

TEEN RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Teen relationship abuse is when one person uses abuse to gain power and keep control over their partner. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or financial.

Research indicates that 50% of 18-year-old women have experienced abuse in at least one dating relationship, and more than one in four teenagers have faced violence in a dating relationship. Ninety-five percent of reported abuse is male violence toward females. However, abuse can happen in many types of relationships, as well as in gay or lesbian relationships. (1)

Unfortunately, due to peer pressure and isolation, teens tend to have a higher tolerance for accepting these abuses, often believing that these actions validate their love or bond for each other. Additionally, they lack clear direction on how to handle abusive situations, seek help, terminate the relationship, and enhance the quality of healthy relationships. Often, these teens themselves are from families where domestic violence is common. However, teen dating violence can happen to anyone no matter where they live, or what kind of home they come from.

Physical Abuse:

- Hitting, grabbing, and pushing.
- Intimidation (blocking doors, hitting things or throwing objects at or near partner)
- Using or threatening to use weapons.

Sexual Abuse:

- Rape (forced penetration without consent, statutory rape and rape by intoxication).
- Making someone feel too scared to say "yes" or "no" regarding any sexual activity.
- Pressure (i.e. unsafe sex)

Financial Abuse:

- Controlling all money or using it to get what they want.
- Controlling possessions; car, cellular phone, pager, clothes, jewelry, gifts.
- Excessive gift giving, especially to make up for abusive behavior.

Emotional/Mental/Verbal Abuse:

- Using put-downs, insults, name-calling, or back-handed compliments.
- Threats to kill you, kill themselves, kill family or friends, kill children, new boyfriend/girlfriend, pets, kidnapping, etc.
- Threats like "If you leave me I will..." take the children, give you no money, spread rumors, tell your parents we had sex.
- Blaming the person for the abuse, i.e... making them feel guilty.
- Minimizing or denying the abusive behavior.
- Isolation from friends and family.
- Possessiveness (questioning someone's whereabouts)

A person may be in **love**, they may **hope** and **believe** their partner will change, and/or they may be very **afraid** of what their partner will do if they leave.

If you or someone you know needs **help** call our bilingual hotline
1-800-664-5880

(1) Carolyn Tucker Halpern, Ph.D. et al., "Partner Violence Among Adolescents in Opposite-Sex Romantic Relationships: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health." American Journal of Public Health 91 (2001) 1680. Edited: March 2005, Violence Intervention Program, Inc.