





History of Step-Up

- Program began in 1997 in response to high numbers of youth assaults against family members referred to juvenile court.
- 750 - 900 juvenile DV cases, both filed and diverted, were referred to juvenile court *every year* between 1996 and 2007.
- 65 % of the victims in these cases were parents or caretakers.

King County, Washington

- Total Population: 1.78 Million
- Median Household Income: \$65,000
- Racial/Ethnic Communities:
 - White: 73%
 - African-American: 5%
 - Asian: 10%
 - Hispanic/Latino: 6%
 - Native American: <1%



Adolescent to Parent Violence in King County Juvenile Court 2001 - 2004

Total Cases Filed: 1,339

- **Offenders**
 - Male 874 / 65%
 - Female 465 / 35%
- **Victims**
 - Mother 957 / 72%
 - Father 382 / 28%

Data from King County Juvenile Court Prosecutor's Office

Relationship of Offender to Parent Victim 2001-2004

- Son to Mother 44 %
- Son to Father 21 %
- Daughter to Mother 28%
- Daughter to Father 7%

Data from King County Juvenile Court Prosecutor's Office

Step-Up Client Data

Total Offenders Interviewed
2001 - 2004

- Male: 187 / 70%
- Female: 81 / 30 %

Step-Up Intake Interviews

Step-Up Client Data 2001 - 2004

Youth referred for violence
against:

- Mother 194 / 72%
- Father 43 / 16%
- Sister 14 / 5%
- Brother 15 / 5%
- Other 8 / 2%

“I’m afraid to take my
teen home”.

“I can’t get him to go to counseling....”

“He’s been in counseling for years... it hasn’t stopped the violence.”

In 1995, King County’s Superior Court Domestic Violence Manager applied for a grant to develop

A Juvenile Justice System Response to Youth Violence toward Family Members

There were several key components for success.....

Where Do We Start?

- Safety, Safety, Safety FIRST
- Collaboration between all parties who interface with these families
- Learn from each other's perspectives
- Develop a common understanding of the problem and what is needed
- Work together to develop a model that is realistic and workable



The Project included:

Development of a <i>Coordinated Community Response Model</i>	<i>Collaboration with Law Enforcement, Juvenile Court and Community Agencies</i>
A <i>Juvenile DV Task Force</i> to conduct analysis and develop recommendations	Development of a diverse and active <i>Advisory Board</i>
Development of an <i>Intervention Program</i> for youth and their parents / caretakers	



Coordinated Community Response

- **Safety First** – all responses take safety of family members into account above all else.
- Youth receives a consistent message from all involved:
 - *family violence is a serious matter*
 - *It is against the law to assault people in your family*
 - *Our goal is to help you, so you get what you need and everyone in your home is safe from harm.*

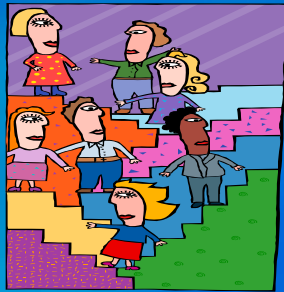
- ### Juvenile DV Task Force
- Juvenile Court – Judges, probation, diversion
 - Prosecuting Attorneys office
 - Defense Agencies
 - Police Agencies
 - Community Domestic Violence agencies
 - Children and Youth Services

The Charge to the Task Force was:

- "To increase coordination and communication within the Juvenile Justice system;
- To identify barriers and challenges within the system related to domestic violence cases, and
- To develop policies and procedures to improve service delivery for those cases."

Diverse Perspectives / Opinions

- Listen
- Learn
- Keep open mind
- Find common goals
- Avoid side tracking



"The idea of children attacking their parents is so foreign to our conceptions of parent-child relations that it is difficult for most of us to believe that such behavior occurs."

- Richard Gelles and Claire Cornell,
Intimate Violence in Families

Goals of Task Force

- Identify barriers and challenges within the juvenile justice system
- Develop proposed policy and procedural changes to address those barriers and challenges

What would be the outcomes if the response system was working in the desired way?

For Parent/Caretaker

- **Increased safety in the home / no repeat offenses**
- **Feels supported by system- police, courts, social services**
- **Is not placed in the position of being court monitor**
- **Their youth would not be charged with a crime**

Mission of court involvement is to motivate youth to engage in counseling and change behavior, rather than pressing charges

What would be the outcomes....

For Youth:

- **Experiences a 'wake-up call' that his/her violence toward family members is serious, and that family violence is a crime**
- **Is held accountable by court to attend counseling to address the violent behavior**
- **Feels supported by the system to get the help he/she needs to change behavior**
- **Has skills to prevent violence/abuse**
- **Has support system for change**

From a review of multiple cases, the Task Force found the cases had in common:

“The dilemma of a parent being called upon to fill the roles of parent, prosecutor, probation monitor, and the victim.”

“The cases also demonstrated the dynamics of a parent feeling guilty, afraid, overwhelmed, and confused as a result of the often conflicting choices they must make.”

Analysis of System Components

Barriers / System Gaps Identified

Police Response:

- Law enforcement response often *increases risk for further violence* when the officer:
 - Minimizes the violent incident, i.e. “this is a parenting issue... you can’t be calling the police just because you can’t discipline your child...”
 - Blames the parent in front of the youth

- Advises parent to use corporal punishment
- Says cannot arrest for this type of violence- “there is nothing I can do, they won’t let us arrest for this...”
- Youth receives message that violence toward family members is not a big deal, and not a crime.
- Parents report after the police leave, the youth becomes more violent, in retaliation for the police call, and now knowing there will be no consequence for the violence.

What message are we giving youth about violence toward family members?

What message is the youth receiving about family violence?

- A study in 1989 showed one of the correlates for higher incidence of child to parent violence was "lowered beliefs in probability of police sanction".

Task Force Recommendations re: Police Response

Provide training to law enforcement officers, including dynamics of this type of violence, effective responses and safety issues for families

Barriers / System Gaps Identified

Detention of Youth

- No clear protocol for detention of youth – leaving it to the decision of individual police and detention screeners, often with limited information and inconsistent interpretations.
- Police officers reported frustration about taking youth to detention, and being told to take him/her back home.

- Parents express confusion by inconsistent responses, and what seems to be disregard for their concerns and safety.
- Lack of options for parents other than calling police when fear for safety- many do not have a place for youth to go outside of home

- When police do not have the option to remove the youth from the home, they most often return within a short period of time to respond to further incidents of violence, that have increased in severity.

Task Force Recommendations re: Detention

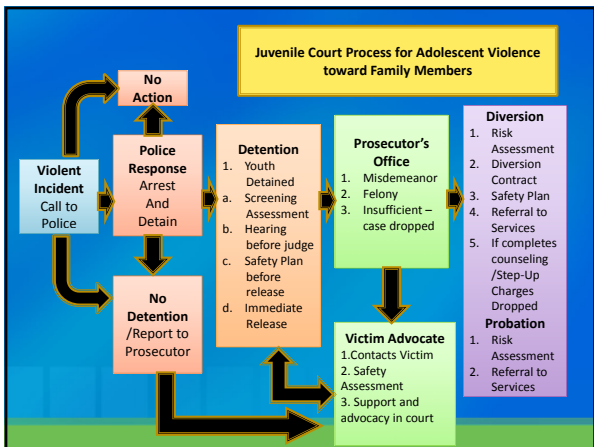
- Develop protocol for detention criteria
- The Task Force recommends a 'cooling off' period overnight in detention for all youth who have assaulted a family member
- Hold youth until a Risk Assessment is conducted, a Safety Plan is made, and the case is reviewed by a Judge before release.

- The Prosecuting Attorney's office **Victim Advocate** conducts safety/risk assessment with every victim. Assesses need for Safety Plan.
- Probation conducts screening assessment with youth.
- Youth appears before Judge, Safety Plan may be a condition of release
- Safety Plan with youth and parent conducted before release

Final Recommendation from Task Force:

➤ Representatives from all departments/organizations commit to work together through an ongoing coordinating body to jointly address the importance of these cases, and develop better approaches for cases involving youth assaulting parents

Step-up Advisory Board formed out of this group

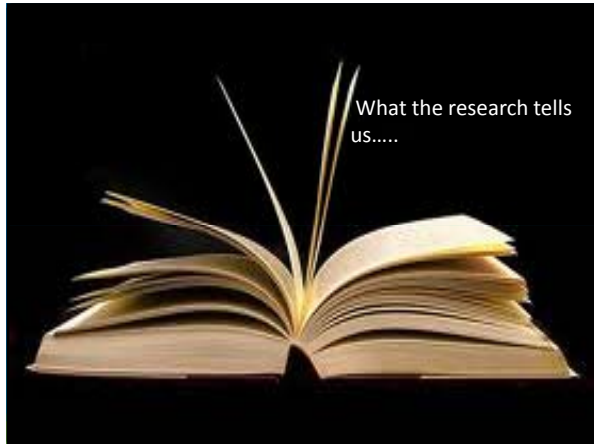


The Other End of the Story...

UP
STEP
Building Respectful
Family Relationships

How Can We Help Teens and Parents?
What Works?

- Little research on youth violence toward family members
- No research on intervention
- Most youth aggression research is with youth violence toward peers, at school and in the community.



What we do know from the research

Best practices for reducing youth aggression:

- **Cognitive Behavioral learning** (Lochman et al., 2007); Bandura, 1973; Crick & Dodge, 1994)
- **Skills based approaches**
- **Group sessions** more effective than individual (Lochman, 2007)
- **Parent training** to help their youth change behavior (Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995; Kazdin & Weisz, 1998)

Criminology research over the last 20 years shows...

- Confrontational, punitive tactics used to change youth's behavior have no effect on recidivism. (Andrews, 1990; Gendreau, 2002; Gibbs, 1986; Taxman, 1999)
- "A 'fair, firm and consistent' stance where agents work to form positive, collaborative relationship with offenders while holding them accountable for their actions", is most effective in promoting behavior change.

Criminology Research...

Several large research studies have shown approaches that use techniques such as

- modeling and practice of positive behaviors, and
- giving feedback on performance,

tend to be most effective in changing behavior and reducing recidivism

Intergenerational Cycle of Violence

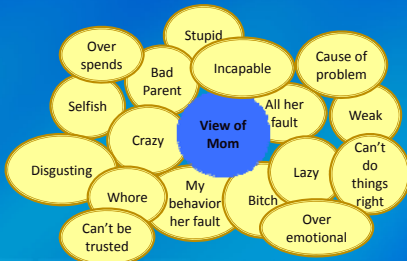


"He says the same things to me that his Dad used to say.... And he was so little- I never thought he was even paying any attention to us...."

Mom of 14 y/o son

Child Living with Domestic Violence

Messages heard about Mom



A Model for Respectful Family Relationships

- Including some elements of adult domestic violence treatment (Duluth Model)
- Abuse and Respect Wheels modified for adolescents in the family
- Responsibility letters and empathy letters
- Accountability for behavior using a 'Check-In' process

Safety Considerations

- Can we work with parents and teens together?
- How safe will it be for parents to talk about their youth's violence?
- What will happen when they go home?
- Will we be increasing risk of harm to family members?

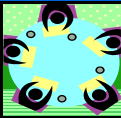
The best way to learn is from the parents and teens....

STEP UP Curriculum
An intervention program for teens that are violent at home

Group work approach including youth and their parents or caregivers.

- joint parent/youth group sessions, and
- parallel youth and parent groups
- Skills based learning
- Cognitive behavioral
- Strengths based
- Restorative practice approach

Step-Up Groups



- 21 sessions – once a week, for 90 min.
- ‘Check-in’ process with parents and teens together for first half of group
- Skill building and practice follows check-in:
 - youth/parents together, or
 - separate youth and parent groups

Step Up Foundation



SAFETY

RESPECT

Support

Community

Restore Relationship

Teen Group Curriculum

A Venn diagram consisting of three overlapping circles. The top circle is blue and labeled 'Skills'. The bottom-left circle is purple and labeled 'Self-Awareness'. The bottom-right circle is green and labeled 'Accountability'. The circles overlap in the center and at the intersections between two circles.

Youth Learn and Practice

Skills to Prevent Violence and Abuse

- Personal Safety Plan
- Self-calming and emotion regulation
- Self-awareness of thoughts and feelings
- Self-talk to shift perspective, reduce fear and anxiety
- Communicating feelings and needs, instead of attacking

Youth Learn and Practice

Respectful relationship skills

- How to talk about feelings and needs respectfully; assertive communication
- Listening
- Empathy
- Asking for help, instead of lashing out

Responsibility for Behavior

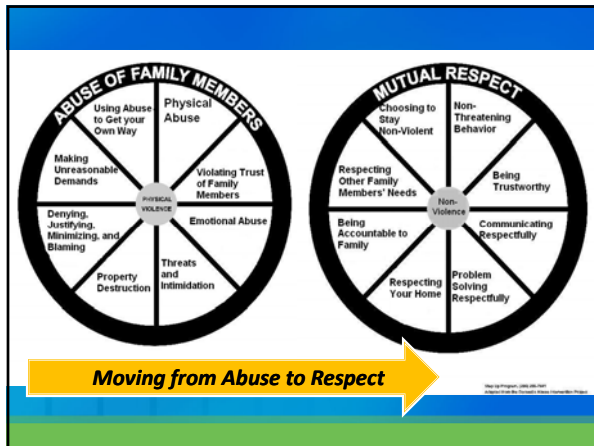
- Restorative process engages teen in self-reflection about effects of hurtful behavior
- Check-In provides a safe framework for accountability – to learn they can be honest, admit mistakes and will still be supported
- Changing behavior with small steps through weekly goal setting and self-assessment of progress

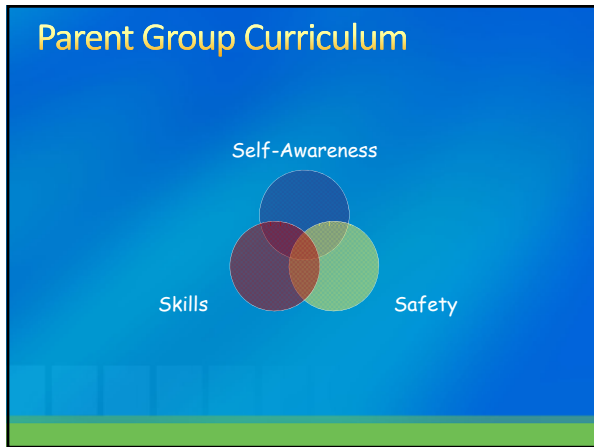
Youth and Parent Together



Together Parents and Teens Practice

- Safety Skills
 - How to talk respectfully, even when angry
 - Solving problems and resolving conflict in respectful ways
 - Listening and trying to understand each other's point of view
 - Finding relationship strengths and building on them





- ### Parents learn and practice
- How to safely respond to violence and abuse
 - How to support teen in using skills learned
 - Modeling respectful behavior for youth
 - Parenting that promotes responsibility
 - Setting boundaries and regaining leadership
 - Building a more positive relationship
 - Recognizing strengths in youth and relationship

Team Approach



Step-Up Evaluation Outcomes

Organizational Research Services 2005 Evaluation of 151 Step-Up participants

Key Findings included:

- "Analysis of short term teen and parent outcomes demonstrated significant improvements in attitudes, skills and behaviors over the course of the intervention."
- "Assessment of the Teen Behavior scales related to different types of behavior indicated significant declines in which youth engaged in such behaviors in family situations."

- "Those youth who completed the Step-Up interventions have lower recidivism rates than youth who did not complete the intervention ."
- At 18 months, the rates of Referrals, Filings, DV Referrals and DV filings are substantially lower for the Completers.
- The average number of DV Referrals and DV filings is less than half that of Non-Completers.
- After 12 months, the average number of Filings among Non-Completers is twice as high as the average among Completers.

• "There is evidence of differences in long term recidivism between the Step-Up Probation Youth and the Comparison Probation Youth at both 12 and 18 months."

- average number of Felony Referrals is significantly higher for the Comparison youth
- Lower rates of DV Referrals and DV Filings among Step-Up youth
- Average number of Felony referrals is about 2.5 times greater for Comparison youth
- 38% of Comparison youth had 1+ DV Referrals in contrast to 22.6% of Step-Up youth
- The average # of DV Filings among comparison youth is twice that of the Step-Up youth.

Families Supporting Each other



All of us Working Together



Contact Information

Lily Anderson: lily.anderson@kingcounty.gov

Routt: greg.routt@kingcounty.gov

Step-Up Program

1211 East Alder

Seattle, WA 98122

[206-296-7841](tel:206-296-7841)

[Website : kingcounty.gov/courts/stepup](http://kingcounty.gov/courts/stepup)
