

# **ECHO Campus Violence Prevention**

UVA Wise Case Presentation: Our  
Students, Dating Relationships, & Media

# Who am I?

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Started back in August 2022

# The Case

UVA Wise has been seeing more reports of unhealthy dating behaviors that have potential to escalate.

These behaviors are *often* coming from a place of ignorance, and stop once a discussion is had.

# 01.

Context of the Case



# Setting

## **UVA Wise**

Small (~1500 students), rural area, predominantly white.

## **Surrounding Community**

Very conservative, bible belt. Resistant to providing sex ed past abstinence-only.

Recent incident of dating violence handled poorly by local high school.



# Sex Education

- Sex Education
  - Abstinence-only sex education (what students in this county mainly receive)
    - 'The easiest way to prevent pregnancy and STI contraction is to not have sex.'
  - Pregnancy and STI prevention focused sex education.
    - 'If you are going to have sex, you need to be using protection such as condoms.'
  - Comprehensive sex education (rarely offered)
    - Starts early, educating students about their bodies, bodily autonomy, puberty changes, relationship and peer pressures, types of sexual contact, etc.



# Sex AND Relationship Education



- No matter the type of sex education provided, **it is likely that our incoming students did not receive any type of relationship education!**
  - Any K-12 relationship education likely told students:
    - You don't have to do anything you don't want to do.
    - If someone is hurting you, tell an adult.
      - These are both good to tell students, but ***so much is missing.***
- If students don't receive education on something from their teachers, coaches, health instructors, etc. they are going to get their information elsewhere!

Where? MEDIA.

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# Media and Relationships



- Students look to, learn from, and emulate popular media.
    - *You* on Netflix
      - Protagonist Joe is a stalker, a murderer, sees women as objects to own or games to 'win.'
    - *Euphoria* on HBO
      - Nate and Maddie/Cassie
      - Jules and Kat's storylines.
    - *Twilight* movie series
      - More stalking!
    - *Gossip Girl*
      - Chuck and Blair
    - Tropes like: Getting out of the friend zone, Enemies to Lovers, etc.
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# Media and Relationships



- It isn't just 'romantic' TV shows, movies, and books.
    - Twitter is an endless source of examples of toxic behaviors that people find funny.
      - Insane jealousy, refusing to accept a breakup, reverse psychology and mind games.
      - Some are hyperbolic, but just like fictional stories, adolescents and young adults don't realize that!
    - "Reality" Television
      - The Kardashians (KUWTK)
      - The Bachelor(ette), Love at First Sight, Love is Blind, Love Island, etc.
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# Media and Relationships: Effect



- Young people (students) idolize relationships in media.
  - The 'I saw it on [the internet]' effect.
    - “What do you mean that when you broke up with me and blocked my number I wasn't supposed to show up and throw rocks at your window? That's literally so romantic I saw it in a movie and they ended up kissing in the rain and getting married.”
    - “What do you mean ‘it's not cheating to have friends of the opposite sex'? Everyone on Twitter agrees with me that it is.”
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# 02.

**What To Do:** both asking and answering.





# What's Already Being Done?



- Speaking with all incoming students about resources.
  - Speaking with freshman seminar about topics of bystander intervention and recognizing relationship abuse.
  - Red Flags Campaign Week (annual awareness campaign)
  - Speaking to small groups on campus
  - Training peer educators.
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# The Dilemma(s)



- We aren't able to **require** this type of education like K-12 can.
  - Talks are often very short (15-20 min) and infrequently scheduled.
- We are up against more attractive displays of (mis)information.
  - Can we fight media with media?
- **We don't want people to think that we are excusing relationship abuse (or escalation towards abuse) by attributing these behaviors to ignorance or poor media literacy.**



# How can ECHO help?

- ANY suggestions are welcome, even if they may be too big for the time being!

Some questions I would like the group to answer *if they can*:

- What does this look like on your campuses and in your communities?
  - How do you utilize your peer educators in this?
  - How do you get in front of students with topics that can't be covered in 15-20 minutes?
  - What does primary prevention look like here?
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# Thank You!

Anyone interested in continuing this discussion, or in reaching out about more information or ideas on this front, please feel free to contact me any time!

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