



Youth Initiative Planning Guide

**Created by Family Services a la famille Ottawa,
the Ottawa Carleton Catholic School Board,
and
the Ottawa Carleton District School Board**

This guide was created as a support to youth in their efforts to create activities within both schools and communities to heighten dating violence awareness and prevention. Getting the messages out to both adults and youth is key to building healthy equal relationships. The value of youth in creating initiatives is a testament to their commitment to creating change. Let's all support the challenge!!

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In the beginning.....

In the beginning there were a number of adults around a table creating a conference for students from within both the Catholic and District School Boards related to dating violence prevention. The expectation was to offer students information, and for the students to return to their schools and create initiatives to heighten their peers' awareness to dating violence and how to stop it.

Since then, In Love and In Danger has blossomed and continues to offer two conferences annually. Youth have embraced the initiative and have created some amazing projects within their schools.

What we have learned over the years is that a guide may support increased student motivation, sharing new ideas and the ability for schools and communities to form teams to share in the work.

Without the support of adults, social workers, teachers, guidance counselors and the like, In Love and In Danger might have made less gain in preventing dating violence and supporting healthy equal relationships. We are grateful for the collective efforts made by everyone.

Dating violence within our community is still an issue. People continue to be victimized and some die at the hands of an abuser. At the same time, youth are becoming more savvy about creating healthy relationships and they are seeking positive models and examples of how to do that. It is critical to demand for change and necessary to provide opportunities for change to occur.

This guide will offer some information for organizing, planning and facilitating projects and activities:

- it will offer some answers to why, who, when, how, what and where.
- Many schools have contributed to the success of In Love and In Danger. We have listed the names of the schools both in recognition of their efforts as well as in recognition of their resource capacity. Other schools may want to contact, partner with them, or just seek out support.
- We have included some ideas of activities schools did this year that others may want to use in the future. These ideas were shared in an activity during a recent conference of In Love and In Danger.

Let's Get started...

Who.....

Youth are the leaders of In Love and In Danger. Youth should be the planners and the drivers of projects. Youth will need to form teams and include adult supporters in order to facilitate awareness opportunities.

Why.....

Youth continue to experience all types of relationships. Youth need to provide and be provided up to date accurate information about their right to make choices within relationships. The signs of dating violence, the resources to get help, the right to say no, the cycle of violence and how to create healthy equal relationships all need to be shared. If information = knowledge, and knowledge=increased power and increased power suggests increased responsibility, then we are all responsible for ensuring that information and opportunities are available.

When.....

All year long. Promoting dating violence prevention and promoting healthy and equal relationships is something that should be discussed all year long. Often, it is helpful to look at key times. Some dates to consider are:

- December 6th, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre
- November 25th, the international day to end violence against women
- Valentines Day, the day of Love
- the White Ribbon Campaign
- other events that may be happening within your school or community.

How.....

Call a meeting of like-minded individuals. Ask an adult supporter to help. Create a team. Attend an In Love and In Danger Conference. Have a sense of how you see the team's role within the initiative. Take a risk, be the leader.

What.....

Plan what it is you want to accomplish. It doesn't have to be a big event. It could be a series of announcements at the beginning of the school day, a short skit in a scheduled assembly, a poster creating campaign at lunch in the cafeteria, or an activity at the youth group in the evening. Any small step makes you see things just slightly differently and that's what you want. Making a difference is the main ingredient. Change is the final dish. All of the other ingredients and hard work pave the way.

Where....

Everywhere!! In your community, at the drama club, at practice, in your school. It is important to explore what venues already exist. How your team can partner with others and how dating violence prevention can be on all of the agendas within your school and community. Connect with local papers, the yearbook, local shelters , and soon the options are endless.

Steps You May Choose to Take in Planning Your Initiative

- Talk to some of your peers about your ideas
- Approach an adult supporter and share your plans
- Call a meeting inviting all interested
- Explore whether there are existing groups that may be able to partner with you
- Before the meeting decide where the meeting will take place, publicize it well, create an agenda, be sure it is not in conflict with something else going on at the school, and have information available (for example, a hand out on dating violence, ideas about creating healthy equal relationships, or information on In Love and In Danger, and so on)
- At the meeting, have a clear agenda that would include the following: Why are we meeting?
 - What are the time lines?
 - Who is leading the meeting?
 - Who is taking minutes of the meeting?
 - If a plan is initiated, ensure that it is recorded separately including what, who, by when, what is needed to make it happen, and who needs to know.
- After the meeting make sure the task list is complete, ensure that the school or organization adult supporter is on side and sharing information and evaluate what went well at the meeting and what may need to be different for the next meeting
- Follow up and next meeting- make sure that people are following up on their jobs. Plan an agenda for the next meeting. Having the minutes or the plan available prior to the next meeting is always helpful for guiding and reminding people of their tasks.

Getting what you need

If you need resources, the following may be helpful to your team;

Speakers for the event

Create a list of possible speakers for your initiative.

\$\$\$\$ Money\$\$\$\$

How much money may you need? How much money might you raise? Who will benefit from the money you raise? Where will you get the money for the initiative?

Donations of food, money, time, clothing

Might you need donations? Might you create a letter to send to potential donors etc.?

Might your local parents' council help out with money or connections?

Volunteers, Equipment etc.

Do you need volunteers? Are you asking a band to play? Do you need lighting or tech. Equipment? Who will photocopy your information?

The Action Plan

Try this format for your actions. You can have as many rows as necessary and it can prove to be a helpful quick glance at what's going on.

<u>Initiative</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>By whom?</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>By when</u>	<u>Other</u>

Some ideas for initiatives generated by your local schools:

The following ideas were generated within the last year. Feel free to use them or modify to add your own creative flair.

Discussion Groups

Hold a discussion group in the library or cafeteria. Have a question of the day to guide the discussion. Have a leader or monitor to guide the conversation. Build in a challenge for the group to take with them, for example, Do one thing the next time you see.....

Campaigns

Do a poster campaign. Get groups together to cover an area of the school with posters reflecting a theme. Try to make it an area that is well traveled. Some schools have used the ceilings in an area. Spread your message. Have a launch where all posters will be displayed and folks are invited to come and view your work. Have hand outs and give messages throughout the display.

Contest Initiatives

Contests with prizes and recognition are great. Design a poster for the local shelter. Design the CD label for In Love and In Danger, design a ribbon to promote during the month of November for International Day To End Violence Against Women, design a button promoting healthy and equal relationships on Valentine's Day. You can use any art form for contests. For example, it could be a poetry writing contest that will be submitted to the school paper, yearbook or local community newspaper.

Assembly Venue

Hold an assembly. Get the drama team to do a skit, show a movie, have a guest speaker. This event could also generate other actions. Use statistics on an overhead, do a quiz or a game.

Theme Day

Have a theme day and raise money for a local charity impacted by dating violence or relationship violence. Hat day, jeans day For every person who participates give them information. Invite the local charity in to meet your group and accept the donation or arrange to visit your local charity to deliver the donation.

Theme Week

A variation of theme day is to make a theme week. Have a calendar of events that will occur either something for each grade or something each day, some events at lunch, some after school etc. For instance, if your theme week is dating violence prevention or healthy relationships week you could have a movie review at lunch, an improv group after school, a demonstration with posters, and finish the week with an assembly and a guest speaker.

Adopt an Organization

Have your team sponsor an organization. Create a relationship with the agency. Find out about them and about what they need. Hold several events to raise awareness and generate donations. Do clothing drives or food drives.

Outreach

Have the In Love and In Danger Team, Trinity Theatre, or simply your own outreach team go into classes and offer workshops on dating or relationship violence and healthy equal relationships. Again, see if your existing groups can support you. For instance if you have a peer support group, perhaps they could work with your group to create the workshop and help deliver it. Make sure you are consulting with your adult supporters around workshop or presentation style projects.

Information Booth

Build an information booth that can be shared amongst other groups. Rotate the schedule and have information available and persons there to share information and resources in person.

Announcements

Have a series of announcements with statistics. Have each member of your team take a day to read an announcement. You could even ask that the school or organization put one of the teams messages on their fax for the month. Get creative!

Human Posters/Human Chains

Use people and have them form as posters. It's quite visual in the hallways to have a number of human posters on display. Make it a human chain and have your whole student body form a symbol in the form of a human chain signifying your solidarity in finding solutions to dating violence. You could form a peace symbol. Call your local media and have them cover your story. Have a donation jar as well.

Coffee House/Bake Sale/ Paper shoe

Host a coffee house. Create an ambiance, send flyers, invite poets and musicians and charge a small fee for a ticket. All music and poetry read must reflect your theme. Raise money and donate to a local charity or buy some resources for your school-books, posters etc that can assist in permanent school messages.

Bake sales also generate money. If you choose to donate to a local shelter for example, have their pamphlet available in each bake sale bag or have buttons etc.

You could do like many stores and sell paper shoes that will have your name on it and hang in the school- The shoe could represent "let's stomp out violence." Or a heart could be used: "have a heart".

The Arts

Use the arts!! Through dance, poetry expression, dramatic pieces, and illustrations create a gallery night or afternoon in which the arts gallery is focused on healthy and equal relationship themes. Create a video too that can be shared or used as a resource. Share it with local agencies and anti violence groups.

What next?

These are just a few ideas that you and your team may use. Be creative and have fun!! The idea is to create opportunities for information sharing and awareness building.

It is all about the choices that we make in relationships that make the difference. Be part of the solution. Demand change and effect change by participating and using your voice collectively with your peers to demonstrate your commitment to dating violence prevention and healthy equal relationships.

Now take that energy and go to your peers. Form a team. Talk to an adult who could be your support. Think about your motivation and build on it so it will motivate others to participate. Be creative, hold a meeting and plan your action!! Attend the In Love and In Danger conferences. Showcase your school. Let others benefit from your actions and your leadership. Remember, you can help stop violence.

Make connections- if you need more information about In Love and In Danger ask one of your school representatives or simply visit the website www.familyservicesottawa.org under community programs. In addition you may email the In Love and In Danger team at ilid@familyservicesottawa.org. Other websites that may be of interest include: www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca; www.canadian-health-network.ca www.edu.gov.nf.ca/discipline/appendl.htm, www.kdva.org/edresources.html

Stay tuned for the release of the In Love and In Danger Resource CD. It is scheduled to be launched in May 2006 and fully released to all schools at the fall conference of In Love and In Danger September 2006. It will offer resources and links, presentations on dating violence and healthy equal relationships, and information on In Love and In Danger, the initiative.

Be safe! Be proud! Be you!