



VIOLENCE FREE
MINNESOTA

Project Connect Minnesota

A Partnership between Violence Free Minnesota, Adolescent Health Clinics, and the Minnesota Department of Health

What is Project Connect Minnesota?

Project Connect Minnesota is focused on promoting healthy relationships among Minnesota's youth through clinical intervention. Pilot adolescent health clinics are screening and talking about healthy relationships with all young clients. Clinics are developing partnerships and building relationships with various domestic and sexual violence agencies that provide services to youth experiencing adolescent relationship abuse in order to make warm referrals and ensure that youth get the care and support that they need and deserve.

What we've done

Policy Change:

- Implementation of Project Connect for all family home visiting programs across the state through multiple trainings around the state annually.
- Project Connect training for FPSP (Family Planning Special Projects) - Incorporating screening for reproductive coercion into FPSP grant process:
 - o Questions about reproductive coercion and DV/SV partnerships now incorporated into screening;
 - o Working with MDH to require training for recipients in the 2015-2017 grant cycle.
- Project Connect training required for Pregnancy Assistance Grant Fund recipients.
- Incorporation of violence and health connection/Project Connect principles to the state Adolescent Health Plan.
- Hennepin County, through the Safer Sex Initiative (SSI), has approved the Project Connect safety card intervention for all educators
- Pilot sites have written and adopted clinic policy around confidentiality, patient screening, identification, intervention, and referral for adolescent relationship abuse.
- Meetings and relationships developed with Minnesota members of the U.S. Congress resulting in verbal support and site visits to clinics.

Trainings:

- Over 827 health care professionals have been trained on screening, identifying, and intervening in cases of adolescent relationship abuse and reproductive coercion.
- Provided training to nursing students through partnerships with the University of Minnesota, Metro State University, Normandale Community College, and St. Catherine University.
- Training has expanded to other youth service providers, including service providers that work with homeless youth, youth outreach workers, volunteer educators, and other community partners.
- 48 health care providers have experienced the Project Connect "Train the Trainer" curriculum through a daylong training.
- Incorporation of sex trafficking issues into Project Connect trainings to providers.

Evaluation Outcomes:

- Survey results show that that **92%** of youth believe it is helpful for providers to talk about healthy and unhealthy relationships to young people, and that their provider cares about their safety.
- Clinic staff at all pilot sites have become more skilled and comfortable talking about healthy relationships and adolescent relationship abuse.
- Many clients have disclosed that the Project Connect intervention led them to think differently about healthy vs. unhealthy relationships in a way that was helpful and relative to their situation, helping to prevent physical violence in the relationships of thousands of Minnesota youth.

Sustainability:

- Each pilot site clinic is connected with staff from local domestic and sexual violence programs who serve youth – site visits and cross trainings have occurred, and several direct warm referrals have been made from the clinics.
- Annual statewide Youth Leadership Summit is incorporating health clinics' youth advisory boards to increase their involvement in adolescent relationship abuse awareness and prevention.
- Sharing our work, resources, and impact on this project broadly to all DV programs in the state through Violence Free Minnesota annual and regional meetings.
- Presentation on Project Connect at the Annual Teenwise Minnesota Conference, which brings together more than 340 social service and health care providers, educators, advocates, and program directors for a two day conference dedicated to expanding knowledge of adolescent sexual health and development.
- 48 health care providers have experienced the Project Connect "Train the Trainer" curriculum through a daylong training.
- Developed relationships/partnerships with 3 major in the state universities (University of Minnesota, Metro State University, and St. Catherine University) to provide trainings to nursing students on Project Connect (future providers!).

"Some of us don't grow up in a home where our parents have a healthy relationship. If we don't see it at home, how can we grow up to have a healthy relationship? I want someone to talk to me, I want to be healthy." - 19 year of female about the importance of the Project Connect intervention.

"I shared the card with my boyfriend and we talked about some unhealthy things we were doing in our relationship. Ever since that talk our relationship has gotten much better – healthier. This card helped me think about my boyfriend and me – it made it easy to talk about how we are doing"

- Teen client who returned after 3 weeks to see the Nurse Practitioner with safety card in hand.

Contact Information

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