.
- Activities to make them feel happier – do things that they have never done before.
- Holiday, night out.
- Family and friends.
- Spend more time with friends.
- Move away from the area.
- Surround themselves with people they trust and that make them happy.
- A sense of security – some may be afraid of a spiteful partner – they need guidance to know what steps can be taken.
- It is irrelevant. If people want to be ungrateful and cry about it then good for them, but ultimately does not matter about dwelling on the past.
- Be with friends/family, eventually start dating new people.
- Professional help.
- Support, care, respect and family and friends.
- To be told what a normal relationship is like.
- Good friends.
- To stay with their friends and stay away from that abusive individual.
- Go out, spend lots of time with friends and don't rush into a new relationship, stay single for a while.
- Forget about/be more cautious around people you may want to date.
- Safety of mind that the ex-abuser won't go after them. Freedom would be helpful enough in improving feelings.
- Stay out of relationships for a while and just hang with their friends.
- General support.
- Tell them that relationships aren't everything and they can be happier without an unhealthy relationship.
- Ensuring there are positive relationships out there through an advice mentoring service.
- Spending more time with friends or family members.
- Someone else who has experienced the same.
- Talking to someone (friends and family) about it.
- Find a more suitable partner to experience normality.
- Surround themselves with friends and family. Don't do anything irrational because they may regret it.
- Take part in activities they enjoy to take their mind off things.
- Do things they enjoy.
- To try to remove themselves from the partner gradually.
- Different for everyone.

- Support and encouragement from family and friends and an acknowledgement that it is not their fault.
- To leave relationships for a while and just be with friends until they feel comfortable to get back into a relationship.
- They would need to feel safe and secure, so a treat like a small holiday may take their mind off it (if the situation was serious).
- Hang around with friends to get their mind off the other person, go out and meet new people or even go on holiday with family members.
- Something to take their mind off relationships like an activity that they could take part in.
- To spend more time with family and friends.
- Talk to someone.
- Someone to talk to.
- Block them out completely and have other teenagers of the opposite gender to talk to on the internet.
- To never talk to the opposite partner again.
- Self indulge. Relax, take a holiday, generally forget the relationship.
- Shut the abusive person out of their life, encourage them to find another medium of making them feel happy and loved. Eg. Put partner's face on a door and throw sponges with paint on at them.
- See friends, stay single and build up more confidence in the mean time.
- Not seeing their ex, allowing them to develop with no mention of their old life.
- Being out and spending quality time with friends and family (people who treat you as you deserve to be treated).
- Go for a run.
- Find a new friend.
- To talk to others who have experienced it, to go back 'out there' in order to realize that most people aren't like that ONE bad experience.
- Activities or new hobbies.
- Spending time with friends doing favourite activities.
- Meet as many new people as possible afterwards.
- Support from friends/family.
- See a psychologist or talk through your issues with someone.

Thesis questionnaire results

School B, year 12. Age 16/17 yrs

20 girls, 20 boys

Total 40

7. a) How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship? 1= not at all confident, 10 = very confident.

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents						1		9	9	1
Percentage (%) of respondents						5		45	45	5

MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents							3	6	9	2
Percentage (%) of respondents							15	30	45	10

d)

If you suspected that your friend was in an abusive relationship, how confident do you think you would feel about knowing the best way to help?

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents			1	1	2	4	5	6	1	
Percentage (%) of respondents			5	5	10	20	25	30	5	

MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents			2	2	2	4	3	3	3	1
Percentage (%) of respondents			10	10	10	20	15	15	15	5

c) What do you think could help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Things taught to us in school and websites.
- Being around other relationships other than theirs, allow them to see the differences (good or bad).
- Educational talks at school, promoting it on social media sites.
- Distancing from friends and family, stop doing hobbies, feel tied to a person.
- Talks in school teaching us the warning signs from a younger age. Also, regular talks on it.
- Talking to people and being shown that it isn't acceptable; having talks in school about what an unhealthy relationship involves.
- Don't know
- If they are completely happy in the relationship then they should be in a healthy relationship.
- Feelings – if they are always feeling down.
- Show them what to look out for and show them the signs to look for.
- I think that someone can understand when the other partner starts calling you names, starts to hit you, starts being dominant and doesn't allow you to do anything.
- Presentations, interviews with people with first hand past experience, video clips of different types of situations.
- Probably evaluate their problems or what that someone finds uncomfortable and then compare it to examples of an unhealthy relationship.
- I don't know – more needs to be promoted on unhealthy relationships so that more people understand what can be considered wrong, or what the first signs may be.
- Talks in school to make people aware what is not okay in a relationship and what are signs of abuse.

- Showing them articles on abuse – the signs – see if they recognize any behaviours.
- Guest speakers could go into schools to help identify signs of abusive nature.
- To be told at an earlier age the signs and warnings of abuse in a relationship
- If a speaker comes in and makes the person aware of the things to look out for – school environment. For all ages, posters at bus stops listing signals to be aware of.
- Show them websites which tell you the different signs, have talks in school (like this one).

MALE

- To have more talks or lessons regarding healthy relationships. This year is the first year we have begun to talk about abuse in depth.
- Speaking to a friend who you trust.
- Sessions to discuss this at an early age.
- PSE lessons in school
- Don't know 3
- Talk to them, help them by advising them to leave the abusive partner
- Signs include them being aggressive towards each other, involuntary forcing and not giving them a choice; if they feel they are being controlled too much.
- They are not happy and don't get much time alone or with friends.
- Keep on to them explaining they could be in an unhealthy relationship until they notice the signs for themselves.
- To be taught the signs of an unhealthy relationship at school.
- Information about relationships and talks in school etc.
- Understanding that abuse in relationships comes in many different forms such as financial and emotional.
- Looking at their relationship from someone else's point of view. See the amount of control enforced on the individual.
- Presentations given in school, leaflets that inform people about healthy relationships.
- Talks and lessons
- If they have no control or say in decisions in the relationship. If they feel threatened or insecure around their partner.
- Anywhere they can find access to unbiased information on what makes healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Take a step back and evaluate the relationship on their own to decide how they feel personally, be told the signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- Having a discussion with an experienced person who deals with various situations. This will allow the person to have a clear understanding of the signs of abuse in a relationship.

- Talk to them face to face, tell them/explain to them how their relationship is unhealthy, compare it to other relationships, show there must be equal power, ensure they are safe.

8. How often have you received information at school about healthy relationships (including sexuality and consent, the influence of pornography and social media, dealing with emotions and staying safe)?

	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Once every few years	Once in secondary school	Never
FEMALE		7 (35%)	12 (60%)		1 (5%)	
MALE		4 (20%)	13 (65%)	2 (10%)		1 (5%)

9. a) Why do you think someone might get into an unhealthy relationship?

	Don't recognize the warning signs	Think partner's behavior is normal	Think jealousy and possessiveness are 'romantic'	Other
FEMALE	16 (80%)	14 (70%)	11 (55%)	5 (25%)
MALE	14 (70%)	16 (80%)	11 (55%)	5 (25%)

Other

FEMALE

- Cutting off all ties with anyone apart from their partner.
- They feel trapped
- Want to be with someone.
- Relying on them for money.
- Lonely, don't think they can get/deserve anything else.

MALE

- They are forced into it by their partner 2
- They think the good equals out the bad.
- Might not be unhealthy at first but then they get attached to the person.
- If their partner becomes emotionally changed by an event or struggle and lashes out at the partner.
- Too young to understand what relationships are about.

b) What do you think might be helpful in **preventing** abuse in teenage relationships?

FEMALE

- Being taught the warning signs properly and being taught what a healthy relationship is so they can refer back to what is right and wrong.
- Regular talks/lessons on domestic abuse etc. from as young age as possible. More ensurement that the home where children are growing up is suitable, for instance if abuse was happening in a home to a child's parent, the child growing up is likely to think that it's normal behaviour. (16 yrs)
- More educational talks at school, helping people become more aware of unhealthy relationships – promoting it on social media.
- Providing better education of what is acceptable in relationships.
- Having more talks in school explaining what a healthy relationship is and what an unhealthy relationship is.
- Talks to make teenagers more aware
- Recognising the warning signs
- More lessons focused on this subject in schools and give more help to people about telling people about their relationship.
- More information to teenagers about the warning signs.
- To be more aware about situations by having more talks within school.
- Having regular talks in schools/colleges about the matter and showing ways in which people can get help.
- They might talk to friends or teachers and ask for help.
- Educational presentations, talks from parents and staff.
- Being told all information from 16 onward to educate potential abusers on how they should/should not act and to make clear the signs to potential victims so they can escape before it's too late.
- Telling someone about the abuse – parent/staff, educate pupils more in school on the topic.
- I think there is enough information provided to stop people from being abusive in relationships through TV adverts/Internet, etc. However, more could be done to educate how to deal with unhealthy relationships.
- Make teenagers more aware of the warning signs so they can see the type of relationship they are getting into.
- Awareness in schools/colleges. Make people more confident in recognizing signs and cutting off toxic people. Show examples of both healthy and unhealthy relationships to show the difference.
- People helping teenagers to understand the signs of domestic abuse and understanding what is healthy and what isn't, not getting involved with someone who is controlling.
- Giving information in schools and having a school counsellor to talk to when needed.

- Regular speakers/lessons scheduled in timetables to allow the teenagers to know the signs to look out for if they are the victim. Also to teach us how to treat others when in a relationship.
- Give more talks about healthy relationships in younger years to make people realize at a younger age the signs of an abusive relationship, so they can get out before it's too late.

MALE

- To ensure pupils feel more at ease about telling teachers rather than worrying that the school will contact parents.
- Discuss this topic at a younger age as at 16-17 many people have already experienced an abusive relationship. (17 yrs)
- PSE lessons in school
- Having talks in school about unhealthy relationships but also so they know the signs of an unhealthy relationship so it can be prevented.
- You can't prevent it. I feel like it is not going to stop due to people thinking that the good equals out the bad. They feel unsafe in the relationship.
- More educational talks in school; teaching younger year groups
- Hold talks for parents as well. This will motivate them to be aware and be supportive.
- Awareness about unhealthy relationships and how to get help.
- Make teenagers more aware.
- Harsher punishments if it occurs
- Guidance about healthy relationships and more places available for people to go to.
- Educating teens on the warning signs and who to go to for help.
- Regular lessons about abuse so people know the warning signs. Lots of support from family and friends.
- Better understanding of what is normal in a healthy relationship. Other people could be told to look out for 'warning signs' which could mean that their friend could be in an abusive relationship.
- Making more teenagers realize that the relationship you have now isn't the be all and end all of your life. In a year or two's time it won't matter so showing that it doesn't need to be an intense relationship at this age. Just someone you can be with and have fun.
- Stopping financial arguments by teaching them to budget money. Teaching teenagers to be able to notice the signs of a developing unhealthy relationship such as possessiveness or control.
- Telling people you trust and who can help you, understanding what constitutes abuse in a relationship.
- Promote what is acceptable in a relationship and not, educate people so they know what is right.
- Become mentally strong and not be afraid of anything to overcome your fears.

- More talks on healthy relationships, people teaching how to have a healthy relationship, plenty of people you can talk to about your relationship, ensuring power is equal.

10.a) Why do you think someone might be abusive towards their partner?

	Jealous	Can't control own emotions	Think it's normal	Lack self-confidence	Makes someone feel in control	Think they will lose respect if they are attentive and supportive
Female	15 (75%)	13 (65%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	16 (80%)	7 (35%)
Male	16 (80%)	13 (65%)	11 (55%)	10 (50%)	17 (85%)	9 (45%)

b) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is being abusive towards their partner and wants to change?

FEMALE

- Having help and support, Being taught the do's and don'ts so they can change their attitudes towards their partner.
- Counselling, being around other people/relationships, talks in school to make them or friends aware of the circumstances.
- Counselling – seeking advice
- To realize they are being abusive and that their behaviour is not normal.
- Give support to change.
- Get help on their own behaviour, have talks on how to be in a healthy relationship.
- Counselling, getting to the bottom of the reason why people are being abusive.
- Offer counseling or meetings with other people who have the same issue.
- Help and support offered to them if they are willing to make a genuine change.
- Counselling on a regular basis, medication.
- Regular counseling sessions for that person to discuss why they feel the way they do.
- If someone wants to change they may ask for help from someone they know or someone who may be close to them.
- Provide confidential counselling from help organisations to remove them from the environment as soon as possible. Give comfort and

reassurance that they are not alone. Give them options of different routes out of the relationship.

- Be more aware of what is healthy/unhealthy in a relationship. Be made aware of the different organisations they can go to for help.
- They should contact organisations that are able to provide the best solutions for their situations as soon as possible before further damage is done.
- Talk to someone who can help them control their emotions and anger.
- Show them extreme examples to shock them. Get them a counsellor, teach them what's right and wrong.
- Counselling and having the realization that the way they are treating their partner is wrong, try and change their anger into a calm mindset so they can talk to their partner without any arguments arising.
- They need to be informed of the consequences that being abusive towards their partner will cause and provide emotional support and advice.
- Counselling.
- Make them realize how they are hurting their loved one by talking to them and telling them how they feel.

MALE

- To talk to someone about their behaviour. Go to anger management.
- Support from friends/family and not being criticized as this would make them worse.
- PSE lessons in school to show them how to make a change.
- Speak to the partner and ask how they feel and go for counseling and help and maybe talk to others for help.
- Anger management classes, seeing a therapist
- Anger management as almost all abuse comes from anger. They must also be taught that a relationship is two ways and can't be too controlling or demanding. This can lead to arguments and fights.
- Counselling sessions.
- Talk to a professional about it and get out of that relationship
- Allow them to be counseled to deal with the problems they are facing, to prevent further abusive behaviour.
- To talk to professionals in this subject area about their problem.
- People to identify it and talk to them or just report it.
- Don't know
- Ability to go and talk to someone who can help them.
- Although there are people to talk to in school, people may want to speak to someone who they have never met before and will never see again so that they will be treated in strict confidentiality.
- Talking to someone who has been through it or talking to their partner about how it makes them feel.
- Allow to look at the reasons behind the abuse in the relationship and evaluate why it started. From there you could help them sort out the problem and slowly remove the abuse.

- Listen to talks and gain understanding of what a healthy relationship is, talk to their partner about the abuse they have been giving in order to correct the behaviour.
- Having someone to talk to about what is actually acceptable in a relationship and what is not, and what the consequences of their behaviour could be (hurt their partner seriously/have relationship ended).
- For them to seek special help to stop them before it gets more violent. Seek someone who was abusive and has actually had help from someone. This will enable the person to have a better understanding.
- Take a break from the relationship, apologise for what you have done and understand what you have done, ensure it doesn't happen again. Have someone you can safely talk to about it without being in trouble.

11. a) If you felt you were in an unhealthy relationship, who would you be most likely to tell?

	Parent/carers	Teacher/other member of school staff	Friend	Other family member	Helping organisation	No one	Other
Female	10 (50%)	3 (15%)	12 (60%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
Male	10 (50%)	0 (0%)	14 (70%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)

Other

FEMALE

* Counsellor

MALE

* Someone you trust the most (but a lot don't tell anyone).

b) If someone felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, why do you think they might not tell anyone/seek help?

	Feel afraid	Feel embarrassed	Feel guilty	Don't trust anyone to keep information confidential	Don't know where to get help	Not sure if partner's behaviour is normal or not	Think it's own fault	Love/loyalty to partner	Worry about being judged/though t badly of
Female	15 (75%)	11 (55%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	13 (65%)	10 (50%)	13 (65%)	
Male	18 (90%)	12 (60%)	6 (30%)	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	12 (60%)	10 (50%)	

Other

FEMALE

- Worried partner will do something.
- Afraid of what they might say about it/them and they may tell them to leave the relationship and they may not want to be lonely.

MALE

- They don't want to lose their partner.
- Don't know they are in an unhealthy relationship

e) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is already **experiencing** abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Help and guidance off school/friends/family, etc.
- Surround self by people that treat them correctly, may learn to trust friend or recognize that relationship isn't normal.
- They should talk to an organization to get help and advice / talk to friends and family.
- Letting them know they are in an abusive relationship.
- Helping them have the strength to leave an unhealthy relationship.
- Knowing where to seek help from. Knowing there is always support available if they need it.
- Letting them know that they aren't alone and can get help, that they'll be safe, that they haven't done anything wrong and that it isn't their fault.
- Offering confidential meetings with members of staff in schools
- Offering more lessons so they have the chance to talk about it with someone.
- For someone to clearly highlight the warning signs to them, which may enable them to identify that their relationship is unhealthy.
- They should seek help from an organization
- Finding help for themselves and learning how to get out of that relationship. Counselling would also help.
- Talk to someone they are close with
- Counselling for comfort and support, give them help lines and transfer to health organisations, presentations to make them aware of the signs.
- Get confidential help from someone, end the relationship.
- They need to understand that what is happening is wrong. They should also know that there are others/organisations out there which can help them make the best decisions.
- Talk to someone who they feel they can trust and who can help them. They need to understand that what they have experienced isn't normal and isn't their fault.
- Have young counselors own age – more comfortable for teenagers. Reassure them it's not their fault. Give them confidence. Raising awareness helps – friends they tell can help more with the information they have.
- To speak to someone they can confide in and can trust and discuss the options of what to do/go with the abusive partner.
- Give them advice on how to leave the relationship calmly or help them to overcome the abuse with counseling.
- Regular talks in form/lessons as going to school is essential.

- Speaking to someone whom they trust and telling them they deserve better, it's not normal, it's not their fault and they can leave, as it would be for the better. They need to know someone is there to help/listen and someone who's trustworthy.

MALE

- For close friends to offer as much support as possible.
- Confidential support or discussing what to do with a friend.
- For them to leave the relationship.
- To have friends and family who can support the person, or go to a help agency.
- Seeking help
- I think they should be shown that being in an abusive relationship is not a good thing and just tell their partner, if they really loved them, they would agree with their decision to leave.
- A strong support group and close friends, somebody who is able to advise them, understanding family members.
- Talking to a professional and getting advice or help
- Make them aware that their relationship is abusive and help them recognize the signs.
- Support made available such as in school, there could be professionals in school to deal with the issues.
- Get help and tell people that they can trust
- To feel that she can come and talk to someone and the information will be confidential.
- 24/7 support.
- The counselors and services that are already available (confidential and anonymous).
- Being shown that it shouldn't be like that and it's not their fault if they want to get out of it.
- Help them increase their self confidence. This can be done by talking to them about the situation without thinking they will talk to you because of self confidence.
- Seek help and understanding of healthy relationships.
- Find out how and where to get help.
- Seek help and try to overcome the situation.
- Knowing there is someone with lots of experience and advice to talk to, understanding what is wrong with your/someone's relationship.

12. When an unhealthy relationship ends, what do you think might be helpful for someone to move on from the experience and feel better about themselves?

FEMALE

- To have support from friends/family and also outside people as they know less about the person than friends and family so can sometimes be more likely to help.
- Make friends/find a partner that treats them right. Keep busy by getting a job or going out.
- They could go to social events and enjoy with their friends
- Counselling – help them to move on and gain confidence.
- Getting support and knowing they are better off now.
- Having someone to talk to privately.
- Support from people and counseling, being cared for, making sure they know it's not their fault.
- Joining a group of people that have had the same experiences and have got out of the relationship.
- To have help from someone in order to take their mind off it. For example, they could spend more time with family and friends.
- To spend time with friends and family going out, doing fun activities, being reassured.
- Spending more time with friends and counseling for that person.
- Don't know
- Surround with family members and friends for comfort and feeling of safety, and information to prevent it happening in the future.
- Hang out with friends, make sure their next partner doesn't have similar signs of abuse.
- They need to find a hobby which they enjoy to take their mind off it. They should go out with friends or family and enjoy their life.
- Be around friends and family, people who love and make you feel better. This would slowly help them gain confidence in themselves again.
- Go out with friends, do things that make you happy. Be productive, dress up and go out for a meal to gain confidence. When they're ready, perhaps go on a date with someone normal. Also, cut off all contact with ex-partner, they will probably still try and interfere in your life after it's over.
- Regain self-confidence and understand that not all people abuse control and power in a relationship.
- They need to be given emotional support and told coping strategies, they should seek out activities to take their mind off the situation.
- Surround themselves with friends, ensure they are safe – away from ex. Time off social media.
- Either stay out of a relationship for a while until they get their confidence back or if they get in a relationship afterwards, to take it really slow and make sure they appreciate and respect them, and treat them well.

MALE

- Lots of support from all who's around that person. Always letting them know that you're there to help. If they want to go to counseling and want you to go, you could go for support.

- Move onto another relationship or be active with friends/family. If left alone, they may start to feel worse about themselves.
- Counselling and mindfulness techniques.
- Go out and meet new, better people.
- Don't know 2
- Taking some 'alone' time, recovering from the relationship, becoming themselves again and hopefully move on.
- From something so powerful, it's very difficult to move on. There is not much to do other than comfort them. If they attend classes, it's always in their head and will haunt them for a long time. (17 yrs).
- Social events and activities with people who can help them overcome their bad experience.
- Not be in a relationship for a while and do things that make you happy.
- Socialise with non-abusive people to experience how comforting they can be.
- A close talk with friends.
- Talk to other people about it and if it's very bad, get counseling.
- To not get back into another relationship for a while and be with friends.
- Counselling, supportive friends/family.
- Don't go straight into another relationship. Relax and enjoy life and wait for the right person.
- Allow themselves to let go and don't generalize relationships based on the abuse in the previous relationship.
- Spend time away from the previous partner, seek any closure that is needed.
- Find out about the warning signs.
- Try and forget about the past and think about the future in a positive manner.

Confidence, firm friends and family, knowing there are people to talk

Thesis questionnaire results, School C

Year 10. Age 14/15 yrs

21 girls, 16 boys

Total 37

13. a) How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship? 1= not at all confident, 10 = very confident.

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents			1	2			4	6	5	3
Percentage (%) of respondents			4	10			19	29	24	14

MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents			1			3	6	4		2
Percentage (%) of respondents			6			18	38	25		13

- f) If you suspected that your friend was in an abusive relationship, how confident do you think you would feel about knowing the best way to help?

FEMALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents			2	1	5	1	3	4	3	2
Percentage (%) of respondents			9	5	24	5	14	19	14	9

MALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of respondents	1				2	3	6	3	1	
Percentage (%) of respondents	6				13	18	38	18	6	

c) What do you think could help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Bruise, emotions
- Don't know 4
- More awareness in schools. Eg. sessions to explain what is/isn't normal.
- Try talking to them about their relationship 2
- If you find yourself googling 'what is a abusive relationship?'
- Show them information about abuse in relationships.
- Tell them directly the behaviour is not healthy and support them throughout it.
- Cuts or bruises, emotional all the time, scared to tell anyone.
- Telling them the signs of abuse in a relationship so they can review their situation and decide what to do about it if they find out the relationship they are in is abusive.
- They might be possessive
- Show things off the internet 2
- They could try to think about whether their relationship makes them feel happy, safe, trusted or not. If not, there is a problem with the relationship.
- Being taught as a class to show what's right and wrong.
- Giving them information on what an unhealthy relationship involves.
- For someone to point it out to them as it happens or show an example so that they can see it.
- Talk about their relationship to realize the signs

MALE

- Don't know 3
- If they're unhappy
- More publicity shown for an abusive relationship through TV, presentations in schools.
- Chat with them and do a survey
- Websites (Childline, etc.)
- Support websites
- If they're being abused eg. being punched, slapped, etc. If they've got cuts or bruises. If they are being verbally abused.
- Counselling
- Maybe you could sit down with them and talk about things.

- Make them more aware
- Hidden cameras
- They could attend a group such as this one. Talk to a teacher/family member.
- If someone tells them.
- Sit down and talk about what's right and wrong

14. a) Why do you think someone might get into an unhealthy relationship?

	Don't recognize the warning signs	Think partner's behavior is normal	Think jealousy and possessiveness are 'romantic'	Other
FEMALE	19 (90%)	14 (67%)	15 (71%)	7 (33%)
MALE	11 (69%)	6 (29%)	10 (14%)	

Other

FEMALE

- Because they don't have a choice
- Act differently before you get together.
- Afraid they're not good enough to deserve better
- They might love him/her but feelings aren't mutual.
- They might not want to be in a 'normal' relationship. For instance, they might want to 'change' the other person.
- Too scared to be alone
- They put up with stuff because they don't want to lose someone.

MALE

- * They might not really like the person.

b) What do you think might be helpful in **preventing** abuse in teenage relationships?

FEMALE

- Don't know 7
- Abuse awareness, someone to talk to

- Support sessions at school.
- Schools and parents should do more to actually teach teenagers what is and what isn't right.
- Have more classes in school on what makes them healthy and at young ages to prevent it ever happening.
- Talking to parents
- Making sure they know the signs of abuse in teenage relationships. Explain to them in school.
- Don't have a relationship.
- Advertise what is an unhealthy relationship more and show some examples.
- School counseling
- Have their friends tell them what's happening and that they care about them.
- Don't be with them 24/7
- Abuse is common in relationships with people who come from an abusive home, have low self-confidence, tend to hide their true feelings. These are the people that should be targeted for spreading awareness, as they are more likely to be abused.
- Being told as a large group as people feel more comfortable.
- Generalising it. Schools make out that stuff like this doesn't happen when it does. Schools should stop assuming it doesn't happen because we are young. (14 years)
- Not to speak to the person as if it's something serious because it makes them nervous and they won't tell the truth.
- Showing them that it is not normal

MALE

- Making sure and understanding your partner.
- Don't know 2
- Telling someone
- If teenagers are shown what a abusive relationship is.
- Advice from adults
- Don't have a relationship until older.
- Giving them an awareness on what is an abusive relationship
- Study the person. Know the person's behaviour.
- Talking to someone who can help
- Don't get into a relationship when you're a teenager
- Making them more aware of the warning signs. Having assemblies or meetings more often in school on this topic.
- Giving them awareness.
- For everyone to be more aware of what's right and wrong

15.a) Why do you think someone might be abusive towards their partner?

	Jealous	Can't control own emotions	Think it's normal	Lack self-confidence	Makes someone feel in control	Think they will lose respect if they are attentive and supportive
Female	17 (81%)	19 (90%)	9 (43%)	9 (43%)	15 (71%)	11(52%)
Male	10 (63%)	9 (56%)	6 (38%)	3 (19%)	13 (81%)	9 (56%)

b) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is being abusive towards their partner and wants to change?

FEMALE

- Therapy 5
- Counselling 5
- Someone to talk to 2
- Abuse awareness.
- Try talking to someone about it and asking for help
- Don't know 2
- Tell them they need to respect their partner and that being abusive in any way is unacceptable and should not be the answer.
- Counselling, help from parents, teachers, friends and a professional.
- Talk to your partner or leave the relationship
- Find a hobby to control their emotion
- Anger management, relationship therapy and counseling. Often people who are abusive have internal issues (control issues, trust issues, deep insecurities). They may have been abused themselves.
- Talk to someone and admit they don't think it's normal.
- They should help themselves, if they know they are doing wrong and they don't stop they don't deserve any help.
- They need to be shown that what they are doing is wrong and how it makes their partner feel.
- Talk to them and tell them it's not normal. Delete them off any social media, get over them and wait until they grow up and show that they will be a loving partner.

MALE

- To spot it and stop being with them.
- Don't know 4
- They are told how to stop.
- Stop being abusive and blip off.
- Blip off (leave)

- Counselling 6
- Talk to someone 2
- Ask for help from someone
- Anger management
- Tell police and break up with the other person

16.a) If you felt you were in an unhealthy relationship, who would you be most likely to tell?

	Parent/carer	Teacher/other member of school staff	Friend	Other family member	Helping organisation	No one	Other
Female	8 (38%)	4 (19%)	16 (76%)	7 (33%)	2 (10%)	6 (29%)	2 (10%)
Male	9 (56%)	5 (31%)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)

Other

****Observation: Those who gave more mature answers more likely to tell no one. Perhaps those who said would tell a parent/teacher had no experience – still young, more dependent on parental figures.

FEMALE

- Pets
- A trusted person (not a friend)

MALE

* (Not me) but people may talk to their pet.

b) If someone felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, why do you think they might not tell anyone/seek help?

	Feel afraid	Feel embarrassed	Feel guilty	Don't trust anyone to keep information confidential	Don't know where to get help	Not sure if partner's behavior is normal or not	Think it's own fault	Love/loyalty to partner	Worry about being judged/thought badly of
Female	17(81%)	11 (52%)	8 (38%)	16 (76%)	10 (48%)	12 (57%)	13 (62%)	10 (48%)	15 (71%)
Male	14	10	4	13	8	5	11	9	12

Other

FEMALE

- Think they can change their partner
- Think that it's just a phase or caused by stress.
- Worried about people's opinions

MALE

g) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is already **experiencing** abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Leave the partner 2
- Leave the abusive relationship 2
- Help
- Counselling
- More support and advice from school
- Leave them and don't find someone that has abused others in a relationship.
- Leave the person. If a person is toxic to you it's okay to care about your happiness more than others, it's NOT selfish.
- Tell them to either seek help for their partner or support them to end the relationship.
- Just leave the partner and try to find someone else who is not abusive.
- Counselling, speaking to someone who can help.
- Talk to someone who is close to you and you can trust.
- Tell someone before it gets out of hand.
- To get out of that relationship because it is obviously bad for them. If they do not want to leave the relationship, they should go as a couple to a counsellor.
- Move on
- Tell someone who will understand/help.
- Realising that they are not to blame, that they didn't deserve it and that people rarely change on their own.
- To talk and get asked anonymously so don't feel pointed out.
- To relax with friends to realize they don't need the partner and to see what they are missing.
- Supportive family members and friends, to be around other people.
- Showing them that it is not right and how they can change.

MALE

- To help them
- Don't know 3
- Break off with them
- Someone asks them how their relationship is.
- Chill, leave.
- Just leave
- Get out of the relationship
- Go looking for help and advice 2
- Seek help from parent/help organization or end relationship
- Dump them and storm away
- To get away from the relationship
- To help get away from their partner

17. When an unhealthy relationship ends, what do you think might be helpful for someone to move on from the experience and feel better about themselves?

FEMALE

- Counselling 4
- Speak to someone
- Reflect on their experiences
- A healthy relationship
- Non-judgemental support. Eg. mentoring from a teacher.
- Find someone new, go out with friends, experience life.
- Hang around with positive/funny/happy people
- Not to seek out a new relationship and spend some quality time with friends and family 2
- Spend time with friends 2
- Try a new relationship to change his/her perspective that not everyone's like that.
- To get away from the person, go abroad with a friend, go out and enjoy yourself 2
- Have fun with family and friends
- Counselling, confidence exercises and giving yourself a break for a while. Don't start dating again right away.
- Realise what happened was wrong and it was not worth it.
- To be surrounded by your best friends.
- Don't know
- Go on holiday, Netflix, food.

MALE

- To stop and stay alone for a bit to get them back on their feet.
- Don't know 5
- To get some help
- Because they are now free.
- Help from parents and teachers.
- Delete number
- Counselling 3
- Move away
- *Name* was a dick, it was the right thing to do.
- Try not to get in touch with them.

18. How often have you received information at school about healthy relationships (including sexuality and consent, the influence of pornography and social media, dealing with emotions and staying safe)?

	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Once every few years	Once in secondary school	Never
FEMALE		4 (19%)	1 (5%)	4 (19%)	3 (14%)	9 (43%)
MALE		2 (13%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	1 (6%)	10 (62%)

Thesis questionnaire results

School D, year 10. Age 14/15 yrs

15 girls, 10 boys

Total 25

19. a) How confident do you feel about your understanding of what makes a healthy/unhealthy relationship? 1= not at all confident, 10 = very confident.

FEMALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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				4	1	3	4	3	
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MALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		2	1	2	1		1	1	2

h) If you suspected that your friend was in an abusive relationship, how confident do you think you would feel about knowing the best way to help?

FEMALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				1	3	4	3	2	1

MALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	3			3		3		1	

c) What do you think could help someone to understand and recognize the signs of abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Go on the internet or go to Infonation.
- Go and talk to someone
- Go on the internet
- Go to someone for help
- Education in schools
- Point it out to them bit by bit. Eg. point out their behaviour in front of others first and so on.
- Don't know
- If a boy did things without your consent

- Talk to them about their relationship and try and make them see the signs they can't see.
- If someone is jealous they might get abusive
- Aggressive, controlling
- Bruising, hesitation, aggressive
- Explain to them what is a healthy relationship and what isn't.
- Information about what the norm is.
- Try to find a person who could actually help them and tell their problems to friends and family to try and find a solution.

MALE

- Don't know 6
- If you are forced to do something or hit it is abuse
- Someone to tell
- Asking if they're happy in their relationship
- Cuts or bruises could suggest someone is being abused

20.a) Why do you think someone might get into an unhealthy relationship?

	Don't recognize the warning signs	Think partner's behavior is normal	Think jealousy and possessiveness are 'romantic'	Other
FEMALE	8	7	9	1
MALE	5	1	4	1

Other

FEMALE

- * Believe that the person loves them

MALE

- * Don't know

b) What do you think might be helpful in **preventing** abuse in teenage relationships?

FEMALE

- More information
- Information centres 2
- Education on the topic
- Don't know 4
- For people to teach kids about the dangers
- Teaching children early so they understand and can see all the signs before it's too late.
- People should teach teens about healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Getting someone to help by telling them
- Help them, tell someone, be concerned and ask
- To have their parents or carers watching out for them but also giving them space for their private life.

MALE

- Don't know 3
- Go to Infonation 2
- Telling someone
- Give them help and advice on having a healthy relationship
- Counselling
- Letting teenagers know the dangers of unhealthy relationships
- Information and help from parents/teachers/friends
- When showing signs of any abuse make sure to tell someone

21. a) Why do you think someone might be abusive towards their partner?

	Jealous	Can't control own emotions	Think it's normal	Lack self-confidence	Makes someone feel in control	Think they will lose respect if they are attentive and supportive
Female	11	11	3	3	11	10
Male	4	2		1	8	

b) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is being abusive towards their partner and wants to change?

FEMALE

- Help centres, counseling
- Go to counseling 4
- Getting help, seeing a counselor/therapist, anger management and apologise.
- Suggest other ways of taking out their anger
- Don't know 2
- Leaving them, moving on and being happy with someone else.
- Sending them off somewhere like rehab so they learn how to control their emotions.
- Rehab
- Confront them
- Suggest the partner to take their anger out on something else.
- Anger management sessions
- Try to not scare the other, respect their freedom and privacy and try not to get in the way of the other person

MALE

- Tell them to see a doctor and stop seeing her for a while
- To stop being a control freak or ask for help
- Go to anger classes and long walks
- Finish with them and go and tell someone what is happening
- Don't know 2
- Have a talk to them and see how they feel
- Tell them you are sorry and you will never abuse them again and that they can end the relationship if they feel unsafe.
- Tell someone. Eg. Parents/teachers/friends
- Tell someone

22. a) If you felt you were in an unhealthy relationship, who would you be most likely to tell?

	Parent/carer	Teacher/other member of school staff	Friend	Other family member	Helping organisation	No one	Other
Female	7	2	14	4	1	2	
Male	7		3		1		2

Other

FEMALE

MALE

- I wouldn't know
- Don't know

b) If someone felt they were in an unhealthy relationship, why do you think they might not tell anyone/seek help?

	Feel afraid	Feel embarrassed	Feel guilty	Don't trust anyone to keep information confidential	Don't know where to get help	Not sure if partner's behavior is normal or not	Think it's own fault	Love/loyalty to partner	Worry about being judged/thought badly of
Female	12	10	6	11	7	8	11	9	11
Male	5	1		3	4		2	2	3

Other

FEMALE

MALE

i) What do you think might be helpful for someone who is already **experiencing** abuse in a relationship?

FEMALE

- Talk to someone about it
- Confront partner
- Go and find help to stop it.
- Talk to their partner or someone they trust
- Talking to someone, even just a friend, so that someone knows what's happening
- Talk to partner and try to understand why he does it.
- Telling someone and breaking up with partner
- Don't know 4
- Tell someone they can trust 2
- Leave the person who's doing it.
- Leave the relationship
- Split up the couple. Call a relationship service.
- Try to get help and get away from the abuser

MALE

- Phone the police or leave them 2
- Get some help and leave the relationship 2
- Tell someone
- Tell them to have a break from her/him for it to settle down
- End the relationship
- Someone she can trust to tell what she is experiencing
- Someone she can trust to tell
- Don't know

23. When an unhealthy relationship ends, what do you think might be helpful for someone to move on from the experience and feel better about themselves?

FEMALE

- Go out with friends.
- Eat 2
- Talk about it to someone you trust.
- Spend more time with the people they love and loves them back.
- Spend time with family.
- If depressed, subscribed anti-depressants
- Going out with friends and having fun.
- Don't know 2
- Move away, move on, stay with friend or find someone you trust
- Move away and lose all contact with them
- Try and move on to someone that treats you better and makes you forget all the bad things
- Move on to someone they're confident with
- Get back into social groups if you were forced to leave them due to the previous relationship
- Take their minds off it by having fun
- Start exercising
- Take up a new hobby
- Go shopping with friends
- Try to forget but not forgive what the other person did and try to live the rest of your life.

MALE

- Get a new boyfriend or spend time with family.
- Get a new BF/GF
- Just forget about the person and have fun with your mates
- Forget about it

- Don't know 2
- Take them on a lads night out
- Speak to someone about their concerns
- Not get into an unhealthy relationship again and move on to someone better
- Not get in another relationship for a while

24. How often have you received information at school about healthy relationships (including sexuality and consent, the influence of pornography and social media, dealing with emotions and staying safe)?

	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Once every few years	Once in secondary school	Never
FEMALE	2	3	4		2	4
MALE	1	3	1			5

