

National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week

FEBRUARY 4-8, 2008

STATISTICS

- 33% of female teens in dating relationships have feared for their safety
- 25% of female teens report having been pressured to go further sexually than they really wanted
- 20% of female teens in a relationship report they were hit, slapped or pushed
- 40% of teen girls say they know someone their own age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend

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Started by Teens for Teens

Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week was started by teens in 2004 to address the problem of violence in dating relationships, especially against teenage girls.

20% of teenage girls report having been pushed, hit, or slapped in a relationship and 25% have been pressured to go further sexually than they really wanted. In fact, **women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates of dating violence than any other group.**

Though these are alarming statistics, the most alarming statistic might be this: **66% of teenagers tell no one** that



Most Teenagers Tell No One

they are the victim of dating violence.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week was started in order to bring dating violence to light and to let teenagers know that *they can talk to each other* and they can talk to people who can help when they are the victim of dating violence.

This newsletter has useful information for you to become aware of the problem of dating violence—why it happens, what you can do, and what help is available.

What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is not only physical. Any time one person uses power to control another there is the potential for violence. Dating violence can take all of the following forms:

Name Calling

Derogatory Remarks

Pressure to use alcohol or drugs

Pressure to have sexual contact

Demands to be constantly available

Constant use of instant and text messages

Isolation from friends, activities, family



Dating Safety Tips

The following tips can help keep you safe when you date.

- Double date the first few times you go out with a new person
- Know the exact plans for the evening and tell your parents or friends
- Be aware that alcohol or drugs can impact your ability to make good decisions
- Trust your instincts
- If you leave a party with someone you do not know well, tell a friend
- Be firm and straightforward in your boundaries and relationships
- If a situation makes you uncomfortable, remain calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation
- Learn which friends you can call if you need help or a ride

40% of teenage girls know someone who has been hit or beaten by their boyfriend

Signs of Dating Violence

If your friend has the following signs of dating violence, talk to them or call someone to figure out what to do. (see "What Do You Say?" on pg.4)

- Unexplained physical injuries
- Truancy
- Failing Grades
- Indecision
- Changes in mood or personality
- Sad or worried all the time
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Pregnancy
- Emotional outbursts
- Isolation
- Changes in activities
- Changes in friends
- Stop doing things that were important before
- Changes in weight/health
- Apologizes or makes excuses for partner
- Avoids eye contact
- Change in dress—dressing to cover injuries



Dating Violence Support Group

Hope Springs Wellness Center is now offering a FREE Dating Violence Support Group for victims of dating violence. Just call 992-8905 to find out when and where the group is taking place.

You Are Not Alone!

Am I Being Abused?



Many people don't recognize that they are in an abusive relationship. They don't realize how they have gradually changed because of the abuse.

How do you know if you are being abused by your dating partner? Ask yourself, **“Am I going out with someone who..”**

- is jealous and possessive, won't let you have friends, checks up on you, won't accept breaking up?

- tries to control you by being bossy, giving orders, making all the decisions, not taking your opinions seriously?
- puts you down in front of friends, tells you that you would be nothing without him?
- scares you?
- makes you worry about his reactions to things you say or do?
- threatens you?
- uses or owns guns or other weapons?
- is violent?
- has a history of fighting, loses temper quickly, brags about mistreating others
- grabs, pushes, shoves, or hits you?
- pressures you for sex or is forceful or scary about sex?
- gets too serious about the relationship too fast?
- abuses alcohol or other drugs and pressures you to take them?
- has a history of failed relationships, and blames the other person for all the problems?
- makes your family and friends uneasy and concerned for your safety?
- makes you feel like you need to apologize to yourself or others for your boyfriend's behavior when he treats you badly?

Adapted from womenslaw.org

“80% of girls who have been physically abused in their intimate relationships continue to date their abuser”

Getting Help

Santa Fe has three agencies devoted to FREE violence education, prevention and treatment. If you call, you will talk with someone who respects you, will work with you, and can help—even if you aren't sure how serious the situation is.

The Santa Fe Rape Crisis & Trauma Treatment Center

988-1951

Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families

473-5200

Hope Springs Wellness Center

992-8905

City of Santa Fe Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Liaison

955-5018



Harmful Beliefs about Men and Women

Young Men May Believe:

- They are entitled to control their female partners
- That masculinity equates with physical aggressiveness
- That they must “possess” their partner
- They are entitled to sexual intimacy
- That gentleness and respect are not manly



Healthy dating relationships require mutual respect

Young Women May Believe:

- They are responsible for all the problems in their relationship
- That jealousy and possessiveness are “romantic”
- That emotional and physical abuse are normal
- That no one can help them

What Do You Say to Intervene?

If you suspect that a friend is in an abusive relationship, it is hard to know what to say. Here are some dos and don'ts from loveis-notabuse.com:

GIRLS

- Listen to what she has to say
- Tell her that you are there for her whenever she wants to talk
- Talk to her in private, and keep what she says confidential
- Let her know why you are concerned. Be specific. Refer to certain incidents you have witnessed, and not to the relationship in general.

Let her know what you saw and how it made you feel.

- Tell her you are concerned for her safety
- Offer to get information for your friend



Learn how to be a good friend

GUYS

- Be specific about what you saw and how it made you feel. “I didn't like it when you told your girlfriend she was stupid in front of all of us.”
- Take a stand
- Give him a reality check—violent behavior has consequences including arrest
- Urge him to seek help. He can talk to a counselor, a coach, a minister, an older brother, or an agency in Santa Fe that helps people with violence
- Offer to get information for your friend