

Dating Abuse/ Domestic Violence Facts:

Introduction

Dating Violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used to exert power and control over a dating partner. Calling dating violence a pattern doesn't mean the first outburst is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time. Every relationship has its own difficulties and no two relationships are the same. Although, one thing that is very common to most abusive relationships is that violence escalates over time and becomes more and more dangerous for the young victim. Power and Control is the base/ root cause of Dating and Domestic Violence (*Love is not Abuse, 1991*).

Who Experiences Dating Violence?

Any teen or young adult can experience violence, abuse, or unhealthy behaviors in their dating relationships. A relationship may be serious or casual, monogamous or not, short-termed or long-term. Dating abuse does not discriminate; it does not see gender, sexual identity, economic status, ethnicity or religious preference. It is during their college years that young adults begin to form serious romantic relationships and/or continue to grow the romantic relationships they may have started in their teenage years. Yet with a limited understanding of healthy and unhealthy behaviors in dating relationships, college students are susceptible to becoming targets of dating abuse. Consider this:

- ***Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) college students report dating violence by a previous partner, and 21% report violence by a current partner.***
- ***More than half (60%) of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.***

• *Ninety percent of college women who are victims of rape or attempted rape know their assailant.*

• *The attacker is usually a classmate, friend, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend or other acquaintance (in that order).*

What Does Dating Violence Look Like?

Teens and young adults experience the same types of abuse in relationships as adults. This can include:

- Physical Abuse: Any intentional use of force with the intent to cause fear or injury, like hitting, shoving, biting, strangling, kicking or using a weapon.
- Verbal or Emotional Abuse: Non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking.
- Sexual Abuse: Any action that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs, including rape, coercion or restricting access to birth control.
- Digital Abuse: Use of technologies and/ or social media networking to intimidate, harass or threaten a current or ex-dating partner. This could include demanding passwords, checking cell phones, cyber bullying, sexting, excessive or threatening texts or stalking on Facebook or other social media.

Warning Signs of Abuse

Prevention Education is your best protection against Dating Violence. Educating yourself will help identify early warning signs of abuse; here are the ten most common signs to look for:

1. Checking your cell phone or email without permission.
2. Constant put-downs.
3. Extreme jealousy or insecurity.
4. Explosive temper.
5. Isolating you from family or friends.
6. Making false accusations.
7. Mood swings.
8. Physically hurting you in any way.
9. Possessiveness.
10. Telling you what to do.

These behaviors will occur across the “Relationship Spectrum”. If you or someone you know sees the warning signs in their relationship, help is available. Below is a list of resources available:

- **Call 911 if you are in immediate danger**
- **Dating Abuse Hotline: 866-331-9474**
- **The Lighthouse Crisis Line: 251-947-6008 or
1-800-650-6522**
- **www.loveisrespect.org**

References: www.loveisnotabuse.com Love Is Not Abuse is a program of Liz Claiborne Inc. that provides information and tools that men, women, children, teens, and corporate executives can use to learn about domestic and dating violence and how they can help end the epidemic.