Navigating Romantic Teen Relationships
Region 2 Parent Resource Center

The Situation
Youth need updated, research based information on current youth issues and concerns such as relationships, boundaries and Character Counts. 49.3% of high school students in the Minot area report that they have had sexual intercourse (2013 ND Youth Risk Behavior Survey-grades 9-12). 8.4% of high school students in the Minot area reported that someone they were dating had physically hurt them and 7.2% reported that they had been physically forced to have sexual intercourse (2013 ND Youth Risk Behavior Survey-grades 9-12).

Extension Response
The Region 2 Parent Resource Center offers a variety of programs for youth and often partners with the schools. Navigating Romantic Teen Relationships (NRTR), a program developed by NDSU Extension-4-H and Youth Development, addresses many issues that are current and pertinent to teens. The program objectives are: identify key components of healthy and unhealthy relationships; describe gender differences related to relationships; recognize key steps in the progression of relationships; use the 6 Pillars of Character as guidelines for a healthy relationship/identify qualities/characteristics wanted from a relationship. The NRTR series was facilitated at Minot Public Schools 4 times (3 series in December 2012 and 1 series in December 2013).

Impacts
* 48 juniors/seniors attended the sessions as part of their Family and Consumer Science class. The program evaluations indicated:
  * Before the program 42% of the students were very or absolutely sure that they could identify the key components of healthy and unhealthy relationships. After the program, 96% were very or absolutely sure that they can identify healthy vs. unhealthy relationships.
  * Before NRTR, 29% of the participants were very or absolutely sure that they could use the 6 Pillars of Character as a guideline for healthy relationships.

Upon completion of the series, 79% reported that they were very or absolutely sure that they could use the Pillars as a guideline.
  * Before attending NRTR, 56% of the students were very or absolutely certain that they could identify qualities/characteristics that they wanted from a relationship. After participating in the program 90% reported that they could identify what they want.
  * 90% of students reported that the program content is effective.
  * Students also reported that as a result of the program, they plan to:
    * Treat others a little nicer; think through things; stand firm on my (personal) boundaries: treat my girlfriend with respect; work on myself; go slower; make sure my relationship is healthy; use what I have learned in a relationship; work on all my relationships with friends and family; use the 6 Pillars of Character; be more careful about who I date; be more understanding and apply what I have learned to my relationships; be myself.

Feedback
* Students reported the most important concepts that they learned. These are some of those responses:
  * How to deal with breakups; how to build a relationship; you can have standards; know your limits; relationships aren't perfect; how to find help for abuse; honesty, loyalty and trust are important; leave unhealthy relationships; the progression of a healthy relationship; respect is key; what it takes to have a good relationship and better character; gender differences; qualities I want from a relationship.
  * Students also stated: "I enjoyed the activities and the knowledge learned." "Perfect! Thanks!" “It was very good and interesting.” “Can you come every week?”

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