

Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet

Crime victims can call
1-800-FYI-CALL
M-F 8:30 am—8:30 pm
or e-mail us at
gethelp@ncvc.org.

What Is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of these behaviors.

Violent Behavior in Teen Relationships

- One of five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped, or pushed by a partner.^a
- Young women, ages 16-24, experience the highest rates of relationship violence.^b
- Roughly one in 10 (9%) teens has been verbally or physically abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend who was drunk or high.^a
- Fourteen percent of teens report having been threatened with physical harm—either to them or self-inflicted by their partner—to avoid a breakup.^a
- Teens identifying as gay, lesbian, and bisexual are as likely to experience violence in same-sex dating relationships as youths involved in opposite sex dating.^c
- Among older teens, the percentage of violent crime involving an intimate partner was 10 times higher for females than males (9 % versus 0.6 %).^d
- Many studies indicate that as a dating relationship becomes more serious, the potential for and nature of violent behavior also escalates.^e

Dating Violence and the Law

- All 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws against dating violence-associated crimes such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. However, the specific term “dating violence” is rarely used in these laws.
- Thirty-five states allow minors to obtain civil protection orders against dating partners, with various restrictions depending upon the age of the minor.

Links to Other Forms of Violence

- In 2001, more than 97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 were victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.^f
- Twelve percent of respondents in a study on violence against women reported having been stalked before the age of 18.^g
- There is a connection between using violence against peers and using sexual and physical violence against dates, with stronger correlations for boys than girls.^h
- Several studies have found that child maltreatment, defined by a combination of family violence indicators such as child abuse, corporal punishment, child sexual abuse, and exposure to domestic violence, is positively correlated with dating abuse perpetration.ⁱ

Who Can Help

- Crisis hotlines and helplines can provide immediate assistance and referrals to sexual assault or domestic violence programs that provide advocacy, counseling, safety planning, legal assistance, emergency shelter, and support groups.
- School-based student assistance programs, guidance offices, and school resource officers can provide referrals for help and guidance on school policies and sanctions for violent behaviors by students or on campus.
- Legal options include calling the police, seeking protective orders, and cooperating with criminal prosecution.

a Liz Claiborne Inc., “Study on Teen Dating Abuse,” (Teenage Research Unlimited, 2005), <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com> (available February 1, 2007).

b C.M. Rennison and S. Welchans, “BJS Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence,” (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

c L.L. Kupper, et al., “Prevalence of Partner Violence in Same-Sex Romantic and Sexual Relationships in a National Sample of Adolescents,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35 (2004): 124-131.

d Katrina Baum, “Juvenile Victimization and Offending, 1993-2003,” (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).

e *Teen Dating Violence Resource Manual*, (Denver: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1997), 17.

f Ralph W. Hingson, et al., “Magnitude of Alcohol-Related Mortality and Morbidity among U.S. College Students Ages 18-24: Changes from 1998 to 2001,” *Annual Review of Public Health* 26 (2005): 267.

g P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, “Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey,” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1998).

h E.J. Ozer, et al., “Violence Perpetration across Peer and Partner Relationships: Co-occurrence and Longitudinal Patterns among Adolescents,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 34 (2004): 64-71.

i D.A. Wolfe, et al., “Predicting Abuse in Adolescent Dating Relationships over 1 Year: The Role of Child Maltreatment and Trauma,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 113 (2004): 406-415.