

Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet

Break the Cycle

Empowering Youth to End
Domestic Violence

breakthecycle.org
loveisrespect.org

Dating Abuse is a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses, physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner.

Dating Relationship means a romantic or intimate social relationship between two individuals.

Break the Cycle engages, educates and empowers youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

Too Common

Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.

One in three teens in the US is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.

One in ten high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

One quarter of high school girls have been victims of physical or sexual abuse.

Why Focus on Teens?

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost triple the national average.

Violent behavior often begins between the ages of 12 and 18.

The severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.

About 72% of eighth and ninth graders are 'dating.'

Long-lasting Effects

Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and further domestic violence.

Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls six times more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get a STD.

Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

Dating Violence and the Law

Eight states currently do not include dating relationships in their definition of domestic violence. As a result, youth victims of dating violence cannot apply for restraining orders.

New Hampshire is the only state where the law specifically allows a minor of any age to apply for a protection order; more than half of states do not specify the minimum age of a petitioner.

Currently only one juvenile domestic violence court in the country focuses exclusively on teen dating violence.

Don't Forget About College Students

Nearly half (43%) of dating college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors.

College students are not equipped to deal with dating abuse – 57% say it is difficult to identify and 58% say they don't know how to help someone who's experiencing it.

One in three (36%) dating college students has given a dating partner their computer, email or social network passwords and these students are more likely to experience digital dating abuse.

One in six (16%) college women has been sexually abused in a dating relationship.

Lack of Awareness

Only 33% of teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.

Eighty one percent of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.