



Teen Dating Violence

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mmcenter.org



24/7 HOTLINE

559.233.HELP (4357)



**KNOW
MORE.**

WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS
TO KNOW ABOUT

Teen Dating Violence

What Is Teen Dating Violence?

Teen Dating Violence is the physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, digital, and/or sexual abuse that occurs within a dating relationship among adolescents. It is a pattern of abuse used to exert power and control over a dating partner.

Our Mission

Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy.

Our Vision

**A community free of
domestic violence.**

These Are The Facts:

1 IN 3
adolescents

in the U.S. is a victim of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds other types of youth violence.

Dating abuse affects

1.5 million
teens annually.

Dating Violence can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background.

At MMC, we understand domestic violence does not discriminate. We assist anyone affected by domestic violence regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender.

Dating Violence Can Be:

Physical

- Pushing/shoving
- Grabbing
- Hitting/slapping/punching
- Kicking
- Holding someone down or holding their arm so they can't walk away
- Throwing/smashing things
- Following/stalking

Emotional

- Intimidation
- Possessiveness
- Invading privacy
- Jealousy
- Playing mind games
- Isolating the victim
- Withholding affection
- Making the victim feel as though the abuse is their fault

Verbal

- Constant criticism
- Put-downs
- Name-calling
- Yelling and cursing
- Spreading rumors or telling secrets
- Lying
- Manipulation
- Making threats

Sexual

- Rape
- Threatening to break up
- Spreading rumors if they refuse sexual acts
- Threatening to hurt them if they refuse sexual acts
- Lying/manipulating someone to get them to agree to sexual behaviors
- Unwanted grabbing/touching
- Demanding sexual photos or messages
- Forced sex when a person is under the influence of drugs/alcohol

Digital

- Demanding responses/check-ins
- Posting degrading things online
- Hacking accounts
- Demanding to share private or sexual images and messages
- Tracking where the victim is at all times



LGBTQ+ Youth

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning, and plus (LGBTQ+) youth experience dating abuse at the same rates and similar ways as heterosexual couples do. However, some aspects of abuse in LGBTQ+ groups are unique.

Some examples include:

- A fear of being “outed” by their partner
- A fear of not being taken seriously because of common misconceptions such as violence between LGBTQ+ partners being mutual or that only the physically bigger partner can be abusive
- Feelings of isolation due to not having a family or community support
- The belief that they have to lie or hide their sexuality in order to receive services



Marjaree Mason Center serves ALL victims of domestic violence, because everyone deserves a life free from violence.

Red Flags

A red flag is a warning sign that a relationship may be unhealthy. Not all signs appear in every unhealthy or abusive relationship, and recognizing one alone may not automatically mean someone is being abusive or experiencing abuse; but several signs together may be cause for concern.

Some examples include:

- Physically hurting you in any way
- Constantly putting you down or embarrassing you
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Possessiveness
- Frequently calling/texting to check in on you
- Checking your cell phone or social media accounts without permission
- Isolating you from friends or family
- Telling you what to do, what to wear, where you can go
- Making false accusations
- Pressuring or forcing you to do things you don't want to do

Relationships exist on a spectrum. It can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. Use these warning signs of abuse to see if your relationship is going in the wrong direction.

Common Beliefs

Of Teen Victims

- They are responsible for solving problems in their relationship, not their partner
- Their partner's jealousy/possessive behavior means they love them
- Abusive treatment should be tolerated/accepted if their partner pays for things
- Abuse is "normal" because it's something they have seen/learned
- There is no one to ask for help

Of Teen Offenders

- They have the right to "control" their partner in any way necessary
- Aggression is "masculine" and submission is "feminine"
- They have the right to "possess" their partner
- They are entitled to intimacy/sex
- They may lose respect from peers if they are attentive and supportive of their partner



Why Teens Stay

Low Self-Esteem

Victims may believe they are failures as partners, or that they are not worthy of love. Offenders reinforce this as a means of control.

Learned Behavior

Teens may believe the abuse is "normal" because they don't have an understanding of healthy versus unhealthy or abusive behaviors.

Self-Blame

Victims may blame themselves for the abuse and feel like they deserve it. Offenders may reinforce this idea.

Belief in Change

Many victims love their offenders and believe their promises to change, often giving them another chance.

Belief That Their Partner Can Be Fixed

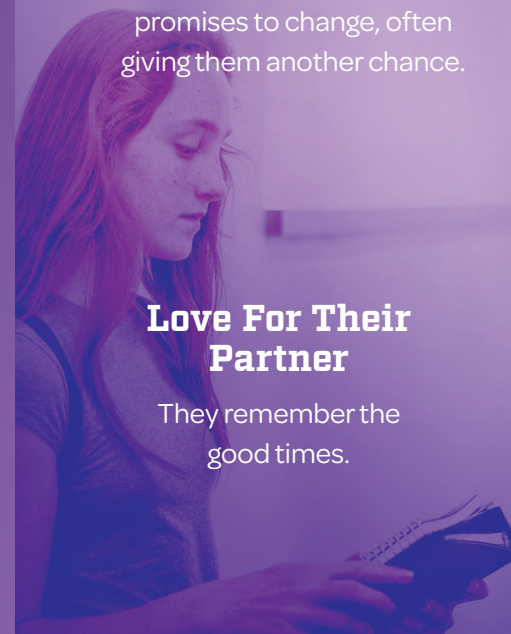
Victims may believe that they are the one who can help their partner change their unhealthy/abusive behaviors.

Love For Their Partner

They remember the good times.

Fear

Victims may fear retaliation or physical violence from their partners. Offenders may threaten to harm their partner or themselves.



Why Teens Don't Tell

Only 33% of teens who experienced dating violence told someone about the abuse.

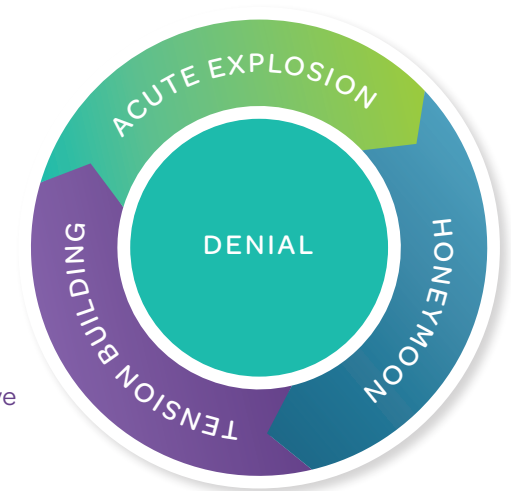
Some reasons are:

- Embarrassment/shame/fear of gossip
- Fear that others won't believe/understand them, or that they will be judged
- They are convinced it's their fault
- They don't want to admit it's a real problem
- They are confused - they think this is what dating/love is all about
- Fear of getting in trouble or losing privileges i.e. social media/late curfew
- They don't know where to get help



Cycle of Violence

The cycle of violence is a repeating pattern often seen in abusive relationships. It involves three different stages that continuously repeat until the victim is able to leave the relationship.



Acute Explosion Stage

The abuser initiates intense verbal or physical abuse in an attempt to intimidate and control their partner. The victim may feel the need to protect themselves, escape, or call for help.

Honeymoon Stage

The abuser feels guilty for their behavior and expresses remorse for the abuse. The victim is happy to be back in a place of peace and they believe there is hope for the future of the relationship.

Tension Building Stage

The abuser becomes increasingly angry and aggressive. The victim senses the abuser's frustration and has the feeling of walking on eggshells.

The cycle of violence occurs in every domestic violence situation. Without intervention, the frequency and severity of the abuse tends to increase over time.

ARE MY ACTIONS

Controlling or Abusive?

Have you ever thought that the way you are behaving may be physically or emotionally harmful to your partner?

Do you find that you...

- Get angry or insecure about your partner's relationships with others?
- Frequently call and text to check up on your partner, or have them check in with you?
- Express your anger by raising your voice, name-calling, or using put-downs?
- Force your partner to be intimate with you - physically or digitally?
- Express your anger by threatening to hurt your partner, or actually physically hurting them?

If any of these behaviors sound familiar, it could be a red flag that you are controlling or abusing your partner. By acknowledging now, that your behaviors might be unhealthy, you can take responsibility for them and begin the process of change.

What can I do?

- Remember that violence is a choice. There are no excuses for your behavior.
- Think about how your actions are affecting your partner.
- Accept the consequences of your actions.
- Remember, you are not alone. Your friends and family can support you through this challenging time.
- Get help from a program or professional that focuses on abusive relationships.

Regardless of your past, you can learn to have healthy, rewarding relationships built on trust and respect.

Tips on Consent

For any relationship to be healthy and strong, consent must be at the core of every action and decision.

Clear

Only YES means YES! If your partner says "no," doesn't say anything, or says "yes" but seems unsure or uncomfortable, then you don't have consent.

Continuous

Be sure to communicate and continuously ask for consent; and remember that your partner is allowed to say "stop" at any time.

Coercion-Free

If someone says "yes" or gives into something because they felt pressured or too afraid to say "no," that's not consent.

Conscious

Everyone needs to be fully awake, aware, and alert to give consent.

Digital Dating Abuse

Digital Dating Abuse happens when someone uses digital technology as a weapon to hurt or control someone in a dating situation.

Some examples include:

- Constantly texting you and making you feel like you can't be away from your phone for fear that you will be punished
- Sending you negative, insulting, or even threatening DMs
- Sending you unwanted, explicit pictures or messages, or pressuring you to send them
- Stealing or insisting on you giving them your passwords
- Looking through your phone's pictures, texts, and call history
- Using your posts, texts, or pictures to pressure into doing things you don't want to do
- Using technology (such as checking your stories/posts, or using apps like "Find My") to keep tabs on you

Your online presence is an extension of you. If you're dating someone who is disrespecting, controlling, or pressuring you through technology, they don't respect you in real life either.

What Can I Do?

If you think you might be in an unhealthy relationship, it can be difficult to know what to do. Here are some suggestions that can help:

Talk to a Trusted Friend

A trusted friend is someone who will listen to you without judgement, who will never make you feel ashamed about your experience, and who will help you find a safe adult you can talk to about your situation.

Find a Safe Adult

A safe adult is someone you trust, feel comfortable with, and who respects your boundaries. This could be a family member or family friend, a coach, teacher, counselor, or someone at a domestic violence agency.

Create a Safety Plan

A safety plan is a practical guide that helps lower your risk of being hurt by your offender. It includes information specific to you and your life that will help keep you safe.

Know and Use Your Resources

Local and national hotlines can help both domestic violence victims and offenders find answers. Call, text, or chat with someone who will listen to your experience and help you explore your options. All conversations are confidential.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1

KNOW MORE®

A PROGRAM OF MARJAREE MASON CENTER

Educate. Empower. Transform.



What We Do

KNOW MORE® is a peer-based education and prevention program that takes place in a classroom or club setting. The program provides a forum for teens to actively engage with one another through dramatizations, advocacy, and community involvement.

Our Mission

Our mission is to educate, empower, and transform the lives of young people, by preventing teen dating violence and promoting healthy youth relationships.

Violent relationships put victims at a higher risk for:

- Poor academic performance
- Substance abuse
- Risky sexual behavior
- Suicide attempts
- Further domestic violence

Find KNOW MORE® on Your Campus

Email:
knowmore@mmcenter.org

Phone:
[559.237.4706](tel:559.237.4706)

To find out more about our other programs, check us out on:

   [@knowmoreteendv](https://twitter.com/knowmoreteendv)

Or visit: knowmoremmc.org

For More Information

National Resources:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1.800.799.7233

1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

thehotline.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

866.331.9474

866.331.8453 (TTY)

loveisrespect.org

Marjaree Mason Center Resources:



24/7 HOTLINE

559.233.HELP (4357)

help@mmcenter.org

Administration Office

559.237.4706

Life Transition Program Office

559.226.1831



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