

Know Your Rights: Teen Dating Violence

*Safety Tips for you
and Your Family
([http:// www.acadv.org/dating](http://www.acadv.org/dating))*

**If you are in danger, call 911 or
your local police emergency number**

To find out about help in your area, call
National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Teen Dating Violence

What is Teen Dating Violence?

Teen dating violence (or relationship abuse) is a pattern of violent behavior that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. Dating violence can take many forms including psychological and emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Teen dating violence is similar to adult domestic violence in that: 1) it affects people from all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds; 2) both tend to show patterns of repeated violence which escalate over time; 3) both tend to display violent and abusive behavior interchanged with apologies and promises to change; and 4) both tend to show increased danger for the victim when trying to terminate the abusive relationship. Source: www.womenslaw.org.

How Big Of A Problem Is Teen Dating Violence?

Teenagers often experience violence in dating relationships. Statistics show that one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship. In dating violence, one partner tries to maintain power and control over the other through abuse. Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence. (Bureau of Justice Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence, May 2000). Source: www.acadv.org.

- 1 in 3 high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship.
- Forty percent of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 say they know someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.
- In one study, from 30 to 50 percent of female high school students reported having already experienced teen dating violence.
- Teen dating violence most often takes place in the home of one of the partners.
- In 1995, 7 percent of all murder victims were young women who were killed by their boyfriends.
- One in five or 20 percent of dating couples report some type of violence in their relationship.
- One of five college females will experience some form of dating violence.
- A survey of 500 young women, ages 15 to 24, found that 60 percent were currently involved in an ongoing abusive relationship and all participants had experienced violence in a dating relationship.
- One study found that 38 percent of date rape victims were young women ages 14 to 17.
- A survey of students revealed date rape accounted for 67 percent of sexual assaults.

- More than half young women raped (68 percent) knew their rapist either as a boyfriend, friend or casual acquaintance.
- 6 out of 10 rapes of young women occur in their own home or a relative's home, not in a dark alley.
- More than 4 in every 10 incidents of domestic violence involves non-married persons (Bureau of Justice Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence, May 2000)

Information on Teen Dating Violence Source: www.acadv.org.

What Dynamics Affect Teen Dating Violence?

- Teens are inexperienced with dating relationships.
- Teens may be pressured by peers to act violently.
- They want independence from parents.
- Teens have "romantic" views of love.
- Teen dating violence is influenced by how teenagers look at themselves and others.

What Are Early Warning Signs That My Date May Become Abusive?

- Extreme jealousy or controlling behavior
- Quick involvement
- Unpredictable mood swings
- Alcohol and drug use
- Explosive anger
- Isolates you from friends and family
- Uses force during an argument
- Shows hypersensitivity
- Believes in rigid sex roles
- Blames others for his problems or feelings
- Cruel to animals or children
- Abused former partners

What Are Common Clues That A Teenager May Be Experiencing Dating Violence?

- Physical signs of injury
- Truancy, dropping out of school
- Failing grades
- Indecision
- Changes in mood or personality
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Emotional outburst
- Isolation

How Can I Have Dating Safety?

- Consider double-dating the first few times you go out with a new person.
- Before leaving on a date, know the exact plans for the evening and make sure a parent or friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home. Let your date know that you are expected to call or tell that person when you get in.
- Be aware of your decreased ability to react under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- If you leave a party with someone you do not know well, make sure you tell another person. Ask a friend to call to see if you arrived home safely.
- Assert yourself when necessary. Be firm and straightforward in your relationships.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation.

How Do I Design My Own Safety Plan?

Think ahead about ways to be safe if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship. You can use the following guidelines to create your safety plan.

- What adults can you tell about the violence and abuse?
- What people at school can you tell in order to be safe--teachers, counselors, security?
- Consider changing your school locker or lock.
- Consider changing your route to/from school.
- Use a buddy system for going to school, classes and after school activities.
- What friends can you tell to help you remain safe?
- If stranded, who could you call for a ride home?
- Keep journals describing the abuse.
- Get rid of or change numbers (to any beepers, pagers or cell phones).
- Keep spare change, calling cards, the number of the local shelter, and a number of someone who could help you.
- Keep restraining orders with you at all times.
- Where could you go quickly to get away from an abusive person?
- What other things can you do?

What False Thinking Might Misguide Young Men?

- They have the right to "control" their female partners in any way necessary.
- "Masculinity" is physical aggressiveness.
- They "possess" their partner.
- They should demand intimacy.
- They may lose respect if they are attentive and supportive toward their girlfriends.

What False Thinking Might Misguide Young Women?

- They are responsible for solving problems in their relationships
- Their boyfriend's jealousy, possessiveness and even physical abuse, is "romantic."
- Abuse is "normal" because their friends are also being abused.
- "I can change him."
- "He won't do it again."
- There is no one to ask for help.

Teenagers can choose better relationships when they learn to identify the early warning signs of an abusive relationship, understand that they have choices, and believe they are valuable people who deserve to be treated with respect.