



Facts on Teen Dating Violence

WHAT IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE?

Like domestic violence, dating violence is a pattern of violent and coercive behavior used by one partner to control another; this violence takes multiple forms, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, financial control and social isolation.

While dating violence affects women of all ages, young women and girls are particularly vulnerable; young men are also affected. Teenagers and adolescents are at an age where they are just beginning to form their first intimate relationships, yet they often do not have the experience or information to know what is healthy or unhealthy in a relationship. In addition, young people may have difficulty accessing needed services and may be exposed to domestic violence in their own homes.

HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT RISK?

- Women and girls between the ages of 16 to 24 experience the highest rates of domestic/dating violence.¹
- One in three teens have experienced some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse.²
- Approximately one in five female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.³
- A survey of high school girls found that 17.8 percent of girls had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will.⁴
- Studies suggest that between 3.3 and 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.⁵

Endnotes

¹ Rennison, Callie Marie and Sarah Welchans. 2003. *Intimate Partner Violence 1993-2001*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States Department of Justice. Washington, DC. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipv01.pdf>

² 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.

³ Silverman, Jay; Anita Raj; Lorelei A. Mucci; and Jeanne E. Hathaway. 2001. "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality," *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 286(5).

⁴ Jezl, D, Molidor, C. and Wright, T. 1996. "Physical, Sexual and Psychological Abuse in High School Dating Relationships: Prevalence and Self-Esteem Issues." *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. 13(1): 69-87.

⁵ Carlson, Bonnie E. (1984). "Children's Observations of Interpersonal Violence." Pp. 147-167 in A.R. Roberts (Ed.) *Battered women and Their Families* (pp. 147-167). NY Springer. Straus, M.A. 1992. "Children as Witnesses to Marital Violence: A Risk Factor for Lifelong Problems Among a Nationally Representative Sample of American Men and Women." *Report of the Twenty-Third Ross Roundtable*. Columbus, OH: Ross Laboratories.