



Dating Abuse and Teen Violence

Federal law and many state laws define domestic violence as abuse perpetrated by a current or former spouse, co-habitant, or co-parent. This leaves dating partners without protections afforded to other current or former intimate partners, including access to protective orders and protection from gun violence.

Teen Dating Violence:

- Nearly 20.9% of female high school students and 13.4% of male high school students report being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- Nearly 1.5 million high school students in the United States are physically abused by dating partners every year.
- A 2013 study of 10th graders found that 35% had been either physically or verbally abused; 31% were perpetrators of physical or verbal abuse.
- A 2014 study found 10% of teenage students in dating relationships were coerced into sexual intercourse in the previous year.
- A 2013 study found 26% of teens in relationships were victims of cyber dating abuse. Females were twice as likely to be victims as males.
- 57% of teens know someone who has been physically, sexually, or verbally abusive in a dating relationship.
- Only 33% of teenage dating abuse victims ever told anyone about it.
- 50% of youth reporting dating violence and rape also reported attempting suicide. This is compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

Adapted by: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
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Campus Violence:

- 43% of dating college women reported experiencing abusive behaviors from their partner.
- Over 13% of college women report that they have been stalked. Of these, 42% were stalked by a boyfriend or ex-boyfriend.
- 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted during their college tenures.
- Date rape among college students accounts for 35% of attempted rapes, 22.9% of threatened rapes, and 12.8% of completed rapes.

Why It Matters:

Domestic violence is most common among women between the ages of 18-24. The rate of marriage has declined steeply over the last fifty years. People, particularly young people, are dating longer than in previous generations. As people get married later in life, dating violence will continue to rise. Given the prevalence of domestic violence within these dating relationships and a shift in the structure of relationships today, communities must work together to ensure that victims of dating violence have access to resources and increase in legal protections.

How to Help:

One of the most effective way to help protect young adults from dating violence is to contact your Members of Congress and ask them to:

- Expand the federal definition of domestic violence to include dating violence and stalking.
- Introduce, cosponsor, and vote in favor of legislation establishing and funding classroom-based programs to educate middle and high school students about healthy relationships, domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- Support legislation providing additional funding for local program initiatives that provide counseling services to youth and children who are abused by dating partners and/or witness domestic violence.
- Fund college campus programs aimed at increasing evidence-based domestic and sexual violence education, prevention, and intervention.
- Increase funding for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs.

Encourage local schools and youth programs to train teachers, school counselors, and athletic coaches on how to recognize children and teens who are victims of intimate partner violence. Provide educators with resources and prepare them to intervene in domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking situations.