



# What Every Parent Must Know About Teen Dating Violence

Education. Prevention. Intervention. Counseling.

## Understanding Teen Dating Violence

Teen dating violence consists of a variety of behaviors used to exercise power and control over the victim. Teen dating violence generally follows a typical abuse cycle including a tension building phase, an explosion, and a honeymoon phase. Dating violence can consist of physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual, and digital abuse.

Physical violence is the intentional use of physical force to cause fear or injury. This can include hitting, shoving, punching, and physically restraining the victim. Physical violence is what most people think about when it comes to dating violence.

Verbal, emotional, and psychological violence includes abusive behaviors such as yelling, name-calling, insults, spreading rumors, stalking, monitoring, manipulation, and isolating from friends and family. This type of violence can be just as damaging as physical violence. Sexual violence can include unwanted touching, coercing or pressuring the victim for sex, and in some instances results in rape.

Digital abuse involves abusive behaviors through the use of technology such as cell phones, email, and social media. Digital abuse can include using social media to monitor where the victim is and who they are with or controlling who they are friends with; sending insults and threats through text messages, email, and Facebook; and sending or demanding sexually explicit pictures or video.

## 5 Facts About Teen Dating Violence

1. Roughly **72%** of eighth and ninth graders are in a dating relationship.
2. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, an estimated **1 in 3** high school relationships involve some sort of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
3. Each year nearly **1.5 million** high school students in the United States experience physical abuse from a dating partner.
4. Approximately **two-thirds** of teens in an abusive relationship never tell anyone about the abuse.
5. Nearly **4 out of 5** girls who have been physically abused continue to date their abuser.

## Warning Signs of Teen Dating Violence

Since teen dating violence is often kept a secret, it is important to be able to recognize the warning signs. While some of these signs may also indicate other problems, or even 'typical' teenage hormonal changes, the following is a list of the most common warning signs of teen dating violence. Parents and others close to teenager should become familiar with these warning signs.

### Warning Signs Expressed By The Victim of Teen Dating Violence

- Failing grades or dropping out of school activities
- Sudden changes in mood or personality
- Avoiding friends and family
- Constantly checking cell phone or email.
- Responding immediately when contacted by dating partner. Gets upset when unable to respond.
- Becoming secretive or withdrawn
- Apologizing and/or making excuses for the dating partner
- Sudden changes in appearance, diet, or sleeping habits
- Unexplained bruises, scratches, or marks



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## Warning Signs of a Violent Dating Partner

- Is jealous and possessive
- Is controlling and demanding
- Uses guilt to get his/her way
- Blames the victim for what is wrong
- Is extremely insecure
- Has an explosive temper
- Experiences violent outbursts including breaking or hitting things
- Insults and calls the victim names
- Constantly calls, texts, or checks up on the victim. Demands to know who he/she has been with and what they have been doing
- Checks the victim's email or cell phone without permission
- Isolates the victim from friends and family
- Is abusive towards other people and/or violent towards animals
- Threatens violence

## What Parents Can Do About Teen Dating Violence

Parents should start talking to their children about healthy relationships well before they start dating. Provide your children with examples of healthy relationships in your own life. Point out healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors in television, movies, and music and take an opportunity to talk to your child about what is appropriate and what is not.

It is never too early to teach self-respect. Teach your children to respect themselves. No one has the right to make your child feel bad about himself or herself. No one has the right to insult, control, or hit another.

Always keep the lines of communication open. Encourage your child to come to you. Take the opportunity to talk to your child anytime the opportunity presents itself. Be open, understanding, and non-judgmental. Listen to your child and refrain from lecturing.

## Get in touch with us today!

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