

DATING VIOLENCE - TEENS

What it looks like, The Facts, Safety Planning, Helpful Hints

Abuse begins when we begin dating and developing intimate relationships. It can happen at any age and in all heterosexual and gay relationships.

DATING VIOLENCE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS:

Sexual molestation and assault include;

- rape
- unwanted sexual touching
- sexual harassment
- sexual exploitation
- forcing unsafe, degrading or offensive sexual activity
- denying or ridiculing a person's sexuality
- controlling reproductive decisions

Psychological Decisions;

- excessive jealousy
- insisting partner cut off communication and contact with family and/or friends
- grandiose promises of marriage or security, often under the guise of love
- destruction of personal property
- threats
- degrading comments or put downs

Physical abuse and torture;

- assault may include pushing, slapping, kicking, biting, beating, burning, strangulation, and/or use of a weapon
- physical neglect, such as denial of food and/or medication
- inappropriate personal or medical care
- rough handling
- confinement

Stalking includes;

- persistent and unwanted attention
- spying and following
- excessive telephone, cell phone, internet or text message communication

Bullying includes;

- physical torture
- encouraging exclusion
- spreading rumours (often about sexual activity)
- inappropriate phone, internet and/or text messaging

RISK FACTORS

Younger women, low income persons, those from ethno cultural or other marginalized communities, aboriginal women, women from violent backgrounds are more likely to be victims of abuse **HOWEVER**. all women can be at risk.

FACTS ABOUT DATING AND SEXUAL ABUSE

- females are 2 to 3 more times more likely to experience sexual abuse than males
- young women are at a greater risk of sexual assault, physical assault and murder than older women.

Clues that may indicate a teen is experiencing dating/relationship violence

- signs of physical injury
- excessive absence from school or dropping out, falling or failing grades
- emotional outbursts, mood or personality changes
- isolation, keep to themselves
- drug or alcohol use
- indecision
- pregnancy

Women of all ages can take measures to prevent becoming abuse victims. Recognizing trouble signs is an important first step. It is equally vital for women to value themselves and take action to avoid partners who try and maintain power or control over their time, body and actions.

SAFETY PLANNING, TIPS AND ACTIONS

DATING SAFETY

- consider double dating the first few times you go out with a new person
- before leaving on a date know the exact plans for the evening and make sure a parent or friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home
- let your date know you are expected to call or tell that person when you arrive at home
- ensure that you have the resources to get home on your own
- be aware of your decreased ability to react if under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- if you leave a party with someone you don't know, make sure you tell a reliable person your plans and whom you are with.
- ask a friend to call and make sure you made it home safely
- assert yourself when necessary
- be firm and straightforward in your relationships
- trust your instincts
- if a situation makes you feel uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation

HELP YOURSELF

Examine your relationship and encourage other people who date to examine their relationships.

Daters should consider whether they are;

- afraid of their partner
- made to feel stupid, useless or worthless
- feel cut off from family and friends
- feel forced into sexual activity
- threatened by physical abuse
- manipulated emotionally, such as "if you love me you will do as I want"
- experience physical abuse such as shoving, grabbing, hitting, pinching or kicking
- witness wild mood swings, perhaps alternating between cruel and kind almost as if there is 2 personalities
- receive frequent promises to change
- with someone who denies or belittles the abuse that has occurred.

TAKE ACTION

- to talk to a trusted friend, family member, neighbour, health professional, faith leader, supervisor, co-worker, local police. Encourage others facing abuse to do the same
- explore perspective or current relationships by taking the quiz below

RELATIONSHIP QUIZ

Does your partner try to control everything you do?

Are you discouraged to see family and friends?

Are you put down, insulted and called names?

Is your partner extremely jealous and possessive?

You are being abused if you answered yes to any of the above, this is not love

Do you ever treat your partner as a possession?

Do you blame or insult your partner for everything that goes wrong?

Do you prevent your partner from seeing other people without you?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you could be an abuser. Take responsibility, this is not love.

SAFETY PLANNING FOR TEENS

Plan in advance different ways to be safe if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship. Use this list to help you design your own safety plan.

___ List adults you can tell about the violence, including people at school such as, teachers, principal, counselors and security staff

___ List friends you can ask to help you remain safe

___ use the buddy system going to school, classes and other school activities

___ list who you can call for a ride home if you become stranded

___ list places you can quickly go to escape an abusive person

___ consider changing your school locker or lock

___ consider changing your route to and from school

___ get rid of or change the number for your pager or cell phone

___ keep spare change, calling cards, local shelter numbers, numbers of persons who can help & restraining orders with you at all times.

___ keep a journal describing all the abusive incidents and the date and times