

Teen Dating Violence

What is teen dating violence?

A pattern of threatened or actual acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by a teen against a current or former dating partner. It may occur in straight or gay relationships. Abuse may include insults, bullying, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse.

Is this abuse?



If you are a victim of dating violence:

Understand that you do not, under any circumstances, deserve to be abused. **It is not your fault.**

Find someone that you really trust to talk to. Your first impulse may be to get help from a friend your own age. This is a good start, but you really need to tell an adult too. Find an adult you trust who takes you seriously, such as your parents, a teacher, counselor, or minister.



MYTHS VS. FACTS

Myth: *It can't happen to me.*

FACT: More than 1 in 10 teenagers experience physical violence in their dating relationships. 1 in 4 teens report experiencing some type of abuse (physical, verbal, emotional mental, or sexual)

Myth: *Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.*

FACT: Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign that the person sees you as a possession. It is the most common early warning sign of abuse.

Myth: *Teen dating violence isn't really that serious.*

FACT: 30% of all women who are murdered in this country are killed by their husband or boyfriend. According to a study that same high percentage applied to teen women aged 15-19, as well. Also, 60% of all rapes reported to rape crisis centers are committed by people the victim knows, and the majority of victims are aged 16-24.

Myth: *Men are abused by women just as often as women are abused by men.*

FACT: The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 95% of the reported incidents of assaults in relationships are committed by males.

Myth: *Alcohol causes a man to abuse*

FACT: Many men who abuse do not drink heavily, and many alcoholics do not beat their partners. Further, abusers who do drink don't necessarily give up abusing when they give up drinking. While some abusers do beat their partners while they are drunk, the alcohol acts as an excuse.

Myth: *Victims bring on the abuse themselves. They ask for it.*

FACT: Abusers believe they have the right to use abuse to control their partner, and they see the victim as less than equal to themselves. The victim has no control over the abuser.

Myth: *If a person stays in an abusive relationship, it must not really be that bad.*

FACT: People stay in abusive relationships for a number of reasons: fear, money, confusion, loss of self-confidence, not recognizing that what's happening is abusive, belief that the abuser needs their help or will change.

Myth: *Most abusers are bums or crazy people.*

FACT: Abusers are found in all classes and types of people: rich, poor, professional, unemployed, black, white, urban, and rural.

Cycle of Violence

Domestic and Dating Violence is like a circle. This is one reason it is so confusing and difficult for the victim to leave. During the calm or honeymoon stage, the abusers are often extremely sorry, promising never to repeat the violence. They may even shower their partners with gifts, flowers and romantic dinners before the cycle starts all over again.

Does your partner...

- Constantly keep track of your time?
- Act jealous and possessive?
- Accuse you of cheating or flirting?
- Try to keep you from being around friends and family?
- Prevent or discourage you from working, hanging out with friends or going to school?
- Constantly put you down or make fun of you in front of others?
- Destroy your things?
- Cheat on you?
- Threaten to hurt you, your family or pets?
- Threaten to use a weapon?
- Push, hit, slap, punch, kick or bite you or your family members?
- Force you to have sex against your will, or demand sexual acts you are uncomfortable with?

Did you know?

- More than one in ten teenagers experience physical violence in their dating relationships.
- One in four teens report experiencing some type of abuse (physical, verbal, emotional, mental, or sexual).
- 69% of all teens who had sex by age 14 said they have gone through one or more types of abuse in a relationship.
- More than one in three teens report that their partners wanted to know where they were (36%) and who they were with (37%) all the time.
- One in five 13-14 year olds in relationships (20%) say they know friends and peers who have been struck in anger (kicked, hit, slapped, or punched) by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

.Sources: asafepacenh.org, icadvinc.org

If you know someone who is a victim of dating violence:

Tell the person that you are worried.

Be a good listener and offer support.

Encourage your friend to seek help.

Educate yourself about dating violence and healthy relationships.

Avoid any confrontations with the abuser. This could be dangerous for you and your friend.

Some precautions you can take

Let friends or family know when you are afraid or need help.

When you go out, tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back.

In an emergency, call 911 or have a friend you can call with a code word letting them know you are in trouble.

Memorize important phone numbers, such as the people to contact or places to go in an emergency. Keep a cell phone handy for immediate access to communication.

Go out in a group or with other couples.

If You Are a Victim of Dating Violence, You Might...

- Think it's your fault.
- Feel angry, sad, lonely, depressed, or confused.
- Feel helpless, threatened or humiliated.
- Feel anxious.
- Not know what might happen next.
- Feel like you can't talk to family and friends.
- Be afraid of getting hurt more seriously.
- Feel protective of your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Know that it is never your fault, no one deserves to be abused and there is help available.