

Teen Dating Violence



HOW THE BREAKING SILENCE TEEN
TEXTLINE WORKS AS AN
INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH
EXPERIENCING IPV

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# Outline for Today



- What is Teen Dating Violence (TDV)
- Distinctive Features of TDV
- A Teenager's Unique Barriers to Safety
- Development and Operation of the Breaking Silence Textline
- Trends in conversations
- TDV Programs



# What is Teen Dating Violence?



- Violence –

“Violence is anything that denies human integrity and leads to hopelessness and helplessness.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

# What is Teen Dating Violence

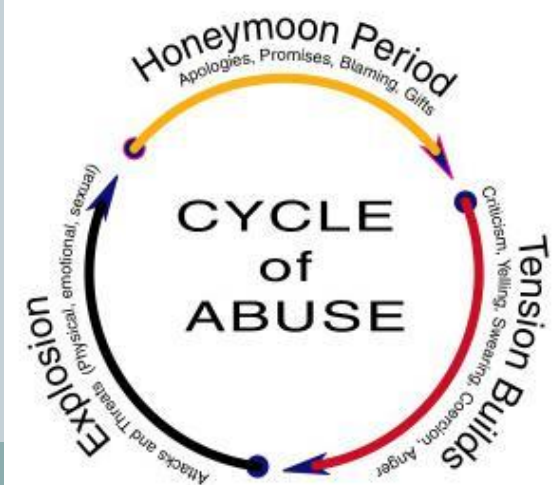


- **The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence:**
  - Also referred to as adolescent dating abuse, teen dating violence is any behavior used by an individual to gain control, manipulate, intimidate, frighten, or gain power over an individual with whom they have an emotional interest in, intimate interaction with, or ongoing intimate dating relationship with.

*“...any behavior used by an individual to gain control, manipulate, intimidate, frighten, or gain power over...”*



- Teens experience many of the same types of abuse in relationships as adults – physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, emotional/verbal abuse, financial abuse and digital abuse.
- In most cases, the abuse escalates over time, becoming more frequent and more severe.



*“...any behavior used by an individual to gain control, manipulate, intimidate, frighten, or gain power over...”*



- **Teen Power and Control**
  - Age Difference
  - Perceived Inexperience
  - Utilizing Lack of Knowledge of Help Resources
  - Lack of Boundaries
    - ✦ Untrusting of adults, or need parent permission
  - Setting Limits or Rules
  - Justifying Abuse

*...with whom they have an emotional interest in, intimate interaction with, or ongoing intimate dating relationship with.*



- BAE
- Open Relationship
- Talking
- Going Out
- Hanging Out
- Situationship
- Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- Relationship
- Side/Main
- Seeing
- Hooking Up

# Prevalence of TDV



- 1 in 3 teens will be the victim of dating violence.
- 1 in 10 high school students report being physically hurt by a dating partner.
- Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost 3x the national average.
- Of those who have experienced TDV, half report an incident of abuse occurred on school grounds.
- 50% of the victims of domestic violence related murders began the relationship with the perpetrator between the ages of 13-24.

# Barriers for Teens



- Teens may have a lack of control over their personal safety at home, school, work, after-school activities, and social outings.
- Teens may attend the same school and classes as the abuser, providing many opportunities for abuse.
- Teens may use social networking websites, emails, texting, and cell phones, which provide unlimited opportunities for abuse and monitoring behaviors.
- May avoid talking about their relationship or asking for help because they fear disapproval of adults and they do not want to get their partner in trouble.

# Barriers for Teens

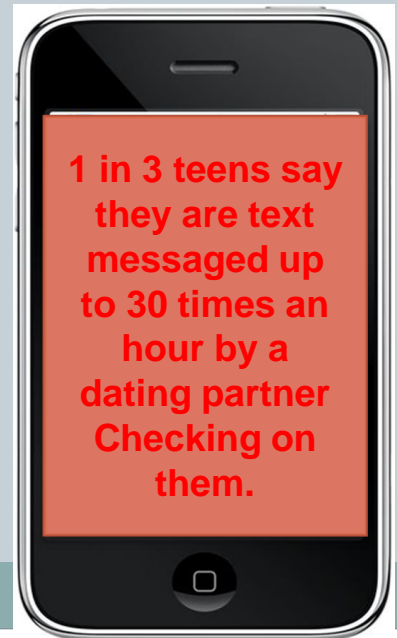


- The places teens go, the things they do, and the people with whom they associate may be dynamic and continuously changing.
- May lack access to money, transportation, or stable housing.
- Media normalizes many of the abusive behaviors that qualify as domestic violence, so teens may have a hard time recognizing their relationships as abusive.
- Teens can be heavily influenced by their peers: if a teen's friends are accepting of dating violence, an adolescent is more likely to be involved in a violent relationship in the future.

# Digital Abuse



- Power and Control Develops Online Through:
  - Stalking
  - Controlling Content Posted
  - Constant or excessive contact – “W?s”
  - Demands to share passwords or social media accounts
  - Pressure to Sext
  - Threaten to share sexts once they have been sent



# Effects of TDV



- Healthy relationship behaviors can have a positive effect on a teen's emotional development.
- Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have severe consequences and short- and long-term negative effects on a developing teen.
- Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience the following:
  - Symptoms of depression and anxiety
  - Engagement in unhealthy behaviors, such as tobacco and drug use, and alcohol
  - Involvement in antisocial behaviors
  - Victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization throughout their adult lives.

# Effects of TDV



- Violent relationships puts victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and further domestic violence.
- Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls six times more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get a STI.
- Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

# Warning Signs of Teen Dating Violence



- Think that jealousy & possessiveness are signs of love
- Suspicious bruises or other injuries
- Failing grades
- Losing of interest or giving up on activities or hobbies they once enjoyed
- Excusing their dating partner's behavior
- Needing to respond immediately to calls or texts from their partner
- Fearfulness around their partner
- Losing self-esteem
- Sudden changes in school attendance or routine
- Depression

# Warning Signs of Abusive Partners



- Loses his or her temper easily
- Checks cellphone/email/social media without permission
- Constant put-downs
- Isolates from friends/family Becomes jealous easily
- Controlling – what to wear, who to hang out with
- Explosive temper
- Threats
- History of violence
- Possessive



# **Questions about Teen Dating Violence?**

# The Beginning of the Textline



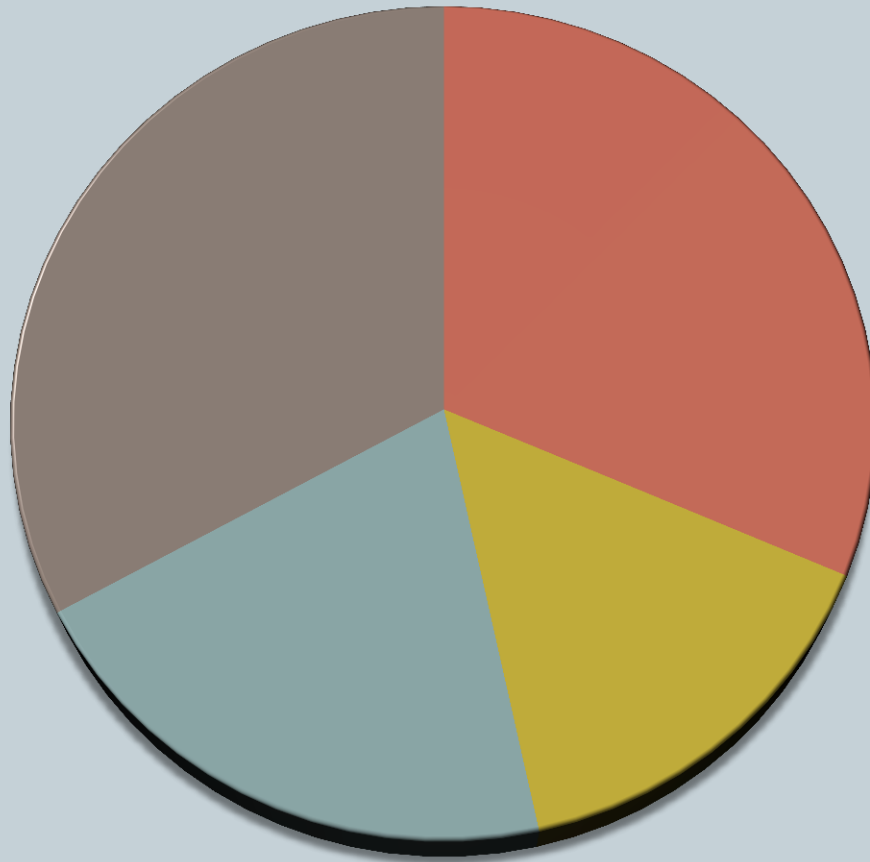
- Project Safe recognized that teens and young adults were not reaching out in traditional ways
- Launched in 2012
- Wanted to provide a resource to teens but also raise awareness of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive aspects of relationships
- Is now available to all teens statewide!

# Marketing the Textline



- Teens may not recognize they are in an abusive relationship.
- It is anonymous!
- Operated by Social Work Interns from UGA.
- It is available 24/7
- Ask questions, get advice, have a sounding board

# Main Issue Presented



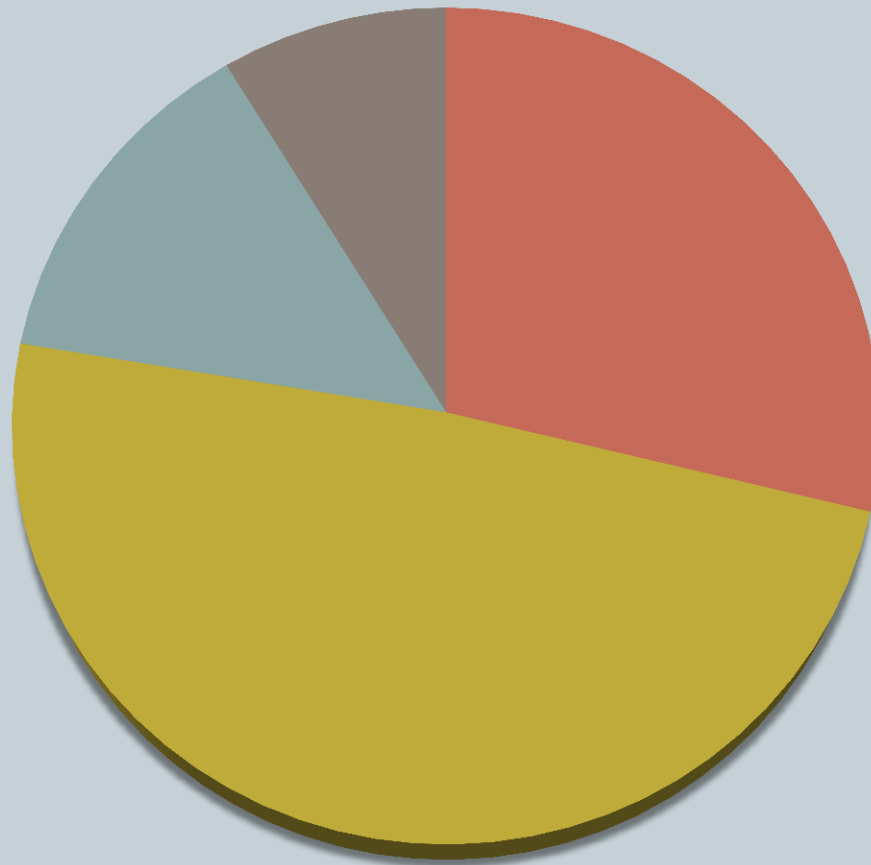
■ Dating Violence (83, 31.44%)

■ Dating / Sex in General (40, 15.15%)

■ Healthy / Unhealthy Relationships (54, 20.45%)

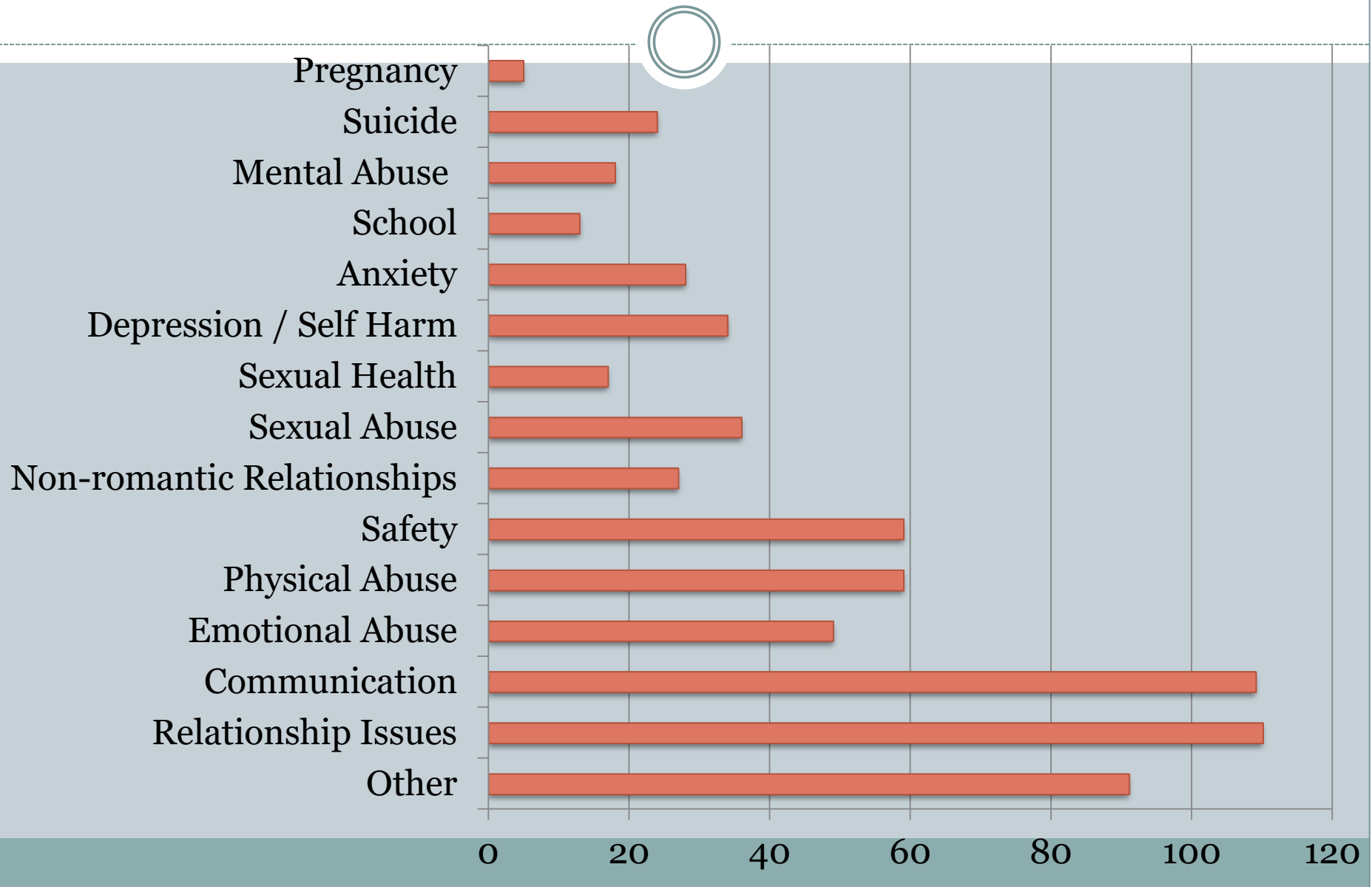
■ Other (87, 32.95%)

# Tone of Conversation

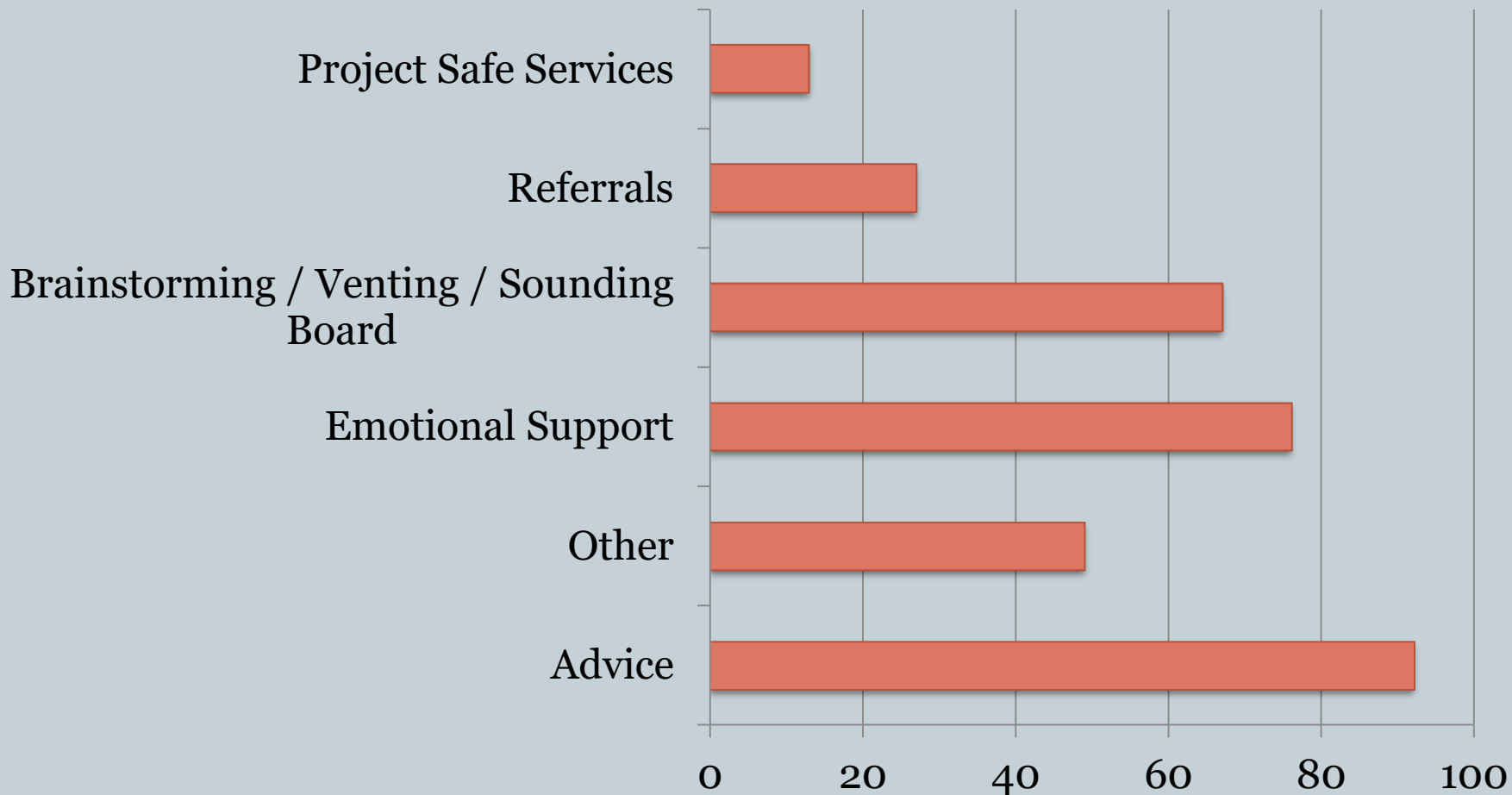


- Crisis / Emergency (76, 28.79%)
- Non-crisis / Information Seeking (129, 48.86%)
- Undefined (36, 13.64%)
- Prank (23, 8.71%)

# Topics Discussed



# Help Sought

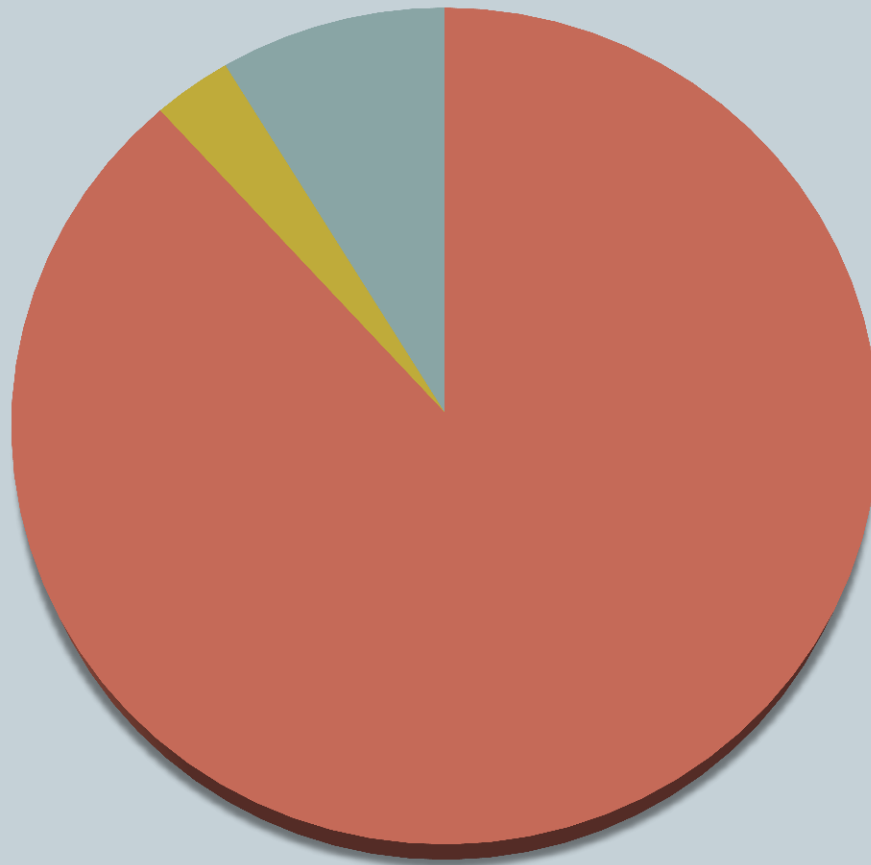


# Defining “Other”



- **Issues**
  - Depression, suicide, DV in the home, child abuse, sexual assault
- **Topics**
  - Fitting in, bullying, mental health, LGBTQ+, substance use, ways to cope, family issues
- **Help Sought**
  - Primarily: Is Breaking Silence a real thing?

# Length of Conversation



- Less Than 24 Hours  
(233, 88.26%)
- More Than 48 Hours (8,  
3.03%)
- Between 24 and 48  
Hours (23, 8.71%)

# Referrals Made



■ Yes (64, 24.24%)

■ No (198, 81%)

# Our Take Aways



- Adding content to youth programs:
  - Healthy Communication
  - Sexting
  - Jealousy and Possessiveness
  - Setting Boundaries
- Adding Additional Training for Operators
  - Suicide/self-harm
  - Trafficking

# Healthy Relationships



# Project Safe Youth Programs



- **Crossroads – 4<sup>th</sup> grade**
  - “Right to be Safe from Harm” “Responsibility not to Harm Others.”
  - Teaches social emotional lessons
  - Basic Domestic Violence definitions
  - Safety Planning and identifying safe people

# Project Safe Youth Programs



- **Ambassadors – Middle School**
  - Small group of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Learn dynamics of TDV
  - Create service learning projects around the school
- **Breaking Silence – High School**
  - Presentation in all 9<sup>th</sup> grade Health Classes
  - Other events and presentations throughout the school year
  - February Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

# Georgia Teen Advocates Network



- Group of Teen Advocates from around Georgia
- Meet every 6 months with conference calls interim
- Discuss current research, new programs, ideas to help raise awareness and prevent Teen Dating Violence.

# Further Reading



- Loveisrespect.org
- [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)
- <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/teen-dating-violence>
- <https://www.breakthecycle.org/>
- <http://georgiafatalityreview.com/reports/report/2015-report/>

# Comments / Questions



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