

Coaching Boys into Men program proves effective in preventing teen dating violence, follow-up study finds

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[Coaching Boys into Men](#) (CBIM), a program that seeks to reduce dating violence and sexual assault, is proven effective to reduce abusive behaviors among male athletes toward their female partners, according to a study that will appear today in the online version of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

The year-long evaluation study, led by Elizabeth Miller, M.D., Ph.D., chief, Division of [Adolescent Medicine](#) at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, and associate professor of pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, examined the long-term effectiveness of the program.

The study looked at more than 2,000 male athletes in 16 California high schools from October 2009 to October 2011 who participated in the coach-led program to prevent abuse toward women. Results demonstrated that youth who participated in the program were less likely to support peers' abusive behaviors, and showed a significant relative reduction in abuse perpetration.

"Perpetration of physical, sexual and [psychological abuse](#) is unfortunately prevalent in many adolescent relationships," said Dr. Miller. "At the end of the sports season, boys who participated in the program were significantly more likely to stop abusive behaviors among their peers. Now, one year later, we find that the rates of abuse

perpetration actually increased among youth who didn't participate, whereas perpetration did not increase among the male athletes whose coaches delivered the program."

Created by national nonprofit Futures Without Violence in collaboration with Dr. Miller, the CBIM program works with coaches to teach their male athletes about building healthy relationships and how to intervene when witnessing disrespectful and abusive behaviors among their peers.

"We've always known that coaches play a pivotal role in shaping [young athletes'](#) attitudes about respect and [healthy relationships](#)," said Esta Soler, president and founder of Futures Without Violence. "We now have evidence that the program actually stops abuse from happening in the first place."

The program combines discussions of personal responsibility, being a positive bystander (stopping disrespectful behaviors among peers), respectful relationships and preventing technology-based bullying, and leverages the influence of athletic coaches as powerful messengers for violence prevention and male athletes as leaders in their community.

The CBIM materials train coaches to talk with their male athletes about stopping and preventing violence and abuse by using a series of training cards that guide athletes through weekly, 15-minute conversations during the sports season. Lessons focus on respect, non-violence, integrity and leadership.

"The key to this program is respect—teaching players to be aware of how they treat women and how to deal with all people in general," said Mike Alberghini, head football coach at Grant Union High School in Sacramento, CA, a participating school in the study. "The experience has brought us together as a stronger, more responsible group."

More information: The Coaching Boys into Men tools are available for free download from Futures Without Violence at www.coachescorner.org.

Provided by University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

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