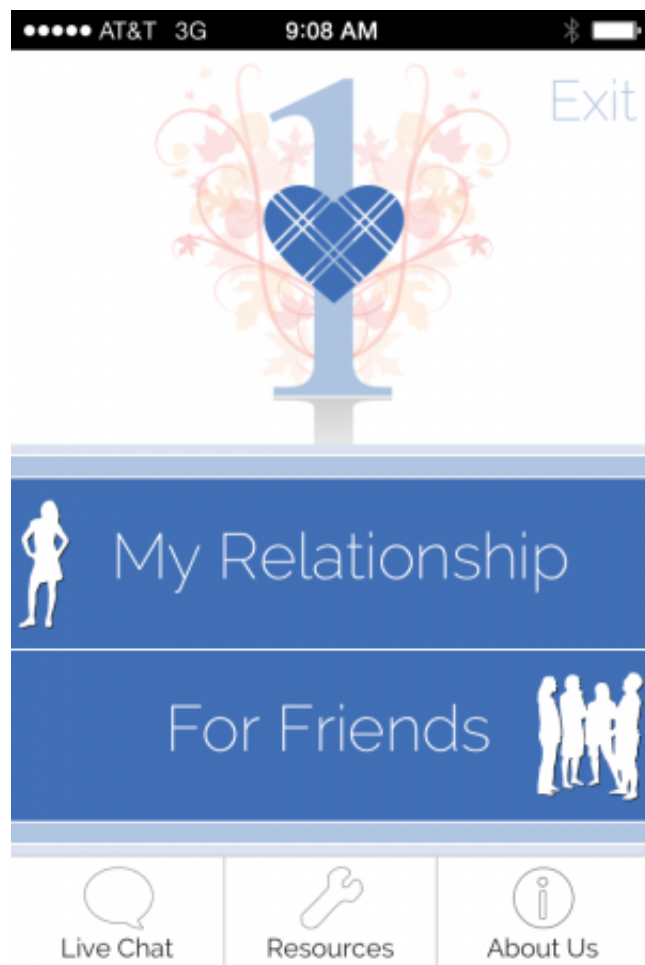


# Smartphone app aids college-age women in abusive relationships

February 18 2014

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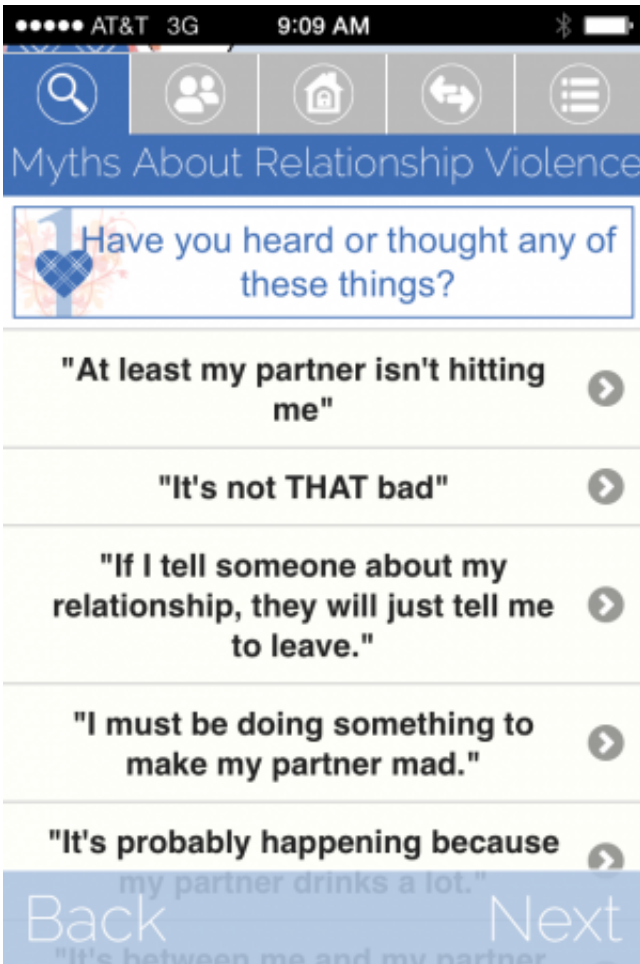
The interactive tool helps survivors of relationship violence clarify their priorities and develop customized personal safety plans. Credit: University of Missouri

Women between the ages of 18 and 24 are at the highest risk for dating violence, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, these women are less likely than older adults to seek formal safety resources and instead look to peers or technology for help and advice. In an effort to connect more young women with safety information, University of Missouri researchers collaborated with Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and the One Love Foundation to develop the "One Love My Plan" smartphone application, an interactive tool that helps college-age women in abusive relationships clarify their priorities and customize personal safety plans.

"At some point, almost everyone knows someone in an unhealthy relationship," said Tina Bloom, an assistant professor at the MU Sinclair School of Nursing. "The purpose of the My Plan app is to quickly and confidentially provide [women](#) and concerned friends with information and available resources. Our goal is not to replace existing services, but to better connect students with them."

To ensure that [young women](#) would find the app helpful and comprehensive, Bloom and her colleagues conducted focus groups with college-age women who identified themselves as survivors of [abusive relationships](#).

"Students said that phones feel private, and they always have their phones with them," Bloom said. "One student told us that she really liked the app because it provided strategies she could use immediately to help herself or a friend. In abusive situations, there are many factors to consider. The My Plan app gives students tools to examine their relationships, set their priorities and privately access resources when they are ready."



The app includes information about healthy relationship dynamics, common relationship violence myths and potential behavioral red flags. Credit: University of Missouri

Previous research shows that, across all socioeconomic backgrounds, millennials comprise the age group most likely to own smartphones, and many smartphone users access health information using their mobile devices. Bloom says the free app is filled with helpful features, including:

- Information on healthy relationship dynamics, common relationship violence myths and potential behavioral red flags.

- Sample scripts for approaching friends who are possibly in dangerous relationships.
- Personalized safety plans based on users' priorities and backed by scientific research.
- Links to local and national resources, including the option to live chat with trained peer advocates through LoveisRespect.org.
- User privacy safeguards, in case partners monitor phone activity, such as:
  - An innocuous name and logo.
  - Password protection and no option to change access code.
  - Tips for protecting privacy on smartphones and social networks.

The One Love Foundation and the Urban Health Institute at Johns Hopkins University provided funding for development of the app. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University, Arizona State University and Oregon Health and Science University also participated in the research and [app](#) development. The collaborative study, "Survivor feedback on a safety decision aid smartphone application for college-age women in abusive relationships," was published online in the *Journal of Technology in Human Services* in December 2013.

**More information:** To download "One Love My Plan" on iPhone, visit: [itunes.apple.com/us/app/one-lo ... lan/id792271887?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/one-love-my-plan/id792271887?mt=8).

To download "One Love My Plan" on Android, visit: [play.google.com/store/apps/det ... mail.com.onelovempv2](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.onelovempv2).

For online access to the One Love Danger Assessment, visit: [www.joinonelove.org/library/re ... html#da/screening\\_me](http://www.joinonelove.org/library/research/one-love-danger-assessment.html#da/screening_me)

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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