Unequal partners: A pilot evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

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Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

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the Faculty of the Undergraduate
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by Katherine Felicity Kowalk

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Accepted by the faculty of the College of Health Sciences, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

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Abstract

**Background:** Teens are considered a vulnerable population in regards to intimate partner violence with reported rates of 1 in 11 high school students being physically hurt by a significant other. Educational programs have been developed for teens to promote healthy relationships. This research examines whether “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick provides relevant, engaging information to educate high school students on the importance of healthy relationships.

**Methodology:** Students at Harrisonburg High School were invited to attend a voluntary program consisting of “Unequal Partners” lessons during extended learning times. The program consisted of a pilot sample of three lessons from the “Unequal Partners” curriculum, one lesson per week for three consecutive weeks. Students completed surveys at baseline and following the final lesson. Following the program, a sample of students were surveyed in order to assess attendance barriers.

**Results:** Pre-test and post-test data revealed that knowledge scores increased from 64.58% to 83.33% after implementation of the “Unequal Partners” lessons. Additionally, attitudes of students toward the program were largely positive. The mean score for all 8 items measured using the 5-point Likert scale was 4.57. The post program survey determined that academic obligations and lack of advertisement were main reasons for low attendance for the program.

**Discussion:** The pilot of the “Unequal Partners” curriculum at Harrisonburg High School shows promise successful in increasing student knowledge on healthy relationships, communication skills and helpful resources.
Background

Violence and abuse toward an intimate partner is the most common form of violence in modern day society (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). Additionally, many victims of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence were first victimized at a young age, confirming that youth are particularly vulnerable to dating violence (Breiding, 2014). Nationally, about 1 in 11 high school students (9.4%) report being physically hurt by a significant other (Miller et. al., 2015). Although students seem to be aware that intimate partner violence is an issue, the problem remains largely hidden from the public, without sufficient education, intervention and funding sources (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). Recent research suggests students emphasized the need for access of information regarding characteristics of a healthy relationship and support in dating violence prevention (Luft, Jenkins & Cameron, 2012; O’Leary et al., 2006).

Literature has continually stated that adolescents seek both romantic and peer-group relationships as a source of intimacy and social contact (Luft, Jenkins & Cameron, 2012). Consequently, these emerging relationships in adolescence serve as the building blocks for partnerships in adulthood (Connolly & McIsaac, 2011). The quality of adolescent relationships has the potential to have lasting effects on the capacity for long-term committed relationships in adulthood as well as self-esteem and the development of personal values surrounding romance, intimate relationships and sexuality (van de Bongardt et al., 2015). Thus, as educators of future generations, we have an obligation to encourage healthy relational development amongst our youth. By educating students on the importance of healthy relationships, what characteristics of a healthy relationship are, as well as provide resources to students experiencing an unhealthy relationship. It is the goal that students will be more likely to engage in healthy behaviors such as
positive communication skills, smart dating strategies and conflict management skills (Adler-Baeder et al., 2007).

Relationships are an integral part of adolescence with the potential to contribute to the development of interpersonal competence, positive future relationships and self-exploration (Florsheim & Moore, 2008). Healthy dating relationships also aide in the development of social and communication skills as well as self-confidence and self-esteem (Davies, 2000). In contrast, unhealthy relationships in adolescence could promote risky behaviors, such as casual sex, sexually transmitted infections (STDs), unintended pregnancy and drug use (Florsheim & Moore, 2008). Thus, it is important to foster healthy relationships at a young age to reduce risky behaviors and negative health outcomes in adolescent populations.

There are few education programs designed to combat relationship violence among adolescents. “Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships” initiative is a multicomponent program designed for students ages 11-14 (Miller et al., 2015). The initiative aims to enhance skills and attitudes related to healthy relationships by way of implementing a school-based curriculum, engaging parents/caregivers, teachers, using social marketing strategies, and working on policy and environmental change. A 2014 study of 1,517 participants showed promising evidence to indicate that the initiative reduces risk factors predictive of teen dating violence (Miller et al., 2015).

Similarly, the “Shifting Boundaries” intervention program is another curriculum developed to combat teen dating violence. This intervention includes a school-based curriculum consisting of 6-10 weeks of material, as well as school-based interventions such as increased faculty security in school hot spots and temporary school-based restraining orders if needed (Taylor et al., 2015). The curriculum included consequences of dating violence, laws related to
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dating violence, personal boundaries, and the role of bystanders (Taylor et al., 2015). Research has shown this program to be effective in reducing sexual violence victimization by peers and dating partners (Taylor et al., 2015). In addition, researchers concluded that 6 months after the implementation of the “Shifting Boundaries” intervention, reported sexual harassment victimization as well as reported frequency of total dating violence decreased (Taylor et al., 2015).

Additionally, the “Safe Dates” program was developed as a school-based intervention to reduce dating violence in adolescents and is one of the most widely used dating abuse prevention programs used in the United States (Foshee et al., 2014). This evidence-based program consists of a ten-session curriculum, a play performed by students, and a poster contest (Foshee et al., 2014). Research has shown that “Safe Dates” is an effective curriculum to reduce dating violence as many as four years after the program (Foshee et al., 2004).

“Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick is designed for students ages 14-17 and is complete with individual lessons, aimed at educating students about healthy relationships and increasing understanding of consent and power (Montfort & Brick, 2007). This program teaches adolescents about these important topics, enabling them to take control of their relationships. Although this program is similar in nature to other programs with the same goal, “Unequal Partners” has limited research to determine efficacy in providing knowledge and skills to students surrounding healthy relationships.

The goal of this research was to evaluate the “Unequal Partners” curriculum by implementing a sample of the lessons to students at Harrisonburg High School (HHS) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This sample of lessons implemented at HHS included the importance of
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healthy relationships, communication styles and provision of local resources. The evaluation included changes in knowledge about the content, attitudes toward the content of the lessons and feasibility of implementation of the lessons at the high school. Questions measuring attitudes toward the content of the lessons were created using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) constructs which have been associated with effective implementation (Damschroder et al., 2009).

Methodology

Participants

Phase 1: Implementation of “Unequal Partners” Curriculum

Participants consisted of high school students at Harrisonburg High School (HHS) in grades 9-12 who had maintained a specific grade average (A’s, B’s and C’s) during the previous 3 weeks of school. Students who met these criteria were eligible to enroll in programs during extended learning times (ELT) held Wednesdays from 9:00-10:00am. The ELTs are not graded courses. Students are permitted this additional learning opportunity as a reward for good grades. Of the 92 students that signed up to attend the ELT program, 10 students came to the first session, with 6 of those students completing all three sessions. Therefore, the participation rate was 9.2%. Of all students surveyed on the pre-test, the mean age was 15.5 years, with a minimum age of 14 and a maximum age of 17. The sample consisted of 80% female respondents and 20% male respondents.

Phase 2: Follow-Up Attendance Survey

Participants consisted of 46 high school students who voluntarily completed a short survey during lunch periods on March 13, 2018 intended to assess attendance barriers. No identifiable information was collected during this survey.
Procedures

Phase 1: Implementation of “Unequal Partners” Curriculum

After obtaining IRB approval (protocol # 17-0556), participants were recruited via an informational booth at lunch periods on October 23rd and 25th, prior to the first program date. At the time of recruitment, students were informed that this ELT contains an optional research component.

Each ELT met for 3 consecutive weeks between 9:00am and 10:00am on Wednesdays. This ELT included lessons pre-approved by HHS administrators from “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick and published by The Center for Sex Education. The lesson outlines and objectives are attached (See Appendix A). The lessons were facilitated by the primary investigator during the Fall 2017 semester. Prior to implementation, the primary investigator attended a facilitator training associated with the “Unequal Partners” curriculum offered by several faculty members with experience implementing healthy relationship programs.

At the beginning of the first session (first of the three week consecutive sessions), students read and completed a written consent form. Students had the option to choose to participate only in the program and not in the research component, or participate in both. Students also had the option to withdraw from the ELT altogether. Students ages 18 and older completed a written consent form (See Appendix B). Students who were under the age of 18 at the time of the study, completed an assent form (See Appendix C). As per the school’s request and advice, parental consent forms (See Appendix D) were mailed directly to the parents of minors with the option to withdraw their child from the research component of the program as well as the program itself. This method of consent/assent was proposed by Harrisonburg High
School based on their experience with substantial difficulty in obtaining signed parental consent forms by sending forms home with students. None of the parents/guardians of the students who signed up for the program withdrew consent for their child to participate in the program. Prior to each lesson, students who had signed up for the program were reminded of their selection of this ELT via text message using the “Remind” application.

Prior to the presentation of curriculum material, students who had consented/assented to participate in the research component completed a paper-and-pencil survey as a pre-test. They created a unique participant ID to link participant surveys across time. This pre-test consisted of knowledge and attitude questions related to the content of the lessons as well as demographic information (See Appendix E). All participants who had consented/assented were instructed to take a copy of the survey and complete all, some or none of the survey. This prevented participants from feeling coerced to complete the survey. The surveys were placed by the students in an envelope and sealed.

All of the lessons were facilitated by the primary investigator under the direction of one of her faculty advisors.

At the conclusion of the third ELT session attended by participants, students who had consented/assented completed a paper-and-pencil post-test survey that included the same questions as the pre-test and process evaluation questions (See Appendix F). The process evaluation questions measured student’s attitudes toward the program.

**Phase 2: Follow-Up Attendance Survey**

Participants were recruited to complete a voluntary follow-up survey during lunch periods on March 13, 2018 (See Appendix G). The survey was completed via Qualtrics, an online research tool. At the time of the survey administration, students were incentivized to
complete the survey with candy. The survey was available to all students of all academic levels regardless of whether or not they participated in the ELT program. Follow-up surveys did not contain any identifiable information and thus were not linked to the student. Data from these surveys was examined to further describe the feasibility of this program at Harrisonburg High School and identify possible barriers to participation.

**Measures**

**Phase 1: Implementation of “Unequal Partners” Curriculum**

The pre- and post-test surveys consisted of both knowledge and attitude questions. The pre-test consisted of 18 items which was completed in approximately 5-7 minutes. In comparison, the post-test consisted of 16 items which were completed in approximately 7-10 minutes. The knowledge questions assessed the students on their understanding of characteristics of a healthy/unhealthy relationship, the most effective communication style, characteristics of different types of communication styles, and strategies for asking for help when needed. The knowledge questions were measured true or false and were scored based on the number answered correctly. For example, students responded to the following true or false question: “If you are dating someone, it is O.K. if one person always decides where you go together”. Thus, students who answered correctly (“False”), earned one point, whereas a student who answered incorrectly (“True”), would earn zero points. All true or false questions were summed scored out of the number the student answered correctly and a percentage correct was calculated. The same sequence of questions were asked on both the pre-test and the post-test in order to determine if the curriculum effectively educated students on the assessed measures.

The attitude questions assessed the student’s attitudes toward the curriculum (“The activities in this program are beneficial for high-school students”), student’s attitudes toward the
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benefit of the program (“This ELT has the potential to benefit my current and/or future relationship.”) and the student’s attitudes toward the facilitator’s skills (“The facilitator of the program created an engaging ELT”). These were measured using a Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The Likert-scale consisted of 5 points ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). For example, students responded to the following question “The level of the material is age appropriate for high-school students”, and were asked to answer based on a 5-point Likert-scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Thus, a score closer to “5” would indicate positive attitudes toward the program whereas scores closer to “1” would indicate negative attitudes toward the program. These attitudes questions were only assessed at post-test.

These questions were constructed using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR), which consists of constructs and domains to aide in the implementation process and explain research findings (Damschroder et al., 2009). The domain of evidence strength and quality was used in order to determine if the program produced desired outcomes (Damschroder et al., 2009). For example, students were asked “In this ELT, I learned new information regarding the topic that was presented”. Additionally, the domain of design quality and packaging was used in order to measure perceived excellence in how the intervention was presented and assembled (Damschroder et al., 2009). For example, students were asked “The facilitator of the program created an engaging ELT”. Lastly, the construct of implementation climate was used to determine if this program would be supported within Harrisonburg High School (Damschroder et al., 2009). For example, students were asked “I would recommend that my friends participate in this ELT”. Constructing test measures using the CIFR allows for valuable feedback on the implementation to be collected clearly and effectively.
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The open-ended items were qualitative in nature. Thus, these items assessed personal opinions and responses to the “Unequal Partners” program. For example, students were asked “What information presented in this ELT was the most useful and why?” and “What is the one thing you will take away from this ELT? Why this one thing?”.

Lastly, demographic questions were asked in order to describe the sample population. For example, students were asked “How old are you?”, “What gender do you identify as?”, “What race do you identify as?” and “What is your current relationship status?”.

**Phase 2: Follow-Up Attendance Survey**

The follow-up survey consisted of “Yes” and “No” responses as well as open-ended, “fill-in the blank” responses. The “Yes” and “No” responses were analyzed to assess the common responses of the participants. For example, students were asked “Do you have the grades to attend elective ELT’s?” and “Were you informed of the “Unequal Partners” ELT opportunity?”. These “Yes” and “No” responses were analyzed to determine the cause of the low attendance experienced in phase 1 such as academic requirements, and lack of sufficient advertisement. The open-ended questions were analyzed were assessed qualitatively. For example, students were asked “What ELT did you attend instead of “Unequal Partners?” and “Why did you decide not to attend “Unequal Partners”? The open-ended questions were intended to give students a chance to describe their reasoning for not attending the “Unequal Partners” ELT program.

**Analysis**

**Phase 1: Implementation of “Unequal Partners” Curriculum**

Due to the small sample size, frequency data was used to describe the initial responses to survey questions and compare these responses to the post-test frequency data. The mean was also
calculated to identify the average response for survey questions. These averages were examined among the pre- and post-test to explore whether knowledge was gained as a result of the program.

**Phase 2: Follow-Up Attendance Survey**

Frequency data was used to describe the participant responses. In addition, measures of central tendency were also calculated to assess the typical scores for the research data.

**Results**

**Phase 1: Implementation of “Unequal Partners” Curriculum**

Mean scores for the pre-test (N=10) were 7.75/12 = 64.58% (SD= 1.09, N=10) with a minimum score of 6 and a maximum score of 9. In comparison, the mean post-test score (N=6) was 10/12 = 83.33% (SD= 0.89, N= 6) with a minimum post-test score of 8 and a maximum score of 11. Using this data, it can be determined that knowledge of characteristics of healthy relationships may have increased after the implementation of the “Unhealthy Partners” curriculum.

Attitudes toward the program were measured using a Likert-scale, open-ended questions as well as fill-in the blank questions created with the guidance of CFIR as noted above (Damschroder et al., 2009). The mean score for all 8 items measured using the 5-point Likert scale was 4.57. Data for individual items measured are summarized in Table 1. This data implies that the students valued the content of the “Unequal Partners” ELT program.

There were six open-ended questions at the conclusion of the post-test survey. Each of which were completed by the six students that attended all three program sessions. In response to the first question, “What information presented in this ELT was most useful and why?”, responses were mixed.
“Communication styles. It’s not that we didn’t already recognize styles of communication, but it’s helpful to see them described and categorized” - Caucasian, female, 15.

“The first day, someone outside of the problem telling me it’s not O.K. to be treated that way” – Caucasian, female, 17.

Following up, students were also asked, “What information presented in this ELT was the least useful and why?”. Answers to this question generally had a common theme.

“None, it was all good.” - Caucasian, female, 17.

“Most of it was pretty useful.” - Caucasian, female, 15.

“Transgender hotline because I’m not transgender.” - Caucasian, male, 15.

The question “What is the one thing you will take away from this ELT? Why this one thing?” produced a variety of responses.

“That we need to confront a person making us uncomfortable. I still probably won’t/can’t, but now I know that it’s a thing I need to do.” - Caucasian, female, 15.

“Don’t be hesitant to ask for help. I’ve struggled doing so a couple times and I know I shouldn’t be.” - Other race, female, 15.

“I will take away the idea that there are many resources for help because when you have a problem it is easy to feel alone or that no one will understand.” - More than one race, female, 17.

Students were also asked, “What activity used in this ELT was the most useful and why?”

“Identifying the goods and bads portrayed in T.V. relationships; it shows the type of behavior we notice and how we respond to it.” - More than one race, female, 17.

“Demonstrating styles of communication; can see what it actually feels like.” - Caucasian, female, 15.

“Fictional character’s relationships sticky notes for a deeper understanding of relationships was the most useful.” – More than one race, male, 14.

Following up, students were asked, “What activity used in this ELT was the least useful and why?”
“Acting out a situation for not everyone can relate.” - More than one race, male, 14.

“Nothing” - Caucasian, female, 17.

Lastly, students were asked to provide any other feedback about the program.

“I think you should do it again.” - Caucasian, female, 17.

“Very useful program.” - Other race, female, 15.

“At first, a little awkward, but the small group was helpful and works better than and larger group. Awkwardness was just because it’s a new environment.” - Caucasian, female, 15.

Overall, the feedback received from the students regarding their attitudes toward the “Unequal Partners” curriculum was positive. Based on their written responses and the increase in knowledge scores after the program implementation, it can be inferred that the program was beneficial in both educating students on topics surrounding healthy relationships as well as providing engaging activities and material that kept the students interested.

**Phase 2: Follow-Up Attendance Survey**

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to assess attendance barriers of the “Unequal Partners” ELT program (N= 46). The first four questions of the survey were “Yes” or “No” questions. The first question asked “Did you attend the ELT program entitled “Unequal Partners” on one or all of the following dates: 11/01/17, 11/08/17, or 11/15/17?” Among the 46 students surveyed, only two students surveyed participated in the ELT program (4.3%). The 44 students who did not participate in the ELT (95.7%) were prompted to answer the subsequent 6 questions.

The second question stated “Did you sign-up for “Unequal Partners” at the informational table set up during lunch periods on 10/23/17 or 10/25/17?” Among the 44 students who continued the survey, three students stated that they had signed up for the ELT program at the
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informational table but did not attend (6.5%). The remaining 89.1% of students who did not attend the ELT, did not sign-up for the program.

The third question assessed eligibility for the program; given that students must have passing grades in their academic classes in order to be eligible to participate in an elective ELT program. In response to the question “Do you have the grades to attend elective ELT’s?” 31 students replied “Yes” (67.4%), while 11 students replied “No” (23.9%). This finding suggests that the majority of the students surveyed have sufficient grades to be eligible to attend elective ELT programs and therefore would be eligible to attend “Unequal Partners”.

The fourth question assessed the advertisement of the program in order to determine if students who were eligible to participate in elective ELT programs were informed of the “Unequal Partners” opportunity. In response to the question “Were you informed of the “Unequal Partners” ELT opportunity?”, 13 of the students who did not participate in the program stated “Yes” (28.3%), while 29 of the students stated “No” (63%). This finding suggests that advertisement of this program was lacking and therefore the majority of the students were not aware of the “Unequal Partners” ETL opportunity. Data from phase 2 is further summarized in Table Two.

The final two questions were open-ended and allowed for students to input their own answers. Responses to the question, “What ELT did you attend instead of “Unequal Partners?” were mixed. Of the 44 students asked this question, 27 of the responses included an academic obligation (61.36%), such as “study hall”, “avid class”, “algebra 2 honors, and “the library”. This finding suggests that the majority of the students surveyed use ELT time for academics instead of elective activities.
In response to the question “Why did you decide not to attend “Unequal Partners?”
students had various different responses. Of the 44 students surveyed, 11 (25%) justified their
reasoning for not attending to be academic, while 19 (43.18%) stated that they were ill informed
of this opportunity.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Overall, it was determined that “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and
Healthy Relationships” by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick may be a beneficial tool in increasing
students’ knowledge of healthy relationships. The scores of the knowledge questions on the pre-
and post- tests increased 18.75% on average following the implementation of the “Unequal
Partners” lessons. In addition, students reported positive attitudes toward the program itself such
as the content, activities and facilitator competency. These findings are consistent with relevant
literature that reported positive outcomes for healthy relationship programs similar to “Unequal
Partners” such as “Shifting Boundaries”, “Start Strong” and “Safe Dates” (Taylor et al., 2015,
Miller et al., 2015, Foshee et al., 2004). Relevant boundaries to program participation include
academic obligations and lack of program advertisement.

Results of this pilot study concluded that the “Unequal Partners” curriculum may be
effective in increasing knowledge on topics surrounding healthy relationships among high school
students. Similar findings were present in studies analyzing similar curricula such as “Start
Strong”, “Shifting Boundaries” and “Safe Dates” (Taylor et al., 2015, Miller et al., 2015, Foshee
et al., 2004). Although students who participate in educational programs on healthy relationships
gain knowledge on these topics, research has shown that although reasoning and knowledge may
increase, it may not predict behavior among adolescents and young adults (Kuther & Higgins-
D’Alessandro, 2000). Thus, further research is warranted in order to determine the long-term effects of the “Unequal Partners” curriculum on relationship quality.

One significant barrier faced throughout phase one of the study was a lack of participation in the program. Of the 92 students who initially signed up for the program, only 10 students attended the first session. This number decreased to a sample size of 6 students who completed all three lessons. This finding differs from the sample sizes of other studies analyzing curricula educating about healthy relationships. One key difference between this study and other studies that analyze the effectiveness of healthy relationship programs, is that the “Unequal Partners” program was completely voluntary as compared to other studies in which the program was integrated into the class curriculum (Taylor et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2015). The low sample size experienced in this pilot study suggests that students are unlikely to participate in course material if it is not mandated. Although the response rate of 9.2% was lower than expected, it is generally accepted for pilot studies to have a small sample size because their purpose is to obtain a basic understanding of the feasibility of the new condition, problems of data collection strategies and proposed methods and assess adequacy of instrumentation (Hertzog, 2008). In addition, this “Unequal Partners” study lacked the monetary and personnel resources that are seen in other studies evaluating similar programs which may contribute to student attendance (Taylor et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2015).

Attitudes toward the “Unequal Partners” curriculum were measured using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to help explain findings and evaluate the implementation progress (Damschroder et al., 2009). Five major constructs are utilized by the CFIR: intervention characteristics, outer setting, inner setting, characteristics of individuals and process (Damschroder et al., 2009). Each construct contains multiple domains
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which were used in order to create the process evaluation for this study. CFIR aided researchers in determining if “Unequal Partners” was implemented effectively. By using CFIR, researchers were able to effectively determine that students participating in the “Unequal Partners” ELT learned new information regarding the topics that were presented, found the facilitator to be effective and supported the program within Harrisonburg High School. CFIR allowed the researcher to gain valuable feedback on the program which will be beneficial in future research on the curriculum.

Some limitations of this study include limited sample size, participants omitting questions and lack of participant honesty when answering the survey questions due to the classroom environment in which the survey was administered. Literature has shown that there is a noticeable trend toward higher response rates and less missing data among those who completed an online survey compared to a paper-and-pencil survey (Lonsdale, Hodge & Rose, 2006). In addition, online surveys provide a higher degree of privacy to the respondent (Hoeglinger, Jann & Diekmann, 2013). In the future, it may be beneficial to administer pre- and post-tests using an online survey system to increase confidentiality, respondent honesty, and internal validity.

To promote program attendance, incentives were offered to students. At sign-up dates, students were given candy as an incentive if they signed up for the program and took a student consent form or assent form to review. If the student attended all three sessions, they were entered into a raffle for gift cards to local restaurants such as Chipotle and Chick-Fil-A. However, this was not enough to get a large majority of the students to attend. Additionally, students were reminded of their selection of this ELT via text messages using the “Remind” application. Despite these efforts to obtain a large sample of students in the program, the sample size remained very low. Perhaps more enticing incentives could be offered to students if more
funding allowed to increase attendance. However, one unintended benefit of the small group size was that the students mentioned they preferred the smaller group because it made them feel more at ease after the initial awkwardness subsided.

Despite efforts to promote attendance to “Unequal Partners” ELT programs, attendance was still a main limitation of this study. Phase 2 of this research study assessed these limitations and provided clarity to justify these issues. Based on responses to the attendance survey, academic obligations and lack of advertisement were the main reasons for the lack of attendance. One suggestion to remedy this issue would be to waive the grade requirement for this ELT so more students would be granted the opportunity to attend regardless of academic standing. Perhaps, including a portion of the “Unequal Partners” curriculum into the academic curriculum in classes such as health. Another suggestion would be having the administration promote this ELT by including this opportunity in the school-wide announcements more frequently, or having health and physical education teachers promote this program, perhaps giving extra credit for attendance. Demographic data was not provided to include statistics on the proportion of students attending HHS who are eligible to attend elective ELT’s, but this data may be beneficial in determining the feasibility of continuing this program at HHS as an elective course.

Although the phase 2 survey was beneficial in gaining useful information on attendance barriers, there were also limitations associated with the administration of this survey. First, the survey was only administered on one day of the school year which perhaps did not give all students the opportunity to participate. In addition, this survey was voluntary which may have catered to a certain group of students, not allowing for a representative sample of all students at HHS. Lastly, administering the survey during lunch periods posed a time constraint for students. Many students approached the survey table after they had finished eating which did not allow for
much time to have students complete the survey before their next class began which may have led students to rush through the survey and not dedicate considerable thought to their responses.

Since research is lacking in regards to evaluation of the curriculum “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships”, further evaluations should be conducted using more of the lessons as well as a larger sample in order to increase validity. The feasibility of the implementation of “Unequal Partners” in Harrisonburg High School is still questionable due to student’s academic obligations during extended learning times and limited advertising opportunities. This pilot study has proven to be effective in increasing student knowledge on healthy relationships, communication skills and helpful resources, thus the future for “Unequal Partners” is promising.
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References


Retrieved March 26, 2018, from https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm


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### Tables

**Table 1**

*Measures of Central Tendency for Student Attitudes Toward Unequal Partners Lessons (N=6).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This ELT has the potential to benefit my current and/or future relationships.</td>
<td>4.67 (0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this ELT, I learned new information regarding the topics that were presented.</td>
<td>4.17 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of this material is age appropriate for high-school students.</td>
<td>4.67 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material in this program is beneficial for high-school students.</td>
<td>4.83 (0.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of the activities is age appropriate for high-school students.</td>
<td>4.67 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in this program are beneficial for high-school students.</td>
<td>4.17 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facilitator of the program created an engaging ELT.</td>
<td>4.80 (0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend that my friends participant in this ELT.</td>
<td>4.83 (0.41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2
*Assessing Sample Population Attendance Barriers.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>“Yes” % (N)</th>
<th>“No” % (N)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you attend the ELT program entitled “Unequal Partners” on one or all of the following dates: 11/01/17, 11/08/17, or 11/15/17?</td>
<td>4.3 (2)</td>
<td>95.7 (44)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you sign-up for “Unequal Partners” at the informational table set up during lunch periods on 10/23/17 or 10/25/17?</td>
<td>6.5% (N=3)</td>
<td>89.1% (N=41)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have the grades to attend elective ELT’s?</td>
<td>67.4% (N=31)</td>
<td>23.9% (N=11)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you informed of the “Unequal Partners” ELT opportunity?</td>
<td>28.3% (N=13)</td>
<td>63.0% (N=29)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix / Appendices
Appendix A
Session 1: Warning Signals

Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:
1. Identify at least three common behaviors that signal a relationship is not honest, equal, responsible and/or respectful.
2. List at least two ways to respond if they were confronted with a partners’ behavior that warn of problems in the relationship.

Rationale:
Recognizing the signs that a relationship in unhealthy or even abusive can be challenging. Many relationships involve controlling or manipulative behaviors that go unnoticed could in fact be warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. People of all ages continue relationships even when there are clear signs that their partner does not respect them and the relationship is damaging to the person’s emotional and/or physical health. Often individuals deny the seriousness of the situation or minimize the extent to which their own needs or wishes are being discounted by their partners. In this lesson participants examine behaviors that could be problematic, as well as more significant warning signs.

Materials Needed:
- Sticky notes that are three different colors, enough for each participant to have one of each color
- Three signs, prepared with one of each of the following: HEALTHY, UNHEALTHY, SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN
- Easel paper/whiteboard
- Pens/pencils for all the participants
- Handout: Warning Signals

Introduction and Ground Rules:
Facilitator:
Thank you in advance for your participation today. My name is Katherine Kowalk and I am an honors student at James Madison University completing a project to complete my senior honors thesis.

Before we begin, please read, sign and return the following consent/assent forms to me. (Place in survey box) Please note you are able to participate in the lesson today without taking part in the study portion of the project but that must be indicated on your form. If you are under 18 years of age, your parents will receive a consent form in the mail and they will be able to withdraw you from the study portion or the program entirely.

This is the first session in the series of three sessions. Based on your attendance today, I will be working with this group for three consecutive weeks. Just a reminder that if you participate in all three weeks of this program, you will be entered into a raffle to win a prize.

I want us to have a good discussion today, but I realize that these topics can be challenging and complex. In order for us to create an environment where people are comfortable sharing, we have some ground rules for us to adhere to today.

Provide handouts and read over them aloud, having students participate in reading.
In order to determine if this program is successful, I would like to ask you all that have consented to take a survey to assess your initial knowledge of healthy relationships. Please complete this survey to the best of your ability and when you are finished, turn it over so I can collect them.

Pass out pre-test
Please note that the pre-test asks you to create a unique student code- this is used for data collection purposes and should not be shared with anyone. I’ll keep a master list of your names and codes in case you forget or your parent does not want you to participate.

Self-Care:
These workshops may bring up emotions or memories for people and the topics can be uncomfortable. We want you to prioritize yourself. Feel free to consult one of your school counselors if you need to take a break. You can also debrief with us after the program.

Relationship Behaviors on TV:
1. Begin by asking participants to think about some of the television shows they watch regularly that depict people in relationships. Invite a few people to share some of their ideas.
2. Instruct participants to form pairs, and to select one couple that is shown in a television show that everyone is familiar with.
3. Once they have selected a couple, participants should identify some behaviors that the couple engage in, and determine if the behaviors that are portrayed are healthy, unhealthy or somewhere in between. Designate each category with a color of sticky note. For example, healthy behaviors can be written on green sticky notes. Instruct participants to write the healthy behaviors on one color note, unhealthy behaviors on another color note, and the somewhere in between behaviors on yet another color note. Ask each group to select one participant to share highlights of their discussion with the larger group.
4. Bring the large group back together and ask each small group to share what couple they chose and the behaviors they noted as healthy, unhealthy or somewhere in between. As each group shares, instruct the participants to place the sticky notes in the appropriate category on the wall.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are your observations about the distribution of sticky notes?
2. What conclusions can we draw about TV’s portrayal of relationships based on this activity?
3. How did you decide if behaviors were healthy, unhealthy, or somewhere in between?

Recognizing Warning Signals:
1. Introduce the activity by noting that sometimes people find themselves in an intimate relationship that is not good for them. Sometimes these relationships are damaging to their emotional and/or physical healthy, but for a variety of reasons the individual continues the unhealthy relationship. Ask for volunteers to name some of the behaviors that are unhealthy in a relationship, without naming names. Write the responses on the easel paper/whiteboard.
2. Distribute the HANDOUT: WARNING SIGNALS to each of the participants. Review the instructions, asking participants to use their imagination and decide what they would probably do in each situation.
3. Ask students to complete the HANDOUT, ask them to pair up with another participant and compare their answers. Then bring the whole group together for discussion. (At the end of the discussion, stress that all of these behaviors are negative signs in a relationship.)

Discussion Questions:
1. How did you decide which boxes to check?
2. If you checked the middle column for a behavior, what are you hoping to discuss about the relationship?
3. What might be the consequences of ignoring one of these behaviors?
4. What behaviors were clear signals to you that it was time to end a relationship?
5. What other behaviors not listed on the handout would be a warning signal to you that a relationship should end?
6. If you decided to discuss a behavior, how would you start the conversation?
7. What other tips would you give someone for discussing these behaviors with a partner?

Conclusion:
1. Conclude the lesson by asking participants to share on thing that they will keep in mind after participating in the lesson.
**Warning Signals**

Directions: A healthy relationship is honest, equal, responsible and respectful. Researchers have identified the behaviors listed in the chart as warning signs that a relationship is not honest, equal, responsible and respectful. Check what YOU would probably do in each of the following situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGINE YOUR PARTNER:</th>
<th>YOU WOULD PROBABLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Makes negative comments about your clothes, body or hair

2. Turns out to be much older- or younger- than they told you they were.

3. Always decides where you will go together.

4. Makes you hide things from your friends.

5. Puts your down in public.

6. Accuses you of fooling around with someone when you are not.

7. Calls and turns up unexpectedly in order to check up on you.

8. Ignores what you want to do.

9. Puts a guilt trip on you when you go out with your friends and family.

10. Keeps you away from your family.

11. Pushes you and then apologizes.

12. Pressures you to engage in sexual activities you are not comfortable with.
Session 2: What’s Up Doc?

Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:
1. Describe four different styles of communication
2. Identify the most effective style of communication as assertive communication
3. Describe at least two influences on making decisions

Rationale:
Young people frequently lack experience communicating what they expect in a relationship with a partner, particularly one who is several years older. When problems arise, they may hesitate to address them. This lesson gives participants the opportunity to examine dishonest, unequal, irresponsible or disrespectful partner behaviors, to identify alternatives for dealing with those behaviors, and to practice responses to those behaviors.

Materials Needed:
- Handout: Styles of Communication
- Educator Resource: Conversation Topics (copied and cut out)
- Four sheets of easel paper, prepared with one of each of the following terms and posted in different places around the room: PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE
- Easel paper/whiteboard
- Markers
- Easel paper with “JORDAN AND HIS MOM” example written out
- Handout: Assertive Message Board

Introduction and Ground Rules:
Facilitator: Welcome back everyone! Again I am Katherine Kowalk and this is the Unequal Partners - Healthy Relationships program. Is there anyone who wasn’t with us last week? (If so, refer to week one introduction and have participants fill out assent/consent forms and pre-test in the back of the classroom with faculty advisor while lesson begins)

Just a reminder of the ground rules we discussed last week. We need to keep these ground rules in mind during this session in order to create an environment where people are comfortable sharing. Would anyone like me to go over these rules again?

Another reminder: These workshops may bring up emotions or memories for people and the topics can be uncomfortable. We want you to prioritize yourself. Feel free to consult one of your school counselors if you need to take a break. You can also debrief with us after the program.

Styles of Communication:
1. Begin the lesson by distributing the HANDOUT: STYLES OF COMMUNICATION and quickly reviewing the information about passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive communicators.
2. Point out the four easel sheets throughout the room that have been pre-labeled with the four types of communication. Divide the group into four small groups and give each group a marker. Assign each group to one of the four categories listed on the easel sheets. Instruct the groups to write down as many fictional characters as possible that
communicate the most often using the communication style represented on the easel paper.
3. Review each list. Ask participants to make observations about what category has the most characters listed, which category was most difficult, and which category was easiest.
4. Identify a bad communication style as a class. Read off a topic from the Educator Resource: Conversation Topics and ask for two volunteers to enact a role play using the poor style of communication.
5. After the role-play, ask the group what characterized the communication demonstrated.

Discussion Questions:
1. Which styles of communication do you think are most common among your peers? In the media?
2. Which styles of communication is the most effective style? Why?
3. What styles of communication do you think are most often used in unhealthy relationships? Healthy relationships?
4. How does examining different styles of communication help our understanding of relationships?

The Benefits of Assertive Communication:
1. Discuss the importance of communicating effectively. Ask participants to list qualities of good, effective communication, and write them on easel paper or whiteboard Highlight again that assertive communication is one of the most effective styles of communicating, especially in relationships.

Discussion Questions: THINK, PAIR, SHARE
a. What does being assertive mean?
b. How does being assertive feel?
c. How would someone else know when you are being assertive- what are you saying or doing?
d. Think about a time when you were being assertive. What were you doing or saying? What were the results of being assertive?
e. Benefits of being assertive.

2. After a few minutes, ask participants to share some of the highlights of their conversations.

Three-Part Assertive Message:
1. Ask participants to think about a time they wanted to let someone know they were doing something they didn’t like, but decided not to because they were afraid of how the other person might react. Did they feel that they may come across as ineffective or feel awkward? Point out they sometimes it helps to practice what you want to say and how you want to say it.
2. Introduce the participants to the “three-part assertive message” format, during the JORDAN AND HIS MOM EXAMPLE written on easel paper.
JORDAN AND HIS MOM

Behavior  Jordan states what his mom is doing without sounding judgmental.  “When you leave out my medications for everyone to see every day”
Feelings  Jordan shares what he is feeling.  “I feel angry.”
Effects  Jordan tells her how what she is doing affects his life.  “Because it is a reminder to everyone that I am different or they think of me as sick.”

3. As a group review the parts of the message. Ask if anyone can identify the issue Jordan is facing, the feelings that Jordan has and what affect this issue has on Jordan.
4. Share another example of a three-part message:
   a. Behavior: “When you tell me to come home before my friends’ curfew”
   b. Feelings: “I feel frustrated”
   c. Effects: “It seems like I have no power in the decisions being made in my life.”
5. Review components of effective communication, such as use of “I” statements, clear descriptions of feelings instead of “you make me feel…,” and the effects of the issue.
6. Write this sentence stem on easel paper:
   a. ASSERTIVE MESSAGES HELP RELATIONSHIPS BY...
7. Ask participants to turn to a neighbor and work together to finish the sentence, coming up with at least two examples of the impact of assertive messages. After a few minutes, invite participants to share some of their ideas, listing them on the easel paper. Make sure the following points are listed:
   a. Focusing the issue on behaviors that are problematic, rather than saying the person is bad.
   b. Lowering the chance that you will violate the other persons’ rights.
   c. Lowering the risk of really damaging the relationship.

Practicing Assertive Messages

1. Ask participants to work together in groups to use the three-part assertive message format to change the previous conversation in the first activity among fictional characters into an assertive conversation. Distribute the HANDOUT: ASSERTIVE MESSAGE BOARD, which they can use to develop their messages.
2. Invite groups to share their messages and how they handled responses during their role-play.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to use the three-part message?
2. How did you handle a negative response?
3. What are some ideas for when someone doesn’t listen?
4. How can you use the three-part assertive message at home? With your friends? With your partners?
5.
Conclusion

1. Conclude the lesson by highlighting common themes and unique points in the discussion. Ask participants to share one thing they discussed they think will be useful in the future.
Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

**Handout**

**Styles of Communication**

**Passive Communicators ...**
- Fail to assert themselves.
- Ignore grievances or annoyances.
- Fail to express their feelings, needs or opinions.
- Speak softly or apologetically.
- Exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body language.

**Aggressive Communicators ...**
- Try to dominate others.
- Use humiliation to control others and criticize, blame or attack others.
- Speak in a loud, demanding and overbearing voice.
- Interrupt frequently.
- Have overbearing or intimidating posture.

**Passive-Aggressive Communicators ...**
- Appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt.
- Use subtle sabotage to get even.
- Use sarcasm.
- Deny there is a problem and have difficulty acknowledging their anger.
- Use facial expressions that don’t match how they feel.

**Assertive Communicators ...**
- State needs, wants and feelings clearly, appropriately and respectfully.
- Use “I” statements.
- Listen well without interrupting.
- Communicate respect for others while standing up for their own rights.
- Speak in a calm and clear tone of voice with a relaxed body posture and good eye contact.

**Source:** Adapted from University of Kentucky Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, (n.d.). The four basic styles of communication. Retrieved from http://www.uky.edu/hr/sites/www.uky.edu.hr/files/wellness/images/Conf14_FourCommStyles.pdf
Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

**Conversation Topics**

**Directions:** Cut out and distribute one topic to each group.

- One person wants the other to change their relationship status on Facebook. The other doesn't want to.
- One person sees that almost all the photos posted on their partners' page are liked by some other hottie. The other person says it's no big deal.
- One person asks the other for their email password. The other person wants to keep it private.
- One person is texting the other constantly. The other person is irritated with all the texting.
Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

Unequal Partners, Volume 1

Handout

Assertive Message Board

Directions: Use the chart below to develop an assertive message.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s happening?</th>
<th>What do you say?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips for Creating a Three-Part Assertive Message

- Describe the behavior in specific rather than vague terms. Keep it brief.
- Limit yourself to describing behavior. Do not try to guess the other person’s motives, attitudes, character and so on.
- Make your behavior statement a description, not a judgment. Assertive messages avoid name-calling, insults, cursing or judgmental words, for example, “you waste our money...”
- Stick to the real issue. If there is a bigger issue that needs addressing, deal with it.
- It’s important that your posture and body language show strength as well — stand or sit straight, maintain eye contact (if culturally appropriate) and speak clearly.
- Focus on a solution that both of you can agree to and accept.

Key Points about Communication

- Be intentional about your communication. Speaking to be understood means saying things in a way so that people will listen.
- Practice active listening. Listening to understand means to listen in a way that is receptive, not judging, and not reacting to what is being said. It often means trying on another person’s point of view or understanding how they might feel about something.
- Use assertive communication. Assertiveness means to stand up for yourself with confidence and be clear with yourself and others about what you want.
- Work together to solve problems. Problem solving includes these steps:
  - Identify the problem
  - Identify possible solutions
  - Evaluate possible solutions and choose one
  - Identify possible roadblocks or challenges
  - Identify ways to handle the roadblocks or challenges
Session 3: Finding Help

Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:
1. Describe at least three reasons why someone might need to help with a relationship.
2. Identify at least two people who might be helpful in different situations.
3. Describe how to search for help on the internet.
4. Demonstrate asking for help.

Rationale:
When faced with issues related to relationship abuse, young people are most likely to turn to a friend or peer first in order to get help or support. Among the most important things we can teach young people is how to find help when they need it, and to feel good about doing so, in case they need help themselves or are in a position to help someone else. This lesson examines types of problems someone might need help with and ways to reach out for help form a trusted adult and/or a local service organization.

Materials Needed:
- Easel paper/whiteboard
- Markers
- Computer, tablet or mobile phone with internet access and an internet connection; preferably multiple devices so that participants can gather into small groups to use the device together
- Finding Help: A Resource List

Introduction and Ground Rules:
Facilitator: Welcome back everyone! Again I am Katherine Kowalk and this is the Unequal Partners - Healthy Relationships program. This is the third and final session in the series of sessions so I am assuming everyone has completed the consent/assent form, correct? Just a reminder of the ground rules we discussed last week. We need to keep these ground rules in mind during this session in order to create an environment where people are comfortable sharing. Would anyone like me to go over these rules again?
Another reminder: These workshops may bring up emotions or memories for people and the topics can be uncomfortable. We want you to prioritize yourself. Feel free to consult my faculty advisor ____ if you need to take a break. You can also debrief with us after the program.

Types of Problems:
1. Write on easel paper/whiteboard:
   a. MOST PEOPLE HAVE “PEOPLE PROBLEMS” – AT LEAST SOMETIMES.

      Brainstorm a list of situations with other people that can be difficult for people who are ages 14-18, writing them on the easel paper/whiteboard. (ex. Do not agree with your parent’s rules, you are into the same person as your best friend)

2. Note that important think for participants to learn is how to go about finding help if they ever have a problem that seems overwhelming, or just plain difficult. Looking at the list; ask students to suggest a person who might be able to help with each of those people problems. Write down their responses next to each situation.

3. Mention that sometimes people may feel uneasy asking someone for help. Ask participants to share a few reasons why this might happen.
Asking Someone for Help:

1. Explain that it is important to know how to ask for help. It could even save a person’s life. Using the situations suggested earlier by participants or the samples below, ask for volunteers to rehearse asking for help.

Sample Situations:

- A girl is being ignored by three girls who used to be her best friends. She goes to her scout leader and says…
- A boy is being called “fag” by someone who posts on his Facebook page. He goes to his school counselor and says…
- A girl is getting constant text messages from her partner, who gets upset when she doesn’t respond. She goes to her friend and says…
- A boy is meeting up with older partners that he’s met online and through dating apps. He goes to his friend and says…

2. After all situations are completed, discuss them briefly:

Discussion Questions:

1. How can it be helpful for people in each of these situations to talk with someone they trust?
2. What could each person have done if the person they asked for help did not help very much, or at all?
3. What are some things adults could do to encourage young people to get help when they need it?

Getting Help from an Organization:

1. Note that while family members and other adults a young person knows are sometimes able to help, there are also many community agencies and organizations where professional helpers are available. Ask participants to suggest some useful agencies that have heard about and list them on easel paper/whiteboard.

2. Direct participants to gather into small groups to use the device available with internet access.

3. Select one problem from the list generated during the “Types of Problems” activity at the beginning of the lesson and ask participants how they might find a helping agency. Give participants time to browse and become familiar with resources listed. If they cannot find the appropriate agency, give hints and/or suggestions.

4. Repeat the process with several other problems. Be sure participants find agencies that could help if someone were concerned about domestic violence, child abuse, rape, incest, and unplanned pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection. Ensure that participants understand that the purpose of these community agencies is to help people and that participants have the right to ask for help.

5. Ask for a volunteer to select one of the problems and role-play calling an appropriate agency. You, the educator, act as the professional on the other end of the line. Discuss this experience briefly with participants.

Discussion Questions:
   a. How easy was it to find the appropriate agency?
   b. How do you know if an agency provides the services needed?
   c. What characteristics do you think an agency should have so that young people feel comfortable seeking services there?

Conclusion:
   1. To conclude, ask for a show of hands for the following:
      a. How many participants feel they have a good idea about how to find the help they or a friend might need?
      b. How many participants think they would encourage a friend to get help if the friend had a serious problem? Ask several participants to explain their reasons.

Post-Test:
In order to determine if this program is successful, I would like to ask you all that have consented to take a survey to assess your acquired knowledge on healthy relationships. Please complete this survey to the best of your ability and when you are finished, turn it over so I can collect them.
Pass out pre-test
Please note that the post-test asks for your unique student code that you created during the first week. Please indicate your ID code on this test as well.
Thank you so much for coming! If you have any questions my contact information is included on the consent/assent form or you may speak to my privately on your way out.
UNEQUAL PARTNERS: A PILOT EVALUATION IN HARRISONBURG HIGH SCHOOL

FINDING HELP: A RESOURCE LIST

Whatever your situation, help is always available. If you need information, guidance, support or just a caring person to talk to, there are supportive individuals and organizations to help with any issue. Depending on whom you feel most comfortable with, you can go to a ...

Parent/guardian
Teacher/professor
Other relative
Guidance counselor
Friend
Coach
Religious/spiritual advisor
Peer counselor/educator
Doctor
Family planning clinic
Nurse
Neighbor

Phone Numbers and Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABUSE &amp; VIOLENCE</th>
<th>PREGNANCY</th>
<th>SUICIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Child Abuse Hotline</td>
<td>Planned Parenthood Health</td>
<td>National Suicide Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-4-A-Child (422-4453)</td>
<td>Center Hotline</td>
<td>Lifeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stopbullying.gov</td>
<td>1-800-230-PLAN (7526)</td>
<td>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plannedparenthood.org</td>
<td>suicidepreventionlifeline.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALCOHOL/DRUGS</th>
<th>RUNAWAY HOTLINE</th>
<th>TRANSGENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Hotline</td>
<td>National Runaway Switchboard</td>
<td>Trans Lifeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-784-6776</td>
<td>1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)</td>
<td>1-877-565-8860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addictioncareoptions.com</td>
<td>1800runaway.org</td>
<td>translifeline.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse and Mental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-662-HELP (4357)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTY 1-800-487-4889</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samhas.gov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATING VIOLENCE</th>
<th>SEXUAL ASSAULT &amp; ABUSE</th>
<th>UNPROTECTED INTERCOURSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Domestic Violence</td>
<td>National Sexual Assault Hotline</td>
<td>Planned Parenthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline</td>
<td>1-800-656-HOPE (4673)</td>
<td>1-800-230-PLAN (7526)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</td>
<td>rainn.org</td>
<td>plannedparenthood.org</td>
</tr>
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<td>TTY 1-800-787-3224</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>thehotline.org</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loveisrespect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>loveisrespect.org</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EC Hotline
(Within 120 hours of intercourse!)
1-888-NOT-2-LATE
not-2-late.com
## Unequal Partners, Volume 1

### DATING VIOLENCE (continued)

- National Network to End Domestic Violence
  - nnedv.org
- Safe Horizon
  - 1-800-621-HOPE (4673)
  - safehorizon.org
- The Anti-Violence Project (LGBTQ+/HIV+)
  - 1-212-714-1141
  - avp.org
- The Trevor Project
  - 1-866-488-7386
  - thetrevorproject.org
- GLBT National Hotline
  - 1-888-843-4564
  - gilbhotline.org
- GLBT National Youth Talkline
  - 1-800-246-PRIDE (7743)
- Youth Resource
  - youthresource.com
- The Veterans Crisis Line
  - 1-800-273-8255
  - veteranscrisisline.net

### EATING DISORDERS

- National Eating Disorders Association
  - 1-800-931-2237
  - nationaleatingdisorders.org
- American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)
  - ashasexualhealth.org
- Planned Parenthood
  - 1-800-230-PLAN (7526)
  - plannedparenthood.org

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

### STALKING

- National Stalking Resource Center
  - victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center
Appendix B

Consent to Participate in Research (For participants 18 years of age and older)

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Katherine Kowalk, Dr. Dayna Henry, Dr. Katherine Ott-Walter, Dr. Laura Merrell, and Dr. Erika Collazo-Vargas from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to evaluate components of the “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” curriculum by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her senior honors thesis.

Research Procedures
Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a survey that will be administered to individual participants at Harrisonburg High School during enrichment periods. The survey consists of a series of questions related to healthy relationships. You may participate in the program without choosing to participate in the study component.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 5-10 minutes of your time during the fall semester enrichment periods for three consecutive weeks.

Risks
Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that participants may be triggered if they or someone they know has previously experienced an unhealthy relationship. During the program, information will be made available regarding resources to support individuals in unhealthy relationships. There are six school counselors in the building and several of them will be available to talk with students if necessary during the time the session if being held. However, it is anticipated that the majority of participants will experience no more than minimal risk by participating.

Benefits
Potential benefits from participating in this program include reflection on increased knowledge surrounding healthy relationships, development of conflict management skills, bystander intervention knowledge and skills, and local resources. Additionally, evaluating the program will provide information that will allow for the potential to design and implement potentially effective healthy relationship programs after this pilot study. Finally, results of the pilot program may help other districts design and implement more effective healthy relationship programs in their school system.

Confidentiality
Participation in the program and evaluation tools used for research will remain strictly confidential. Only researchers will have access to student responses. The results of this research will be presented at relevant professional conferences and may be published in relevant peer-reviewed journals. You will be identified in the research records by a
code name or number. The researchers retain the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researchers. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers will be destroyed.

*There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.*

**Participation & Withdrawal**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

**Questions about the Study**

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

- **Researcher’s Name:** Katherine Kowalk  
  **Department:** Health Sciences  
  **James Madison University**  
  **Telephone:** 240-405-2485  
  **Email Address:** kowalkkf@dukes.jmu.edu

- **Advisor’s Name:** Dr. Dayna Henry  
  **Department:** Health Sciences  
  **James Madison University**  
  **Telephone:** 540-568-4116  
  **Email Address:** henryds@jmu.edu

- **Advisors Name:** Katherine Ott-Walter  
  **Email:** ottwalmk@jmu.edu

- **Advisors Name:** Laura Merrell  
  **Email:** merrellk@jmu.edu

- **Advisors Name:** Erika Collazo-Vargas  
  **Email:** collazem@jmu.edu

**Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject**

Dr. David Cockley  
**Chair, Institutional Review Board**  
**James Madison University**  
**Telephone:** (540) 568-2834  
**Email:** cocklede@jmu.edu

**Giving of Consent**

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.
Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation Project in Harrisonburg High School

Appendix C

**YOUTH ASSENT FORM (Ages 13-17)**

IRB # 17-0556

Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation Project in Harrisonburg High School

We are inviting you to participate in this study because you are a high school student, and we are interested in the effectiveness of the “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” curriculum by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick.

This program will take you about 50 minutes every Wednesday during enrichment periods for three consecutive weeks. The study component of the program will take about 5-10 minutes at the end of each session.

At the beginning and end of each program, you will be asked to complete a brief survey regarding the program which will be kept confidential. During the program, you will participate in lessons on topics surrounding healthy relationships. These lessons will mimic a lesson you would attend during the academic day but the course content would be covering healthy relationships.

Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that you may be triggered if you or someone you know has previously experienced an unhealthy relationship. During the program, information will be made available to you regarding resources to support you if you may feel triggered. There are six school counselors in the building and several of them will be available to talk with you if necessary during the time the session is being held. However, it is anticipated that the majority of participants will experience no more than minimal risk by participating.

Your responses will be completely confidential. Your responses will only be seen by the researchers and no individual responses will be identified in the final presentation.

We have asked your parents for their permission for you to do this study. Please talk this over with them before you decide whether or not to participate.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask one of the researchers.

If you check "yes," it means that you have decided to participate and have read everything that is on this form. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form to keep.

_____ Yes, I would like to participate in the study.

_______________________________ ___________________________
Signature of Subject Date

_______________________________ ___________________________
Signature of Investigator Date

Katherine Kowalk, James Madison University kowalkkf@dukes.jmu.edu 240-405-2485
Appendix D
Parental Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent (For Participants under the age of 18)

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Katherine Kowalk, Dr. Dayna Henry, Dr. Katherine Ott-Walter, Dr. Laura Merrell, Dr. Dayna Henry and Dr. Erika Collazo-Vargas from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to evaluate components of the “Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power, Consent and Healthy Relationships” curriculum by Sue Montfort and Peggy Brick. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her senior honors thesis.

Research Procedures
You are receiving this letter because your child has provided assent to participate in the research study. If you wish to revoke parental consent for your child to participate in the research study, you will be required to sign this consent form and return it to the school. This study consists of a survey completed after attending a program at Harrisonburg High School during enrichment periods on Wednesday mornings, followed by an assessment of the program consisting of a series of questions related to healthy relationships. Your child may participate in the program without participating in the study component.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 5-10 minutes of your child’s time for three consecutive enrichment periods which are held from 9:00am-10:00am on Wednesday mornings. If you revoke consent for your child to participate in the research, they may choose to attend the enrichment program but not complete any of the research materials.

Risks
Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that participants may be triggered if they or someone they know has previously experienced an unhealthy relationship. During the program, information will be made available regarding resources to support individuals in unhealthy relationships. There are six school counselors in the building and several of them will be available to talk with students if necessary during the time the session if being held. However, it is anticipated that the majority of participants will experience no more than minimal risk by participating.

Benefits
Potential benefits from participating in this program include reflection on increased knowledge surrounding healthy relationships, development of conflict management skills, bystander intervention knowledge and skills, and local resources. Additionally, evaluating the program will provide information that will allow for the potential to design and implement potentially effective healthy relationship programs after this pilot study. Finally, results of the pilot program may help other districts design and implement more effective healthy relationship programs in their school system.

Payment for participation
There is no compensation for participation in the study or the research.

Confidentiality
Participation in the program and evaluation tools used for research will remain strictly confidential. Only researchers will have access to student responses.
The results of this research will be presented at relevant professional conferences and may by published in relevant peer-reviewed journals. Your child will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. The researchers retain the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child’s identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researchers. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers will be destroyed.

There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should you and your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child’s participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Researcher’s Name: Katherine Kowalk
Department: Health Sciences
James Madison University
Email Address: kowalkkf@dukes.jmu.edu

Advisor’s Name: Dr. Dayna Henry
Department: Health Sciences
James Madison University
Telephone: 540-568-4116
Email Address: henryds@jmu.edu

Advisors Name: Katherine Ott-Walter
Email: ottwalmk@jmu.edu

Advisors Name: Laura Merrell
Email: merrellk@jmu.edu

Advisors Name: Erika Collazo-Vargas
Email: collazem@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I do not give consent for my child to participate in the research.

____________________ (parent’s initial)
Unequal Partners: A Pilot Evaluation in Harrisonburg High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Child (Printed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Parent/Guardian (Signed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Researcher (Signed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Unequal Partners Lesson Evaluation
Thank you for your participation and feedback. Please place the completed evaluation form in the envelope before you return to your seats.

Please create a unique participant ID which is the first and last numbers of your house number and the first letter of your favorite color. This number will be used to link your responses anonymously if you choose to participate in additional session. (Example: If your house number is 1234 and your favorite color is red, your participant ID would be 14R).

Participant ID ____________

Some questions about you:

1) How old are you? ________________

2) What gender do you identify as?:
   - Woman
   - Man
   - Other ________________

3) What race do you identify as? (Check all that apply)
   - African American or Black
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Caucasian or White
   - East Asian
   - South Asian
   - More than one race
   - Other

4) What is your current relationship status? (Check one)
   - Exclusive committed relationship with one person
   - Dating/ hooking up with several people
   - Hooking up with just one person (casual relationship)
   - Not dating anyone right now (skip to question 4)

5) How long have you been in this relationship? (Please specify in weeks, months or years):
   ________________

Please indicate True (T) or False (F) to the following statements:

6) If you are dating someone, it is O.K. if one person always decides where you go together.
   - True
   - False

7) Being in a healthy relationship means that both partners are equal.
   - True
   - False
8) Assertive communication is one of the most effective styles of communication, especially in relationships.
   □ True
   □ False

9) If a partner is jealous, it means they care a lot about you.
   □ True
   □ False

10) It’s O.K. to feel guilty to spend time with people other than your partner.
    □ True
    □ False

11) A partner checking up on you unexpectedly is unhealthy.
    □ True
    □ False

12) Effective communication includes only stating your behavior and your feelings about the behavior.
    □ True
    □ False

13) Active listening involves “trying on” another person’s point of view.
    □ True
    □ False

14) It’s effective to be a passive communicator if you’re a woman.
    □ True
    □ False

15) It’s O.K. to interrupt people if you have something important to say.
    □ True
    □ False

16) Sometimes people feel uneasy asking for help when they have problems.
    □ True
    □ False

17) You should always go to a family member if you’re having a problem.
    □ True
    □ False

18) List three community organizations of agencies where professional helpers are available.
    1.
    2.
    3.

Thank you for your participation and feedback.
Please place the completed evaluation form in the envelope before you return to your seats.
Appendix F

Post-Assessment:

1) Indicate your participant ID (First and last numbers of your house number and the first letter of your favorite color): ____________

2) Has your relationship status changed since the first time you took a survey in this class?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes, choose one:
   - I started a new relationship
   - My previous relationship ended.

Please indicate True (T) or False (F) to the following statements:

3) If you are dating someone, it is O.K. if one person always decides where you go together.
   - True
   - False

4) Being in a healthy relationship means that both partners are equal.
   - True
   - False

5) Assertive communication is one of the most effective styles of communication, especially in relationships.
   - True
   - False

6) If a partner is jealous, it means they care a lot about you.
   - True
   - False

7) It’s O.K. to feel guilty to spend time with people other than your partner.
   - True
   - False

8) A partner checking up on you unexpectedly is unhealthy.
   - True
   - False

9) Effective communication includes only stating your behavior and your feelings about the behavior.
   - True
   - False

10) Active listening involves “trying on” another person’s point of view.
    - True
    - False
11) It’s effective to be a passive communicator if you’re a woman.
☐ True
☐ False

12) It’s O.K. to interrupt people if you have something important to say.
☐ True
☐ False

13) Sometimes people feel uneasy asking for help when they have problems.
☐ True
☐ False

14) You should always go to a family member if you’re having a problem.
☐ True
☐ False

15) List three community organizations of agencies where professional helpers are available.
1. 
2.
3.

10) Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This ELT has the potential to benefit my current and/or future relationships.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this ELT, I learned new information regarding the topic that was presented.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of the material is age appropriate for high-school students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material in this program is beneficial for high-school students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of the activities is age appropriate for high-school students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in this program are beneficial for high-school students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facilitator of the program created an engaging ELT.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend that my friends participate in this ELT.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please write in your responses to the following questions. In addition to answering the questions, please provide an explanation to help us understand your thoughts.
11) What information presented in this ELT was the most useful and why?

12) What information presented in this ELT was the least useful and why?

13) What activity used in this ELT was the most useful and why?

14) What activity used in this ELT was the least useful and why?

15) What is the one thing you will take away from this ELT? Why this one thing?

16) Please provide any other feedback about the program.

Thank you for your participation and feedback.
Please place the completed evaluation form in the envelope before you leave.
Appendix G
Unequal Partners Attendance Survey

1. Did you attend the ELT program entitled “Unequal Partners” on one or all of the following dates: 11/01, 11/08, 11/15?
   
   Yes
   
   No

If you answered “Yes” to question one, stop here and turn in your survey.

2. Did you sign-up for “Unequal Partners” at the informational table set up during lunch periods on 10/23 and 10/25?
   
   Yes
   
   No

3. Do you have the grades to attend elective ELT’s?
   
   Yes
   
   No

4. Were you informed of the “Unequal Partners” ELT opportunity?
   
   Yes
   
   No

5. What ELT did you elect to attend instead of “Unequal Partners”?

6. Why did you decide not to attend “Unequal Partners”?

Thank you for your feedback.