

## Omnibuzz<sup>®</sup> Topline Findings—Teen Relationship Abuse Research

**Objectives & Methodology:** Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc. (formerly Liz Claiborne Inc.) commissioned quantitative research to determine the level of sexual, physical, and verbal abuse among American teenagers and investigate teens' related attitudes. A series of six questions was placed in the February 2005 fielding of Omnibuzz<sup>®</sup>, TRU's monthly online omnibus survey. The questionnaire fielded February 16-21, 2005 among a national sample and was completed by 683 teens ages 13 to 18. The margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points (at the 95% confidence level).

### Highlights

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**Two in three teens have either been in a relationship or "hooked up."**

- > Two out of three teens—regardless of gender—have either been in a relationship or have "hooked up" or dated.

### INFORMATION ON FRIENDS

**More than half of teens (57%) know friends or peers who have been physically, sexually, or verbally abused.**

- > One in three teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by their partner.
- > Sexual pressure appears rampant: 45% of girls know a friend or peer who has been pressured into having either intercourse or oral sex.
- > Forty percent of girls know someone who has been pressured into having intercourse; nearly a third of girls (32%) know someone who has been pressured into performing oral sex.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THEMSELVES

- > An alarming 13% of teen girls in a relationship admit to being physically hurt or hit.
- > One in four teen girls who have been in a relationship report they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse.
- > Nearly one in five teen girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self harm if presented with a breakup.
- > More than one in four teen girls in a relationship (26%) reports enduring repeated verbal abuse.

### THEIR VIEW OF THE PROBLEM

The vast majority of teens (80%) regard verbal abuse as "a serious issue" for their age group, while nearly 73% say the same is true for physical violence.

- > Strongly 71% of respondents say they know the warning signs of an abusive relationship. However, a closer look at gender differences suggests an underlying problem.

## WHAT THEY ARE DOING ABOUT IT

- > One-third of respondents said they've told someone about violence when they became aware of it or experienced it themselves. Some 23% said they'd personally tried to stop abuse in a friend's relationship.

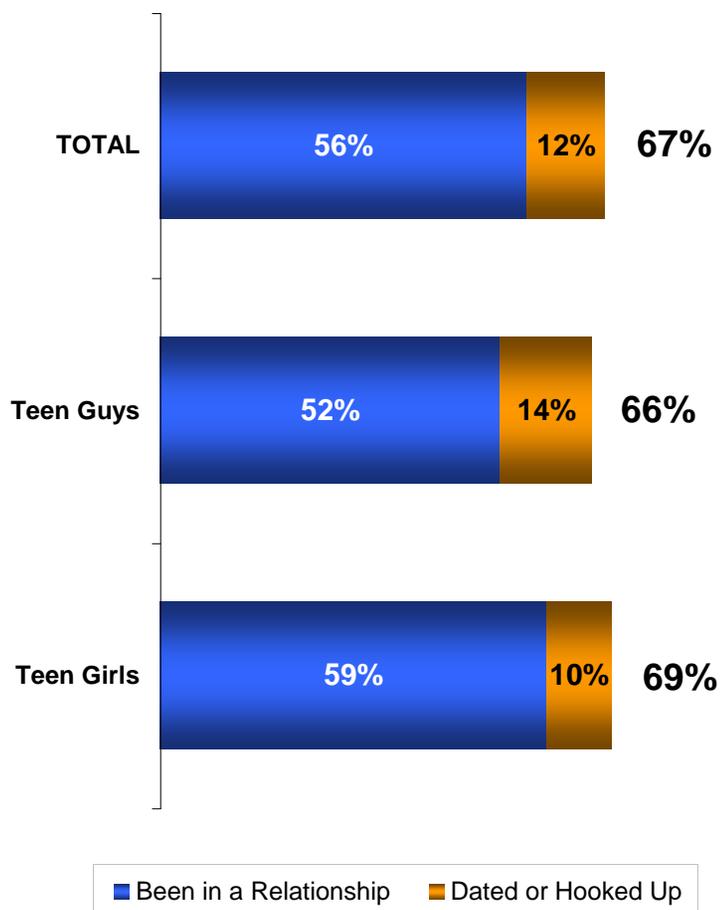
### **Friends are the primary listening posts—more common than Mom and Dad combined.**

- > If trapped in an abusive relationship, the majority of teens (73%) said they would talk through the problem with friends; 54% said they would discuss it with their parents.

**Only 33% who have been in or known about an abusive relationship said they have told anyone about it.**

## Two in three teens have either been in a relationship or “hooked up”

### WHETHER EVER BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP

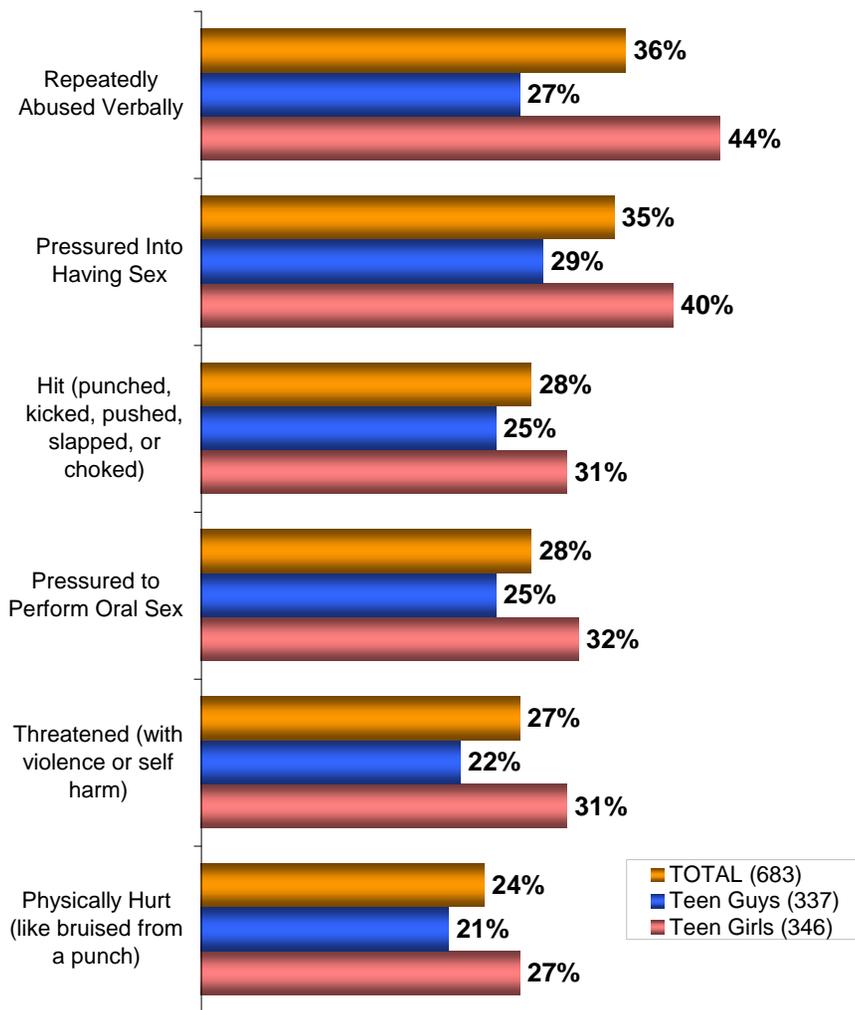


*Question: Have you ever been in a relationship?*

- > Two out of three teens—regardless of gender—have been in a relationship, dated, or “hooked up.” (*Due to rounding, the component results does not precisely equal the total.*)
  - » Specifically, 59% of teen girls have been in a relationship, while 10% say they’ve gone on dates or hooked up.
  - » Slightly fewer guys (52%) than girls have been in a relationship—but slightly more (14%) have hooked up.

**More than half of teens know friends or peers who have been physically, sexually, or verbally abused**

**KNOW FRIENDS OR PEOPLE THE SAME AGE WHO HAVE BEEN...**

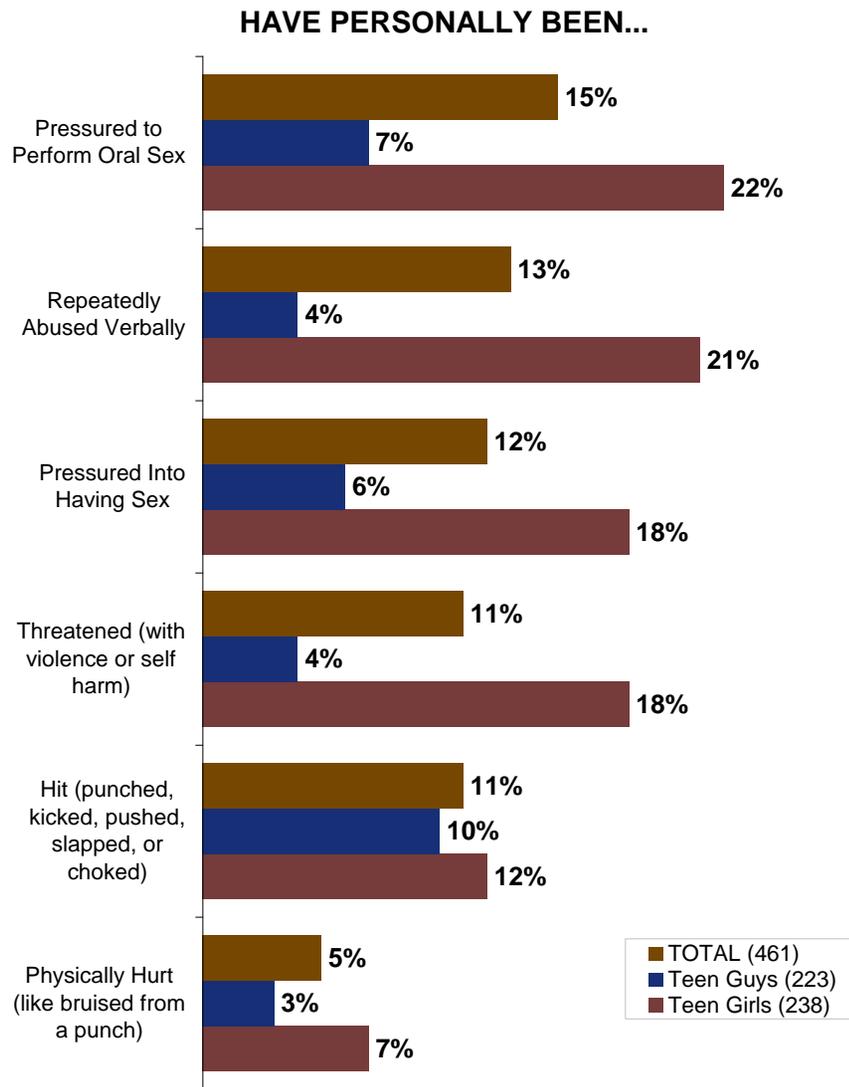


*Question: Do you know anyone among your friends and people your age who have been...*

- > Anyone who thinks today’s teens have it easy should think again: a startling number of young people report knowledge of unhealthy relationships within their peer groups.
  - » More than half of teens (57%) know friends or others their age who have experienced physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.
  - » More than half of girls (51%) know a friend or a peer who has been verbally abused or threatened, as have one third of boys (34%).
- > Sexual pressure appears rampant: 45% of girls know someone who has been pressured to have intercourse or perform oral sex.
  - » Fully four in 10 girls know a friend or peer who has been pressured to have intercourse; nearly a third of girls (32%) know someone who has been pressured into performing oral sex.
  - » Teen boys reported somewhat lower numbers (29% intercourse; 25% oral sex), likely because their friendships with females are not as close as to allow sharing of such intimate information.
- > A shocking 33% of teens know a friend or peer who has been physically abused—either hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked, or otherwise physically hurt (such as being bruised from a punch).
- > Verbal abuse is also frequent: 44% of girls and 27% of guys know someone who has been repeatedly abused verbally.

***Please note: base sizes are noted in parentheses in the chart’s legend.***

**One in four female teens report that they personally have been pressured to have intercourse or to perform oral sex**

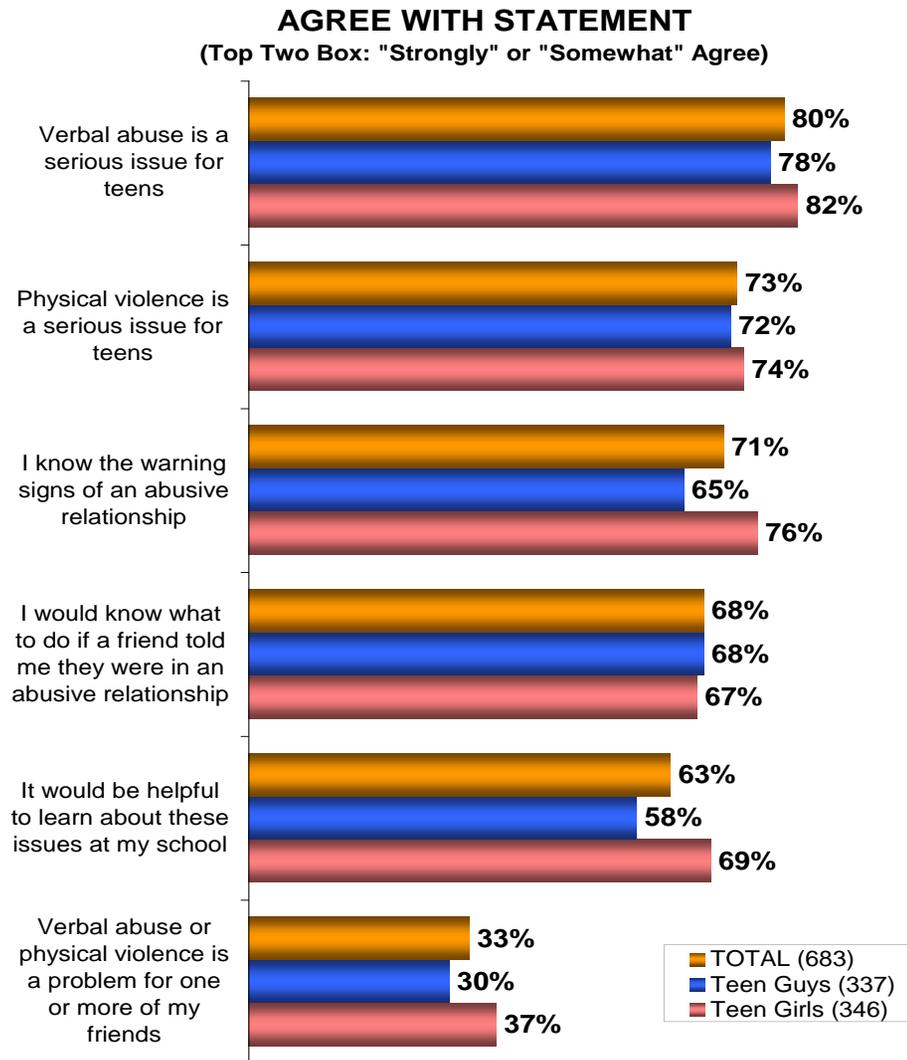


*Question: Have you ever been... [Asked if been in a relationship]*

- > Many teens say they feel pressured to have sex, but it's clear that girls bear the brunt of the pressure: one in four teen girls who have been in a relationship (26%) say they've personally been pressured to engage in intercourse or perform oral sex.
  - » More than one in five teen girls (22%) reports experiencing pressure to perform oral sex.
  - » Nearly as many girls (18%) say they've been pressured to have intercourse.
  
- > One in four teen girls in a relationship (26%) said they've been threatened with violence or experienced verbal abuse.
  - » One in five (21%) said they've endured repeated verbal abuse.
  - » Almost as many (18%) said a boyfriend or partner had threatened violence or harm to themselves if presented with a break-up.
  
- > An astonishing 13% of teen girls in a relationship reported first-hand experience with a physically abusive partner.
  - » More girls (7%) than guys (3%) report being physically *hurt*—such as obtaining a bruise—at the hands of a partner.
  - » However, roughly the same number of girls and guys reported having experienced physical violence (including being hit, punched, kicked, slapped, or choked). This suggests that, although violence between partners is not the exclusive domain of males, guys' physical strength makes such abuse more painful for the victim.

***Please note: question asked of teens who have been in a relationship—base sizes are noted in parentheses in the chart's legend.***

**One-third of teens say that at least one of their friends suffers in a physically or verbally abusive relationship**

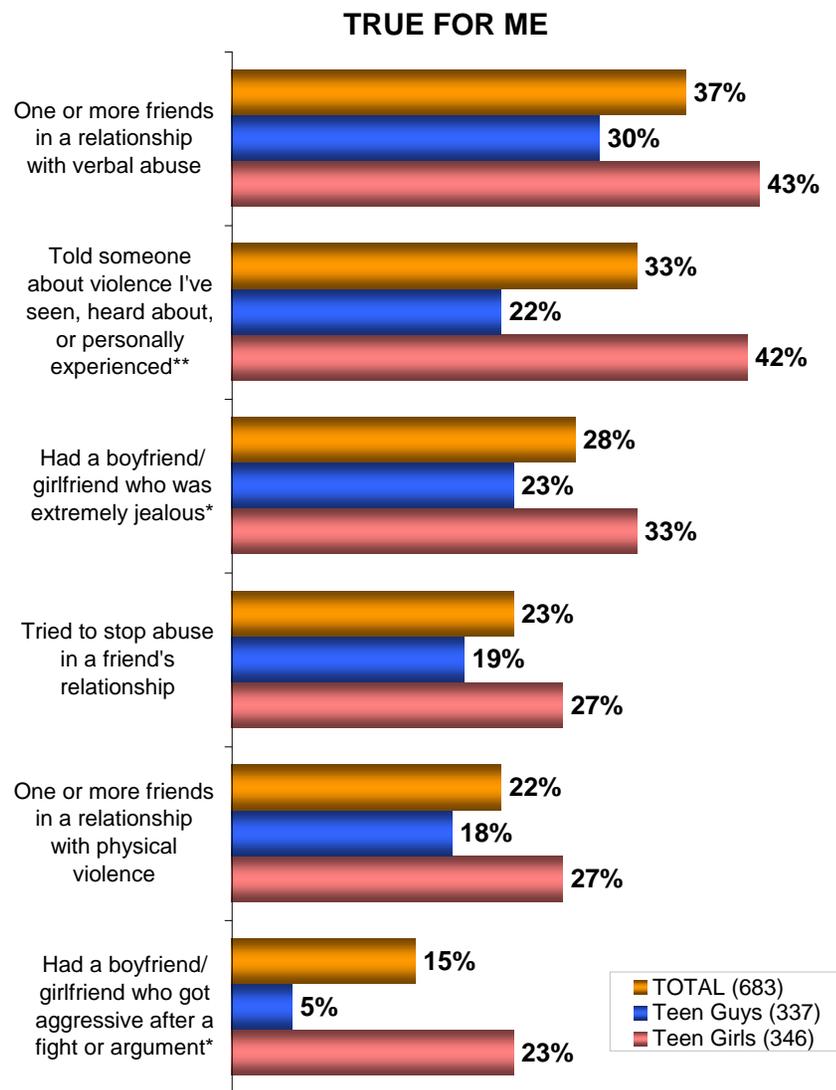


*Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

- > Fully eight in 10 teens (80%) regard verbal abuse as “a serious issue” for their age group, while nearly three-fourths (73%) say the same is true for physical violence.
  - » There’s notable gender parity in both of these findings, suggesting that males and females agree on the topic’s importance.
- > One-third of respondents (33%) confirm that physical or verbal abuse is a problem for at least one of their friends.
  - » Unfortunately, only two-thirds (68%) of teens say they would know what to do if a friend came to them for help about an abusive relationship—that leaves nearly one-third in the dark about a proper response.
  - » Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents suggested it would be helpful to learn about such issues in school.
- > A solid 71% of respondents say they know the warning signs of an abusive relationship. However, a closer look at gender differences suggests an underlying problem.
  - » While 76% of girls say they know how to spot an abusive relationship, only 65% of guys say the same. The possibility exists that some males may not even know what actions constitute an unhealthy relationship—despite the fact that males have a better chance of causing injuries to their partners if violent.

***Please note: base sizes are noted in parentheses in the chart’s legend.***

**One in five teens—and one in four girls—said they know a friend who has been involved in a physically abusive relationship**



*Question: Which of the following are true for you?*

- > Many teens indicated that one or more of their friends are involved in a physically or verbally abusive relationship.
  - » Some 37% of teens say they're aware of a friend in a verbally abusive relationship. As was the case for the combination of friends and peers, significantly more females (43%) than males (30%) reported such knowledge about friends specifically.
  - » More than one in five teens (22%) said they know of a friend involved in a physically abusive relationship. Again, significantly more girls (27%) than guys (18%) answered in the affirmative.
  
- > One-third (33%) of respondents said they've told someone about violence when they became aware of it or experienced it themselves. Some 23% said they'd personally tried to stop abuse in a friend's relationship.
  - » TRU's experience suggests that teens have always been afraid of standing out in a crowd. As such, they're typically reluctant to rock the boat in social situations.
  - » Increasingly, this generation of teens takes a "live and let live" attitude toward their peers' attitudes and actions: they may not like something, but they're hesitant to involve themselves in an issue they consider someone else's business. Although this stance is based on an effort to be open-minded, it does little to combat abusive relationships.

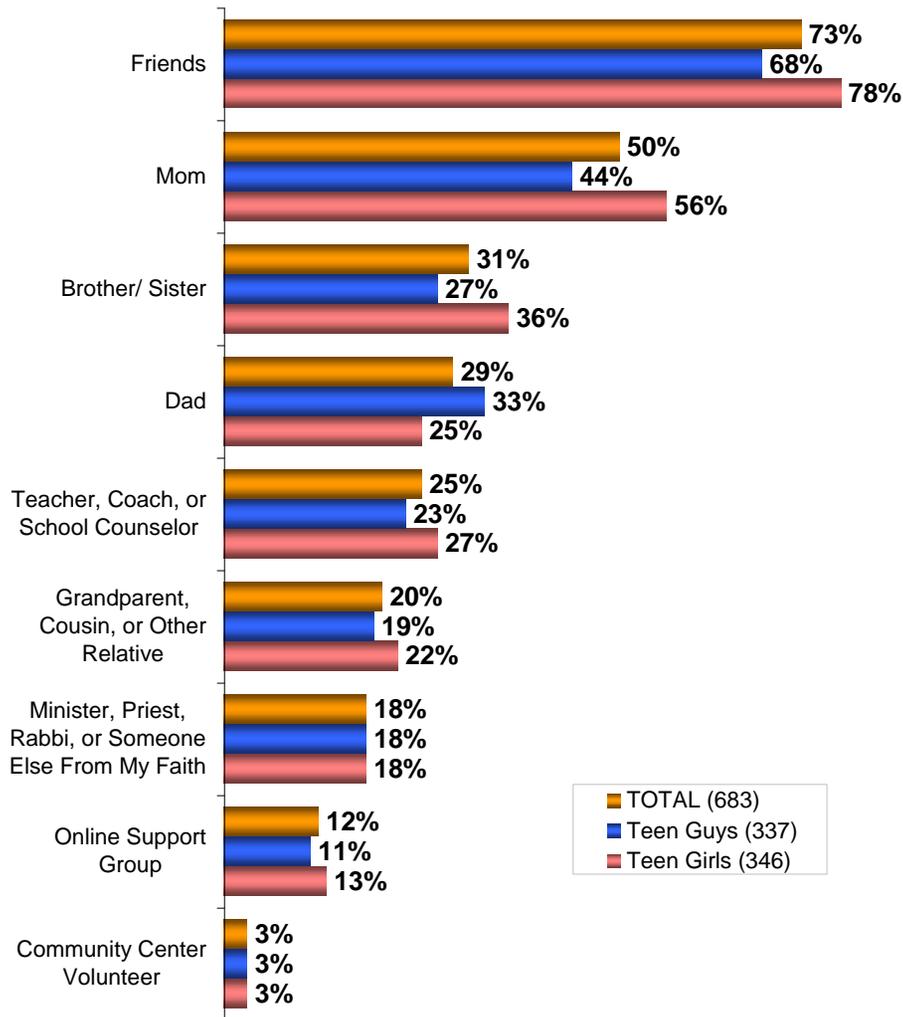
***Please note: base sizes are noted in parentheses in chart's legend.***

\* = Asked if been in a relationship, dated, or hooked up (N=461 teens: 223 male and 238 female)

\*\* = Asked if personally experienced an abusive relationship or know a friend or someone the same age who has (N=398 teens: 174 male and 224 female)

**Friends make better listening posts than both Mom and Dad combined**

**WHO WOULD TALK TO IF IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP**



*Question: If you were ever in an abusive relationship, who would you talk to about it?*

- > If trapped in an abusive relationship, a strong majority of teens (73%) said they would talk through the problem with friends; 54% said they would discuss it with their parents.
  - » Significantly more girls (78%) than guys (68%) said they'd talk to friends about a troubled relationship—a pattern that's repeated throughout much of this question's results. Overall, guys seem reluctant to talk about such issues: Dad is the only confidante they'd admit using more often than their female counterparts.
  
- > Teens seem to know instinctively that certain subjects will be difficult to discuss with parents. Although more than half of respondents (54%) said they'd talk about an abusive relationship with either mom or dad, that figure trails friends by a large margin.
  - » Some 50% of teens overall say they'd go to Mom, while 29% say they'd approach Dad. Perhaps not surprisingly, the responses split along gender lines.

***Please note: base sizes are noted in parentheses in the chart's legend.***