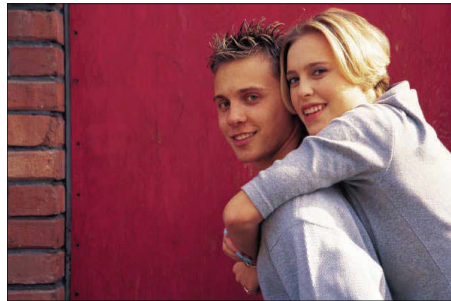




teen dating violence

Myths About Dating Violence

- Violence in dating relationships rarely happens. NOT TRUE. Statistics show that one in every three dating relationships is violent.
- Dating violence occurs only with drug users or poor people coming from bad families. NOT TRUE. Dating violence can occur whether or not a partner uses alcohol or drugs. And it can happen if a partner is poor, rich, respectable, an athlete, or a good student.
- Dating violence means a couple having a "fight." NOT TRUE. Dating violence is not about a couple having a fight. It is about one partner threatening, abusing, controlling and/or assaulting another.
- Young women are just as violent as men. NOT TRUE. While young women can be violent, statistics show that young men are more violent.
- Dating violence is usually an isolated incident. NOT TRUE. Dating violence is a "pattern" of abuse and control and once it starts, it almost never stops.



- Stress causes dating violence. NOT TRUE. Many people are very stressed and never assault their partners.
- Drinking causes dating violence. NOT TRUE. Abusers will use alcohol as an excuse for their violent behavior, but will eventually also become violent when not drinking. Additionally, the manipulation and controlling behavior are normally present even when an abuser is sober. Think about it...many people get drunk, but most do not assault their partners.
- People who batter can not help it. They lose control. NOT TRUE. Usually people who batter do not assault anyone else. They get mad at others but control themselves. They

assault their partners because they get away with it.

- If victims wanted to leave, they could just break up. NOT TRUE. Often abusers will threaten to kill the partners if they break up and will later stalk them. Also, victims feel sorry for their partners and sometimes even feel guilty thinking the abuse is their fault.
- If you love someone enough, you can make him or her change. NOT TRUE. It's not that easy. The decision to change must be made by the abuser, and usually this does not happen.
- If the victim did not make the partner angry, he or she would not hit the victim. NOT TRUE. Victims are assaulted regardless of their behavior. If it's not for one reason, it's for another.

Anyone can be a victim of dating/domestic violence.

40%

of girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.

89%

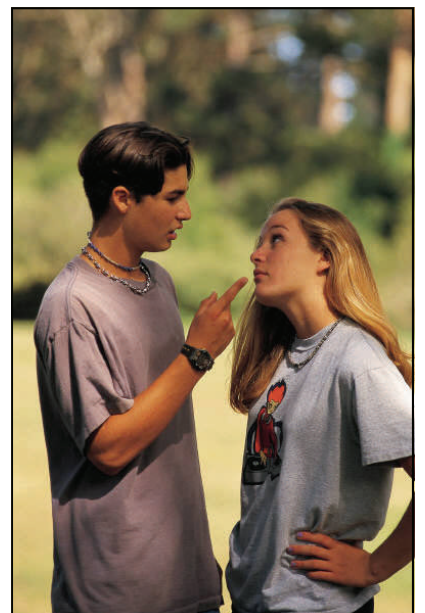
of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 say they have been in dating relationships.

31%

said they or a friend experienced dating violence.

26%

of teenagers said they are concerned about dating violence.



Behaviors of an abusive partner

Trouble trusting others, particularly you. In spite of this, they may say that they know you would never be unfaithful.

Jealous and possessive. Initially, the abuser may say others were coming on to you. Eventually, though, you will be accused of being attracted to other people, flirting, or being unfaithful.

Controlling. Sometimes this can be subtle. You may be changing your behavior without realizing why. For example, you may “decide” not to see your friends too often because you don’t want your partner to get mad.

Passionate! The abusive relationship is intense and passionate. There is usually a Romeo and Juliet quality, which may be noticed by your friends. This intensity DOES NOT MEAN you are fated lovers. It means someone is holding on too tightly.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality. Appears perfect to outsiders but is very different in private.

Mood swings or explosive temper. You think everything is going fine, and suddenly your partner is furious.

Macho or super-masculine. This is sometimes present in male abusers. This boyfriend will have strong opinions about how a man and a woman should behave. He will be rigid. You may find yourself saying, “Well, yes, this happened but there are reasons why.” The abusive partner, male or female, will not accept reasons or explanations. Everything is black or white.

Isolating. These partners may want to isolate you from your friends or family. They may always want to be alone with you. Often they will start trouble between you and your best friend. They will be threatened by any relationships you have with members of the opposite sex and may attempt to destroy those friendships by criticizing your friends or pointing out ways in which they have wronged you.

Emotionally and verbally abusive. Sometimes there is no physical abuse until something like a commitment is made, i.e. you have sex, get pregnant, or cut off your friends or family. It could also be as simple as your agreement not to date other people. You don’t have to have bruises to be in an abusive relationship.

Denial. This partner will attempt to minimize the violence or behavior saying, “I barely touched you.” “I was just messing around.” “You can’t take a joke.”

Blamer. Abusive partners will blame others for their mistakes or problems. Again, it may be subtle. They will blame others for fights if they can. “You make me crazy.” “I love you so much I can’t help being jealous.” “If you weren’t so beautiful/handsome, I wouldn’t be so worried about losing you.” Nothing is ever their fault.

When you have a fight, they may try to blame outside stressors. “My parents are making me crazy.” “I feel like I’m under so much pressure.” “You don’t understand. Nobody does.”

Alcohol or drug user. This partner may abuse alcohol or drugs. If so, he or she has a built-in excuse. Remember that many people abuse alcohol and drugs and never become violent or abusive. It’s no excuse.

18% of girls and 7% of guys
in high school report being physically hurt
by someone they are dating.

12% - 35%
of teens have experienced
some form of violence in a
dating relationship from
pushing and shoving
to hitting.

If you are a victim

If these warning signs described your relationship ...

- Seek medical attention if you are hurt
- Talk to someone about the problem. Part of the abuser’s power comes from secrecy of the abuse. Let people know what is happening so they can look out for you. Any pattern of abuse, is a sign of an unhealthy relationship.
- Have a safety plan in the event you are abused again.
- Think independently. Does his behavior feel right or natural to YOU? Are you acting in a certain way because you WANT to, or out of fear for what your partner might think or do?
- Know your legal rights. There are laws to help and protect you. You may get a protection order with the help of an adult. This says the abuser may not harass you or come into contact with you for up to 90 days.
- Know that you are not alone. Dating violence happens more than you think, and people are prepared to help.
- Know that the abuse is not your fault. Abusers blame their victims as though they deserve to be abused. The abuser is always responsible for his/her actions.
- Keep a written record of the abuse.

For non-emergency resources, contact LEVI at 303.774.4534. For emergency shelter or counseling for women and children, call Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley at 303.772.4422. In an emergency, dial 9-1-1.



www.LongmontDomesticViolence.org



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A community-wide
response to
domestic violence