



Child Witness to Domestic Violence: Resources, Collaborations, and Creating Dialogue Around Healthy Relationships

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The Second Step

is a community of survivors, advocates, and volunteers who foster the safety, stability, and well-being of those who have experienced domestic violence. We provide comprehensive services, including safety planning, legal advocacy, counseling, peer support, transitional housing, and other essential services to adults, youth, and children in Greater Boston and MetroWest.

Our Programs

- **Residential**
 - 2 years, comprehensive services, case management
- **Community**
 - Time unlimited, safety, support
 - IMAGINE, SEEK. mentoring, networks
- **Steps to Justice (legal services)**
 - Any and all DV-related issues
 - DV understood broadly
 - No income limits
- **Youth and Prevention**
 - Time unlimited
 - 1:1 relationships, mentoring, therapeutic groups, outdoor programming



Trauma and Its Effects on Youth

- Trauma has a huge impact on youth and adolescent development
- Use of coping skills → not always healthy
 - Drug use
 - Isolation
 - Self-harm
 - Running away
 - Fights / outbursts
 - Sexual activity
- Trauma is isolating in nature → “no one knows what I am going through”
- Youth carry the effects of trauma into relationships with peers, partners, parents



How Do We Provide Resources?

- Client-centered; based on self-identified needs
- The realities of therapy
 - Many youth have been through/worked with countless therapists/counselors
 - Looking for support/guidance/validation → not always a diagnosis
- Understanding that trauma looks different for everyone
 - No cookie cutter or one-stop shop for resources



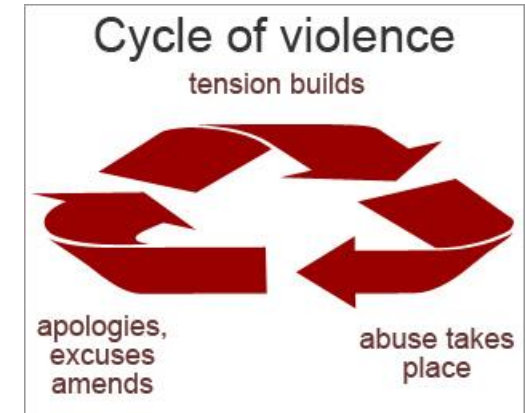
The Importance of Collaborations

- TSS partners with numerous agencies across the state to ensure survivors' needs are met
- Creating networks
 - DV/SA → complex issues
 - Certain cases may require a network of providers, not just one
- It really does take a village
 - Family ACCESS; Children's Charter; OUT MetroWest; DV/SA agencies; teachers; therapists; DCF; etc.



Healthy Relationships: Beginning a Dialogue

- It's not all black & white → abuse education & violence prevention
 - Awareness Campaigns
 - Outreach/Education
 - Schools and Systems
 - Agencies
- Adults creating terms/language



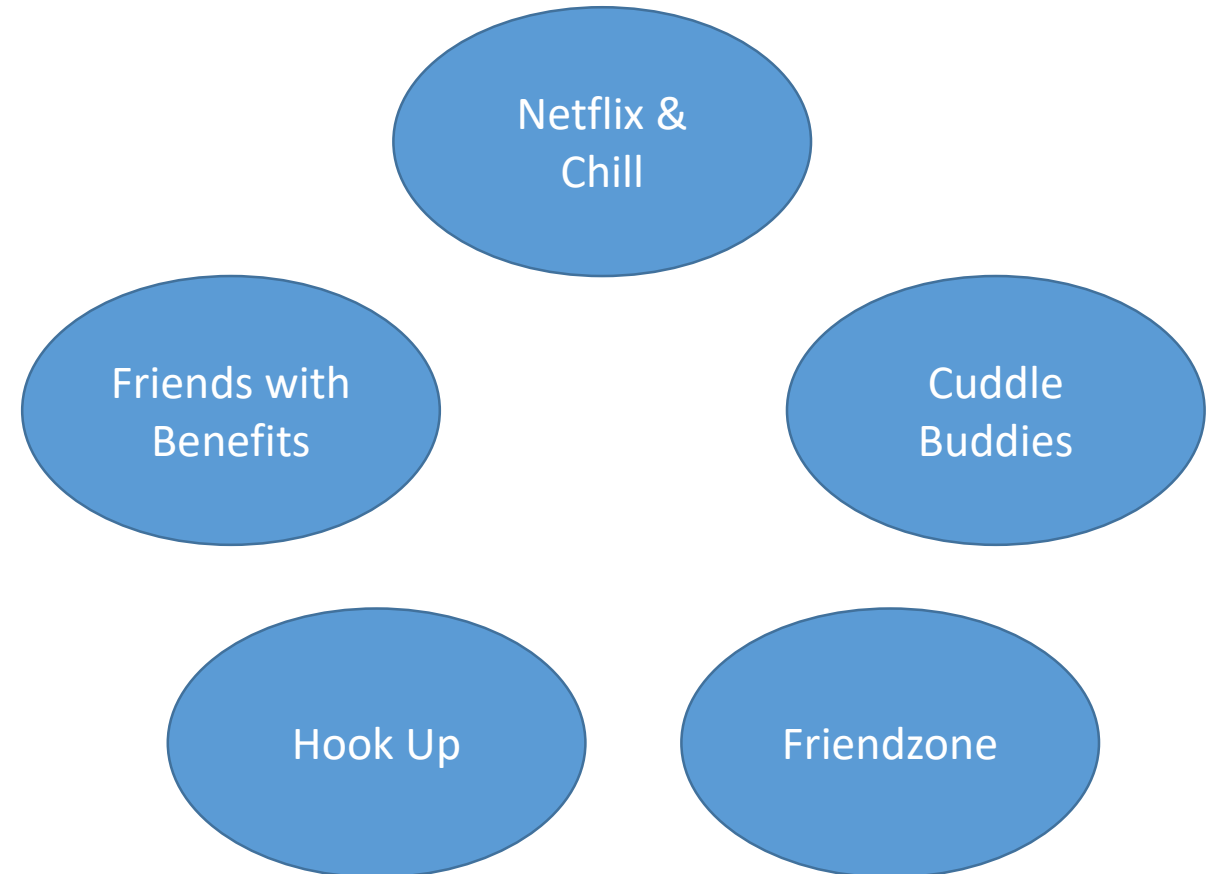
ABUSE





- Youth → creating their own definitions/language about relationships
- Exploring themselves
 - Wants, needs, interests
- Blurred lines → confusion

Healthy Relationships: Beginning a Dialogue





Healthy Relationships: Meet Them Where They Are

- Encourage youth to use their words/language to define their relationship
 - Don't define for them
- Ask questions using their language
- Openness is key
- Validation goes a long way



Questions?



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