

# MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER TOOLKIT

Recently, national attention has focused on **addressing sexual assault** on college campuses.

We aim to also increase the safety of **middle and high school students** who may be in unhealthy relationships or have been victims of sexual violence.

In fact, **44%** of reported sexual assaults take place before the victim is 18 years old.

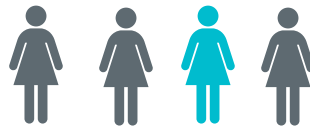
## The facts on dating violence:

- Dating violence affects **one in three adolescents**. For many, abusive relationships start in middle school.
- **81% of school counselors** reported that their districts did not have a protocol for how to respond to dating violence; **90%** had no training.
- Youth who are victims of dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of **depression** and **anxiety**, and engage in **unhealthy behaviors**.
- Youth who are victims of dating violence in high school are at **higher risk for victimization** during college.

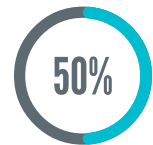
## The facts on sexual harassment:



Half of middle and high school students report experiencing sexual harassment in school.



More than one in four girls reported that they received unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, pictures or posts about them online.



Half of harassed students ignored the harassment and told no one, even when it bothered them.

## What you can do to address the issue:



**RESEARCH** what is going on in your school district and report back.



**ENCOURAGE** your school district to take action to create a safer school climate.



**WATCH & SHARE** Audrie & Daisy, a new documentary about high school students who were sexually assaulted.

[southwestpasaysnomore.org](http://southwestpasaysnomore.org)

SOUTHWEST PA SAYS

**NO MORE**

SOUTHWEST PA SAYS



### TAKE ACTION IN YOUR SCHOOL

School district: \_\_\_\_\_ Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

School website: \_\_\_\_\_ Your contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

Consult your school's website, student handbook or talk to school administrators to find out the following. If your school could be doing a better job in any of these areas, urge administrators or school board members to take action to ensure a safe school environment.

**Who is your school's Title IX coordinator?** All Schools are required to have a Title IX Coordinator to oversee requirements to provide gender equity for students, which includes equal access to athletic opportunities for girls and boys and the creation of a safe environment free from harassment or abuse. The Title IX coordinator is supposed to receive special training to know how to deal with sexual harassment and sexual assault complaints and is supposed to be a readily-accessible, knowledgeable, and trusted resource for students. This info should be easy to find on the school's website.

**What is your school's policy about sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct?** Does it include clear procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to sexual harassment and sexual assault? And when was it last amended/voted on? The White House has issued a recommendation that schools adopt a sexual misconduct policy, see: [www.notalone.gov/assets/considerations-for-school-district-sexual-misconduct-policies.pdf](http://www.notalone.gov/assets/considerations-for-school-district-sexual-misconduct-policies.pdf)

**What sexual harassment or dating violence prevention information does my school district provide to students?** If they don't provide quality programming already (guidance that does not focus on victim's behaviors—like watching their drink or not walking alone), your county's rape crisis or domestic violence program likely provides educational programs for schools. You can find out what programs serve your county at [www.pcar.org](http://www.pcar.org) or [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org). You can also look at the resources guide on pages 5-6 of this packet.

**Ask your child if they have witnessed sexually harassing behaviors in school or on the bus** (sexually suggestive comments and language, unwelcome and unwanted sexual touching, sexts or pornography). If you learn of problems, follow up with the principal or other school personnel, [Women's Law Project](#) or [Pittsburgh Action Against Rape](#) (in Allegheny County) for help to intervene and stop this behavior.

**Talk with another parent about what your school is doing and could be doing better.** Promote Women's Law Project and your local crisis center as resources for students and families who have experienced abuse or harassment at school and who need help in feeling safe at school.

## ENCOURAGE YOUR SCHOOL & DISTRICT TO TAKE ACTION

### Letter you can tailor to send to school board members, principal or superintendent

(Template below)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm writing today as a concerned \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/student/community member).

In our community and around the country, young people are experiencing alarming levels of violence in their relationships. I know these issues are important to you, as they are to me. In light of how frequently these issues are in the news, I want to encourage you to ensure that our district is doing everything it can to create a safe culture in our schools, free from sexual violence (including sexual harassment) and bullying. I also encourage you to make sure policies are in place to support students who have experienced harassment or abuse and let them know how to reach out for help.

These are some steps to consider:

- **Review** district policies on sexual harassment and misconduct and make sure they are up to date based on current practices, including very recent federal guidance: [www.notalone.gov/assets/considerations-for-school-district-sexual-misconduct-policies.pdf](http://www.notalone.gov/assets/considerations-for-school-district-sexual-misconduct-policies.pdf)
- **Ensure** that teachers, counselors and administration have had recent training on how to intervene when harassment or abuse is suspected or witnessed, and how to respond to disclosures (beyond mandated reporting). Members of our local community crisis center, \_\_\_\_\_, are the best professionals to provide this training as they are the experts in how our community responds and what victims need to feel supported after they disclose violence.
- **Integrate** prevention programming in the classroom, in student leadership groups and in athletic programs.
- **Make sure** students and parents know who our Title IX coordinator is, and ensure that s/he has received appropriate training on harassment and abuse in order to be a resource to our school. Make sure students and parents know who our Title IX coordinator is and they could expect from our Title IX coordinator if a report is made. Also, we want to ensure the Title IX Coordinator has received appropriate training on responding to victims of sexual assault, dating violence and stalking in order to be a resource to our school.
- **Establish** a meaningful relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, our local victim service agency, so students who need help will be promptly directed to free and confidential services.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our school district.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

Phone

Email

## WATCH & SHARE AUDRIE & DAISY

*After you watch Audrie & Daisy, pass it along to others. If you deem it appropriate, (film is recommended for upper middle and high school students and above) consider watching it again with your child. Talk about what you saw. Be sure to check out [www.audrieanddaisy.com](http://www.audrieanddaisy.com) for some excellent educational materials, talking points and lesson plans to help you use the film to spur conversation.*

You can also **send an email asking a friend to watch the documentary** (template below).

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Have you seen [Audrie & Daisy](http://www.audrieanddaisy.com)? It tells the story of two teenage girls who went to parties, drank alcohol, passed out and were sexually assaulted by guys they thought were their friends. In the aftermath, both girls discovered that the crimes were documented on cell phones. Video and pictures were passed around. Their lives were changed forever.

I watched it, and I think it is something you should see. You can view it on Netflix and get more information at [www.audrieanddaisy.com](http://www.audrieanddaisy.com).

Sincerely,

Name

# Domestic & Sexual Violence Resources

If you are in immediate danger, call **911**.

## Allegheny County

- **ALLE-KISKI AREA HOPE CENTER** ([akhopecenter.org](http://akhopecenter.org)) 24-Hour Hotline: 888-299-4673
- **CENTER FOR VICTIMS** ([centerforvictims.org](http://centerforvictims.org)) 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-866-644-2882
- **CRISIS CENTER NORTH** ([crisiscenternorth.org](http://crisiscenternorth.org)) Toll Free Hotline: 1-866-782-0911
- **PITTSBURGH ACTION AGAINST RAPE** ([paar.net](http://paar.net)) Hotline: 1-866-END-RAPE (363-7273)
- **WOMEN'S CENTER & SHELTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH** ([wcspittsburgh.org](http://wcspittsburgh.org))  
24-Hour Hotline: 412-687-8005

## Armstrong County

- **HAVIN** ([havinpa.org](http://havinpa.org)) 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-841-8881

## Beaver County

- **WOMEN'S CENTER OF BEAVER COUNTY** ([womenscenterbc.org](http://womenscenterbc.org))  
24-Hour Helpline: 724-775-0131 or 877-629-1841

## Butler County

- **VOICE** ([voiceforvictims.com](http://voiceforvictims.com)) 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-400-8551

## Fayette, Greene & Washington Counties

- **CRIME VICTIMS' CENTER OF FAYETTE COUNTY** ([crimevictimscenter.com](http://crimevictimscenter.com))  
24-Hour Hotline: 724-437-3737
- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES OF SOUTHWESTERN PA** ([peacefromdv.org](http://peacefromdv.org))  
Washington Cty: 724-223-9190 or 800-791-4000  
Greene Cty: 724-852-2463 or 800-791-4000  
Fayette Cty: 724-439-9500 or 800-791-4000
- **SPHS CARE CENTER STTARS PROGRAM** ([sphs.org](http://sphs.org)) Hotline: 1-888-480-7283

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## Indiana County

- **ALICE PAUL HOUSE** ([alicepaulhouse.org](http://alicepaulhouse.org)) Hotline: 1-800-435-7249

## Lawrence County

- **CRISIS SHELTER OF LAWRENCE COUNTY** ([crisisshelter.org](http://crisisshelter.org)) 24-Hour Hotline: 724-652-9036

## Westmoreland County

- **BLACKBURN CENTER AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE** ([blackburncenter.org](http://blackburncenter.org))  
24-Hour Hotline: 1-888-832-2272

## Other Resources

Resources for victims are available in every county and are provided free of charge. You can search for resources by county through:

- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence – [pcadv.org](http://pcadv.org)
- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape – [pcar.org](http://pcar.org)

## Citations

- CDC Division National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Understanding Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/teen-dating-violence-factsheet-a.pdf>
- Davis, A., MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at [www.nccdcrc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf](http://www.nccdcrc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf)
- Khubchandani J, Price JH, Thompson A, Dake JA, Wiblehauser M, Telljohann SK., Adolescent dating violence: a national assessment of school counselors' perceptions and practices. *Pediatrics*. 2012 Aug;130(2):202-10.
- In 2011, the American Association of University Women commissioned a national survey of students in grades 7-12 about their experiences and thoughts about sexual harassment during the 2010-11 school year. Findings are available online via the Crossing The Line report.

This toolkit was compiled with the help of Blackburn Center, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape and the Women's Law Project.