

## DATING VIOLENCE

### WHY IT MATTERS

Dating violence occurs when one partner attempts to maintain power and control over the other through one or more forms of abuse, including sexual, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. Dating violence affects both females and males, and does not discriminate by racial, social, or economic background. Given the prevalence of domestic violence within dating relationships, communities must work together to prevent these violent relationships and ensure that victims of dating violence have adequate access to legal protection.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence - 20 per 1,000 women.<sup>1</sup>
- 53% of domestic violence victims are abused by a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend.<sup>1</sup>
- 13% of teenage girls who are in a relationship report being physically hurt or hit.<sup>2</sup>
- 54% of all rape cases occur before victims reach 18 years of age.<sup>3</sup>
- 71% of rape and sexual assault victims knew their offenders.<sup>3</sup>
- Studies indicate that as a dating relationship becomes more serious, the potential for and nature of violent behavior also escalates.<sup>4</sup>

### TEEN VIOLENCE

- Nearly one in five teenaged girls report that their boyfriend threatened violence or self-harm when presented with a breakup.<sup>2</sup>
- One in four teen girls who are in a relationship report they are pressured into performing oral sex or engaging in sexual intercourse.<sup>5</sup>
- One in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped, or pushed by a partner.<sup>2</sup>
- A study of 8th and 9th graders found that 25% have been victims of nonsexual dating violence, and 8% have been victims of sexual dating violence.<sup>6</sup>
- 26% of teen girls in a relationship report enduring repeated verbal abuse.<sup>7</sup>
- 42% of boys and 43% of girls say the abuse occurs in a school building or on school grounds.<sup>8</sup>
- Over 30% of teenagers do not tell anyone about being victimized by their partner - less than 3% report the abuse to police or another authority figure and only 3% tell a family member about the violence.<sup>9</sup>

### CAMPUS VIOLENCE

- 21% of college students report they have experienced dating violence by a current partner. 32% report dating violence by a previous partner.<sup>10</sup>
- 60% of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.<sup>11</sup>
- 13% of college women report experiencing forced sexual intercourse by a dating partner.<sup>7</sup>
- Over 13% of college women report they have been stalked. Of these, 42% were stalked by a boyfriend or ex-boyfriend.<sup>12</sup>

### EFFECT OF DATING VIOLENCE ON HEALTH

- Those who experience dating violence are more likely to participate in binge drinking, fighting, and/or smoking and are at an increased risk of suffering from mental illness.<sup>13</sup>
- The rates of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy are higher for young people who have a history of abuse.<sup>14</sup>
- A Harvard School of Public Health study indicated that female teenagers who are victims of dating violence are significantly more likely to become victims of sexual assault.<sup>15</sup>
- It was found that females involved in a violent relationships typically suffered from post-traumatic stress and dissociation, while males suffered from anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress.<sup>14</sup>
- Research strongly suggests that social support helps mitigate the negative mental health consequences of dating violence.<sup>3</sup>

## STATE DATING VIOLENCE LAWS<sup>16</sup>

- Many states require a victim to be married to, live with, or have a child in common with the perpetrator in order for criminal and civil domestic violence laws to protect the victim.
- 39 states and DC allow victims of dating violence to apply for orders of protection against the perpetrator. Minnesota, Oklahoma, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming allow minors 16 years and older to petition for an order of protection without an adult. California allows minors 12 years and older to petition without an adult.
- Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Virginia do not recognize dating violence in their statutes.

## HOW TO HELP

One of the most effective ways to help protect young adults from the harmful effects of domestic violence is to write your legislators asking them to support the following initiatives:

- legislation encouraging education for middle and high school students that talks about healthy dating relationships and addresses the problem of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.
- legislation providing additional funding for local program initiatives that provide counseling services to youth and children exposed to domestic violence.
- funding for local programs and schools that provide domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking education, prevention and intervention.
- increased funding for the youth programs in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) 2005.

Encourage members of local schools and youth programs, including teachers, counselors, and athletic coaches, to seek training on how to recognize youth who are in violent situations and how to provide resources to intervene in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Ask local schools about their comprehensive safety plans that address such topics.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or if you or someone you know is a victim of dating violence and wants help, call the **National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474** or visit **[loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)**

National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE and National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE. You can visit also visit the *Dating Violence Resource Center* at [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2001) *Special Report Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>2</sup> Liz Claiborne Inc. "Study on Teen Dating Violence." Teenage Research Unlimited, [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com). (February 2005).

<sup>3</sup> *Dating violence: Facts*. (2007). Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.ricadv.org/dating\\_facts.html](http://www.ricadv.org/dating_facts.html).

<sup>4</sup> *Teen Dating Violence Resource Manual*, (Denver, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence) 1997. pg 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Children Now*, Kaiser Permanente Poll, December 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Foshee, V.A., et al. The Safe Dates Project: Theoretical Basis, Evaluation Design, and Selected Baseline Findings. Youth Violence Prevention: Description and baseline data from 13 evaluation projects (K. Powell, D. Hawkins, Eds.). *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Supplement*, 1996, 12 (5), 39-47

<sup>7</sup> *No More Factsheet*, Liz Claiborne Inc., [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com).

<sup>8</sup> Lockyer, B., & O'Connell, J. (2004). *A preventable epidemic: Teen dating violence and its impact on school safety and Academic Achievement* California Attorney General's Office and the California Department of Education.

<sup>9</sup> Christian Molitor, et. Al., *Gender and Contextual Factors in Adolescent Dating Violence*, February 2000.

<sup>10</sup> C. Sellers and M. Bromley, "Violent Behavior in College Student Dating Relationships," *Journal of Contemporary Justice* (1996). Retrieved from The National Center for Victims of Crimes, Campus Dating Violence Fact Sheet, [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org).

<sup>11</sup> I. Johnson and R. Sigler, "Forced Sexual Intercourse on Campus," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* (1996). Retrieved from The National Center for Victims of Crimes, Campus Dating Violence Fact Sheet, [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

<sup>12</sup> B. Fisher and F. Cullen, "Extent and Nature of Sexual Victimization of College Women," (Washington: NIJ, 2000). Retrieved from The National Center for Victims of Crimes, Campus Dating Violence Fact Sheet, [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org).

<sup>13</sup> Seave, P., & Lockyer, B. (2004). *Teen Dating Violence*. Office of the Attorney General and the Crime and Violence Prevention Center, WestEd.

<sup>14</sup> Varia, S. (2006). *Dating violence among adolescents*. Washington, DC: Adocates for Youth.

<sup>15</sup> Harvard School of Public Health (2001). "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls Linked with Teen Pregnancy, Suicide, and Other Health Risk Behaviors.

<sup>16</sup> *Dating Violence Laws: A Statutory Overview*(2000). National Center for Victims of Crime.

For more information please see our website at [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org).



The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a national leader in the effort to create and influence Federal legislation that positively affects the lives of domestic violence victims and children. We work closely with advocates at the local, state and national level to identify the issues facing domestic violence victims, their children and the people who serve them and to develop a legislative agenda to address these issues. NCADV welcomes you to join us in our effort to end domestic violence.