

# **“Coaching Boys Into Men”**

## **A Gender-based Violence Prevention Program**

### **Middle School Study**

“Coaching Boys into Men,” a program developed by Futures Without Violence (all materials available at [www.coachescorner.org](http://www.coachescorner.org)), guides middle and high school coaches to talk to their male athletes about stopping violence against women and girls. The program is intended to:

- increase youth knowledge of what constitutes abusive behaviors
- increase positive gender attitudes among youth
- increase the number of youth who intervene when witnessing disrespectful behaviors.

The long-term goal is to reduce young male athlete involvement in disrespectful and harmful behaviors toward women and girls. The program has scripted tools for coaches to use with their athletes, including speeches and weekly reminders to their team about expectations for respectful behaviors toward women and girls.

A randomized trial in 16 high schools in Sacramento, CA, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and led by Dr. Elizabeth Miller (Chief of Adolescent Medicine, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh) found that the program increases high school male athlete intentions to do something when they witness disrespectful and harmful behaviors among their peers as well as actual positive bystander behaviors. One year later, the athletes who received the program from their coaches reported lower rates of abuse perpetration than the athletes who did not receive the program.

In feedback from the high school coaches and athletes, most recommended starting this program in the middle school years, when socialization around interactions with girls are just beginning. The middle school years are a recent focus of teen dating violence prevention efforts because this is a critical developmental transition. We are planning a study similar to that conducted in California, with a focus on 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade male athletes, in 30 middle schools.

Baseline surveys are collected for all coaches and middle school student athletes involved in the study (intervention and control), with parental permission. Follow up surveys are collected at the end of each sports season throughout the academic year. The wait-listed schools will receive the same trainings as soon as data collection is completed.

#### **Anonymous On-line Surveys Administered to Students in Media Lab:**

Baseline Survey – start of sport season (water bottle gift for athlete)

First Follow Up Survey – end of sport season (another gift for athlete)

Final Follow Up Survey – 12 months after baseline (\$20 gift card for athlete)

**\*\*We will obtain all human subjects research approvals necessary to conduct research in schools including review and approval from each school district as needed.**

**\*\*The surveys utilize a personal code created by the student so the surveys are anonymous and have NO identifying information.**

**\*\*Parents receive an informational letter and consent form to sign if they are willing to have their child participate in the study.**

**Site Responsibilities:**If a school is selected to do the program:

1. Coaches (in intervention schools) attend one 60-minute training (the training can be scheduled at the school site at a time most convenient for the coaches) and receive \$25 for participating in the training.
2. Coaches use tools to proactively address student behaviors using the Coaching Boys Into Men Training Cards  
Each card is expected to take about 10 minutes once a week, with scripts to help open a conversation about respectful behaviors and how to intervene when witnessing abusive behaviors among their peers  
The Trainer will reach out to the coaches every 2 weeks to see how the program implementation is going, and to support coaches with additional booster trainings as needed.
3. To make sure the program is implemented with fidelity, coaches will be asked to keep track of when and for how long they deliver each Training Card. Research assistants will observe up to two training sessions, will request permission to audiotape at least one session, and call the coaches at designated times to ask which cards have been implemented thus far. Coaches will receive gift cards to thank them for their time in responding to these requests (up to \$25).

For both intervention and comparison schools:

1. School sites support baseline and follow up survey distribution and completion (the surveys take about 10 minutes and are conducted on-line on a computer at school).
2. Coaches will be asked to complete a brief (5 minute) survey at the start of the sports season and a similar survey at the end of the sports season for which they will receive a \$25 gift card for each.
3. Assistance may include the coaches distributing and collecting the information sheets and parent consent forms from their athletes, as well as helping the research team find a convenient time to use the computer lab at school to complete the surveys.

**Stipend:** A small stipend is paid to each athletic department participating in the study (\$1000 each year x 3 years which is the length of the grant) for use of computer facilities and for assistance with distributing the parent information sheets to their athletes.

**Anticipated Dates:** continued recruitment of schools through Summer 2015; start with Fall Sports 2015

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**Funding:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Community Partners/Trainers:** Futures Without Violence, Center for Victims, and Pittsburgh Action Against Rape

### **What Coaches say about the program:**

--*"I have used the training from this program as a form of intervention. When our team was traveling to an event, the boys started yelling and whistling at a group of girls. Before leaving the bus, we talked about disrespectful behavior and what would be considered respectful behavior. The next time we saw a group of girls, our team was very respectful in their mannerisms."*

--*"An athlete was looking at a woman's butt and making comments. I stopped the athlete and talked to him about the damage caused. The damage to the woman, the damage to the team, and the damage to his reputation."*

--*"The teasing changed....The language that they used for teasing each other... The one about calling each other girls...they were always a couple of boys in here that used to always say 'come on ladies' and now they are correcting [each other ]."*

--*"you address issues that are hard for kids to communicate about in a relatively safe environment"*

--*"Keep doing it....Not everybody gets a chance to have conversations with their kids regarding matters like this..."*

--*"A lot of my wrestlers were like 'I've never seen it'... 'Well studies show there is...Think about this, think about your sister, your moms, your girlfriends, this is what they are going to be experiencing ...You guys gotta not only not do it but prevent your friends from doing this as well'...Just giving them [athletes] the facts...it was a little shocking [for] them"  
"We did the pledge, we signed and I emailed it to everybody, it was the idea that you went through this you guys are going to do your best to match your commitment not be demeaning to woman and watch what you say."*

### **What Athletes Say about the program:**

--*"...it could impact a girl's life if stuff like this happens. So the guys need to be role models to their teammates in a way."*

--*"I think we became more aware of it, ... When you don't see it, you don't really think about it. It was brought to our attention."*

--*"[The girls said] He used to be heck of mean, but did you talk to him or something? Because he's heck of nice now."*

--*"...'You play ball like a girl....' Girls take it more offensively because they think it's negative towards them in a way."*

--*"...if you're trying to tell their teammate that they're not doing so well, don't say, 'Oh dude, you just got raped.'"*

--*"You're not just going to let them just get beat up, you gotta step in somewhere."*