

A Controlled Evaluation of Expect Respect Support Groups (ERSG): Preventing and Interrupting Teen Dating Violence among At-Risk Middle and High School Students

(OMB no. 0920-0861 exp. date 08/31/2013)

Proposed Changes: Justification and Overview

18 January, 2012

Project Description

The prevalence and consequences of teen dating violence (TDV) make it a public health concern that requires early and effective prevention. In order to protect young people and build an evidence-base of effective prevention strategies, evaluation of TDV prevention programs is needed, including those programs currently in the field. Expect Respect Support Groups (ERSG) were identified by CDC through the empowerment evaluation process as a program in the field (Austin Independent School District) that is in need of rigorous evaluation. The ERSG program has demonstrated favorable, albeit preliminary, results in a pre-post program evaluation, which strongly suggests that a controlled evaluation is needed to more rigorously examine program effects. The proposed study has two primary goals and two exploratory aims. The primary goals are: 1) To evaluate the effectiveness of ERSG in preventing and reducing TDV, and 2) To assess if at-risk male and female middle and high school students in schools receiving ERSG report increased healthy conflict resolution skills, compared to at-risk students in control schools not receiving ERSG. The exploratory aims are: 1) To evaluate whether the effectiveness of ERSG is enhanced by the presence of a universal, school-wide prevention program, and 2) To examine whether participants with different characteristics respond differently to the intervention. For example, we will examine whether outcome for boys or girls are the same.

Proposed Changes

The requested changes to this study are non-substantive, will not change the burden associated with this study, and will not change the scope of work for this study.

- To more efficiently collect data from students participating in the study, we are requesting a minor change to the OMB protocol. In terms of data collection, the original OMB protocol states:

“Data collection will be conducted by qualified individuals, other than the school’s Expect Respect facilitator, who are employed by the contractor. Data collectors will have training in working with at-risk students. The following steps will be implemented by CDC to safeguard the objectivity of the evaluation: 1) all data collectors (also referred to as survey administrators) will receive human subjects’ training; 2) documents will be developed to support data collection which contain standardized responses to common questions asked during data collection. To develop these documents CDC will work with SafePlace to identify particular words, instructions, or issues in the survey that may be unclear to students with lower verbal ability. Standard responses will be drafted so that data collectors across schools will provide similar answers to participants; 3) CDC will prepare data collection flow charts that will provide detailed instructions to the data collector and will ensure fidelity to standardized survey administration; 4) CDC will

conduct site visits, will hold bi-weekly or monthly conference calls with the contractors to provide oversight and discuss data collection procedures; 5) CDC in collaboration with the study consultant will provide consultation via email and conference calls to the contractor; and 6) when participants complete the survey they will place the survey in an envelope and seal the envelope. The survey administrator will then deliver the sealed envelope to the data manager. The data collectors will not have access to the survey responses. As the CDC principal investigator on the CDC IRB protocol Dr. Greta Massetti is responsible for overseeing the scientific and human subject's integrity of the study. These aspects of oversight in addition to other measures determined to be appropriate over the course of data collection will be put into place to ensure that CDC will be able to have confidence in the results of the evaluation of Expect Respect. It should be noted that it is necessary to have the data collectors in the room with the students while they complete the survey both to manage emotional upset that may occur when reading survey questions about relationships and to answer clarifying questions about the survey questions or process (e.g., skip patterns)."

We request to change the protocol so that all trained data collectors, some of whom may be ERSG facilitators, can administer surveys associated with this study. Currently, ERSG facilitators are responsible only for conducting intake assessments and facilitating weekly ERSG sessions, while a separate trained data collector administers the baseline, completion, and follow-up surveys. Allowing facilitators to receive training and be available to administer the surveys will help address two critical data collection issues that have emerged. The first issue is the challenge of ensuring that data are collected within the required timeframe for the study. The study protocol requires that the pre- and post-tests data be gathered within specific and limited timeframes, which has proven to be difficult with the current number of data collectors. The addition of facilitators as data collectors would help guarantee the timely collection of data. A second issue is the difficulty in locating students who miss the group survey and therefore require individual survey administration. Since the facilitators work more closely with students and have greater connections to the schools, the facilitators are uniquely able to help with the process of locating and administering the survey to these hard-to-reach students, thereby minimizing the amount of missing data in the evaluation.

In order to maintain privacy and objectivity, the same measures that are currently in place for data collection will continue to be implemented. Training for survey administrators assures that students' names or other identifiable information will not be associated with responses provided. Moreover, survey administrators receive extensive training in administering the surveys to maintain student confidentiality, privacy, and objectivity in students' responses. Further, respondents will be told that the information obtained from all of the surveys will be combined into a summary report so that details of individual questionnaires cannot be linked to specific participants. To ensure privacy, students will not use any identifiable information on survey responses. Instead, all students will receive a random identification number.

To further ensure students' privacy, survey packets are assembled for each student. The package includes a manila envelope, 2 copies of the student assent form, and a copy of the

survey with the student's SafePlace identification number, the school identification number, and the facilitator's identification number filled in on page 2. A sticky note with the student's name on it is affixed to the package prior to survey administration but is removed after handing out the survey. The rooms where survey administration takes place have enough space for each student to have privacy while answering the questions. Survey administration rooms are relatively quiet so that the number of distractions for students are limited. After students have completed the survey, they are instructed to place the completed survey in the Manila envelope and to seal the envelope, which remains sealed until they are opened at SafePlace and data are ready to be entered into the computer. In control schools, surveys will still be administered in a one-on-one setting with only a research assistant or intern and the student present in an empty office or classroom to ensure student privacy