



Gaming Against Violence:

Using videogames to stop teen dating violence

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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®

MOSCONE CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO, CA

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Teen Dating Violence (TDV)

“physical, sexual, or psychological /
emotional violence within a dating
relationship”



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Start Strong Prevention in Middle School Matters," 2011.

44%
of all students

have been in an abusive relationship by
the time they graduate from college



More than **1 IN 3** **(38%)** would not know
how to get help on
campus if they were in an
abusive relationship

ing Death Trial

Jennifer Ann



Jennifer Crecente
Victim



Rebecca Taylor
CBS 42 NEWS



MURDER VICTIM



JENNIFER CRECENTE

LIVE

TRAVIS COUNTY
JUSTICE
COMPLEX

BIG STORY
Crabbe Plea Deal
REBECCA TAYLOR
TRAVIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Jennifer Ann





Jennifer Ann's Group®

Increase **Awareness** of TDV

Provide **Education** on TDV

Encourage **Advocacy** for TDV laws



500,000+ distributed
throughout US and UK



A New Approach to Teen Dating Violence

VIDEO GAMES

**Tweens, teens, and young adults
already playing video games (70-95%)**

**Sensitive topic + Adolescence
= Need for Self-Paced Exploration**



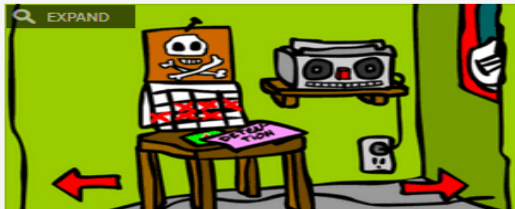
RECOMMENDED BY BRIAN CRECENTE

[The Post In Which I Tell You I'm Leaving](#)[The Wonderful Distractions, Sentient Glitches of Skyrim's Massive World](#)[A Sherlock Holmes TV Show for the Video Game Era](#)[Adieu](#)[Is the PS Vita A Device Ahead of Its Time or Behind It?](#)[Lets Play With the Vita's ModNation Racers: Road Trip](#)[Let's Play Plan Dem](#)[Let's Play World Inv](#)[Chastene Responds](#)

BRIAN CRECENTE on KOTAKU — SERIOUS GAMES — 5/27/08 5:30pm

6,232 22

Winners Named for Teen Dating Violence Prevention Game Design Contest



The Life Love Game Design Challenge named its winners today. The Flash game design challenge sponsored by Jennifer Ann's Group asked developers to come up with games about **teen dating violence prevention** without using violent content or a violent theme.

The \$1,000 winning design "Escape Your Boyfriend's Room" by Jorge Goyco is an interesting point and click game that manages to get both the warning signs of an abusive relationship across as well as how you can get yourself out of the relationship. I loved the look of

2008: Five registrations
2014: Twenty-two registrations
2008: \$1,500 in prize money
2015: \$10,000 in prize money





A world of developers & designers

@ Argentina

@ Belgium

@ Canada

@ India

@ Ireland

@ Mexico

@ Thailand

@ USA



A world of game ideas

- ⌚ Escape the Room
- ⌚ Adventure
- ⌚ Tower Defense
- ⌚ Mini Games
- ⌚ Simulation
- ⌚ Art Games
- ⌚ Platform
- ⌚ Point-and-Click



Finding the Proper Balance

Game must be **played**

Sufficiently compelling:

Visually appealing

Professional (enough)

Error-free

Game must be **effective**

Provide information or experience:

Accurate and timely

Educational value

Emotional impact



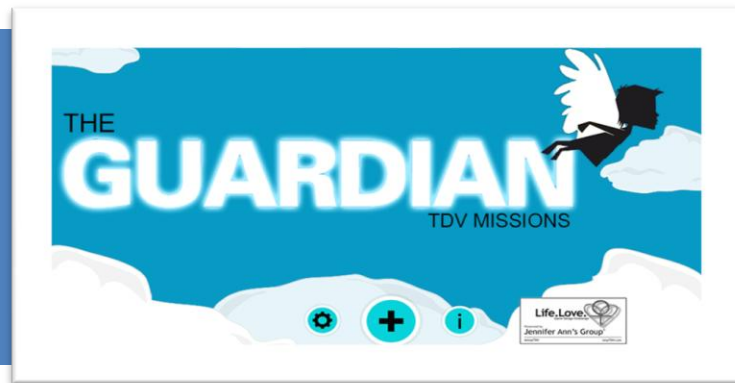


Walking Through Two

"The Guardian: TDV Missions"

1st Place, 2014

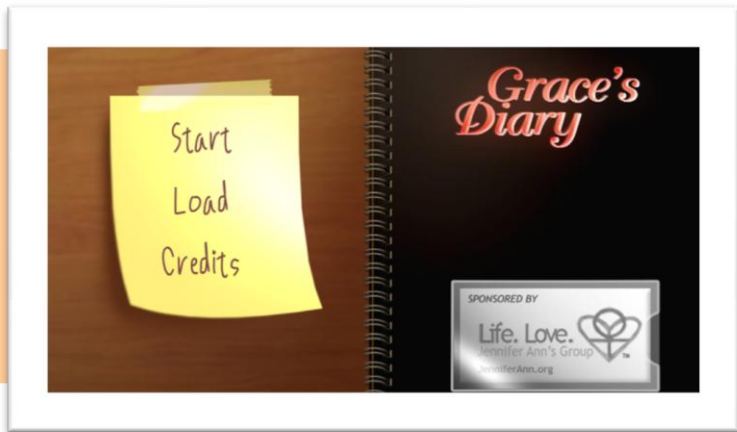
99UNO in Argentina



"Grace's Diary"

1st Place, 2010

HEMA in Thailand





Platform:

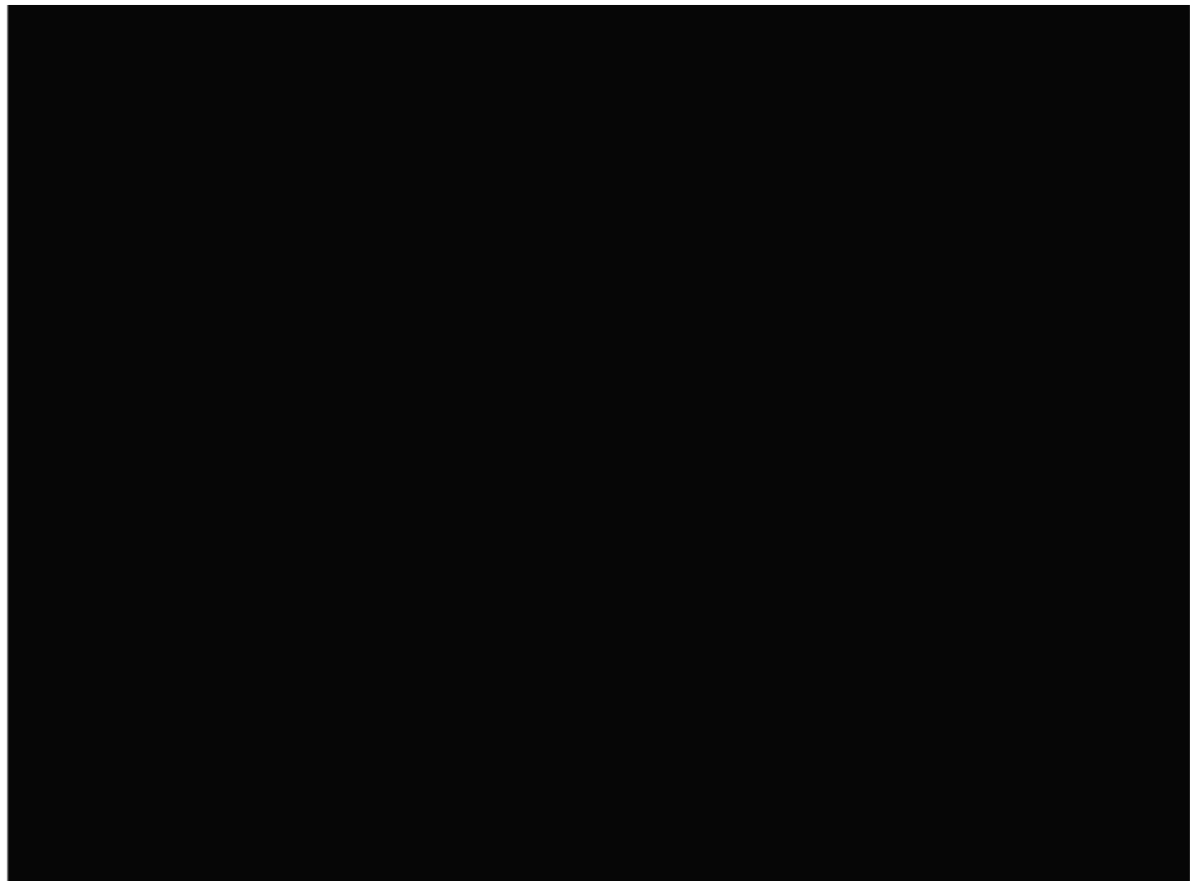
***The
Guardian***





Point and Click:

*Grace's
Diary*





Remember our goals:

- ☑ Increase awareness
- ☑ Provide educational information

Where's the proof?

Evidence-based research for validation



cava

changing
attitudes to dating
violence in
adolescents

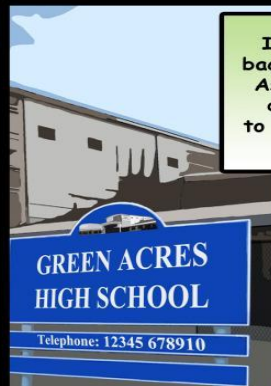


Dr. Erica Bowen

- Reader in the Psychology of Intimate Partner Violence at Coventry University
- Director of the Violence and Interpersonal Aggression Research Group
- Academic Lead on CAVA
- Judge for Life.Love. Game Design Challenge



First day back at school



It is the first day of school back after the summer vacation. As part of your 'Student Rep' duties you have been asked to put together a display in one of the corridors.



Hot OR NOT

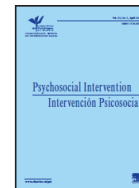
ve been given pieces of paper showing the teristics of healthy and ealthy relationships. But rtunately they have all become muddled.



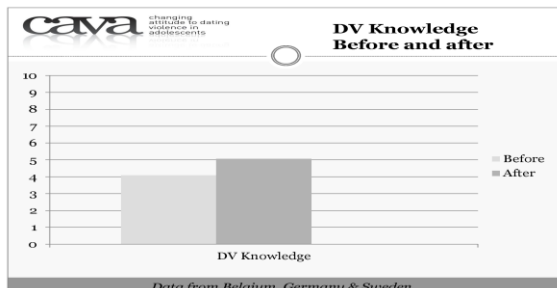


Psychosocial Intervention

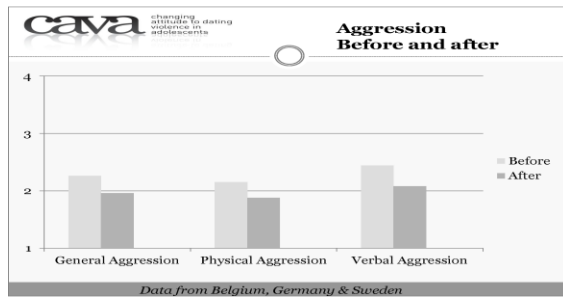
www.elsevier.es/psi



“It’s like you’re actually playing as yourself”: Development and preliminary evaluation of ‘Green Acres High’, a serious game-based primary intervention to combat adolescent dating violence⁺



Knowledge of dating violence



Endorsement of aggression

Endorsement of physical aggression

Endorsement of verbal aggression



Added Benefits of Video Game Approach

- Experiential Learning
 - *action*, not just explanation
 - *experiencing*, not merely reading

Learning, generally

- Discovery Learning
 - students exploring; recognize aspects on their own
- Contextualized Learning
 - learning in context rather than in isolation

Emotional Health
Issues

- Digital games are preferred technology for teens
- Computers are preferred tools resulting in a positive experience
- Teens felt that games were appropriate to reach them

Teens



Games, Emotional Health, & Teens

- Many emotional health and wellness issues affecting young people that could benefit from games
- Quick overview:
 1. **Bullying** "SchoolLife"
 2. **Pregnancy / STDs** "It's Your Game ... Keep it Real"
 3. **Suicide Prevention** "Inner Vision"



Applicability to other topics

Unique aspect of games provides emotional context / empathy

Bullying

SchoolLife (GiantOtter.com)

- “Multiplayer game that teaches empathy” w/ 3D Virtual Environment (VE) of school
- Players experience game as bullying victim and as bystander
- Two experiments:
 - Increases social processes related to improved interpersonal relationships.
 - These increases carry over into a negotiation following the game.
- NSF grant to improve “socio-emotional learning” using VE and AI
- Currently multi-player; will utilize AI for single-player
- Potential applications: different races / ethnicities; students as teachers





Applicability to other topics

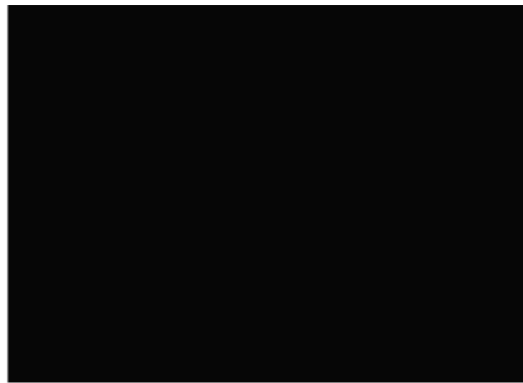
Unique aspect of games provides emotional context / empathy

Pregnancy / STDs

It's Your Game . . . Keep It Real! (iyg.sph.uth.tmc.edu)

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

- Middle school abstinence-plus program
- 12 lessons taught in 7th grade
+ 12 in 8th grade
- 45 minutes each
- Integrates video
- Gameplay largely quiz-based through mini-games
- Study: control students 1.29x more likely to initiate sex by 9th grade
29.9% (control) v. 23.4% (intervention)





Applicability to other topics

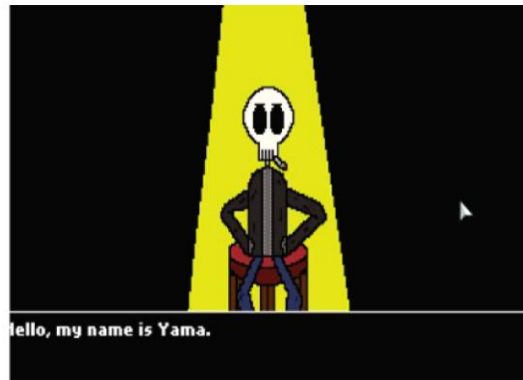
Unique aspect of games provides emotional context / empathy

Suicide

Inner Vision (Sunil-Rao.com)

- Irreverent death skeleton
- Challenge: save three lives
- “crappy little flash game”
- players **connected** with the characters
- “It hits on a core message that’s absolutely crucial: listen.” RockPaperShotgun.com
- game has helped people “think about their own life in a new light”
- “The response to Inner Vision is the reason why I make games.”

Sunil Rao, *Inner Vision* creator





EIGHTH ANNUAL

Life.Love. Game Design Challenge



NOW WITH

EXTRA Challenge!

\$10K IN PRIZES

bit.ly/LifeLove2015



Conclusion

- **Teen Dating Violence (TDV):** prevalence and complicating issues
- **Jennifer Ann's Group:** preventing TDV through video games
- **Research-based:** video games as TDV intervention
- **Adolescent mental health / wellness:** bullying, pregnancy, suicide



Final Thought

Unique opportunity to effect positive change

Themes / mechanics available to all games

Good for developers, industry, and public





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Jennifer Ann's Group®

