

# Adolescent Sexual Health Education Programs

## Adolescent Dating Violence Among Program Participants

December 2020

# DATA BRIEF



Adolescence is a critical time to establish and foster lifelong attitudes and behaviors about healthy relationships.<sup>1</sup> Adolescent dating violence (ADV) occurs between two people in a close relationship and can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, economic or technological, or involve stalking.<sup>2</sup> Dating violence can affect any kind of relationship, including relationships that involve partners from different genders or the same gender. Both victims and perpetrators of ADV may be any gender. Young people who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety and are at higher risk of being victims of violence again as adults.<sup>3</sup>

California's adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education programs, the federally-funded California Personal Responsibility Education Program (CA PREP) and the state-funded Information and Education Program (I&E), support local agencies to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and life skills education. The programs include curricula on healthy relationships and consent to enhance participants' knowledge of and skills at sexual communication, including refusal and negotiation. These healthy relationship curricula are reinforced by the 2016 California Healthy Youth Act, which

requires sexual health education in schools to include content on knowledge and skills-building for healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

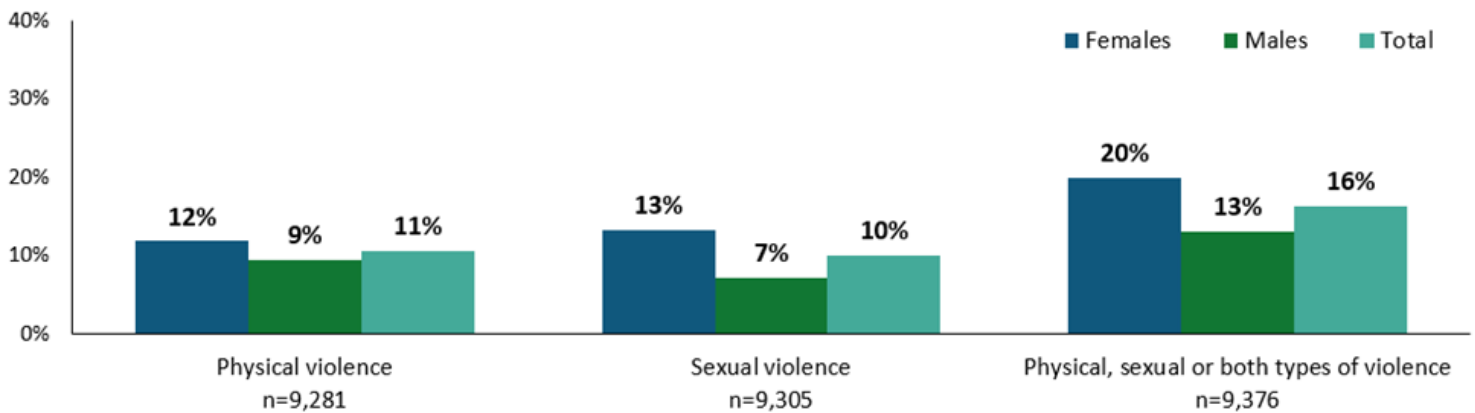
This brief is based on data from 13,027 CA PREP participants (July 2016-June 2017) and 2,131 I&E participants (March-June 2017) who were surveyed at program entry. This brief focuses on the 62% of surveyed youth from both programs who reported that they had dated in the past year. These youth were asked about their experiences of physical and sexual ADV.

### ADV BY TYPE OF VIOLENCE AND GENDER

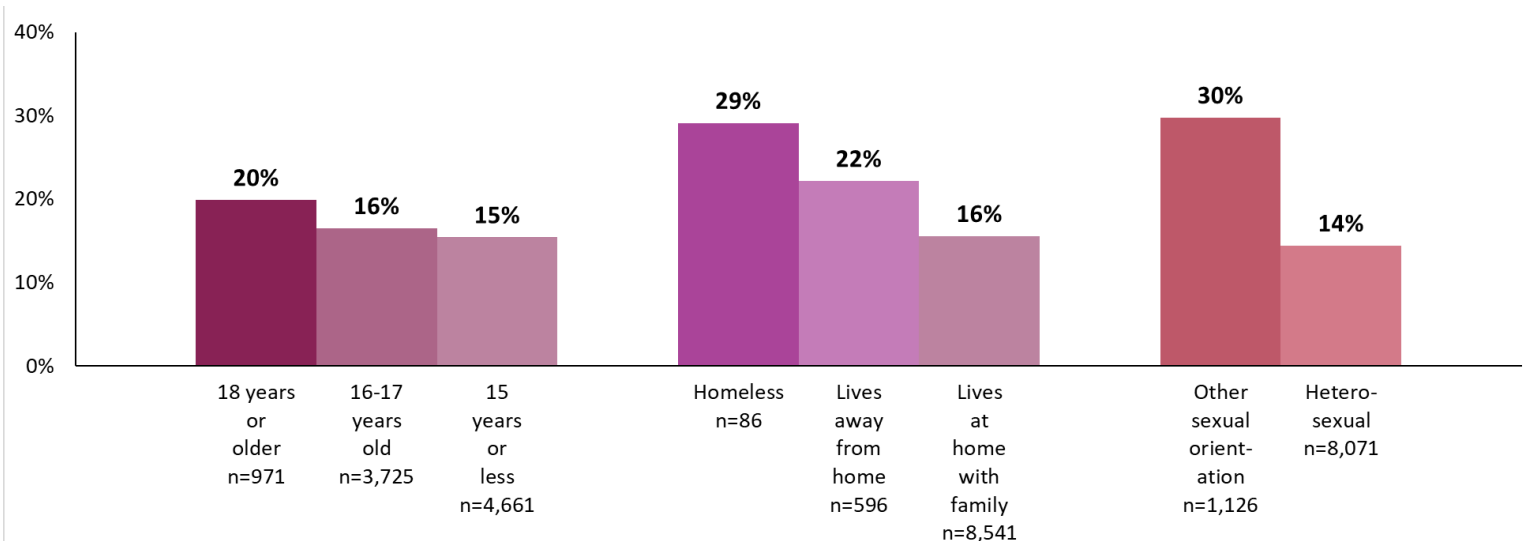
16% of CA PREP and I&E participants reported recent ADV, including 20% of females and 13% of males. Almost twice as many female (13%) versus male (7%) participants reported experiences of sexual violence. There was a three percentage point difference between females (12%) and males (9%) in reports of physical violence (**Figure 1**).

Nationally, among high school students who dated in the past year, 9.6% experienced physical ADV and 10.6% experienced sexual ADV.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1:** Among those who dated in the past year, percentage of participants who experienced dating violence, by type of violence and gender (n=9,376)<sup>a</sup>



**Figure 2:** Among those who dated in the past year, percentage of participants who experienced dating violence, by select factors (n=9,376)<sup>b</sup>



## ADV AMONG SELECT POPULATIONS

Rates of ADV increase with age, in part because older youth spend more time in relationships.<sup>6</sup> Those living in out-of-home settings (foster or group care, juvenile justice centers, shelters, transitional housing or homeless youth), as well as those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning are particularly vulnerable to experiencing dating violence.<sup>7-9</sup>

Reports of ADV were higher among CA PREP and I&E participants who were 18 years or older (20%), when compared to younger age groups. Reports of ADV were higher among participants who were homeless (29%) or living in out-of-home settings (22%) versus those living



at home (16%). Over twice as many participants who identified as non-heterosexual (30%) versus heterosexual (14%) reported ADV (Figure 2).

## SUMMARY

Adolescence is a crucial time to strengthen communication skills and strategies to engage in healthy relationships.<sup>1</sup> CA PREP and I&E provide participants an opportunity to build their knowledge about consent, healthy relationships and different types of relationship violence. A focus on better integrating information about ADV into both programs may help improve awareness and increase the availability of supports for all youth, including those who are at greatest risk for ADV.



Footnotes for Figures: a) For physical violence, analyses are for 4,955 males, 4,235 females and 91 individuals who did not report their gender. For sexual violence, analyses are for 4,967 males, 4,247 females and 91 individuals who did not report their gender. For any violence, analyses are for 5,003 males, 4,280 females and 93 individuals who did not report their gender. All three groups are included in the total columns. All differences are significant ( $p < .05$ ). b) The following individuals did not report the information for the selected factors: for age, 19 individuals; for living situation, 153 individuals; and for sexual orientation, 179 individuals. All differences are significant ( $p < .05$ ).

References for text: 1) California Adolescent Health Collaborative (n.d.) Teen Dating Violence: Keeping California Adolescents Safe in Their Relationships. 2) California Department of Public Health (2017). Teen Dating Violence. 3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020). Preventing Teen Dating Violence. 4) California Healthy Youth Act, California Education Code §§ 51930-51939. 5) CDC (2016). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2015. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, 65(6), p. 11. 6) Ybarra ML, Espelage DL, Langhinrichsen-Rohling J, et al. (2016). Lifetime prevalence rates and overlap of physical, psychological, and sexual dating abuse perpetration and victimization in a national sample of youth. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 45(5), 1083-1099. 7) King DM, Hatcher SS, Blakey JM, et al. (2015). Health-risk behaviors and dating violence victimization: An examination of the associated risk behaviors among detained female youth. *Social Work in Public Health*, 30(7), 559-566. 8) Slesnick N, Erdem G, Collins J, et al. (2010). Prevalence of intimate partner violence reported by homeless youth in Columbus, Ohio. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(9), 1579-1593. 9) Martin-Storey A. (2015). Prevalence of dating violence among sexual minority youth: Variations across gender, sexual minority identity and gender of sexual partners. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44(1), 211-224.

*This brief was prepared by the California Department of Public Health Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division and the University of California, San Francisco Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies.*