

Attachment TTT: Parent Consent for Student Participation in Focus Group

Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships™ Initiative

Division of Violence Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Student name: _____

Date: _____

School ID number: _____

<Date>

Dear Parent:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is conducting a research project. It is called "Evaluation of CDC's *Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships*[™] Initiative." Your child's school has received funding to conduct one of two teen dating violence prevention programs. The purpose of this study is to see how these programs work. We would like to talk to students before, during and after these programs to see how and if the programs work. A representative group of students at each school have been nominated to participate in a small group discussion (called a "focus group") with researchers. On behalf of CDC, NORC at the University of Chicago will invite students to join the focus group discussion for 90 minutes.

Your child does not have to participate. If s/he does participate, his/her information will be kept completely confidential, or private. We will not record your child's name as a participant in the focus group, nor write down your child's name next to comments your child makes during the discussion. **Please take a few moments to read the enclosed information statement.** We hope it will help you to understand what we will be doing and how. We hope you will be as excited about this project as other parents have been.

Sincerely,

Bruce G. Taylor, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, NORC Evaluation Contract
CDC's Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships[™] Initiative



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Parent Consent for Student Participation in Focus Group

Researchers' statement to parents

We are asking permission for your child to take part in a small group discussion (or focus group session) at his/her school. Your child is among a representative group that has been nominated to participate in the focus group. This letter will give you information about the study so you can decide if you want your child to take part in the focus group. Please read the information carefully. You can call the number at the end of this letter to ask any questions you have about the research. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want your child to take part in the focus group.

What is the purpose of the study?

Through a CDC research project called "Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Dating Relationships", your child's school has received funding to do one of two kinds of teen dating violence prevention. Your school is one of <#> schools in <city> who have received this funding. Preventing teen dating violence means stopping it before it starts. To do this we have to make sure teens' first dating relationships are healthy ones. CDC's "Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Dating Relationships" initiative aims to promote respectful, nonviolent dating relationships among youth. We are doing this by involving youth, parents, schools and the community. The purpose of this research study is to see how these programs work. We have to talk to teens during and after these programs to see how and if the programs work.

What will the focus group require of my child?

A focus group is a special group discussion that includes the research staff from NORC at the University of Chicago and about six or seven other students from your child's school. The focus group session will take about an hour, which may require two class periods. We will meet with this small group of students in a private room to be able to talk about the project and also about things students do, what they think about things, and their relationships with other people, including boyfriends or girlfriends or people they hang out with. We will ask students what they think about the classroom and other school activities for this project. We will also ask the students about whether they think any of the project activities have changed other students' attitudes or behaviors about violence and harassment in their school. Although some of the questions we will ask during the Focus Group session will be about relationships with boyfriends and/or girlfriends, your child does not need to have a current or past boyfriend or girlfriend to participate in this discussion.

We will take notes during the group meeting in order to understand the students' experience with the project activities. Our notes will be locked in a cabinet in our office in Bethesda, Maryland. We will destroy our focus group notes as soon as we complete our project report. Our job is to ask the students questions, to keep the group focused on the topic we want to discuss, and to make sure we don't run out of time. We really want the students to feel free to talk together as a group, so if the students are talking



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about the questions we asked, we will mostly just listen to their ideas and take notes. Our discussion will take about 90 minutes to complete.

How will my child's privacy be protected?

To protect your child's privacy, we will not write down his/her name on any of our notes we take during the Focus Group. Our research team will keep your child's private information (his/her name and his/her answers to the focus group questions) and our notes from group discussion locked in our research offices in Bethesda, Maryland. We will not record how much individual children personally talked in the focus group meeting or what they said.

Although we value your child's participation in this Focus Group, we understand that they may not be comfortable telling the entire group what they have to say out loud. In these cases, if student prefer, they can write down their ideas or thoughts. We will provide several sheets of paper and a pencil so that students can write down any ideas that they do not feel like sharing with the entire group. When students are finished writing down their ideas, they can put the paper in an envelope that we will provide and seal/close the envelope. Students should feel free to write down all of their ideas that they do not want to share with the entire group on the provided paper. Your child will not have to put his/her name or initials anywhere on the paper or the envelope. At the end of the focus group, students will turn in their envelopes to the researcher. No one else will be able to see their ideas except for the researchers. At the end of each focus group, we will collect any envelopes and place them into a larger manila envelope. We will review and analyze the contents of the envelopes at our office in Bethesda and once completed we will seal the envelopes in the larger manila envelope and secure that in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal Investigator's (Dr. Bruce Taylor) office. We will take steps to assure that the paper documents/envelopes are kept secure in our Bethesda offices.

Who will see my child's comments made during the Focus Group?

Your child's comments made during the Focus Group are confidential and totally private. Other parents, teachers, and your child's friends will never see your child's answers. Only the researcher will see your child's contribution to the small group discussion. After the researcher leaves the focus group session, they'll store your answers with a school code that does not identify students personally, so after that they won't know whose answers are whose.

All information that we gather from students will be confidential, or private. We have obtained something called a "Certificate of Confidentiality" from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This gives us even more protection for your child's privacy. With this Certificate, we cannot be forced to give any information about your child to any court or legal proceedings, even if they tried to get it. We might have to give information to DHHS if they needed to evaluate our study, but that is not likely.

The only other time that we might have to share information is that we are required to protect your child by reporting to authorities if your child tells us that they are being hurt by an adult or planning to hurt themselves or someone else.



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The information we collect could be really helpful to other researchers who are trying to improve the lives of teenagers too. Since this study is funded by the Centers for Disease Control, which is part of the government, the information we collect will be made available to other researchers who are interested in whether the programs we are conducting work and how teenagers think and act. However, no information that could be used to identify you will be released to other researchers—that means that there won't be any way for anyone to know that you participated in a focus group or know how you answered the questions.

Does my child have to do this?

No, your child does not have to participate. Your child's participation in this focus group is voluntary. You or your child can say that they don't want to participate in the focus group and that is fine. Your choice will not affect how teachers treat your child. Your child would also be free to stop participating at any time without consequences. It is important that your child feel comfortable answering the questions honestly. Your child would not have to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer.

What if the questions are upsetting?

We don't think you'll be upset by our general (not personal) discussion, but if you are, <Name of School Guidance Counselor or Other Adult> is available to talk to and to help. You can also talk to your parents or another adult about the focus group. We will also give you a list of places in your community you can call to get help with any of problems that we discuss in the focus group session.

What are the risks?

Because you will be speaking with us in a group of other students, there is the possibility that other participants in the focus group meeting will tell other people about your participation. Group members may repeat what you have said during the meeting to other people. However, we will ask everyone in the group to keep what is said in the group confidential, or secret. We hope you will feel comfortable enough to be open and honest in your responses to our questions.

Are there any benefits to participating?

There are no direct benefits to participating in this Focus Group. However, you may benefit from knowing that your participation has the potential to help future middle school and high school students have healthy and safe relationships with peers and dating partners. Your ideas may help teachers around the country think about how to make their schools safer places.

What will be done with the results of this Focus Group?

Your comments will be combined with other students' comments and summarized in a report. Then we will write a report on the focus group results from many schools and other data we collect. We will never write the students' names in any reports. We will be careful not to include information that could be used to identify the students who participated in the focus group. Only general themes and some direct things you say will



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be included in our final report. In the event that we use something you said directly, we will only describe those words as coming from “a student in <site name>” instead of using any names.

OTHER INFORMATION

All the information your child gives as part of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your child’s name will not be recorded. Only the school will be identified in focus group notes and the school identification will be kept confidential in all summary reports. Information collected will not become part of school records. No one at the school will see your child’s responses. The results of this project will be only reported in ways that do not identify individual participants.

All summary reports from focus group sessions will be kept in locked files and will be retained for a minimum of [three years] after the end of the study. Participants’ personal information (name, birthdate, etc.) will be kept for a minimum of [three years]. Only researchers at NORC at the University of Chicago and CDC will ever have access to any personal data or other identifying information.

This study is being funded by CDC, which is part of the federal government. Therefore, the data collected as part of this study will be made available to researchers. Other researchers may also examine whether the program worked and how certain things might be related to dating behaviors in teens. No information that could be used to identify your child will be released to these researchers. There would be no way for anyone else to know who was in the study or to know any information that might identify who is in the study.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If you or your child decides to not participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalties or consequences. Please keep a copy of this information sheet for your records. Feel free to contact us at <email> or <1-800-number> if you have any questions or concerns. We are also willing to answer any questions or concerns that might arise after the survey. We will provide referral information if your son/daughter would asks us for assistance related to teen dating issues, bullying, or sexual harassment. You may also contact NORC’s Institutional Review Board Office (Michael Kuby, the NORC IRB Manager, toll-free at 1-866-309-0542). We look forward to working with your child. We do not anticipate any foreseeable risks to your child. We think that our research will be helpful in designing better intervention programs to improve teen dating relationships and to assist in creating a safer school environment for your child.

HOW DO I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION?

If you agree to have your child participate, you need to sign below, and return this form [to your child's school].

By signing this form, I am saying I want my child to participate.

Child Name (please print) Grade Level

Parent Signature Date

Parent Name (please print) Date

By signing this form, I am saying I do not want my child to participate.

Child Name (please print) Grade Level

Parent Signature Date

Parent Name (please print) Date