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Educating Teens About Healthy Relationships to Prevent Domestic Violence

Virtual training to be held for school staff, teachers, parents, and teens

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott today announced upcoming trainings to educate teens and school staff about healthy relationships and to prevent dangerous behaviors that can lead to adult domestic violence.

The City Attorney's Office is partnering with the San Diego Domestic Violence Council, San Diego County Office of Education, Center for Community Solutions, and Community Resource Center to present online workshops on Wednesday, October 7, for school staff, teachers, parents, and teenagers. This webinar will provide tools to recognize and prevent abusive teenage relationships, which often lead to violent adult relationships.

Studies have shown that one in five San Diego students have experienced emotional violence, one in 10 have experienced sexual violence, and one in 16 have been subjected to physical violence. These rates are more than double for LGB youth, per a SDUSD Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2019) that focused on data from students who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

“Protecting teens from dangerous behaviors today is a proven way to prevent them from being the victims of domestic violence, or abusers themselves, once they are adults,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“Through education and support, we can break the cycle, stop intimate partner violence before it begins, and teach our children how to have healthy and respectful relationships.”**

Behaviors that lead to domestic violence can take root as teens start to date and experiment with their first romantic or intimate relationships. Experts say those who experience teen dating violence are at a higher risk of being in abusive relationships in the future. In a study by the Centers for Disease Control of adults who were victims of violence or stalking by an intimate partner, 26 percent of the women and 15 percent of the men had first experienced sexual or physical violence before age 18.

“We want everyone to know that not only is teen dating violence preventable, but many helpful resources are out there,” said Sabrina Van Zuiden, Prevention & Community Engagement Specialist at Center for Community Solutions, who will be one of the presenters.

Though the training cannot be held in person, it can reach more people online.

“Our reach virtually stretches from one end of the county to the other without the hurdles of transportation, and we can schedule more classes in a day,” Supervising Deputy City Attorney Diane Doherty, with the City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit, said.

Recent City Attorney media releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney's home page located on the Internet at <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney>

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1620, San Diego, California 92101-4188 (619) 236-6220

Wednesday's workshop – Teen Dating Violence 101: Tools and Resources to Support Our Youth – takes place at 1 p.m. in English and 5 p.m. in Spanish and English. Register here: <https://sdcoe.k12oms.org/918-190916>

Van Zuiden and Doherty are the Co-Chairs of the Teen Dating Violence Committee of the San Diego Domestic Violence Council. **“The Teen Dating Violence Committee is a collaborative made up of individuals and organizations providing both intervention and prevention support against relationship and sexual violence in our communities,”** Van Zuiden said. These workshops are a collaborative effort of the TDV Committee members. The presenters include the San Diego County Office of Education, Community Resource Center, Center for Community Solutions, and San Diego Youth Services.

While the City Attorney's Office and community partners work to combat domestic violence year-round, the City Attorney noted that the event is occurring during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which is an important time to shine a light on a problem that's often left in the shadows.

The City Attorney's Office, along with community partners San Diego Youth Services, the Center for Community Solutions, San Ysidro Health, Community Resource Center, and South Bay Community Services, are conducting targeted outreach to middle and high schools county-wide with the goal of hosting future trainings for students, teachers, Wellness Center Coordinators, ASB advisors and school counselors, social workers, health educators and nurses on recognizing the signs of and preventing teen dating violence.

Another valuable resource for teens and others experiencing violence in a relationship is the San Diego Family Justice Center (SDFJC). A division of the City Attorney's Office, the SDFJC works with numerous community partners to ensure that any person experiencing physical or sexual relationship violence can find the assistance they need in a safe and supportive setting.

Confidential services are available free of charge. Call 619-533-6000 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday, call the 24-hour hotline 888-385-4657, or visit www.sandiego.gov/fjc.

Community Resources

Center for Community Solutions
www.ccssd.org / 888-385-4657

Community Resource Center
www.crcncc.org / 877-633-1112

San Diego Youth Services
www.sdyouthservices.org / 619-241-0608

San Ysidro Health
www.syhteenclinic.org / 619-800-8336

South Bay Community Services
www.southbaycommunityservices.org / 800-640-2933

WRC
www.wrcsd.org / 760-757-3500

National DV Hotline

www.thehotline.org / 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 for TTY, or if you're unable to speak safely, text LOVEIS to 22522

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