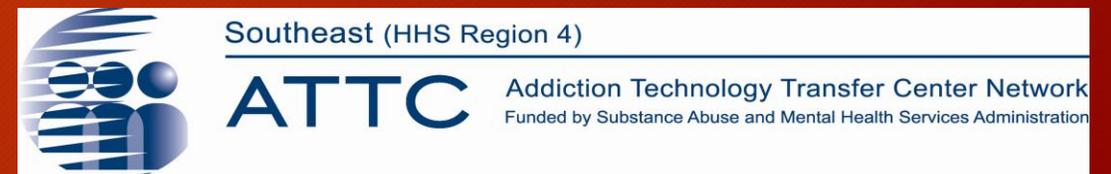


Safety and Sobriety in Dating Relationships

Gary K. Byrd, M.Ed., MAC, CCS, CAMS



HBCU-Center for Excellence Overview

Through a Cooperative Agreement with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, (CSAT) and Center for Mental Health Services, (CMHS) Morehouse School of Medicine established the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Center for Excellence in Behavioral Health (HBCU-CFE), funded as Grant No. TI023447.

Our Goals

- Promote student behavioral health to positively impact student retention
- Expand campus service capacity, including the provision of culturally appropriate behavioral health resources
- Facilitate best practices dissemination and behavioral health workforce development

Gary K. Byrd, M.Ed., MAC, CCS, CAMS

Gary K. Byrd is President and CEO of the Anger Management Institute and High Impact Training. Mr. Byrd received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina and his Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling from West Georgia State University. Mr. Byrd is a Certified as a Master Addiction Counselor, a Certified Clinical Supervisor, a Certified Grief Specialist, a Certified Anger Management Specialist, and is a Certified Happiness Coach. He is currently working toward completing his Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

Mr. Byrd is the author of three participant manuals: Choice-Based Anger Control Manual for Adults, ACT RIGHT anger management manual for teens, and a domestic violence participant manual for men and women.

Objectives

- Describe the relationship between addiction and dating violence.
- Discuss safety and sobriety issues as it relates to substance abuse and dating violence.

Safety and Sobriety are Interconnected

- Lack of sobriety, in the perpetrator, increases the risk of further violence against the victim.
- Lack of victim safety threatens the sobriety of both the victim and perpetrator.
- Abstinence and sobriety are not sufficient conditions for safety.

Understanding the Intersection of AOD and College Dating Violence

Correlation

Does not mean

Causality

Definition of Dating Violence

- U.S. Department of Justice (2012), dating violence is defined as violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic nature with the victim.
- A large number of college students engage in unhealthy personal relationships, (Paul, McManus & Hayes 2000) which hinder them from attaining maximum educational success (Ohnishi et al. 2011).

Dating Violence More Prevalent Among College Students Than Previously Believed

- A new survey reveals dating violence and abuse to be surprisingly more prevalent among college students than previously believed. Nearly half of dating college women (43%) report having ever experienced violent or abusive dating behaviors, and more than one in five (22%) report actual physical abuse, sexual abuse or threats of physical violence.
- Despite the high number of students experiencing these types of abuse, more than one-third of college students (38%) say they would not know how to get help on campus if they found themselves in an abusive relationship
 - "Liz Claiborne Inc.'s Love Is Not Abuse 2011 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll,"

Prevalence of Violence Among College Dating Couples

- Research consistently demonstrates that approximately 20-30% of dating couples experience at least one act of physical aggression, 70-90% experience psychological aggression, and 3-20% experience sexual aggression each year (Shorey et al., 2008a)
- The modal forms of aggression experienced by college students is often classified as “minor” in severity ([Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996](#)), which include insulting, yelling, swearing, or doing something to spite one’s partner (psychological aggression), pushing, grabbing, or slapping one’s partner (physical aggression), and insisting on sex with a partner when he/she does not want to (sexual aggression).

Prevalence of College Dating Violence

- Approximately 8-16% of individuals in college dating relationships experience at least one act of severe physical aggression (e.g., punch, choke, kick partner) ([Bell & Naugle, 2007](#); [Hines & Saudino, 2003](#)).
- 12-30% experience severe psychological aggression (e.g., threaten to hit partner, destroy personal belonging of partner) ([Bell & Naugle, 2007](#); [Hines & Saudino, 2003](#)).
- 3-9% experience severe sexual aggression (e.g., use force/threats to have sex with partner) each year ([Bell & Naugle, 2007](#); [Hines & Saudino, 2003](#)).

Prevalence of College Dating Violence

"Liz Claiborne Inc.'s Love Is Not Abuse 2011 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll,"

- Nearly 1 in 3 (29%) college women report having been a victim of an abusive dating relationship in her life.
- 57% of students who report having been in an abusive dating relationship indicate it occurred in college.
- 52% of college women report knowing a friend who has experienced violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, digital, verbal or controlling abuse.
- Further, 58% of students said they would not know how to help if they knew someone was a victim.

Prevalence of College Dating Violence

- 43% of dating college women report experiencing some violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, tech, verbal or controlling abuse.
- Over one in five college women (22%) report actual physical abuse, sexual abuse or threats of physical violence.
- 52% of college women report knowing a friend who has experienced violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, tech, verbal or controlling abuse.

Alcohol Consumption Among College Students

- Violence between college-aged dating partners is a serious problem and has been shown to be associated with substance use (Hines & Straus, 2007).
- Alcohol consumption are particularly evident at our nation's colleges and universities where college students drink significantly more than their non-college-attending peers (Merline, Jager, & Schulenberg, 2008; Stone, Becker, Huber, & Catalano, 2012; White et al., 2006).

African American College Students

- African American college students tend to perceive dating violence more in physical terms than in psychological terms.
- This conclusion is also supported by earlier research that indicated that there is a general tendency to classify physical forms of aggression as abuse especially among ethnic minorities (Yick, 1997).
- As a result of ignoring psychological abuse, verbal or other types of psychological aggressions are not viewed as a problem by African American college students.

African American College Students

- Consequently, abused African American college students, especially who are victims of psychological aggression do not perceive themselves as victim, which further prevents them from seeking appropriate help.
- It should be emphasized that seemingly nebulous indistinct psychological aggression can often develop into more distinct and dangerous physical violence.

Impact of AOD Use of Dating Violence

- Research also shows that binge drinkers, defined as the consumption of 5 or more standard drinks (e.g., 12 ounce beer) for men and 4 or more standard drinks for women on one occasion ([Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000](#)), perpetrate more sexual aggression than non-perpetrators ([Rapoza & Drake, 2009](#)).
- Substance use by one or both partners may increase the chances of arguments between partners, leading to reduced relationship quality and, in turn, aggression.

Anger/Aggression Relationship to AOD

Drug Group	Overall Risks	Why?
Alcohol	High	Societal permission/expectation; disinhibition; withdrawal; irritability, pervasiveness within society
Sedatives & Barbiturates	High	Promotes irritability; assaultativeness; self-destructive attacks
Crystal Meth	High	Long-term use can produce both immediate aggression and long-term personality changes
PCP	High	Produces angry/assaultive tendencies

Anger/Aggression Relationship to AOD

Drug Group	Overall Risks	Why?
Steroids	Medium-High	Seems to encourage anger and aggression, especially in already prone individuals
Inhalants	Medium	Generally incapacitates users but associated with aggressive lifestyles
Opiates	Medium-Low	Generally diminishes all emotions during use; aggression to procure drug money main problem
Cannabis	Medium-low	Mistakenly assumed to diminish anger/aggression; can exacerbate underlying paranoia

Similarities between Addiction & Partner Abuse

- Primary-no other cause
 - Chronic-continues until intervention
 - Progressive-things get worse
 - Characterized by loss of control
- Primary-no other cause
 - Chronic-continues until intervention
 - Progressive-things get worse
 - Characterized by gaining control

Similarities Between Addiction & Partner Abuse

- Escalation-increasing frequency and amounts
 - Denial, minimization, and blaming
 - Choosing approving peers
 - Lying and manipulating
 - Lack of predictability
 - Defining roles for family members
 - High Relapse rate after a period of apparent change
- Escalation-at least for the first couple of years of a relationship
 - Denial, minimization, and blaming
 - Choosing approving peers
 - Lying and manipulating
 - Lack of predictability
 - Defining roles for family members
 - High Relapse rate after a period of apparent change

Partner Abuse Doesn't Go Away When An Addict Recovers

- Abusers may become irritable when in recovery from not drinking and take it out on family members.
- Others may become more controlling when sober than they were while drunk.
- Abusers may use their recovery program as a weapon against their partner (e.g., he may insist that she is alcoholic even though she drinks moderately; or he may criticize her for being “in denial” about her drinking).



Stages of a Relationship

- Romantic Stage (falling in love)
 - 90 days
 - Fronting
 - Spending time together
 - Sex
- Power/Struggle Stage
- Intimacy Stage (Trust)

Most Common Reasons College Students Gave for Entering a Romantic Relationship*

- Emotional needs met through relationships were companionship, friendship, overcoming loneliness, compassion, and happiness.
- Love, romance, and the desire for affection
- Commitment--marriage, stability, and the desire for children, which totaled eight responses in the survey

Reasons Given College Students Gave for Ending a Relationship Among African American College Students*

- Cheating was the most frequently reported cause of breakups (43.2%)
- Abuse/violence/control comprised 35.2% of the reasons.
- Family interference was reported as the third most common cause of breakups (17%)
- Former partner's abuse of addictive substances such as alcohol, illegal drugs, or medications, constituted 12.5% of the overall reasons for breakups.
- Loving the Academy: Helping Educators Understand Characteristics of Black College Students' Romantic Relationships, Miriam Chitiga Fayetteville State University, mchitiga@uncfsu.edu. 1-1-2014

Top seven reasons why college students are reluctant to report dating abuse:

- 62% think that it will make it worse for the victim
- 60% feel it is not their business
- 60% think that it will hurt their relationship with the victim
- 56% they know the suspected abuser
- 56% they are afraid the abuser might make their life worse on campus
- 53% they are afraid that people who know it was them who reported it
- 52% they are afraid of getting hurt themselves

College Students Don't Know How To Help

- 58% of college students say they don't know how what to do to help someone who is a victim of dating abuse.
- 38% of college students say they don't know how to get help for themselves on campus if they were a victim of dating abuse.
- More than half of all college students (57%) say it is difficult to identify dating abuse.

Violent and Abusive Dating Behaviors

- Controlling Behaviors
 - Told me where to live either on or off campus
 - Prevented me from participating in sports or other extracurricular activities
 - Told me what classes to take at college
- Verbal Abuse
 - Threatened to hurt me if we were to break up
 - Name calling
- Physical Abuse

Violent and Abusive Dating Behaviors

- Abuse via Technology
 - Excessive texting
 - Shared or threatened to share private or embarrassing pictures or videos of
- Sexual Abuse
 - Pressured me into having sex (going all the way) when I didn't want to
- Forced Substance Use
 - Pressured me into drinking alcohol when I didn't want to
 - Pressured me to do drugs when I didn't want

SA and FV Intersect In Various Ways

- Any mood-altering substance is capable of promoting anger/aggression, but no such substance inevitable does so.
- Many individuals with anger/aggression problems also have substance abuse problems.
- There may be no intrinsic connection between the two conditions.
 - Independent variables so that treatment for one will have no impact on the other.

What we can do?

Dating Violence and Substance Use in College Students: A Review of the Literature
Ryan C. Shorey,¹ Gregory L. Stuart,¹ and Tara L. Cornelius

- Educate participants in prevention programs on the effects of alcohol on aggressive behavior and that alcohol use does not excuse one's aggressive behavior.
- Participants could be informed that there are factors that likely interact with alcohol to increase one's risk for aggression (e.g., childhood abuse history, trait anger, hostility), and participants could be informed of the dangers of consuming alcohol when one may have predispositions to behave aggressively.
- Furthermore, information on the effects of alcohol on reduced risk perception, which may increase one's risk for victimization, could also be provided.

Safety and Sobriety: What we can do?

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- Prevention programs will need to focus efforts on targeting multiple risk factors for aggression, such as anger and emotional dysregulation, beliefs about aggressive behavior, communication skills, and alcohol use, to name a few.
- Screening participants on individual risk factors for aggression will aid prevention programs in providing the most effective educational and skill-building material to participants ([Shorey et al., 2008b](#)).

Safety and Sobriety: What we can do?

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- In addition, because it appears that drug use may play a role in dating violence for a small number of individuals, screening participants on their drug use and then providing individualized feedback for individuals who consume drugs may be beneficial.

Question and Answer Time

CONTACT US!

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