

Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet

Virginia 2009

Teen Dating Violence Facts

- In 2007, 475 youth sought services for TDV from local domestic violence agencies in Virginia.¹
- About one in 10 teens reports being a victim of physical dating abuse each year.²
- About one in four teens reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse each year.³

Teen dating violence (TDV) is defined as physical, sexual, or psychological violence within a close relationship. TDV isn't an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. TDV is a pattern of controlling behavior that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. In addition to the risk for injury and death, victims of dating violence are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior, eating disorders, substance use, and suicidal ideation/attempts.⁴

How to Recognize the Warning Signs

Preventing dating abuse begins with awareness. Unhealthy relationships can happen to anyone, at any age, regardless of background, education, or religion.

In unhealthy relationships, the partners who are being abused may:

- Give up hobbies and other activities that they once enjoyed.
- Worry all the time about making their partners angry or jealous.
- Withdraw from friends and family.
- Spend too much of their free time with their dating partners.

The abusive partners in these unhealthy relationships may:

- Insult their partners in public.
- Try to control how their partners dress and act.
- Check in on their partners over and over again.
- Lose their temper and seem unable to control their anger.
- Threaten to harm themselves if their partners ever try to break up with them.

Tips for Prevention

- Be aware of signs of abusive behaviors in your friends, children and others around you. Talk to them about and promote healthy relationships.
- Recognize the early signs of abuse in your own relationships. If your partner belittles you, tries to control where you go and who you see, threatens or makes you fearful, get help.
- Tell people about what is happening. Talk to a friend or family member you trust. Seek help to end the relationship.

RESOURCES:

Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-838-8238 (V/TTY)

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
www.loveisrespect.org
866-331-9474 - 866-331-8453 TTY

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
Action Alliance www.vsdvalliance.org

Choose Respect
www.chooserespect.org

1. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). June 6, 2008. MMWR:57(No. SS-4). Table 11 www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5704.pdf
3. Choose Respect, Causing Pain: Real Stories of Dating Abuse and Violence Video Discussion Guide, 2007. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Appendix A, p - 113.
4. Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence — United States, 2005, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Feb 8, 2008. MMWR:57(No. 5)

Division of Injury and Violence Prevention
Virginia Department of Health
1-800-732-8333
www.vahealth.org/injury