

That's Not Cool: A Bystander Intervention Online Campaign USA



Type of intervention



Online/App

Target groups, levels of prevention and sub-groups:



Primary prevention

Young People (11-17 Years), Young Adults (18-20 Years) | Male & Female | Internet Specific Interventions | Online/App



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Target population

Young people aged 13 to 18 years of age.

Delivery organisation

That's Not Cool (<http://www.thatsnotcool.com/>) is a national public education campaign, based in the USA, that uses digital examples of controlling, pressuring and threatening behavior to raise awareness about teen dating abuse. That's Not Cool is sponsored and co-created by Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund), the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women and the Advertising Council.

Mode and context of delivery

Bystander Interventions are education programmes that aim to teach young people how to intervene safely and effectively in cases of sexual and dating violence, before, during and after incidents with strangers, acquaintances and

friends. Bystander Interventions have a common philosophy that all members of a community have a role in shifting social norms to prevent violence.

For example, That's Not Cool integrates bystander intervention philosophies in a number of videos included on their website. One such example is the 'What's the Buzz?' video under the 'Beeping' tab (<http://www.thatsnotcool.com/VideoIndex.aspx?title=Beeping>). This video depicts a girl who is upset by receiving incessant messages from her boyfriend. In the video, this girl's friends help her by reassuring her with strategies they themselves have successfully used when faced with a similar situation.

Another video example is the 'What's the Buzz?' video under the 'Show me your Battery' tab ([http://www.thatsnotcool.com/VideoIndex.aspx?title=Show me your battery](http://www.thatsnotcool.com/VideoIndex.aspx?title=Show_me_your_battery)). This video depicts a male telling a female how he is pressuring his girlfriend to send him nude photographs of herself. The female he is telling acts as a responsible society member and does not condone his behaviour, whilst openly challenging the morality of his behaviour.

The That's Not Cool campaign has been created to help young people and their parents understand how mobile phones, instant messaging and online profiles are all digital extensions of who we are. It aims to give the tools to help people think about what is, or is not, okay in their digital relationships with the aim of raising awareness about and preventing teen dating abuse.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

No professional background is required to access the site or to gain benefit from the information provided.

That's Not Cool also offers the opportunity to recruit teens to join their Ambassador Program. The Ambassador Program provides teens an opportunity to raise awareness of an issue that affects friends, family and the community at large. That's Not Cool Ambassadors provide valuable feedback on new ideas for That's Not Cool and organize activities to raise awareness of digital dating abuse and That's Not Cool in their schools. That's Not Cool asks any individual who is interested in becoming an Ambassador to fill in an online application form (http://www.thatsnotcool.com/become_an_ambassador.aspx). Ambassadors can be anyone aged 13-18 years, who is motivated to take action against digital dating abuse in their school or community.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The site is geared towards teens with a focus on privacy, healthy communication, healthy relationships and technology. Teens can engage with the website/campaign to an extent of their choice.

Description of intervention

That's Not Cool uses digital examples of controlling, pressuring and threatening behavior to raise awareness about and prevent teen dating abuse. It aims to give teens the tools to help them think about what is, or is not, okay in their digital relationships. The site focusses on privacy, healthy communication, healthy relationships and technology.

The website (<http://www.thatsnotcool.com/>) presents a range of materials and information. The tabs along the top of the website direct the user to the kind of information/materials they may be interested in:

Videos: A range of videos can be accessed via the website. The videos address privacy, healthy relationships and communication and technology issues that teens may face in dating relationships, such as it being "not cool" for a

partner to pressure the other person in the relationship in to sharing passwords to social media profiles, it being “not cool” for a partner to pressure the other person in the relationship in to sending nude photographs of themselves and being “not cool” to be incessantly texting a partner. Some videos are “interactive” in that the teen is presented with a multiple choice of three possible answers in response to a question regarding what is the best way to act in a given situation. In this way, answers can be selected and feedback is given as to whether the selection was correct/incorrect and the reasons behind this.

Callout Cards: Callout cards have been designed to print, send or post and share via social media. The cards are aimed to get teens talking about what is and is not okay in a relationship. The cards are designed with humour and sarcasm and span the topics such ‘textual harassment’ (for example, “Congrats! With that last text you achieved stalker status”) and ‘constant messaging’ (for example, “Congrats on sending me your millionth instant message today”).

Talk it Out: Talk it out provides a forum where teens can publicly post questions and receive answers to these questions.

Need Help?: The Need Help? section asks teens to consider: ‘When does caring become controlling?’, ‘When does affection become obsession?’ and ‘When does talking become stalking?’. Information is provided for where teens can get help if they feel like themselves, or someone they know, is in an abusive relationship. Teens are reminded that they have the right to privacy and have their decisions respected. The section of this website helps teens to identify whether a person’s behaviour could be deemed as abusive and where they can access help.

Evaluation

14 studies have evaluated the effects of interventions on bystander attitudes and effectiveness, of which eight reported statistically significant positive results. Three studies were strong and found the interventions to be promising. See references below.

References

Banyard, L.B., Moynihan, M.M., Plante, E.G. (2007) Sexual Violence Prevention Through Bystander Education: an experimental evaluation.

Gidycz, A.G., Orchowski, L.M., Berkowitz, A.D. (2011) Preventing Sexual Aggression Among College Men: An Evaluation of a social norms and bystander intervention programme.

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Tabachnick, J. (2008) Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention. National Sexual Violence Resource Centre (NSVRC), Enola, USA

<http://www.thatsnotcool.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/thatsnotcool>

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