



The One Love Foundation An Evidence-Based Approach to Ending Relationship Abuse

One Love was founded in honor of Yeardeley Love, a 22-year-old college student who was killed by her ex-boyfriend. After her death, the family started the One Love Foundation to educate young people about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

The Challenge

The statistics surrounding relationship abuse are daunting. Domestic violence accounts for 21% of all violent crimeⁱ. More than one million high school students nationwide suffer physical dating abuse per yearⁱⁱ, and up to 17% of college students in the United States report being physically or sexually hurt by a dating partner while in school.^{iii,iv} More than one in three cis-women (36%)^v and cis-men (34%)^{vi}, and more than half of trans/non-binary people (54%)^{vii} have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. The negative impacts of this type of trauma can be devastating – youth who survive teen dating violence are more likely to experience long-term mental health consequences including depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide, and may also engage in unhealthy coping behaviors such as using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol.^{viii,ix,x,xi}

The Opportunity

One Love aims to get ahead of the issue through a multi-faceted, evidence-based approach to preventative education targeted at young people, especially adolescents aged 11-18 years old. One Love focuses on educating youth in this unique, critical period of development because changes in brain structure, function, and connectivity are naturally positioning them to grow, learn, and thrive.^{xii} By taking risks, exploring their emerging identities and relationships, and drawing on natural resilience, adolescents can learn new healthy patterns and even repair existing damage from childhood setbacks and traumas.^{xiii}

One Love's Research and Evidence-Based Approach

One Love's approach to preventative education began with the conception of our groundbreaking workshop, *Escalation*. The 90-minute *Escalation* film and workshop were developed using two prominent theories of behavior change: [Theory of Planned Behavior](#) and [Diffusion of Innovation](#). The themes addressed in the talking points of the *Escalation* discussion guide were developed by Emily Rothman, PhD then piloted with students by Cris Sullivan, PhD and Amy Bonomi, PhD, all three leading experts in the field of domestic abuse and dating violence. This programmatic model relies heavily on the peer-to-peer influence which research has proven to be a best practice for healthy intervention and promotion strategies^{xiv} – research indicates that close friendships and open discussions among peers about dating challenges or issues can help prevent adolescent dating abuse.^{xv} More than 1.7 million people have been reached through a One Love workshop, and 96% of responding youth participants say other students should also go through a workshop. At One Love, we've seen first-hand the power that in-person discussions have when communities, youth, and their adult allies own the message and share it.

One Love partnered with Dr. Rothman and other external researchers to conduct randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluations to study outcomes in knowledge and attitudes regarding dating abuse, attitudes regarding bystander intervention, and bystander behaviors following a single One Love workshop. The pilot RCT studied 85 college students participating in One Love workshops and baseline surveys conducted between October 2015 and March 2016, with a follow up survey after three months. The second, larger RCT studied 335 U.S. Navy sailors between the ages of 18-24 years old participating in One Love workshops and baseline surveys in April 2018, with



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follow up surveys after four months and eight months. The initial evaluation found increases in bystander readiness to intervene and decreases in denial of dating abuse as a problem on campus; additional promising findings included improved recognition of dating abuse warning signs and increased feelings of responsibility for preventing dating abuse.^{xvi} Outcomes from the second evaluation included improved attitudes about dating abuse, increased engagement in prevention-oriented bystander behavior, initiation of conversations with friends and family about partner violence, and intervention when encountering verbal abuse, among others.^{xvii} Both evaluations have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

One Love workshops incorporate three leading CDC recommendations for preventing intimate partner violence:

- 1) Teaching safe and healthy relationship skills;
- 2) Engaging influential adults and peers through bystander empowerment and education; and
- 3) Creating protective environments by improving school climate and safety.^{xviii}

Recognizing controlling behavior – one of the strongest predictors of future adolescent relationship abuse^{xix} – along with other critical warning signs of unhealthy relationships is a primary goal in every One Love training.

Since the release of *Escalation* in 2014, One Love has developed many additional films and resources aimed to reach youth of different ages, identities, and experiences through relatable scenarios and illustrations grounded in the current scientific literature and best practices. One Love curricula are organized by learning objectives that have been mapped to CASEL’s competency areas and designed to be compatible with state standards and learning requirements. One Love’s workshop model and corresponding curriculum are anchored in Merrill’s Principles of Instruction and Instructional Strategies for Attitudinal Change, including the instructional design principles of activation, demonstration, application, integration, and task-centered learning.^{xx} The teaching points that serve as the basis for One Love’s discussion guides were informed by domestic violence practitioners and academic educators in the field to ensure adherence to current industry recommendations, and introduce the issue of abuse in an age-appropriate manner. Our curricula are also reviewed by the One Love Culturally Responsive Education Review Committee using a framework based on the NYU Metro Center’s Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard.^{xxi} In addition, One Love trains its facilitators in five areas of Facilitator Competencies, which also align to Merrill’s Principles of Instruction.^{xxii}

Designing an Evaluation Framework and Learning Agenda

Currently, One Love is pursuing scientific rigor and continuous improvement through the development of 1) a sustainable evaluation framework to measure participant success across the core learning objectives outlined in the theory of change and better understand One Love’s impact against the target outcomes; and 2) a prioritized learning agenda to identify and address critical knowledge gaps in the literature. One Love can catalyze innovation and elevate the field by highlighting urgent questions and engaging diverse partners across sectors to expand our understanding of not only what interventions work in preventing dating abuse, but why and for whom.



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