

Convenience of Powdered Alcohol Puts Teens at Risk

Another new twist on drinking has appeared. “Palcohol” is an alcoholic beverage – in powder form. Freeze-dried and sold in air-tight packages, it is advertised as a convenient lightweight packet of powder that you can carry with you anywhere and all you have to do is just add water or another beverage mixer whenever you want a drink.

Palcohol weighs about an ounce and is small enough to fit into any pocket. It is available in vodka and rum varieties, as well as enticing drinkers with other pre-mixed cocktail flavors such as Powderita (margarita), Cosmopolitan, Lemon Drop, and Mojito. The makers of Palcohol say they are also experimenting with sprinkling the powder on food.



The high alcohol content of Palcohol raises serious safety and potential abuse questions. Dissolving it in enough water would result in a drink with proof similar to that of regular vodka or rum (about 20 proof), but using too little water could create a shot with dangerous concentrations of alcohol. The convenience of the small packets could also encourage over-consumption. Because of its powdered form, there is the risk of teens thinking it can be snorted, causing serious health risks. The makers, however, state they strongly caution against inhaling the mix, as doing so is not a responsible or smart way to use the product.



Mothers Against Drunk Drivers has expressed their concern about its ability to be easily hidden, therefore making it easy to take into places undetected. A big problem will be the kid's ability to sneak the powder into school and mixing it with another acceptable beverage such as soda or water.

There has been some confusion as to whether or not this has been officially approved by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). Initial approval was subsequently rescinded, with a TTB spokesperson saying the approvals were “issued in error”. While Palcohol could still hit the market at a later date, there are still many hurdles to jump, including individual state regulations that would need to be set regarding the sale and distribution.

So, while not yet fully approved, it is definitely something to keep your eyes out for. A quick search on the internet turns up powder packets you can purchase and also provides easy access on how to make your own powdered alcohol concoction at home.



“Unite Against Bullying”

Bullying Prevention

Bullying can threaten students’ physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety that may lead to suicide and/or attempts
- Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Decreased academic achievement
- Absent from school and/or drop out of school.
- A very small number of bullied children might retaliate through extremely violent measures

The best way to address bullying is to be proactive in addressing bullying instead of reactive.

What Your School Can Do:

Assess school prevention and intervention efforts and policies surrounding student behavior, including substance use and violence. You may be able to build upon them or integrate bullying prevention strategies with the efforts and policies you already have in place. Many programs help address the same protective and risk factors that bullying programs do.

Assess Bullying in Your School:

Conduct assessments in your school to determine how often bullying occurs, where it happens, how students and adults intervene, and whether your prevention efforts are working.

Involve and Engage Parents and Youth:

It is important for everyone in the community to work together to send a unified message against bullying. Launch an awareness campaign to make the objectives known to the school, parents, and community members. Establish a school safety committee or task force to plan, implement, and evaluate your school's bullying prevention program.

Create Policies and Rules:

Create a mission statement, code of conduct, school-wide rules, and a bullying reporting system. These establish a climate in which bullying is not acceptable. Disseminate and communicate widely.

Build a Safe Environment:

Establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect. Use staff meetings, assemblies, class and parent meetings, newsletters to families, the school website, and the student handbook to establish a positive climate at school. Reinforce positive social interactions and inclusiveness.

Educate Students and School Staff:

Build bullying prevention material into the curriculum and school activities. Train teachers and staff on the school’s rules and policies. Give them the skills to intervene consistently and appropriately.

LOVE IS NOT ABUSE

With domestic violence taking a national spotlight in the wake of TMZ releasing video footage of Baltimore Ravens player Ray Rice striking his fiancée in an elevator, we are reminded of the importance of discussing domestic abuse and dating violence with our children.

- Every 9 seconds a woman in the United States is a victim of domestic violence
- 10% of teenagers report physical abuse in their relationships
- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner every year
- Dating violence against girls has been reported starting as young as 6th grade

Dating violence is a pattern of destructive behaviors used to exert power and control over a dating partner. While we define dating violence as a pattern, that doesn't mean the first instance of abuse is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time. Dating violence can take place in person or electronically. The nature of dating violence can be physical, emotional, or sexual.

- Physical – This occurs when a partner experiences unaccidental physical harm and could include being pinched, hit, shoved, slapped, punched, or kicked.
- Psychological/Emotional – This means threatening a partner or harming his or her sense of self-worth. Examples include name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping him/her away from friends or family.
- Sexual – This is forcing a partner to engage in a sex act when he or she does not or cannot consent. This can be physical or nonphysical (threatening to spread rumors if a partner refuses to have sex).
- Stalking – This refers to a pattern of harassing or threatening tactics that are unwanted and cause fear in the victim.

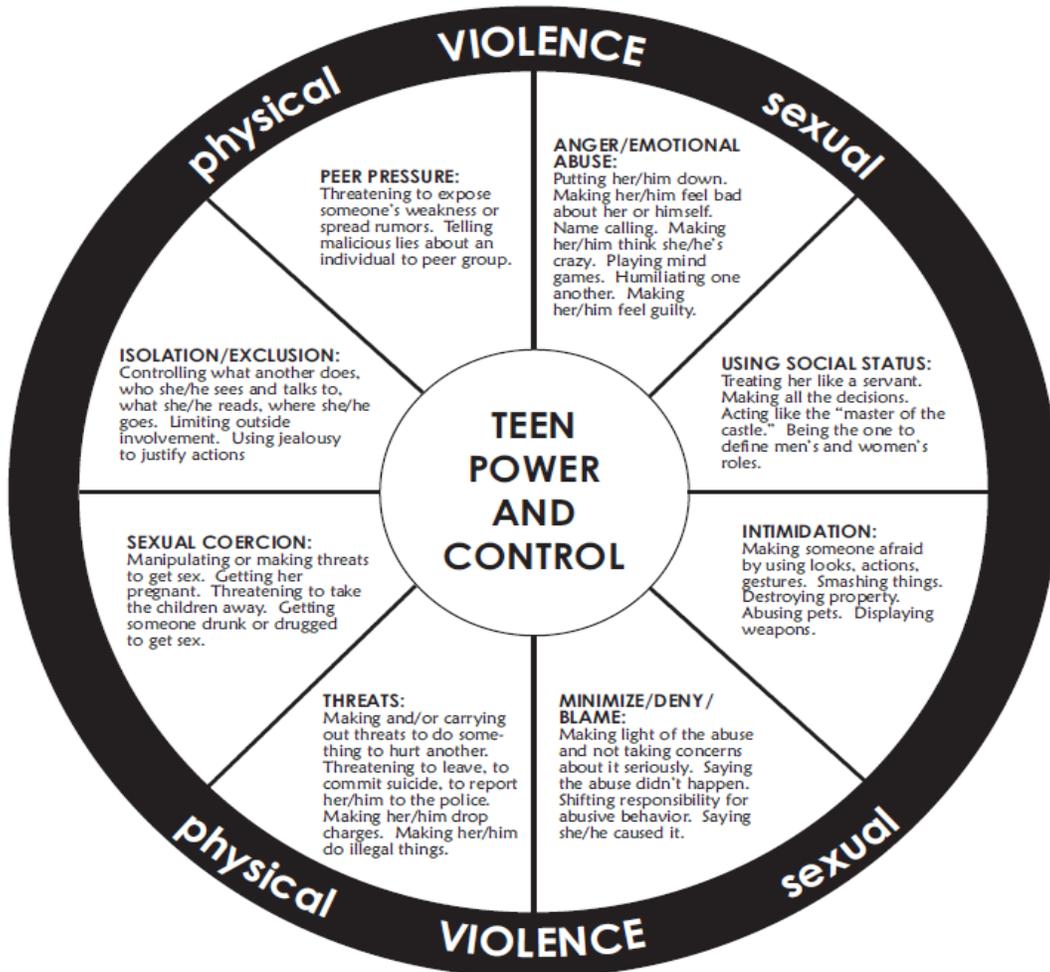
Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Teens often think some behaviors, like teasing and name calling, are a “normal” part of a relationship. However, these behaviors can become abusive and develop into more serious forms of violence. Violent relationships in adolescents can have serious ramifications by putting victims at a higher risk for substance use, eating disorders, risky sexual behaviors and further domestic violence. Teen girls in an abusive relationship are six times more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get a sexually transmitted infection.

The below wheel represents a snapshot of what a violent teen dating relationship looks like. While it doesn't cover every experience, it does portray the most common tactics teen abusers use against their dating partners.

You will notice that the center of the wheel is "Power and Control." This is at the center of the wheel because they are the reasons abusers choose to use violence and other tactics against their dating partners. They want complete power over and control of their partners. In order to get that power and control, most teen abusers start out very slyly using the various tactics - or spokes - of the wheel, but usually increase their use of them over time. These include anger/emotional abuse, using social status, intimidation, minimize/deny/blame, threats, sexual coercion, isolation/exclusion and peer pressure.

The outer rim of the wheel is physical violence, as violent acts or the threat of violent acts are what abusers use to get and keep their power and control over their dating partners.

TEEN POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Produced and distributed by:

Developed from:
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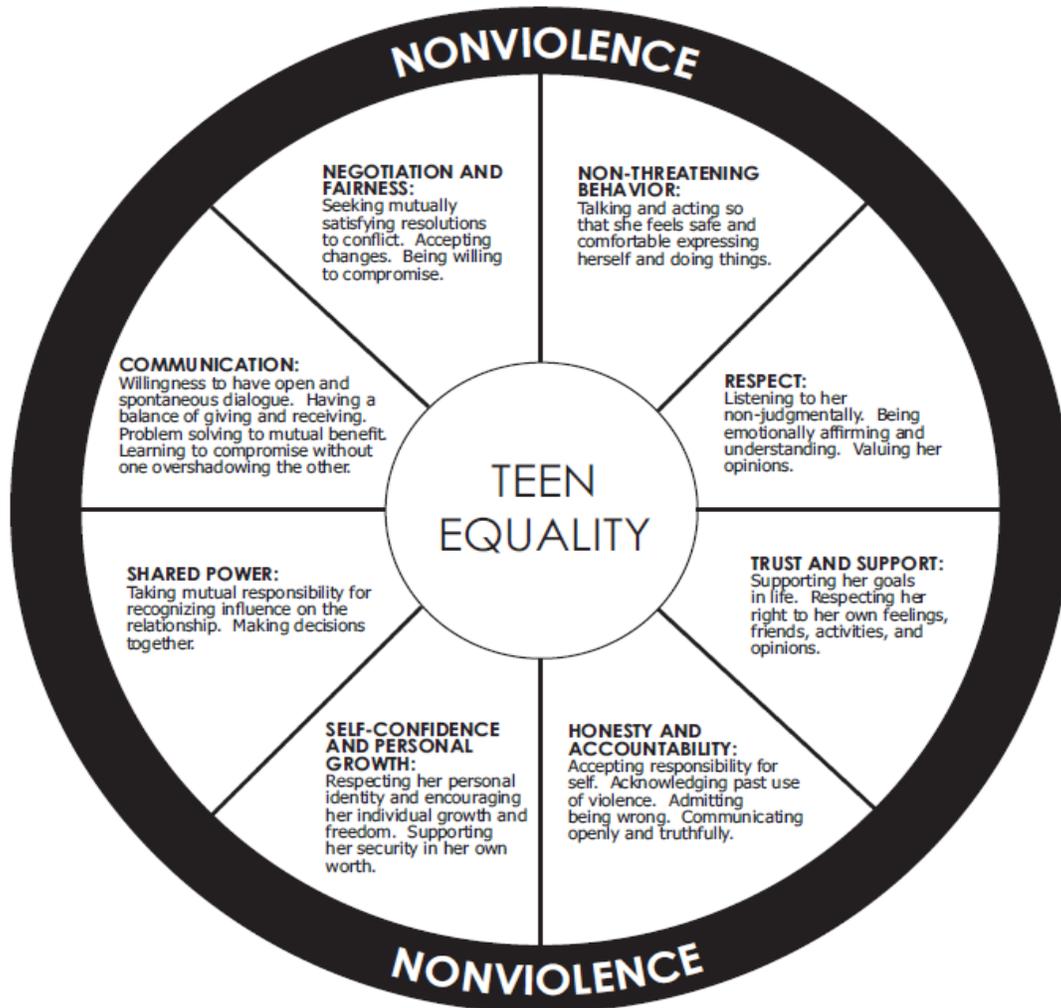


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As much as we would love to be able to protect our children from experiencing dating violence, the statistics tell us they themselves or one of their friends may experience it. The best thing that we can do is EDUCATE ourselves, understand what domestic and sexual violence is, and if we see it or suspect it, say something. Be an example to others, be patient, listen and support. Resources are available throughout the state through the Nebraska Domestic Violence Coalition. For a listing of where the closest resource is to you, go to <http://ndvsac.org/wp-content/uploads/General/GetHelp/Program%20%20Co%20Listing%20July%202014-1.pdf>.

In contrast to the power and control wheel, the equality wheel represents the various elements of teen dating relationships based on equality. Instead of being about getting power and control over a dating partner, a relationship based on equality involves traits like fairness, communication, respect, trust, support and honesty.

EQUALITY WHEEL FOR TEENS



Adapted from:
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(Sources: <http://domesticviolencestatistics.org/domestic-violence-statistics/>; www.chicagonow.com/tween-us/2014/09/talking-with-my-tween-about-domestic-abuse-ray-rice/; www.dosomething.org; www.loveisrespect.org)