

Attachment PPPP: Parent Consent for Student Participation in Communications Focus Groups

Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships™ Initiative

Division of Violence Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Parent Consent for Student Participation in Communication Focus Group

Researchers' statement to parents

We are asking permission for your child to take part in a small group discussion (or focus group session). This letter will give you information about the study so you can decide if you want your child to take part in the focus group. Please read the information carefully. You can call the number at the end of this letter to ask any questions you have about the research. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want your child to take part in the focus group.

What is the purpose of the study?

Through a CDC research project called "Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Dating Relationships", your child's school has received funding to do one of two kinds of teen dating violence prevention. Your school is one of <#> schools in <city> who have received this funding. Preventing teen dating violence means stopping it before it starts. To do this we have to make sure teens' first dating relationships are healthy ones. CDC's "Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Dating Relationships" initiative aims to promote respectful, nonviolent dating relationships among youth. We are doing this by involving youth, parents, schools and the community. The purpose of this research is to learn more about the topic of healthy dating and relationships.

What will the focus group require of my child?

A focus group is a special group discussion that includes the research staff from Ogilvy Public Relations and about six or seven other students from your child's school. The focus group session will take about 90 minutes. We will meet with this small group of students in a private room to be able to talk about things students do, what they think about things, and their relationships with other people, including boyfriends or girlfriends or people they hang out with. Although some of the questions we will ask during the Focus Group session will be about relationships with boyfriends and/or girlfriends, your child does not need to have a current or past boyfriend or girlfriend to participate in this discussion.

The discussion will be audio recorded. The files will be used to summarize findings from all focus groups. We will destroy our focus group notes as soon as we complete our project report. Our job is to ask the students questions, to keep the group focused on the topic we want to discuss, and to make sure we don't run out of time. We really want the students to feel free to talk together as a group, so if the students are talking about the questions we asked, we will mostly just listen to their ideas and take notes. Our discussion will take about 90 minutes to complete.

How will my child's privacy be protected?

To protect your child's privacy, we will not write down his/her name on any of our notes we take during the Focus Group. Our research team will keep your child's private information (his/her name and his/her answers to the focus group questions) and our notes from group discussion locked in our research offices in Washington, D.C. We will not record how much individual children personally talked in the focus group meeting.

Although we value your child's participation in this Focus Group, we understand that they may not be comfortable telling the entire group what they have to say out loud. In these cases, if student prefer, they can write down their ideas or thoughts. We will provide several sheets of paper and a pencil so that students can write down any ideas that they do not feel like sharing with the entire group. When students are finished writing down their ideas, they can put the paper in an envelope that we will provide and seal/close the envelope. Students should feel free to write down all of their ideas that they do not want to share with the entire group on the provided paper. Your child will not have to put his/her name or initials anywhere on the paper or the envelope. At the end of the focus group, students will turn in their envelopes to the researcher. No one else will be able to see their ideas except for the researchers. At the end of each focus group, we will collect any envelopes and place them into a larger manila envelope. We will review and analyze the contents of the envelopes at our office in Washington D.C. and once completed we will seal the envelopes in the

larger manila envelope and secure that in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office. We will take steps to assure that the paper documents/envelopes are kept secure in our Washington D.C. offices.

Who will see my child's comments made during the Focus Group?

Your child's comments made during the Focus Group are confidential and totally private. Other parents, teachers, and your child's friends will never see your child's answers. Only the researcher will see your child's contribution to the small group discussion. All information that we gather from students will be confidential, or private.

The only time that we might have to share information is that we are required to protect your child by reporting child abuse to authorities, that is if your child verbally tells us that he/she is being hurt by an adult, or by a child or in the event that your child is planning to hurt him/herself or someone else.

The information we collect could be really helpful to other researchers who are trying to improve the lives of teenagers too. Since this study is funded by the Centers for Disease Control, which is part of the government, the information we collect will be made available to other researchers who are interested in whether the programs we are conducting work and how teenagers think and act. However, no information that could be used to identify you will be released to other researchers—that means that there won't be any way for anyone to know that you participated in a focus group or know how you answered the questions.

Does my child have to do this?

No, your child does not have to participate. Your child's participation in this focus group is voluntary. You or your child can say that they don't want to participate in the focus group and that is fine. Your choice will not affect how teachers treat your child. Your child would also be free to stop participating at any time without consequences. It is important that your child feel comfortable answering the questions honestly. Your child would not have to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer.

What if the questions are upsetting?

We don't think you'll be upset by our general (not personal) discussion, but if you are, <Name of Adult> is available to talk to and to help. You can also talk to your parents or another adult about the focus group. We will also give you a list of places in your community you can call to get help with any of problems that we discuss in the focus group session.

What are the risks?

Because your child will be speaking with us in a group of other students, there is the possibility that other participants in the focus group meeting will tell other people about their participation. Group members may repeat what is said during the meeting to other people. However, we will ask everyone in the group to keep what is said in the group confidential, or secret. We hope everyone will feel comfortable enough to be open and honest in the responses to our questions.

Are there any benefits to participating?

There are no direct benefits to participating in this Focus Group. However, your child may benefit from knowing that your participation has the potential to help future middle school and high school students have healthy and safe relationships with peers and dating partners.

What will be done with the results of this Focus Group?

Your comments will be combined with other students' comments and summarized in a report. Then we will write a report on the focus group results from many schools and other data we collect. We will never write the students' names in any reports. We will be careful not to include information that could be used to identify the students who participated in the focus group. Only general themes and some direct things you say will be included in our final report. In the event that we use something you said directly, we will only describe those words as coming from "a student in <site name>" instead of using any names.

