

Facts About Teen Dating Violence

- 1 in 4 teens is harassed/abused through technology.
- 52% of teens who experience digital abuse are also physically abused.
- Only 9% of teens seek help, and rarely from a parent or teacher.
- 1 in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a dating partner.
- Violent behavior often begins between 6th and 12th grade, but can begin earlier.
- 1 in 7 teenage boys have been victims in an abusive relationship.
- 43% of LGBT youth have reported being abuse by a partner.



What Parents Should Know

If you suspect that your child may be in an abusive relationship, look out for warning signs:

- Your child begins to separate from long-time friends, classmates or family members.
- Your child starts to dress differently.
- Your child's partner texts or calls them incessantly.
- Your child has unexplained bruises or marks on their body.
- Your child stops participating in extracurricular activities or changes their social media habits.
- Your child's relationship becomes very serious in a short amount of time.

Myth - If they stay in the relationship, it must not be that bad. **Fact** - For teenagers, reasons they stay are compounded by peer pressure, a fear of getting in trouble with adults, and the potential loss of friends.

Myth - Only teens with low self-esteem are in abusive relationships. **Fact**- Shared experiences and mutual respect (or attraction) are the first bond in teen relationships. It is after this is established that abuse happens, and has nothing to do with your child's 'strength' or 'self-esteem.'

How You Can Help

Before approaching your child about potential abuse in the relationship, consider reaching out for support or guidance. Remember, reacting strongly to any situation could cause your child to shut down.

- Saying things to your child like "I'm concerned about you and it's not okay for anyone to be treated like this" can help your child hear your concerns. It is important to remember to never imply that your child brought something on themselves or did something to deserve it.
- Talk about the negative behaviors of your child's partner, rather than the partner him/herself. Oftentimes, attacking your child's partner can cause your child to become defensive.
- Encourage your child to reach out for help from either a teen dating violence program or counselor.

Rose Brooks Center Advocates can provide support or answer questions you may have about your child's relationship. Hotline: 816.861.6100