

Violence among teen dating couples is a pattern used by some teens to control their partners. Violence can include physical, verbal, emotional and sexual acts that threaten the well being of the person that is being abused. It can happen in relationships between partners of different sexes or of the same sex.

ARE YOU DATING SOMEONE WHO:

Is jealous or too possessive?

- Loses control when jealous?
- Wants to choose your friends or won't let you have friends?
- Thinks you have to spend all your free time with him/her?
- Checks up on you and wants to know where you are at all times?
- Follows you wherever you go to see who you are with?
- Does not accept being apart from you?
- Tells you what to wear and how to do your hair and make-up?
- Makes you feel you cannot give your opinion or makes you feel insecure?
- Doesn't listen to you or take you seriously?
- Ignores your wishes and needs?

Scares you?

- Do you worry about how he/she will react to things you say or do?
- Does he/she threaten you? Does he/she own, use, or talk a lot about weapons?
- Do you feel that behaving the way he/she wants will improve things?

Is violent?

- Loses patience and temper quickly?
- Becomes violent for no good reason?
- Throws, breaks things, or hits the walls when he/she becomes angry?
- Harms pets or animals or threatens to do so?
- Has hit you, pulled your hair, twisted your arm, or shoved you?
- Has been violent in previous relationships?
- Gets very angry or violent if you don't want to do what he/she asks?
- Becomes very aggressive when you disagree with what he/she says?
- Unfairly accuses you?
- Humiliates, insults, or ridicules you?
- Makes you have sex?

SOME MYTHS ABOUT ABUSE

MYTH: Dating partners are jealous because they love you.

TRUTH: Jealousy is only an excuse used by possessive men/women who like to control their partners to justify their violent reactions. Furthermore, jealousy is a sign of manipulation, insecurity, and a need to control ones partner.

Myth: He/she hits you because you provoke him/her.

TRUTH: No one provokes a violent reaction in anybody. People are responsible for their own reaction to different situations. Violence is an excuse used by some men and women to silence their partners.

Myth: Men rape because they cannot control their sexual desire or impulse.

TRUTH: Rape is a crime, and the myth that men cannot control themselves is false. Every person has the right to say NO and to decide if and when they want to have intercourse.

WHAT CAN I DO?

If someone you are dating has any of the negative behaviors mentioned in this brochure, look for help, so that if you decide to leave, the breaking-up process is easier. Your date's actions are not your fault, nor your responsibility.

If you want to leave the relationship immediately, you can:

- Make a plan about what to do if your dating partner gets abusive.
- Share your experience with a person you trust and who can help you (parents, friends, guidance counselors).
- Get help from a counselor or advocate who can help you and can ease the separation process.
- Keep a daily log of your partner's abuse.
- Tell your partner that this type of behavior is UNACCEPTABLE.
- Avoid being alone with your partner. Do not let him/her in your home or car when you are alone.
- Avoid being alone at school, work or on your way somewhere.
- When you go out, tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back.

DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE BEING ABUSED BY THEIR DATING PARTNERS?

If your friends tell you they are being abused, or if you see them involved in an abusive relationship, there are several things you can do:

- Don't ignore the abuse. Speak with them. Tell them you are concerned with their well being, and offer your support.
- Advise them to speak to an adult. Offer to go with them when they seek help.
- Don't place yourself in a dangerous situation with the abuser. Don't be a mediator.
- Call the police if you witness an assault. Tell an adult—the principal, teacher, guidance counselor, or your parents.
- Give them the hotline numbers and website addresses in this brochure.

You can also:

- Ask the librarian to have books on abuse and teen dating violence in the library.
- Make posters at school to educate other students about dating violence.
- Perform a play about teen dating violence.

If your friends are being abusive or violent

- Don't ignore the abuse. Tell them that violence is unacceptable; that it shows they have a serious problem and need help.
- Offer to talk with them about how to solve differences in a positive manner and seek alternatives to violence.
- Advise them to seek help – counseling or a support group.
- Call the police if you witness an assault.
- Be an example of a healthy relationship. Treat your friends and partners with respect.

HOW TO GET HELP:

There are many places that offer 24-hour support, emergency shelters, legal services and information about safe options for you. For more information and assistance, please call:

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-799-7233 OR

1-800-787-3224 TTY

Visit the following websites:

www.austin-safeplace.org/programs/school/teenDVSA.htm

www.loveisnotabuse.com/home.asp

Locally, call or visit:

This brochure is part of a series created by the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence. To receive copies of this brochure, visit www.dvalianza.org or send an e-mail to: information@dvalianza.org



This project was supported by Grant No. 2001-WT-BX-K004 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

02/11/05

