



RESEARCH BYTES



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FORTIFYING RELATIONSHIPS

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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When *unable to find the words* to describe their internal worlds, many people struggling with suicidal ideation *remained silent*. This often led to hopelessness about their situation.

(Maple et al., 2019)



Qualities of Primary Safety Plan Confidants:

(Fulginiti & Frey, 2020)

- Accessibility
- Knowledge of the mental health system
- Stress management ability
- Ability to **prioritize** the needs of the individual in crisis over their own

A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH

From examining individual relationships and outcomes to exploring multilevel contextual factors, Kent School faculty have published research amplifying the voices of those persons who are most impacted by the phenomenon at hand: those with lived experience. Read about how interpersonal characteristics may impact permanency planning for children in out-of-home care or suicide safety planning, explore adolescents' perceptions of dating violence, and more in this edition of *Research Bytes*.

"Nobody Hears a Silent Cry for Help": Suicide Attempt Survivors' Experiences of Disclosing During and After a Crisis

M. Maple, L.M. Frey, K. McKay, S. Coker, & S. Grey

Archives of Suicide Research 24(4) | DOI: 10.1080/13811118.2019.1658671

Self-disclosure of suicidal ideation or behavior (i.e., telling someone about it) is the most direct way to identify someone at risk for suicide, but there are many reasons an individual may choose not to disclose. Those reasons may include fear of practical implications (like being involuntarily hospitalized) or having previously experienced negative reactions to disclosure. People may choose to disclose to seek help, share their background, or experience relief. This qualitative study explored first-hand narratives of suicide attempt survivors to uncover the complexity involved in disclosure, the role help seeking has when someone is actively suicidal, and the challenges people at this juncture have in finding their voices. Themes reveal it is unrealistic to expect every person to have the words necessary to describe their experience and that difficult interactions with family members may damage trust following the disclosure of suicidal behavior, demonstrating the need to better understand how to support families.

Are the "Right" People Selected for First Disclosures About Suicidal Thoughts? Exploring What We Know About Advance Care Planning in the Context of Safety Planning

A. Fulginiti & L.M. Frey

Community Mental Health Journal 56(1) | DOI: 10.1007/s10597-019-00457-x

Nominating primary confidants (i.e., safety plan nominees) is central to safety planning for suicide, but little is known about these persons. This exploratory study aimed to examine whether people identified as primary confidants were more likely to possess preventive attributes (accessibility, knowledge about the mental health system, stress management ability, and the ability to prioritize the needs of the participant over their own needs) than people not identified as primary confidants. Results indicated that people selected as confidants for first disclosures of suicidal thoughts were perceived as being particularly capable of managing stressful situations. The findings point to attributes the clinician could survey for with the client in order to consider the merit of everyone in their social networks.

"It is time that agencies put more structures and resources in place to match the highest risk children with homes that are more likely to have the resilience, cultural competence, and natural supports necessary to successfully raise them without disruption."

(Antle et al., 2019, p. 144)



Exploring Relational and Parental Factors for Permanency Outcomes of Children in Care

B.F. Antle, A.P. Barbee, B.K. Sar, D.J. Sullivan, & K. Tarter

Families in Society 101(2) | DOI: 10.1177/1044389419881280

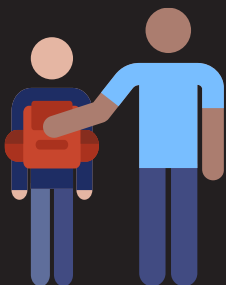
This study explored the impact of individual and relational characteristics of foster parents on permanency outcomes for children in care, filling a gap where previous research has focused on child and case characteristics. The results indicate the need for targeted recruitment, screening, and matching of foster parents with children for improved permanency outcomes. Foster parents who are high in empathy, emotional stability, extraversion, marital satisfaction, and less distress, along with a greater understanding of the role of racism in our society and institutions may be more likely to provide stable placements and promote positive permanency outcomes for children in care.

The Impact of Closeness to Non-Parental Adults in Social Networks on Substance Use Among Young Men Who Have Sex with Men

E.M. Sterrett-Hong, M. Birkett, L. Kuhns, D. Zhang, & B. Mustanski

Journal of Homosexuality 68(10) | DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2019.1705670

This study examined associations between young men who have sex with men (YMSM)'s relationships with non-parental adults (NPAs) and other members of their social networks with their substance use. Results show that emotional closeness to NPAs was associated with less frequent binge drinking and abstinence from marijuana use over a 6-month period, but not with cigarette smoking. Quality, not quantity, of relationships with NPAs was associated over time with YMSM substance use. Strong relationships with NPAs can positively influence YMSM's resilience, coping, and protective factors, which is especially important as YMSM and other sexual minorities engage with substance use at higher rates than other groups.



Close relationships to NPAs may help YMSM cope with stress related to being sexual minorities, through validation and emotional support, which, in turn, may lead them to engage in lower levels of substance use.

Intergenerational Transmission of Intimate Partner Violence and Its Impact on Adolescent Relationship Attitudes: A Qualitative Study

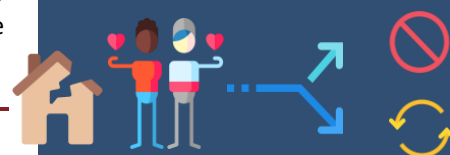
B.F. Antle, E.A. Karam, A.P. Barbee, D. Sullivan, A. Minogue, & A. Glover

Journal of Loss and Trauma 25(1) | DOI: 10.1080/15325024.2019.1634894

Youth exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) can have a lasting impact on behavioral and emotional functioning, cognitive functioning and attitudes, physical functioning, and social functioning. Adolescents may seek ways to make sense of exposure to IPV and many desire more information and knowledge about IPV. This qualitative study used interviews from participants in a healthy relationship program to understand the impact of IPV in the family of origin on adolescent values and attitudes toward relationships and the impact of the program on attitudes and skills. Analysis resulted in the following themes: negative parental relationship models, family of origin domestic violence occurs in many forms, rejection of family of origin violence, repetition of violence and relationship patterns, and relationship education programs can change attitudes and skills.

Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) influenced adolescents in different ways: some rejected the pattern of violence and relationship problems and some repeated that pattern. Relationship education can change attitudes around IPV and can improve relationship skills.

(Antle et al., 2020)



"You Soak It Up Like A Sponge": Urban African American Teens' Perceptions of the Determinants of Dating Abuse Perpetration and Victimization

H.L. Storer, A.S. Madkour, & C. Kendall

City & Community 19(4) | DOI: 10.1111/CICO.12479

This study explored African American teens' perceptions of dating abuse perpetration and victimization, centering youth voices in effort to contextualize the complex causes of adolescent dating abuse (ADA). Across the interviews was an overarching theme that experiences of dating abuse were strongly influenced by the adolescent's broader lived social environment. Explanations of ADA victimization included victim personal characteristics and exposure to family violence. Reasons cited for ADA perpetration were unresolved trauma and loss, perpetrator home environments with lack of male role model, and use of drugs or alcohol. Individual characteristics were nested in mistreatment in their family units. Findings indicate that teens' exposure to family violence could socialize ADA or it could lead the teen to "turn away" from violence. Prevention programs targeting African American teens should emphasize raising awareness of the multitude of community- and societal-level factors, mechanisms of oppression, and equipping youth with the tools to deconstruct dominant systems of oppression.

Teens' "turning away" from violence represents an important counternarrative: exposure and socialization to violence does not always perpetuate violence but can actually discourage violence.

Dating abuse prevention efforts should focus not only on individual and interpersonal factors, but also community- and societal-level factors that impact risk of violence.

(Storer et al., 2020)

The Role of Gender in Adolescent Dating Abuse: An Interpretive Meta-Synthesis of the Qualitative Literature

H.L. Storer, K. Schultz, & S.L. Hamby

Social Work 65(4) | DOI: 10.1093/SW/SWAA032

Despite strides toward gender equality, gender stereotypes and gendered social scripts persist in youth and young adults' dating relationships. This study examines how gender influences and contextualizes the lived experience of adolescent dating abuse (ADA) across diverse adolescent samples. The influence of gender on the lived experience of ADA included: impact on the victim, gender-specific attitudes and norms regarding dating abuse, and masculine gender norms as antecedents of abusive relationships. Attention to gender socialization and the contextually different lived experiences of youth with diverse gender identities essential to preventing ADA and promoting healthy relationships.



Across studies, teens described a gendered social environment that influences relationship interactions, rationales for perpetration, and perceptions of violence severity.

Promoting safe and healthy relationships for youth of all genders requires attention to the situational complexities and multiple identities that individuals occupy—including gender.

Context Matters: Factors that Influence African American Teens' Perceptions and Definitions of Dating Violence

H.L. Storer, A. Talan, A. Swiatlo, K. LeSar, & M. Broussard

Psychology of Violence 10(1) | DOI: 10.1037/vio0000232

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a significant public health and social justice issue, particularly among African American adolescents in underserved and resource-poor urban environments. This study investigated the range of contextual factors that can influence African American teens' perceptions of ADA. Participants varied in their assessment of specific acts as dating violence. Many contextual factors influenced categorizing of scenarios. When engaging African American youth in dating violence prevention, contextual factors should be considered. Prevention efforts need to be multilevel and target both upstream social norms that may perpetuate myths about dating violence and strengthening teens' knowledge and attitudes via exposure to culturally appropriate dating violence curricula.



Contextual Factors that Influenced Categorizing of Scenarios as Dating Violence/Abuse

- Physical violence perpetrated by male-identified individuals
- Potential for the behavior to escalate the severity of the act and initiate further acts
- Presence of overt coercion and control
- Intention of the perpetrator to cause harm
- Perceived culpability of the victim
- Considering the depicted act a typical relationship behavior
- Normalization of the depicted behavior

"Leaving Was A Process, Not An Event": The Lived Experience of Dating and Domestic Violence in 140 Characters

H.L. Storer, M. Rodriguez, & R. Franklin

Journal of Interpersonal Violence 36 | DOI: 10.1177/0886260518816325

One of the most frequent refrains heard in the public discourse on intimate partner violence (IPV) is why do they stay? Using data generated from the #WhyIStayed Twitter campaign, this study examined Twitter users' reasons for staying in their abusive relationships. Results showed myriad emotional, interpersonal, and structural barriers they faced to leaving abusive relationships. Primary themes of factors that influenced their decision-making processes were: (a) impact of IPV on personal well-being; (b) lack of knowledge about the dynamics of abusive relationships; (c) not identifying as a stereotypical IPV victim; (d) fear of reinforcing stereotypes; (e) internalizing social messages about relationships; (f) structural barriers, and (g) leaving takes time. This study underscores that "readiness to leave" is a multifaceted concept influenced by various factors and is more of a process than a "turning point."



#WhyIStayed

Structural barriers to leaving abusive relationships included:

- Lack of shelter
- Police inaction/criminal justice-based responses
- Child custody issues
- Immigration status



Studies featured in this issue of Research Bytes focus on improving relational characteristics and dynamics to promote overall wellbeing. The findings of these projects highlight the need for interventions to assess influencing factors at all levels (micro, mezzo, and macro) to best address issues faced by members of our community.

