

Preventing Dating Violence

Dating violence can happen to any teen regardless of gender, race, socio-economic status, or whether or not they have experience with dating.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 4 adolescents experiences verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year.

Supporting Your Child



What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is a pattern of behaviors used to exert power or control over a dating partner.

Dating violence includes any behavior by a dating partner that . . .

- is used to manipulate, to gain control, and to gain power over someone.
- makes a person feel bad about himself or herself, or afraid of his or her dating partner.

Dating violence happens to boys and girls and can involve physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

Abusive behaviors may include the following:

- Physical abuse, such as hitting, shaking, biting
- Throwing things
- Pushing
- Using a weapon



Emotional Abuse

- Ignoring a date's feelings.
- Insulting a date's beliefs or values.
- Name-calling
- Isolating dating partner from others.
- Keeping dating partner from leaving.
- Threatening to hurt oneself.

Sexual Abuse

- Forcing a date to have sex.
- Forcing a date to do other sexual deeds he or she does not want to do.

Warning Signs of Dating Violence

For the target:

- Intense jealousy or possessiveness from dating partner.
- Change in mood or character (depression, moodiness, tendency to be argumentative)
- Often checks-in with partner.
- Unexplained marks on the body (bruises, scratches, burns)
- Deferring to the partner's every wish.
- Often apologizing for the partner's behavior
- Poorer academic performance
- Isolation from friends and family
- Gets visibly upset after phone calls or dates with dating partner.
- Is afraid of making partner angry.
- Describes being "punished" by an angry partner (through silence, humiliation, or force).

For the perpetrator:

- Gets violent when angry.
- Talks disrespectfully about dating partner; puts down dating partner.
- Brags about having total control over partner.
- Dates other people, but doesn't allow partner to do so.
- Gets angry after phone calls or dates with partner.
- Is obsessed with partner's actions.
- Gets in fights with others.
- Tries to exert control over family members.
- Discusses violent behavior as normal.
- Has criminal record of abuse.
- Acts out violence toward pets or inanimate objects (for example, kicks dog or punches walls).
- Talks about getting even with others.
- Blames problems on others or outside circumstances.



Consequences of Dating Violence

Dating violence can have serious consequences. While the immediate impact might be humiliation and/or physical pain, young people who experience abuse are more likely to be in physical fights or bring weapons to school. They might exhibit higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse as well as high-risk sexual behaviors.

Some consequences the perpetrator may experience:

- Lose confidence in oneself.
- Become afraid to express feelings of anger..
- Suffer serious injury, even death.
- Begin to doubt own abilities, feelings, and decision-making ability.
- Feel isolation from family and friends.
- Feel shame,guilt, and loneliness.
- Face inability to maintain long lasting or fulfilling relationships.
- Get a sexually transmitted infection.
- Experience an unwanted pregnancy.

Some consequences the perpetrator may experience:

- Get arrested; spend time in jail; unable to attend college due to criminal record; abandon dreams and goals.
- Experience feelings of shame and guilt.
- Have conflict with parents or other caregivers; feel isolation from family and friends.
- Face inability to maintain long-lasting or fulfilling relationship..
- Contract a sexually transmitted infection.
- Experience an unwanted pregnancy.
- Become depressed, anxious, fearful, or suicidal.
- Begin having problems at work, school, and other activities.
- Lose dating partner's love and respect; dating partner could end relationship.

Understanding Barriers to Getting Help

Teens who are in an abusive relationship may have a difficult time getting help for the following reasons:

- Fear of hurting their dating partner's feelings.
- Fear that the friend who they confide in will tell them to end the relationship.
- Fear of losing independence from one's parents.
- Fear of getting into trouble with one's parents.
- Fear that people will not understand, will blame them, or won't believe what's happened.
- Not knowing how or where to get help.
- Fear of retaliation from the abusive dating partner.
- Not knowing how to leave or improve the situation.
- Embarrassment
- Fear of being judged
- Not trusting that what is said will be kept confidential.
- Not wanting to admit that it's a real problem.



FRISCO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Services-Guidance and Counseling
469-633-6583
www.friscoisd.org

National Teen Dating Abuse: 866-331-9474

Break the Cycle: www.breakthecycle.org

That's Not Cool: www.thatshotcool.com

www.safeyouth.org