

Am I responsible to help peers in abusive dating relationship?

Learning from a qualitative study

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Dating Violence



- * Dating violence is a pattern of **assaultive and controlling behaviors** that one person uses against another in order **to gain or maintain power and control** in the relationship.

The abuser intentionally behaves in ways that cause fear, degradation and humiliation to control the other person.

(Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, 2014)

Dating Violence in HK

- * In the international dating violence study (IDVS),

Hong Kong has a prevalence of
25.6% of physical assault victimization; and
13% of sexual coercion victimization
among university students

(Chan et al., 2008)



Dating violence in HK

- * In another study, 46% of participants in HK students reported attempted physical assault against dating partner which was a significantly higher than 30% for US participants.
- * The HK sample also shows higher rates in the frequency and severity level in injuries caused to the partners

(Chan & Stratus, 2008)

Who would they go to when they encountered dating violence?

- * Chinese culture is rooted in Confucianism, and it is generally believed that individual represents the family.
- * Violence is regarded as a shameful issue that should be hidden in order to save the face of the entire family (Shen, 2011).

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CONFUCIANISM

Who would they go to when they encountered dating violence?

- * In Chinese population, help-seeking behaviour appears to be passive, secretive and not open to outside professional helps (Lee & Law, 2001).
- * A study found that Chinese intimate partner violence victims tended to seek help from an informal system, especially friends (41%) and family (35%) (Wang & Chen, 2004).

Who would they go to when they encountered dating violence?

- * Black et al. (2008) studied the willingness of the youth to tell someone about their dating violence victimization experience and found all the respondents reported that they will talk to peers.
- * It is also found that the perception about severity of the problem serves as the motivator to seek for help (Timlin-Scalera, Ponterotto, Blumberg, & Jackson, 2003).



Who would they go to when they encountered dating violence?

- * In this connection, exploration of young people's attitude towards dating violence and perceived barriers in responding peers in abusive relationships would help in further development of dating violence prevention and intervention for university students.

Methodology

- * Students were recruited at Dating Café Ambassador Programme to educate peers in helping to prevent dating violence in university campus.
- * In the 7.5 hr face-to-face workshop, ambassadors can acquire better understanding of dating violence and necessary skills in assessing and responding to peers in need.

School of Nursing
Department of Social Work and Social Administration
CEDARS

Dating Café
Stop Dating Violence Ambassador Programme

CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME
WEDNESDAY FEB 19, 26 & MAR 5 | 6PM – 8:30PM
APPLY ONLINE NOW!

Wanna HELP?
“She makes him think he’s not going to be anything WITHOUT her.”
“Her boyfriend tries to brainwash her.”
“She said that he doesn’t mean to hurt her.”

What Will You Gain?
✓ Better understanding of dating violence
✓ Practical skills to early detect abusive relationships
✓ How to help your peers in abusive relationships

Training language:
Cantonese
Training methods:
• Mini-lecture with discussion
• Self-assessment
• Practical skills demonstration
• Experiential exercises
Training Programme Fee: \$40
Training handbook & light refreshment provided
For enquiries, please contact:
Dr Janet Wong, School of Nursing at janetyh@hku.hk

Methodology



- * Participants (n=16) were followed throughout the workshop and two focus group interviews were conducted based on an interview guide. Two researchers collected data in the form of field notes.
- * Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. Two researchers independently categorized the data from written field notes and form interpretative codes.
- * Codes were identified after consensus meeting.
- * Ethical approval of the study has been obtained from HA HKWC/HKU Ethics Committee. All participants signed informed consents before the study.

Interview questions

- * How do you define a dating relationship?
- * What is the definition of dating violence?
- * Why don't you help peers in abusive relationship?
- * Do you perceive it is your responsibility to help?



Results

How do you define a dating relationship?

Code: Look at dating seriously

University students look at dating seriously, as a commitment and a way to find out a life-long partner.

**“Dating means recognition of the relationship with the other person. It is a commitment.”*

**“Dating is a way to assess for suitability.”*

**“Dating is a process for the couple to gain consensus in their views on different aspects. If they can get a consensus, long term relationship may follow.”*

**“In a dating relationship, the couples don’t need to say anything. They feel comfortable even in silence.”*

What is the definition of dating violence?

Beginning of the 1st session of the workshop.....

**“Dating violence means unresolved conflicts between couples”*

**“Actions which make the partner feel embarrassed and uncomfortable, or even stressful in the relationship.”*

**“Forcing the partner to do something he/she doesn’t like.”*

What is the definition of dating violence now?

At the end of the 2nd session.....

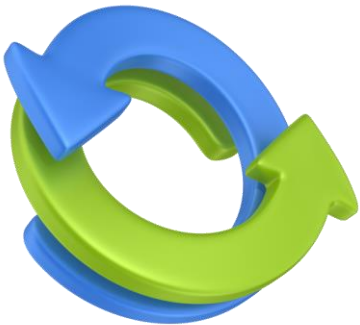
**“Dating violence is beyond physical harm.”*

**“I never thought that controlling behaviours are actually a kind of dating violence.”*

**“How people interpret the behaviour determines whether the behaviour is abusive or not. Some people may think that it is just a way their partners show their concerns.”*

What is the definition of dating violence now?

- * *“The intention of the behaviour also gives a hint of whether the action is abusive or not.”*
- * *“In dating violence, the victim can be an abuser at the same time.”*
- * *“There is a cycle of violence. Violence acts accumulated and become more frequent as time went by.”*



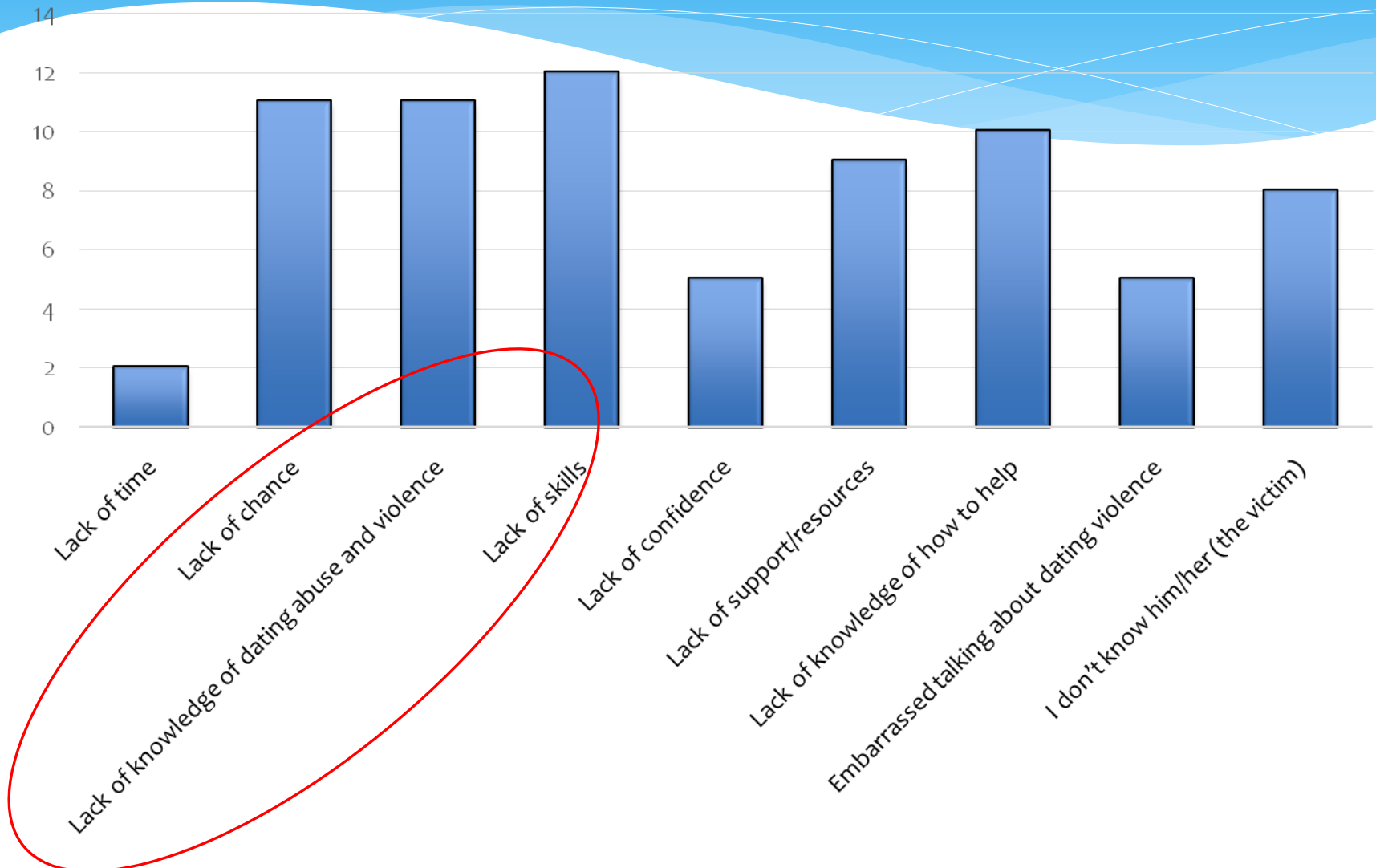
What is the definition of dating violence now?

- * Participants were able to identify the definition of dating violence after two sessions of training. Their focus was not only limited to behavioural tactics but also the power and control intention.
- * Code: Dating violence is not only behavioural tactics but also the power and control intention



Why don't you help peers
in abusive relationship?

Why don't you help peers in abusive relationship?



Why don't you help peers in abusive relationship?

- * “In the program, we learnt that **communication** is important when we try to help others to face the abusive relationship. With better understanding of dating violence, my **readiness to help** the others was enhanced.”
Knowledge
- * “Before this program, I used to give a lot of my own opinions to my friends who have conflicts with their partners or have an abusive relationship. Now, I know that instead of giving advice, allowing the victims to vent is also very important.”
Skills
- * “Before, I thought that the relationship of my friends and their partners are just unhealthy but now I know they are actually abusive, like controlling others financially.”
Chance

Do you perceive it is your responsibility to help?

- * “After knowing more about dating violence, I think I have the responsibility to promote this message to my significant others.”
- * “I am willing to fulfil my role as an ambassador, however, many people are not used to share the unpleasant experiences in a dating relationship with others. The victims need courage to speak out and this is an obstacle we would face as an ambassador.”

Do you perceive it is your responsibility to help?

- * “I think the homework we had in the ambassador training programme helps us to engage in assessing peers for healthy and unhealthy relationship. It provided us an opportunity to enlighten others with related knowledge also.”
- * “I saw incident of dating violence in public. But I have reservation in helping as I have concern on my own safety.”

Do you perceive it is your responsibility to help?

- * *“I think I would have to do some self-reflection as well. I realized that some of my behaviours are actually abusive.”*



Do you perceive it is your responsibility to help?

- * Code: Willing to fulfill their role as ambassadors
- * Code: Difficulties in initiating the discussion on dating violence as obstacles of dating violence prevention

Conclusion

- * Students used to have a relatively low awareness of dating violence. A clear definition of dating violence increases their awareness.
- * Equipped with related knowledge and skills, students' readiness in dating violence prevention has been enhanced.
- * Awareness of evaluating their own relationship has been improved as well.
- * Trained ambassadors perceived that they have the responsibility to help others who encountered dating violence.
- * Under reporting of incidents and difficulties in initiating the discussion on dating violence are identified as obstacles of dating violence prevention.

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