

Program Objectives

Lessons from Literature is designed to raise student awareness of violence and abuse in intimate and peer relationships and equip students with tools and skills for choosing alternatives to violence. The program helps students learn to:

1. Describe the dynamics of abusive use of power and control in relationships.

- Abusive uses of power and control in a relationship can lead to physical and sexual violence.
- Often, such violent behavior and choices are preceded by other damaging, more emotionally-based abuse such as coercion, threats, or hurtful language.
- Refer to the [Power and Control Wheel](#) on page 32 as a visual aid and for more examples.

2. Explain the consequences of physical, verbal and sexual abuse and the impact of such abuse on individuals and society.

- Abuse not only affects the victim and the abuser, but can also affect their friends, family, and community.
- Consequences of abuse can be temporary or permanent; they can be physical, emotional, health-related, economic, social and/or sexual.
- Some forms of relationship abuse – specifically, physical and sexual assault – are illegal, and consequences can include suspension, expulsion or even incarceration of the abuser.
- Encourage your students to identify and explain these consequences when analyzing the literature.

3. Identify and propose alternatives to using violence.

- Alternatives to violence are those behaviors and actions that do not cause or have the intent to cause harm.
- When considering alternatives to violence or analyzing the choices made by characters in literature, it's important to understand that each situation is unique and that ways of responding safely and nonviolently will vary.

4. Create and communicate personal boundaries.

- Personal boundaries help define interactions that are consensual, comfortable, nonthreatening and respectful.
- Everyone has the right to communicate how they want to be treated by others.

5. Apply principles of respectful behavior toward others in daily life.

- Refer to the [Respect Wheel](#) on page 33 as a visual aid; also use it as a starting point to create classroom and personal principles of respect.

