

Addressing Dating Violence



What is the Definition of Dating Abuse?

Dating abuse includes any behavior by a dating partner that

- Is used to **manipulate**
- Is used to **gain control**
- Is used to **gain power over** someone
- Makes a person **feel bad** about himself or herself or other people who are close to this person (family and friends)
- Makes a person **afraid** of her or his boyfriend or girlfriend

What Behaviors are Involved in Abuse?

Dating abuse behaviors may include:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

It is important to realize that emotionally abusive behaviors can be just as hurtful as physically abusive behaviors

What Behaviors are Involved in Abuse?

Dating violence behaviors that are **physically abusive** may include:

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Pinching
- Throwing things
- Using a weapon
- Choking
- Shoving
- Pulling hair

What Behaviors are Involved in Abuse?

Dating violence behaviors that are **psychologically or emotionally abusive** may include:

- Ignoring a date's feelings
- Calling a person names
- Isolating a date from others
- Trying to scare a date
- Displaying inappropriate anger
- Keeping a date from leaving
- Putting down family and friends
- Threatening to hurt oneself

What Behaviors are Involved in Abuse?

Dating violence behaviors that are **sexually abusive** may include:

- Forcing a date to have sex
- Forcing a date to do other sexual things he or she doesn't want to do

Warning Signs or “Red Flags”

What are some **RED FLAGS** that someone may be in an abusive dating relationship?

- Physical signs of being hurt
- Fear of the dating partner
- Being increasingly isolated from family and friends
- Changing behavior because of a partner’s jealousy
- Feeling embarrassed, put down, ashamed or guilty
- Being threatened

Warning Signs or “Red Flags”

What are some **RED FLAGS** that someone may be abusing a dating partner?

- Physically threatening assaulting a girlfriend/boyfriend
- Intimidating a dating partner
- Becoming angry if partner is spending time with others
- Asking dating partner to change behavior because of jealousy
- Verbally threatening your girlfriend/boyfriend
- Using “guilt trips” to get your dating partner to do something

We Need to Know the Warning Signs

As educators, we should be aware of these “red flags” or warning signs and be prepared to intervene, if we see them.

We should also teach students to know these “red flags,” because teens often will confide in a friend before they will confide in an adult.

Dating Abuse Can Happen To Anyone

- Both boys and girls are victims of abuse.
- Both boys and girls are perpetrators of abuse.
- Teenagers from all neighborhoods, income levels, and ethnic groups experience dating abuse.
- Dating abuse can happen to anyone in a relationship.
- Abuse almost always reoccurs in a relationship. It doesn't just go away.
- Most abuse gets more severe over time.

Why Should We Address Dating Violence with Teens?

- Nearly three in four tweens (age 11-14) (72%) say boyfriend/girlfriend relationships usually begin at age 14 or younger.

(Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008)

- **62% of tweens** (age 11-14) who have been in a relationship say they know friends who have been verbally abused (called stupid, worthless, ugly, etc.) by a boyfriend/girlfriend.

(Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008)

Why Should We Address Dating Violence with Teens?

- **1 in 3 teenagers** report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their partner.

(Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008)

- A comparison of Intimate Partner Violence rates between teens and adults reveals that **teens are at higher risk of intimate partner abuse.**

(Journal of American Medical Association, 2001)

Why Should We Address Dating Violence with Teens?

- **Females ages 16-24 are more vulnerable** to intimate partner violence than any other age group—at a rate almost triple the national average.

(U.S. Department of Justice, 2001)

- **58% of rape victims report being raped between the ages of 12-24.**

(Health Resources and Services Administration, 2002)

Possible Reasons Why Teens Have High Rates of Dating Abuse

Reason # 3: The legal system may not help.

- Most domestic violence laws do not include dating violence in their definition.
- Minors usually cannot file a civil case or ask for a restraining order without an adult appearing in court with them—Florida is an exception!
- Schools may be lax in enforcing a restraining order.

Why Do People Stay?

- The abuser apologizes and promises to not abuse again.
- The person being abused may be in denial.
- Teens may think this behavior is a “normal” part of a relationship.
- The abused becomes more and more isolated from those who could help.
- There is a fear that the violence might escalate if they leave.
- Means of protecting the abused are not enforced.

Barriers To Getting Help

- Fear of hurting their date's feelings
- **Fear that the friend they confide in will tell them to end the relationship**
- Fear of losing their independence from their parents
- **Fear of getting into trouble with their parents**
- Fear that people will not understand, will blame them, or won't believe that it happened

Barriers To Getting Help

- Not knowing how or where to get help
- Fear of retaliation from a dating partner
- Not knowing how to leave or improve the situation
- Fear of being judged
- Not trusting that what is said will be kept confidential
- Not wanting to admit there is a problem

What Should Schools Do About Dating Violence?

- Set clear school policies about reporting dating abuse or violence of any kind, whether it occurs on campus or not.
- Work to create a school environment where respect and responsibility are promoted.
- If a student has obtained a restraining protection order or other court order due to dating abuse, take the situation seriously and proactively enforce the order on campus.

What Should Schools Do About Dating Violence?

- Train staff to recognize signs of dating abuse and intervene appropriately.
- Teach a curriculum about dating abuse.
- Educate parents about the issue.
- Make dating abuse resources in the community available to students.

FLORIDA DATING VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-500-1119

TTY Hotline

1-800-621-4202

www.fcadv.org

Any Questions or Comments??