

## **DATING SAFELY**

- 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 you are leaving and with whom. Ask a friend to call and make sure 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.

## **HELPING A FRIEND WHO IS A VICTIM**

Most teens talk to other teens about their problems. If a friend tells you things that sound like his or her relationship is abusive, here are some suggestions on ways to help:

- If you see signs of abuse, talk to your friend about it.
- Tell your friend that you're worried and want to help. Support - don't judge.
- An abusive partner often undermines the victim's self-confidence, so point out your friend's good qualities.
- Encourage your friend to talk to a trusted adult, offering to go along.

- Call the police if you witness an assault (911). Tell an adult – school principal, parent, guidance counselor, or school resource officer – if you suspect the abuse but don't witness it.
- Never put yourself in a dangerous situation with the victim's partner. Don't try to mediate or otherwise get involved directly.

## **HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR TEENAGERS**

If you are a teenager involved in an abusive relationship, you need to remember that no one deserves to be abused or threatened. Remember, you cannot change your batterer, and in time the violence will get worse. You need to take care of yourself. Talk to a trusted adult (a parent, teacher, school resource officer, friend, counselor or clergyman), or shelter (*locally - The Genieve Shelter, 925-4365*), or agency (*National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)*) serving victims of domestic abuse in your community. Together, you can talk about making a plan to end the relationship and remain safe.

If you are hurting someone else, have the courage to get help! No matter what the other person does to provoke you, no matter how justified you feel, no matter what your friends do, it is never okay to harm someone else. Remember that physical and sexual violence are illegal and can land you in jail.



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# **Teens, Young Adults and Dating Violence**



**An Information Guide  
provided by  
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## **DATING VIOLENCE**



Teenagers often experience violence in dating relationships. In dating violence, one partner tries to maintain power and control over the other through abuse. This violence includes any form of sexual

assault, physical violence, and verbal or emotional abuse. Dating violence crosses all racial, economic and social lines. Most victims are young women, who are also at greater risk for serious injury.

*Research shows that physical or sexual abuse is a part of 1 in 3 high school relationships. Abuse isn't just hitting. It's yelling, threatening, name-calling, saying "I'll kill myself if you leave me," obsessive phone calling or paging, and extreme possessiveness.*

Teen violence often is hidden because teenagers typically:

- Are inexperienced with dating relationships.
- Are pressured by peers to act violently.
- Want independence from parents.
- Have "romantic" view of love.

Teen dating violence is influenced by how teenagers look at themselves and others.

Young men may *falsely* believe:

- 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 towards their girlfriends.

Young women may *falsely* believe:

- 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.
- 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.



*Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence – nearly 20 per 1000 women.*

### **EARLY WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR DATE MAY EVENTUALLY BECOME ABUSIVE**

Abusive relationships have good times and bad times. Part of what makes dating violence so confusing and painful is that there is love mixed with the abuse. Does your boyfriend or girlfriend exhibit the following traits?

- Extreme jealousy or possessiveness.
- Explosive anger.
- Unpredictable mood swings.

- Controlling behavior – won't let you have friends, checks up on you or won't accept breaking up.
- Abuses alcohol or drugs and pressures you to use them.
- Isolates you from friends and family.
- Takes your money and/or controls your money.
- Uses force during an argument.
- Shows hypersensitivity.
- Blames others for his problems or feelings.
- Cruel to animals or children.
- Verbally abusive – calls you things that hurt - such as degrading things - alone or in front of others.
- Abused former partners.
- Threatens violence – has a history of fighting, loses his temper quickly, brags about mistreating others.
- Grabs, shoves, pushes or hits you.

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you could be a victim of dating abuse. It might seem like small things, but over time someone that is abusive will get worse. Violent dating partners become violent spouses.

### **COMMON CLUES THAT INDICATE 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
- Pregnancy
- Emotional outbursts
- Isolation