

**National Teen Dating Violence Awareness  
What Your Teen Needs to Know**

PONTIAC, Michigan, February, 6, 2009 ...This week marks yet another designation that those in domestic violence prevention and parents everywhere wish would go away. It is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week. But the facts are that one-third of teens report experiencing some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse.

Officials at HAVEN stress that teens and their parents must become informed of the signs and ways to prevent teen dating violence. How people respond to the violence will impact its duration and impact. When friends and family remain silent or excuse abuse, the abusive person is encouraged to continue the behavior. Peer influence for teens can not be underestimated. Therefore the message to teens has to be zero tolerance.

**What Teens Can Do:**

- \* Speak up when you see or hear about abuse. Your silence will do nothing to improve the situation, and may make things worse.
- \* Learn about domestic violence dynamics and help your friend or family member recognize their abusive behavior.
- \* Your friend or family member will probably try to blame the victim, and will look to you to support that. Don't--the victim has done nothing to provoke the abuse, no matter what her or his behavior has been.
- \* Let the abusive person know that help is available, and they can change if they want to.

**What HAVEN is Doing:**

HAVEN has both prevention programs and support groups for teens. Their Teen Women's Support Group is for teenage women who have suffered trauma from dating violence, sexual assault, or child abuse. The Prevention Education programs include Skills for Violence-Free Relationships which concentrates on raising middle school and high school students' awareness of sexual assault, dating violence, and sexual harassment.

Students are informed about the causes and consequences associated with violence. Presentations are given in a classroom setting over a one to three day period. The program identifies the societal myths surrounding rape and violence; the definition of sexual assault, power and control, consent, and coercion; information about date rape drugs, ways to support a friend and how to seek help at HAVEN.

Schools requesting services are charged a nominal fee for service. To request a school presentation or to speak to someone directly, please contact HAVEN's Prevention Education department at (248) 334-1284 ext.680.

HAVEN's Crisis Support Line is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week: (877) 922-1274  
HAVEN is the Oakland County non profit organization that has been working towards

eliminating domestic violence and sexual assault by building violence-free communities one family at a time for over thirty-years. It is a nationally recognized non-profit offering treatment and prevention services across Oakland County and the surrounding communities.

For more information about HAVEN, its programs or events, please contact Melissa Bunker at [marketwrite@comcast.net](mailto:marketwrite@comcast.net) and (313) 886-9074.