

# Education can prevent youth dating violence: Researcher

BY AMY MINSKY, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE AUGUST 4, 2009

The frequency of dating violence among youths could be reduced drastically with a small investment in time and money, says an expert.

Dr. David Wolfe, from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, said preventing physical violence begins with educating elementary and high school students about relationships.

"We shouldn't just be trying to treat or punish perpetrators after the fact," he said. "If they're taught properly, they will know what the limits are and be able to handle conflict."

Wolfe said without proper instruction, boys and girls don't know how to react or cope in all situations.

Since 2000, health classes for Grade 9 students in Ontario have included 28 hours of education in healthy sexuality, safety and injury prevention, and substance use.

Though the content is a requirement, Wolfe explained, the method in which it is taught is left to the teachers -- most of whom don't have any background in teaching about relationships. School officials don't provide resources for teachers, exacerbating the problem.