



Teen Dating Violence: Information for Parents

Introduction

Teen dating violence can include multiple forms of abuse including unwanted physical contact, sexual abuse, and/or psychological manipulation. What's more, while 67% of parents believe they know what is occurring in their children's intimate/dating relationships, only 51% of teens believed their parents knew "a lot" or "everything" about their relationship.¹ In a 2011 national study of over 15,000 high school students, 9.4% self-reported they had been physically harmed by their partner and 8% of students had been forced to have sex in the previous 12 months², but less than 3% of teens reported abuse to an authority figure.³ In addition, over 80% of high school counselors reported that their school did not have a protocol for teen dating violence.⁴

Technology and Dating Abuse

Teens frequently communicate with one another through cell phones, email, and social media sites. Since technology provides quick, constant access to people, it is often used as a tool for abuse and a means to establish power and control that is easier to hide than physical violence and verbal assaults. A recent study showed that one in four teens in a relationship has been harassed or insulted by their partner via cell phone, and almost 40% of teenagers say they were contacted by their partner electronically 10 to over 30 times an hour between 6 and 10pm. Since most technology requires passwords and access codes, teens can easily hide technology-based abuse from their parents, despite how frequently it can occur. For example, of the, 65% of teens who were asked to engage in unwanted sexual activity through technology, 82% did not tell their parents about it.

Examples of Abusive Behavior:

Physical

- Pinching, grabbing, shoving, punching, kicking, restraining, hitting or hair pulling, biting, scratching

Sexual

- Pressuring or forcing a partner into sexual activity in person or via social media/ texting
- Making it difficult or impossible for a partner to say no to sexual activity or behavior
- Preventing a partner from using birth control or other forms of contraception

Technology

- Impersonating a partner online or publically posting negative comments about a partner
- Frequently emailing, texting, messaging, or calling about the location or activity of a partner

Psychological/Threats and Intimidation

- Threatening to leave or hurt a partner, themselves, a partner’s family, friends, or pets
- Controlling whom a partner is allowed to see or telling a partner what they can or cannot do
- Yelling, screaming, insulting, intimidating, embarrassing or spreading rumors about a partner
- Minimizing, denying, or blaming a partner for any abuse

How to Help a Teen Victim:

- Be patient, talking about the abuse may take time.
- Remind the teen that the abuse isn’t their fault, you support them, and they’re not alone.
- Encourage them to call the police and talk to a Domestic Violence specialist [in your area](#).
- Encourage them to consider an order of protection. Offer to support/accompany them.
- Help them create a [safety plan](#) so they know what to do in case of future incidents. The federal government has introduced comprehensive guidance to help schools better understand their obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault and teen dating violence. Encourage your child to reach out to their school counselor if they feel comfortable.
- Be supportive. A teen may break up with and go back to an abusive partner many times. Understand that a victim of abuse is the expert in their situation; help with choices they make for their safety instead of giving advice about what they should do, but ultimately, make your teen’s safety priority.

For More Information:

| Websites | Phone Numbers |
|---|--|
| Respect Love Dating Abuse Website Love is Respect No More Day One Señales de Advertencia de una Relación Abusiva Ayudar a un Amigo/a Para Padres Y Guardianes | National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1.800.799.7233 National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline 1.866.331.9474 TTD/TTY-1.866.331.8453 Love is Respect Peer Advocates 1.866.331.9474 or Text “loveis” to 22522 Online Chat: www.loveisrespect.org Doméstica y Agresión Sexual del Estado de Nueva York 1-800-942-6906 |

1 Liz Claiborne, Inc./Teen Research Unlimited. (2008). [Tween and Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study](#)
 2Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance]. MMWR 2012;61(No. SS-4):[10].
 3 Molidor, C., Tolman, R., & Kober, J. (2000). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *The Prevention Researcher*, 7(1), 1.
 4 Jagdish Khubchandani, James H. Price, Amy Thompson, Joseph A. Dake, Michael W. Biblshouser, and Susan K. Telljohann. [“Adolescent Dating Violence: A National Assessment of School Counselors’ Perceptions and Practices.”](#) *Pediatrics* (2012); 130:2 202-210,
 5 National Criminal Justice Reference Service. (2013) [An Exploratory Study of Juvenile Orders of Protection as a Remedy for Dating Violence](#).

1-800-942-6906

NYS Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline
 CONFIDENTIAL 24 HRS/7 DAYS
 English & español, multi-language accessibility
 711: Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 In NYC: 311 or 1-800-621-HOPE (4673)
 TDD: 1-800-810-7444