



# TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

## Prevention Recommendations

FOR

- TEENS
- PARENTS
- SCHOOL PERSONNEL
- MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS
- PHYSICIANS AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
- JUDGES AND COURT PERSONNEL
- VICTIM ATTORNEYS AND PROSECUTORS
- LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS

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## ABA Disclaimer

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## OJJDP Disclaimer

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# Introduction

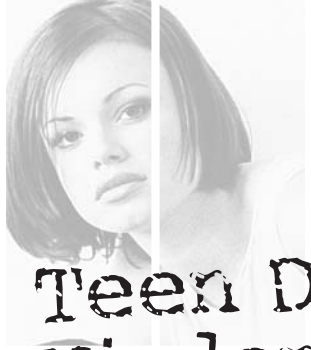
**T**hese prevention recommendations were largely created by teams of teenagers from various areas across the United States, with assistance from their adult teammates, while attending the November 2004, “Teen Dating Violence Prevention National Summit” in Washington, D.C.

After undergoing a series of edits and reviews by adult legal, domestic violence and educational taskforces, a final edit by the Initiative’s teen taskforce ensured their teen character and influence remained in tact. With that, the prevention recommendations in this book are presented to you with the hope that you will understand teen dating violence prevention from a broad perspective and then work with our nation’s teenagers to ensure their health and safety.

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This book begins with facts and warning signs, followed by a collection of terms and definitions developed by the Initiative’s teenagers, and finally a series of prevention recommendations targeting nine key groups deemed critical to successful prevention efforts.

You may use the Toolkit’s “Materials Reproduction Disc” to make individual copies of these sets and distribute them to the people they address in your high school and community.



# Teen Dating Violence Facts

## PREVALENCE AND FREQUENCY

- Teen dating violence runs across race, gender, and socioeconomic lines. Both males and females are victims, but boys and girls are abusive in different ways:
  - Girls are more likely to yell, threaten to hurt themselves, pinch, slap, scratch, or kick;
  - Boys injure girls more severely and frequently;
  - Some teen victims experience violence occasionally;
  - Others are abused more often...sometimes daily.

*"Teen Victim Project," National Center for Victims of Crime, <http://www.ncvc.org/tvp>, (Last visited 10/5/04).*

- A comparison of Intimate Partner Violence rates between teens and adults reveals that teens are at higher risk of intimate partner abuse.

*Jay G. Silverman et al, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 286, 572, 576-577, (Nov. 5, 2001).*

- Females ages 16-24 are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence than any other age group – at a rate almost triple the national average.

*U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-99* (Oct. 2001, rev. 11/28/01).*

- Approximately 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.

*Jay G. Silverman, PhD; Anita Raj, PhD; Lorelei A. Mucci, MPH; and Jeanne E. Hathaway, MD, MPH, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 286, (No. 5, 2001).*

- Among female victims of intimate partner violence, a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend victimized 94% of those between the ages of 16-19.

*U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics,7, (2001).*

- Between 1993 and 1999, 22% of all homicides against females ages 16-19 were committed by an intimate partner.

*Bureau of Justice Statistics Press Release, "Violence Rates Among Intimate Partners Differ Greatly According to Age," (10/29/01).*

- In a study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating.

*"Prevalence of Partner Violence in Same-Sex Romantic and Sexual Relationships in a National Sample of Adolescents," Halpern CT, Young ML, Waller MW, Martin SL, Kupper LL. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, Pages 124-131, (August 2004).*

- Nearly one-half of adult sex offenders report committing their first sexual offenses prior to the age of 18.

Ron Snipe, et Al, "Recidivism in Young Adulthood, Adolescent Sexual Offenders Grown Up," *25 Criminal Justice & Behavior*, 109, 117, (1998).

- 58% of rape victims report being raped between the ages of 12-24.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), (2002).

- Half of the reported date rapes occur among teenagers.

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) 2002 Report: *Research on Rape and Violence*, <http://www.uasasonoma.org/teensite/statistics.htm#Child/Teen%20Victimization>, (Last Visited 10/1/04).

- Intimate partner violence among adolescents is associated with increased risk of substance use, unhealthy weight control behaviors, sexual risk behaviors, pregnancy, and suicide.

Molidor, Tolman, & Kober, (2000); National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, (2001).

## PARENTAL AWARENESS

- 81% of parents surveyed either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.

"Women's Health," June/July 2004, *Family Violence Prevention Fund and Advocates for Youth*, <http://www.med.umich.edu/whp/newsletters/summer04/p03-dating.html>, (Last visited 9/23/04).

- A majority of parents (54%) admit they've not spoken to their child about dating violence.

Empower Program, sponsored by Liz Claiborne Inc. and conducted by Knowledge Networks, Social Control, Verbal Abuse, and Violence Among Teenagers, (2000).

## TEEN AWARENESS

- Nearly 25% of 14-17 year-olds surveyed know at least one student who was a victim of dating violence, while 11% know multiple victims of dating violence. 33% of teens have actually witnessed such an event.

Empower Program, sponsored by Liz Claiborne Inc. and conducted by Knowledge Networks, Social Control, Verbal Abuse, and Violence Among Teenagers, (2000).

- 20% of surveyed male students report witnessing someone they go to high school with physically hit a person they were dating.

Tiffany J. Zwicker, Education Policy Brief, "The Imperative of Developing Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs in Secondary Schools." *12 Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies*, 131, (2002).

- 39% of female high school students report that students talk in school about whether someone is attempting to control the person they are dating.

Tiffany J. Zwicker, Education Policy Brief, "The Imperative of Developing Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs in Secondary Schools." *12 Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies*, 131, (2002).



- 57% of teens know someone who has been physically, sexually, or verbally abusive in a dating relationship.  
*Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, (February 2005).*
- 45% of girls know a friend or peer who has been pressured into either intercourse or oral sex.  
*Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, (February 2005).*
- One in three teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by their dating partner.  
*Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, (February 2005).*
- In 9 out of 10 rapes in which the offender is under 18, so is the victim.  
*Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Fact Sheet on Violence: Adolescents & Young Adults, 5, (2002).*

## INCIDENT REPORTING

- When female high school students were asked whom they would talk to if someone they date is attempting to control them, insults them, or physically harms them, 86% percent said they would confide in a friend, while only 7% said they would talk to police.  
*Tiffany J. Zwicker, Education Policy Brief, "The Imperative of Developing Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs in Secondary Schools." 12 Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies, 131, (2002).*
- 83% of 10th graders surveyed at the 4th Annual Teen Dating Abuse Summit reported that they would sooner turn to a friend for help with dating abuse than to a teacher, counselor, parent or other caring adult.  
*The Northern Westchester Shelter, with Pace Women's Justice Center, (April 2003).*
- Only 33% of teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse  
*Liz Claiborne Inc., Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, (February 2005).*

## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- A study of 1,600 juvenile sexual assault offenders nationwide indicated that only around 33% of the juveniles perceived sex as a way to demonstrate love or caring for another person; 23.5% percent perceived sex as a way to feel power and control; 9.4% as a way to dissipate anger; 8.4% percent as a way to punish.  
*California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) 2002 Report: Research on Rape and Violence, <http://www.uasasonoma.org/teensite/statistics.htm#Child/Teen%20Victimization>, (Last visited 10/1/04).*

- A University of Texas medical center study of new mothers, age 18 and younger, chronicled numerous reports of being slapped, hit, kicked or physically hurt by a husband or boyfriend. Most of the violent incidents occurred during the first three months after childbirth.

*S. Harrykisson, M.P.H., V. Rickert, Psy.D. and C. Wiemann, Ph.D., (2002).*

- Both victims and abusers attribute the responsibility for violent dating behavior to victims, caused by: provocation by the girl; the victim's personality type; the girl's need for affection; communication problems; and peer group influence.

*Francine Lavoie et Al, Teen Dating Relationships and Aggression, (2002).*

- 77% of female and 67% of male high school students endorse some form of sexual coercion, including unwanted kissing, hugging, genital contact, and sexual intercourse.

*M. Jackson, F. Cram & F.W. Seymour, Journal of Family Violence, (2000).*

- Male peer support for violence against women is a constant predictor of male violence within post-secondary educational institutions.

*Martin D. Schwartz & Walter S. DeKerssedy, "Aggregation Bias and Woman Abuse," (2000).*

- 50% of youth reporting both dating violence and rape also reported attempting suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

*D. M. Ackard, Minneapolis, MN, and D. Neumark-Sztainer, Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, "Date Violence and Date Rape Among Adolescents: Associations with Disordered Eating Behaviors and Psychological Health," Child Abuse & Neglect, 26 455-473, (2002).*

## THE LEGACY OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

- More than half of both prison and jail inmates serving time for violence against an intimate were using drugs, alcohol or both at the time of the incident for which they were incarcerated.

*U.S. Department of Justice, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/press/vi.pr>, (1998). (Last visited 9/04.)*

- The severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to increase if the pattern has been established in adolescence.

*S.L. Feld & M.A. Strauss, Criminology, 27, 141-161, (1989).*

- Patterns of dating violence behavior often start early and carry through into adult relationships.

*V.A. Forshee et Al, Health Education Research, 11(3), 275-286, (1996).*

- Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications for victims: Many will continue to be abused in their adult relationships and are at a higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and suicide.

*Jay G. Silverman PhD, et Al, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality." Journal of the American Medical Association, (2001).*



# Warning Signs

## WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

### YOU MAY BE IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

- He tells you he can't live without you.
- She blames you for her problems.
- He breaks or hits things to intimidate you.
- Your weight, appearance, or grades have changed dramatically since you started seeing this person.
- He threatens to hurt himself or others if you break up with him.
- The person you are dating acts jealously, says jealous things, or exhibits aggressive behaviors towards you.
- He pressures you into having sex, or forces you to do sexual things you don't want to do by saying, "If you really loved me you would..."
- She humiliates you and belittles your opinions.
- The person you are dating slaps or shoves you in a seemingly playful way, but it happens often and doesn't seem right.
- He is jealous and possessive about the time you spend with your friends.
- She is constantly checking up on you, and asking where you are and what you are doing.
- The person you date has severe mood swings or constant bad moods.
- She wants to limit your other school activities, so you can "be together more."
- You're frightened of him and worry about how he'll react to things you say or do.
- He wants your relationship to get serious too quickly, and he refuses to take "no" for an answer.
- They blame past bad relationships on everything or everybody else instead of accepting any of the responsibility.
- She abuses drugs or alcohol and pressures you to take them with her even when you don't want to.



- His statements or actions indicate that he thinks men should be in control and women should do what they're told.
- The person you're with treats you like property rather than a person they value.
- When she gets angry she calls you names, kicks, hits, and pushes you.
- He is abusive or aggressive towards inanimate objects and animals.
- The person you are dating forces you to choose being with them over your family and friends.
- She makes you feel that her needs and desires come before yours.
- He makes you feel afraid to express your own thoughts or feelings, make decisions about how to spend your money, what to wear, where to go, or who to hang out with.
- She lashes out or blames you for her bad day.
- Your family and friends have warned you about this person or have told you that they're worried about your safety.
- He may use or own weapons, and has a history of violence and fighting.
- She blows disagreements out of proportion.
- The person you are with tells you they dislike your parents and friends.
- He has hit, pushed, choked, restrained, kicked, or physically hurt you.
- She constantly threatens to break up with you, or constantly accuses you of planning to break up with her.
- He treats his mother disrespectfully.
- The person you're with often loses their temper with you, verbally assaults you, sometimes threatens you, or brags about mistreating others.
- She wants you to be available to her at all times.
- The person you are dating treats their parents badly.
- His threats and anger are followed by vows of love and pleas for your forgiveness.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

### SOMEONE YOU KNOW MAY BE IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

- His girlfriend is always checking up on him, calling or paging him, and demanding to know where he's been and whom he's been with.
- He acts extremely jealous when she talks to other guys, even when only a friendly conversation.
- A teen you know seems to be: emotionally broken down; sad all of the time; constantly bruised; unusually quiet; extremely withdrawn; isolated; nervous when talking around the person they're dating; acting oddly; afraid.
- Your friend seems to be: detached from everyone and everything; constantly distracted; unwilling to listen to your advice about her relationship; uninterested in your observations; ill and out of school a lot; unable to stop crying.
- Her weight, appearance, or grades have changed dramatically since she started dating him.
- He always seems worried about upsetting her.
- Since she started dating him, she frequently cancels plans with you and other friends at the last minute, giving reasons that sound untrue.
- He constantly apologizes for her behavior and makes excuses for her.
- She has injuries she can't explain, or the explanation she gives seems lame.
- You've seen him lose his temper and break or damage things when he's angry.
- She seems depressed a lot since she's been dating him.
- Since they've been dating, he's given up things that used to be important to him, such as spending time with friends or the activities he used to participate in.
- She constantly worries about making him angry.
- He constantly talks about how to do something harmful, or says how 'cool' violent acts are.
- Since he began dating her, he has become more and more isolated from everyone else.
- When she and her boyfriend are together with other people, he tells mean stories about her, calls her names like, "stupid," "slut," "dog," or generally puts her down.
- Someone you know who is in a relationship suddenly seems to have noticeable medical problems: they're always going to the doctor; are out sick a lot; show weight loss and/or hair loss.
- One of the teens has a history of being cruel or abusive in their past relationships.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

- Since your teen has been dating this person, they've dropped school activities that used to be important to them.
- Since he's been dating her, your son's grades have begun to fail.
- You see sudden, uncharacteristic changes in your daughter's clothing or make-up that only began after she started dating him.
- Since your teen has been seeing this person, you've noticed a change in their body language (e.g. slouching, biting fingernails, nervousness, little or no eye contact).
- You see constant bruises, notice other signs of injury, or damaged personal property, and your teenager's explanations seem out of place or don't make sense.
- Your son's girlfriend has an extraordinary influence on his behavior and decisions.
- Your teen is not eating, not talking, and not acting as they normally would.
- You notice sudden changes in your teenager's mood or personality since they began dating this person. They have a constant bad temper and emotional outbursts.
- Your son seems increasingly anxious or depressed since he's been seeing her.
- Your daughter's conversations with her boyfriend are often in the form of explanations, concerning where she's been, what she's been doing, and whom she's been with.
- Since he started seeing her, your son has suddenly become secretive and is acting out. (Teens naturally have some secretive behaviors since this is a period in life when they are trying to establish their identity. Parents should respect that but pay attention to an increase in secretive or odd behaviors.)
- Your daughter stopped seeing friends and family members, and is becoming more and more isolated.
- Since they began dating, your teenager is avoiding eye contact with you, having 'crying jags,' or getting 'hysterical.'
- Your son constantly apologizes for his girlfriend's behavior and makes excuses for her.
- Your teen has a sudden change in dress, which uncharacteristically covers them up (it may be to cover injuries).
- Your daughter's boyfriend acts extremely jealous when others pay attention to her...especially when it's other guys.
- **Excessive** telephone calling can be a sign of an abusive relationship. Pay attention to that, especially if you notice much of the conversation is your teen justifying what they've been doing and with whom.

- You know your teen’s boyfriend or girlfriend has a temper, but when they’re around you they’re extraordinarily charming.
- Your son’s girlfriend tells him that you don’t like her.
- When your daughter and her boyfriend are together around you, you notice he calls her names and puts her down.
- Since your teenager started dating this person, they have become increasingly insecure, destructive and angry.
- Your teen shows bullying behaviors, which could indicate they have the potential to be abusive in a dating relationship.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- Since the two students started hanging out with each other, one of them is having consistent school attendance problems.
- A previously good student has a noticeable downward change in their grades and you know they’ve been hanging out with someone in particular since their schoolwork began to suffer.
- A student suddenly requests changes in their school schedule.
- A female student has a sudden noticeable weight change.
- You notice a student suddenly no longer hangs out with the group of students they generally spent time with and instead are hanging out with one particular person all the time.
- A student demonstrates changes in their behavior that are more passive or quiet than usual.
- A student seems suddenly isolated from the clique she used to be with and appears sad or withdrawn.
- One person seems to be controlling the other.
  - *Physical: one person’s arm is always **firmly** around the other person.*
  - *Social: one of the two people looks down or straight ahead – not at others.*
- There is a drastic shift from the way the kid usually dressed since they’ve been hanging out so much with one particular person. If their clothing is unusually covering, they may be hiding injuries.
- You notice a student has constant bruising or other injuries.
  - *A female student has constant bruising on her arms.*

## WARNING SIGNS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS

- When you ask about the teen’s relationship with the person they are dating they say “fine” in a quick response, are generally non-responsive, or silent, and they don’t make eye-contact with you.
  - *Be aware that in some cultures, such as in Native American culture, prolonged eye-contact may be a form of disrespect. So the physician or other health care professional should be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create unwarranted problems.*
- The teen seems to have little social interaction with other teens outside of the person they are dating.
  - *They no longer hang out with their usual friends and seem sad about that.*
- It sounds like they are covering up for the person they are dating.
  - *They give suspicious excuses when you ask certain questions about the person.*
  - *The teen’s friend alerted you about concerns regarding the couple, but when you ask about it, the teen makes excuses for their boyfriend’s/girlfriend’s behavior, which doesn’t sound valid or sincere.*
- The teen is having school attendance problems that began when they started dating a particular person.
- One person in the relationship is clearly controlling the other.
- The teen has bruising or other injuries that seem odd or not adequately explained.
  - *A female has bruising on her arms.*
- The teen’s clothing seems uncharacteristic for the season or is extremely covering. They may be dressing to cover up injuries!
- A student suddenly requests your help to change their school schedule.
- The teen refuses to participate in the conversation when you attempt to ask pointed questions about your suspicions of abuse or when you suggest intervention.
  - *Or they make light of your suspicions and insist everything’s OK, or the problem is just a minor lover’s spat.*

## WARNING SIGNS FOR PHYSICIANS AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

- Your teen patient's demeanor is guarded or seems fearful.
- Your teenage patient has physical complaints or signs of injury with no causal explanations.
- You are seeing this teenage client because of a drug overdose or suicide attempt.
- The patient complains of frequent headaches or other signs of stress.
- You notice your teen patient has injuries in various stages of healing or has several health issues of concern...all at the same time.
- Your teenage patient suffers from anxiety, depression, or insomnia.
- She says she was assaulted by an alleged "stranger," but her story doesn't seem to support that.
- When you ask your patient questions about their boyfriend/girlfriend, they seem evasive or guarded, and won't make eye-contact with you.
  - *Be aware that in some cultures, such as in Native American culture, prolonged eye-contact may be a form of disrespect. So the physician or other health care professional should be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create unwarranted problems.*
- You notice she has mid-arm bruising, and she gets nervous and anxious when you ask about it.
- Your teen patient has ulcers or other stomach problems.
- When you ask your teen patient how he's doing in school, you find out he has failing grades and no future school plans.
- You suspect an abusive relationship, and mention it to your teen client, but they become unduly embarrassed and deny the suggestion quickly and strongly.
- Your teen patient has experienced dramatic weight loss and/or hair loss.
- She appears to have an eating disorder.
- Your teenage patient's boyfriend or girlfriend won't leave the exam room and, when you ask questions about injuries or other concerns, the patient defers to them or the partner answers without giving your patient the opportunity to do so.



## WARNING SIGNS FOR JUDGES AND COURT PERSONNEL

- In the courtroom, the ‘victim’ seems extremely anxious, embarrassed, and hesitant to talk about what happened to them.
- When questioned, the accused male suggests that men are superior to women.
- During testimony, there is evidence that one of the teens in the relationship plays an excessively protective role.
- In the courtroom, the “alleged” victim verbally taunts the accused.
- During testimony, the accused uses derogatory comments in reference to race, gender or sexual orientation.
- The alleged victim appears extremely fearful of the accused.
- The accused is extremely non-chalant or disrespectful of court authority and combative towards the judge, the attorneys, other court personnel and adults.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR ATTORNEYS

- A review of the teen’s home situation shows problems, such as an alcoholic parent, family violence, or other abusive behaviors.
- Interaction between the victim and perpetrator is very strained, volatile, or one seems fearful of the other.
- The teen wears clothing that seems to be extremely covering for the season. A teen who has covered themselves with clothing may be hiding bruises or other injuries!

- Non-verbal body language, such as shyness, averting eyes, non-communicative demeanor, anxiety or other signs of fear may indicate victimization.
  - *Be aware that in some cultures, such as in Native American culture, prolonged eye-contact may be a form of disrespect. Therefore, be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create unwarranted problems.*
- The breath of the accused smells like alcohol, their eyes are glassy, or they have a history of substance abuse.
- Your client is getting constant phone calls, text messages or voicemails and seems upset by them.
- Your client seems afraid to be in the same vicinity as the accused and generally fears being alone.
- The teen is extremely fearful at your suggestion that they'll have to be in a courtroom with the accused.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

- As an SRO on campus, you notice:
  - *A student appears to suddenly have lost a lot of weight since they began hanging out with one particular person.*
  - *Constant verbal arguments within student 'dating' relationships.*
  - *Signs of physical abuse:*
    - *Constant or severe bruises or other injuries.*
    - *Clothing that seems uncharacteristic or out of season (clothing may be used to cover up injuries).*
- When you are called to a scene, a records-check reveals that one or both teens were in a past yet similar incident involving abusive behavior or battery.
- One of the teens at the scene appears disheveled, has torn clothing, bruises or scrapes, or seems sad or afraid.
- At a scene, when you ask the two teenagers if they're OK, or what happened to them, their reply doesn't seem valid, or they want to dismiss it as 'nothing serious.'
- When questioning the teens, one looks to the other to give answers, or one answers your questions without giving the other teen the opportunity to reply.

- One of the teens appears intensely fearful, guarded, or anxious at your questions and won't make eye-contact with you.
  - *Be aware that in some cultures, such as in Native American culture, prolonged eye-contact may be a form of disrespect. Therefore, be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create unwarranted problems.*
- The teen is quick to deny suggestions of abuse, or becomes intensely protective of the other teen when you discuss the possibility of abuse with them.
- Warning signs of interpersonal violence are present, along with indicators of drug or alcohol use.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS

- A teen's sitting in the back of the room, not participating in discussions, and appearing angry concerning the topic.
- The student exhibits extremely low self-esteem.
- You've been alerted about the behavior of a teenage boy whose father is known to be rude and disrespectful of women.
- You notice a teen has physical signs of possible abuse, such as bruising and cuts.
- A student wears unseasonable or uncharacteristic clothing, which may be hiding injuries.
- A student suddenly requests changes in their school schedule.
- Be aware that some teens will try hard to demonstrate no signs of abuse when they are being victimized.
  - *They may put a lot of effort into looking like the 'perfect student;' or someone who goes about their daily responsibilities like a robot; or someone who talks about their relationship as if it's unusually 'perfect.'*
- Though they have a reputation for being aggressive and sometimes violent, they're initially very nice with the person they're pursuing.
- A capable student doesn't put forth the effort to do well. They seem like they don't care.



# Teenagers' Useful Terms and Definitions

## FRIENDS

People who share common interests, like being together, and care for one another in a loving manner.

## BOYFRIEND AND GIRLFRIEND

Terms for people involved in a committed relationship that is based on an attraction to each other.

## DATING

- A caring, affectionate relationship that goes beyond friendship.
- A committed relationship that holds importance to both people involved.
- A behavior that encompasses “going out” and potentially includes repetitive “hooking up” but does not have to be “exclusive” or “committed.”
- An intimate relationship (not necessarily exclusive) between two people, regardless of age or sex.
- To be in or potentially be in an intimate relationship with a person and doing social activities together to further that relationship.

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

openness, communicative, compromising, trusting, independent, honest, respectful, responsive, understanding, comforting, realistic, supportive, patient, positive, committed, equal

## UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES

jealousy, sexual coercion, possessiveness, humiliating, fearful, shameful, powerful, controlling, demanding, overly passionate

## LOVE

A psychological and emotional feeling for another person, which is verbally indescribable.

## BULLYING

Negative mental or physical abuse towards another individual for the sole purpose of causing intimidation.

## VIOLENCE

- An aggressive act towards another person that causes mental, physical, and emotional harm.
- Physical or mental harm brought to someone purposely through physical actions as well as through forms of communication.
- Verbal, emotional, psychological, physical and sexual behaviors that are intended to belittle, control, frighten, harm, or injure another.
- An act or repetition of acts that degrade or injure someone.

## VIOLENT AND ABUSIVE ACTS

isolating, creating fear, intimidating, shaming, controlling, threatening, name-calling, hitting, pushing, kicking, pulling hair, sexual coercion.

## TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

- The negative act between two adolescents, that results in a mental, physical, and emotional situation that harms one or both people in the relationship.
- Any behavior in a romantic or intimate relationship that is intended to establish an unequal balance of power and control and includes verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, economic, and social harm to one or both people.
- Any acts committed by one partner against another in a dating/intimate relationship that are committed to degrade/injure the other partner and that take away/destroy the aspects of a good/healthy relationship.

# Teens







# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for **Teens**

## VICTIMS, ABUSERS, SIBLINGS, FRIENDS, AND BYSTANDERS

- Respect yourself and respect others. **Do it!**
- Don't be silent about teen dating violence.
- If you suspect someone is a victim, encourage them to find help.
  - *Support them to tell someone they trust.*
- If you suspect someone is an abuser tell them to tell someone they trust and get help!  
**Don't wait!**
- Without being judgmental, **listen**, so you can find out what the problem is.
  - *Don't cut them off!*
- Seek advice/training from an organization that addresses teen dating violence to learn how you can help a victim, ensure the victim's safety, and stay safe yourself!
- Help them realize there is a problem.
- Tell the victim they "deserve respect."
- Give the victim sincere compliments to help restore their self-confidence.
- Tell the victim, "It's not your fault."
- Tell the victim that there is never a reason to stay if they feel afraid, unhappy or abused.
- Encourage the victim to speak up and speak out for themselves.
- Make yourself available to the victim if they need you.
- Keep in contact with the person – it will let them know you're supporting them and that they're not alone.
- Be prepared to find appropriate help for the victim if you need to.
  - *Contact an adult whom you trust and you feel can help.*

- Help the victim make safety plans.
  - *Help them decide on a safe, public place to go.*
  - *Make sure they keep a trusted friend's phone number close by.*
  - *Help them create a password that, when used, is a signal that they need help.*
- Encourage the victim to keep a set of clothes at a friend's house.
- Always have a cell phone with you, in case they need you.
- If you're a victim, keep a cell phone handy in the event you need help.
- Raise awareness – Make it known that teen dating violence can happen to anyone, and that it can occur in different forms.
- Ask for or create school or community support groups with the guidance of an adult who is knowledgeable on the issue – leaders should be teens/students.  
The groups themes should be:
  - ***Stay Strong!***
  - ***Choose Respect!***
  - ***Expect Respect!***
- Have support groups available so the abuser has someone to talk to as well.
  - *Guys to guys groups*
  - *Girls to girls groups*
- Tell friends and family about the warning signs.
- Support the “it takes a village” idea:
  - *Educate your community about the warning signs.*
  - *Involve your community in awareness and prevention.*
  - *‘Talk it up’ to everyone.*
  - ***Don’t stop talking about it!***

# Parents





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Parents

## DUAL PARENTS, SINGLE PARENTS, FORSTER PARENTS, LEGAL GUARDIANS

- Spend quality time with your teen – You’ll be amazed what you learn!
- Talk to your teens daily – ask about their day. **Listen, Listen, Listen!**
- Be willing to hear the good and bad about your teen.
- It’s okay if young people get mad when you ask questions – **Don’t stop asking!**
  - *But don’t badger your teen or their friends for information or answers – there’s a fine line!*
  - *And don’t press on an issue every day!*
- Give your child space to grow and discover who they are, but don’t close your eyes and ears completely.
- Give your teen positive feedback, make them feel good about themselves, and build up your teen’s confidence.
- Don’t pre-judge your teen’s friends.
  - *Be open-minded!*
- Be comfortable talking about ‘uncomfortable’ subjects. If you’re not, become comfortable by getting the necessary information and becoming educated.
  - *Find a way to bring up matters that your teen is hesitant to discuss.*
- Consider the idea that what you’re saying to your teen may not fit the current situation and/or the existing teen culture.
  - *Your perception of things may be wrong, so be willing to listen if your teen wants to tell you how things really are.*
- Start talking to your kids about healthy relationships when you first notice their interest in serious dating.
  - *Be aware of what’s going on, early on in your teen’s relationships.*
  - *Educate them about their rights and responsibilities as a teen who is beginning to date.*
- Communicate to your male and female children that both sexes are equal.

- Dads, don't be "chauvinistic" – Show your sons how to treat women by how you treat your wife, your mother, your daughter, and other women.
  - *Treat your daughter in the same way you would like them to be treated by others.*
- Be a role model for your teen on issues such as sobriety, your personal relationship with your spouse or others.
  - *Show by example, even with the little things, such as saying "please" and "thank you."*
- Tell your teen stories about your own life and your similar experiences.
- Talk with your kids about life's possible negative experiences, and how to avoid them.
- Don't use your poor relationship with your own parents as an excuse for being a bad parent to your child. **Get in there!**
- Establish a trusting relationship with your child. That way, if you ever need to talk about things like dating violence they will talk with you and trust you to do the right thing for them.
  - *Beware of the trust issue: Teens are afraid to talk to their parents about their relationships, especially if they're abusive relationships.*
  - *If they show you they trust you with their secret by opening up to you, be careful how you react to and treat the information they've given you.*
  - *Don't blow things out of proportion just because you don't know about the issue.*
- Just because you know the other family, don't assume everything is okay between your teen and their boyfriend/girlfriend.
- Don't tell a teen "no," or not to do something "just because," with no explanation.
- Communicate with your teen about the possible connection between drinking, drug abuse and violent relationship behavior.
- Talk to your teen about the web sites they visit.
- Be a 'detective' without violating your kid's privacy.
  - *Don't just snoop: You should have 'probable cause' to penetrate their privacy.*
  - *Don't jump to conclusions.*
- Be careful not to create a 'friendship' with your teen: Teens usually want (and need) you to be their parent – not their friend.
  - *If you are extremely close with your teen, know when to be a parent versus being your child's friend.*

- If your teen seems angry or depressed, figure out why.
- Don't be closed-minded about information you find because you don't feel that it is directly related to your teen's situation – you might miss something important or something that is related to their relationship that you aren't aware of.
- Get educated on the extreme warning signs of teen dating violence (such as self-mutilation, thoughts of suicide, etc.)
  - *These are extreme situations and you should seek professional help immediately.*
- Try to work it out with your child first before asking someone else to help.
  - *Outside help may not work right away.*
- If you suspect your teen needs counseling, you may need to find a counselor outside of your area, because of your child's privacy/confidentiality concerns.
  - *Teens may be resistant to counseling so work with someone appropriate to locate a counselor your teen will work with.*
  - *If you decide counseling is needed, know that many teens prefer group counseling to individual counseling.*
  - *You may need to find counseling for a Native American teen off the reservation to relieve any pressure caused by the teen's confidentiality concerns, given the closed nature of the reservation community.*
    - *It might help to contact the Social Services Department of the closest Area Office of The Bureau of Indian Affairs or the closest Indian Health Service Hospital to seek assistance finding a counselor located off the reservation.*
    - *As a complement to professional assistance, you may want to consider traditional help within the tribe. For example, you may want to seek the assistance of a traditional healer.*
- Be aware of other possible resources.
  - *Relatives (especially grandparents) can be an effective resource, depending on your relationship with them, and their relationship with the teen.*
  - *Religious resources alone may or may not be effective when you need help. If you are pressured to keep quiet, insist on getting the appropriate help!*
- Talk to your kid's teachers because they may confide in a teacher they trust.
  - *Attend parent-teacher conferences and ask questions about any noticeable changes in your teen's behavior.*
- Talk to other parents in the community about what kids are doing: you may get information about your teen and/or their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Help your community get the necessary resources to create Teen Centers, so kids have something constructive to do.
  - *Explore possible resources through the school system and the internet.*



# School Personnel





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for **School Personnel**

**"SCHOOL PERSONNEL" INCLUDES:** All teachers, coaches, principals, administrators, secretaries, school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, computer lab staff, teacher aides, teacher substitutes, paraprofessionals, media center staff, school resource officers, maintenance engineers, cafeteria workers, security personnel, parking lot attendants, probation officers, bus drivers, parent/guardian volunteers, and community resource personnel who come on campus.

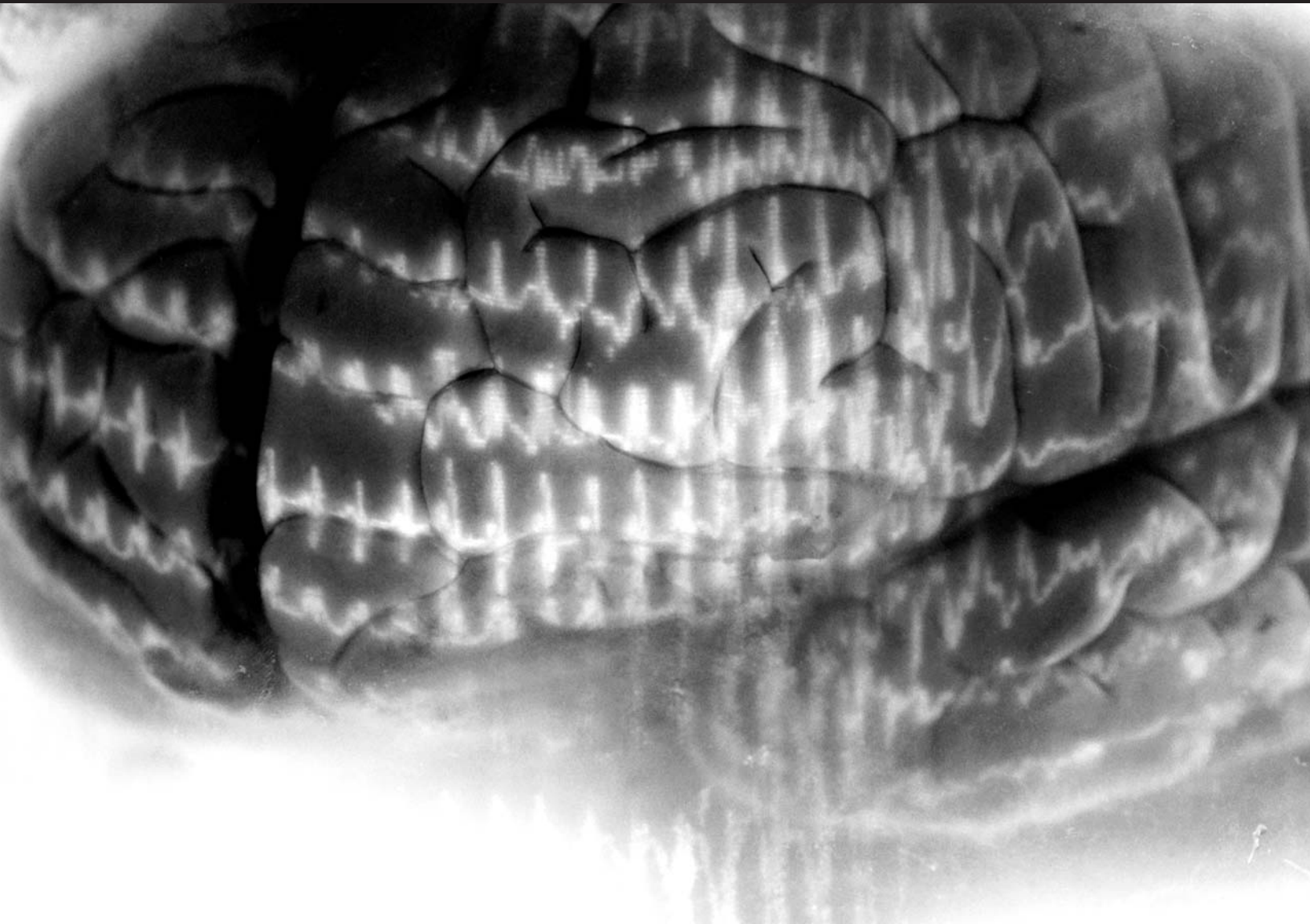
- Work with your students to **clearly** define teen dating violence and then educate the student body about it.
  - *Educate your students as often as possible, but at least annually in an event that really draws attention to the issue. **Please!***
- Schools should employ teachers whose actions show their *priority* is the kids – not just on paper, or during official meetings, but **all** the time!
- A ‘cool teacher’ will recognize when a student is acting out for attention, and then give them the appropriate attention they need. ***Some kids need a little extra help and a self-esteem boost!***
- If you are interested in being the ‘cool teacher’ that students come to for help and advice concerning their relationships, you should have the following qualities and abilities:
  - *Passion about what you are doing;*
  - *Awareness and training concerning cultural differences, so you don’t wrongly interpret issues, or exacerbate or create unwarranted problems;*
  - *The desire to create ways that enable students to recognize their connections with **others**;*
  - *The ability to be a good listener (a ‘cool teacher’ won’t give the impression that they are too busy or not interested in the students);*
  - *The determination to find out what students need from their teachers and then show them you care about them by acting accordingly;*
  - *The ability to initiate a casual conversation with students, while showing that you are genuinely interested in them;*
  - *The willingness to invite student opinions and feedback and then respond to them;*
  - *The desire to encourage students to share their good and bad experiences;*
  - *A quality that enables you to show admiration for the ideas and activities your students are committed to;*

- *The determination to give students individual and special attention;*
  - *Sensitivity to recognize when a student is upset and ask them what the problem is;*
  - *The ability to be respectful of students' feelings (you don't put down kids' feelings by saying things like, "You're too young to really love someone.");*
  - *A flexible nature, but consistent about the school's discipline policies;*
  - *The ability to enforce classroom policies that require students treat each other respectfully;*
  - *A non-judgmental character;*
  - *The ability to maintain your adult demeanor instead of becoming the students' equal.*
- *Make your classroom a comfortable place for your students to come and talk to you about sensitive issues like teen dating violence. (A desk full of papers doesn't look like you have the time to talk.)*
  - *Create opportunities for students to speak out about things. If they have a serious problem, this may be the opportunity they seize to ask for help.*
    - *Be sensitive about students who are reluctant about working with other students (you may want to investigate why they feel that way).*
    - *Find non-embarrassing ways to bring shy or reluctant students into the group. By doing that, you might be helping them to find a friend or solve a problem!*
    - *Provide a welcoming opportunity for kids to talk one-on-one with teachers. Be sure all the students know about it!*
    - *Create a teacher-planned period when teens can talk in confidence, in a relaxed place.*
    - *Explore ways to create confidential methods for students to get help, such as granting special passes so students can more easily have chats with teachers or participate in peer group discussions.*
  - *Increase awareness of teen dating violence as a real problem that can occur anywhere and to any type of teen.*
    - *Ensure awareness information addresses cultural differences and needs.*
  - *Choose a creative theme to help teach about teen dating violence prevention at the school.*
  - *Be sensitive to other school personnel and aware that they too may need help/instruction/resources because they might have experienced dating violence in their own lives.*
  - *Ensure school personnel are educated and trained on the following issues:*
    - *There are cultural differences in the appearance of teen dating violence, as well as different approaches to prevention. School personnel should be trained well concerning cultural issues so they can handle situations effectively for every teen in the school.*

- *When dealing with teens, including Native American teens in rural areas, school personnel must also be aware and sensitive to cultural differences in terms of socio-economic conditions, which are often heightened in rural America and can play a significant role in a teen's well-being on a multitude of levels – including issues associated with teen dating violence.*
- *When dealing with Native American teens, understand that differences revolve around tribalism. To 'outsiders' this can be problematic because you will often be dealing with a very closed community.*
- *There are possible legal ramifications if a teen dating violence incident occurs on school grounds.*
- *School personnel are mandated reporters in certain matters, so teachers must learn about their state laws and the issues involved if a student tells them personal information.*
  - *School personnel should consider the ability to change state laws to improve the situation for teens.*
  - *School personnel should find ways to honor their student's trust in them.*
  - *School personnel should be encouraged to support meaningful changes so teens will be more likely to come to them for help (such as privacy issues).*
- *High-quality, developmentally appropriate instructional materials (such as videos of people's actual stories) to teach teens about teen dating violence and its dangers are effective teaching tools.*
- *The indicators of teen dating violence—including both the obvious and less obvious signs of an abusive relationship.*
- *Teen dating violence has a negative impact on a teen's ability to learn.*
- *Hostile environments discourage kids from seeking help and may even harm their ability to learn.*
- *Sexual harassment demeans a person and is extremely disrespectful.*
- *Students need to be taken seriously, supported, and helped when they need it.*
- *Appropriately addressing students' fear of losing friends if they come forward to report a victimization they suspect or know about.*
- *The importance of encouraging classroom discussions on proper relationship behaviors.*
- *Training materials need to be about real life-incidents, (not mock 'imaginary' trials or other portrayals by obvious actors, or actors who are obviously not teens).*
- *School personnel must be educated to recognize their responsibility to youth so they take action when they see something, or when something is reported to them.*
- *School officials must make and appropriately enforce specific school policy about what is **NOT** acceptable (e.g. pinching, patting and smacking butts or 'kneeing' guys in the groin).*

- Demand that students treat each other with respect at all times.
- Prevent language in school that dehumanizes and sexually objectifies people.
- Address behaviors that desensitize kids and can set the stage for serious forms of abusive behaviors, such as sexual harassment.
- Talk to students about personal responsibility.
  - *Explain to your students that they may be sending mixed messages when the way they dress doesn't show they're choosing and expecting respect!*
- Have school dress codes and enforce them.
- Stress the responsibility of bystanders when a teen dating violence incident occurs.
- Help develop teen dating violence awareness activities within school adolescent health clubs and other teen-focused clubs and organizations.
- If appropriate for the school, consider using certain forms of surveillance. It may help a frightened student feel safe and secure.

# Mental Health Professionals







# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for **Mental Health Professionals and School Counselors**

- Work to develop young people's trust.
  - *Listen, listen, listen, and always be there for us!*
  - *Don't deny or diminish our feelings.*
- When counseling, use the teen's first name.
- Talk with teens **about** their problems – don't talk **to** them.
- Clarify “confidentiality,” including the fact that the mental health professional may be required to report some things to the authorities, regardless of the teen's wishes.
  - *It's not OK to talk to others about specific issues that certain students have, unless the issues discussed are life-threatening, possibly harmful to others, or unless the teen has given you permission to do so.*
  - *“I told a counselor something and it got around the school because a counselor told a teacher.” If a teen says that, it's unacceptable! It destroys trust and is in conflict with the idea of ‘confidentiality.’*
- School counselors or another member of school personnel should be available and willing to listen to students.
  - *Be there for the teens at all times: Not just at your convenience;*
  - *Be non-judgmental;*
  - *Give good advice to the best of your knowledge and training;*
  - *If they need it, help the student to create a safety plan;*
  - *Make appropriate referrals to outside experts, when necessary.*
- Get into our business! Sometimes we're saying, “I don't have the willpower to tell anyone else, and that's why I'm coming to you for help.”
- Understand that some things **need** adult intervention, but also that adult intervention can be more harmful than helpful if it not fully informed.
  - *You should be trained concerning how to counsel teens from various cultural backgrounds. Or, know about the community resources available to teens from different cultures.*

- *It would be helpful if counselors would have a list of other counselors in the area who are from different cultures so when a teen needs help, you can refer them to someone who is best suited to deal with their needs.*
  - *If a Native American teen who lives on a reservation needs help, you may want to find counseling for them off the reservation to relieve any pressure caused by the teen's confidentiality concerns, given the closed nature of the reservation community. It might help to contact the Social Services Department of the closest Area Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the closest Indian Health Service Hospital to seek assistance.*
- Stay interested **and** involved in teens' lives. Keep up on what's going on!
  - *Establish appropriate relationships with **ALL** the students.*
  - *Continue to ask questions, and work to develop and maintain the students' trust.*
  - *Don't be surprised that teen dating violence happens in your community.*
    - *Someone who is involved and really cares won't say, "I had no idea teens deal with this."*
- Know what kids listen to, then listen to, know and understand the lyrics.
  - *Talk with teens about lyrics that demonstrate disrespectful, hurtful or illegal behavior.*
- Know the slang to understand what's going on so, if you need to, you can help.
- Be trained to recognize the warning signs.
- Understand the types of dating violence warning signs that many teen peers ignore. Overlooking the behaviors makes it difficult for teens to recognize or understand what is happening when a violent action actually *does* take place.
  - *Holding down, pushing, pulling, slapping, pulling hair, or controlling what the other person does or says are serious indicators of an abusive relationship.*
- Recognize the problem:
  - *This kind of abuse really happens... and it happens to **all** types of teens!*
  - *Girls **and** guys are being abused.*
  - *Teens hit other teens, and it's not right.*
  - *People who witness the violence don't stop it because they experience it too or they don't know how to help.*
- Don't be swayed when some students insist, "It doesn't happen in *our* school," or "It doesn't happen to anyone *I* know."
  - *Sometimes certain groups of students might think they're better than others and don't want to admit it can happen to them or someone they know...or admit that it actually **did** happen.*

- Educate students on warning signs and human dignity issues.
  - *Educate both guys and girls!*
  - *Help teens realize how serious teen dating violence is (Teens have died in violent relationships!), and how it's not right in so many ways.*
- Educate males and females about what 'being a respectable male' really means (or should mean), and that it does not include violence or control over others.
- Help teens set down rules for 'good relationships.'
- Stress to all teens that it's never OK to be hit.
- Help the teen understand the problem and possible solutions.
  - *Don't tell teens what they feel or what they "have to do."*
- Ask teens questions such as, "How long has this been going on?" and "Are you OK in your relationship?"
- Intervene appropriately if the student *feels* they are in danger, if you *sense* they are in danger...and especially if you *know* they are in danger.
  - *Your policy should be: If a student feels they are in danger, immediately help the student develop a safety plan.*
  - *Figure out the safest intervention methods and involve appropriate others to ensure intervention is safe and effective.*
- Work with teens to create prevention and intervention strategies.
  - *Most of the time teens go to their friends for help and advice, but stress to teens that their ability to help is less effective than the type of help an adult can provide.*
  - *Ensure the teens in your school receive appropriate and sound advice about how to help effectively, yet be safe themselves.*
- When counseling teens, don't say: young men, young women, adolescent, teenager, youth, kids now days.
- When counseling teens, do say: teen, student, young people, young adults...and our first names.
- Tell us what our options are.
  - *What we can do to get out of it?*
  - *What should we say when we're trying to end it?*
  - *What resources might we need?*

- Counselors should give the teen an information card with useful phone numbers, in case they need to call for help or want someone to talk too.
  - *It would help if there were more hotline numbers!*
  - *The information you give them should be culturally appropriate so it's effective. This is especially helpful for students whose primary language isn't English.*
- Teach teens to speak up!
  - *Encourage the experienced teens, who are comfortable talking about their situations, to go public with their stories about teen dating violence. Their stories can help other victims and abusers.*
  - *Encourage teens to talk to other teens when they see abuse taking place.*
- Get on the national agenda for a nationwide conference on high school reform, to address:
  - *Students' social/emotional health;*
  - *Appropriate and effective school discipline policies;*
  - *Quality school staff training that appropriately equips them to teach students about life skills and proper relationship building;*
  - *The creation of school systems that foster positive changes in teen culture.*
- Educate the community about teen dating violence, and how to be responsible to the needs of the kids – and to the schools' needs as well.
  - *Ensure your method of giving advice is culturally appropriate. For instance, on Indian reservations, the governing body of the Tribe (often called the Tribal Council) should be educated about teen dating violence and given prevention recommendations.*

# Physicians/Health Care Professionals





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Physicians and Health Care Professionals

- Do what is appropriate to make your patient feel comfortable to talk with you.
  - *If the teen patient requests it, have their parent(s) leave the exam room.*
- Ask all your teen patients open-ended questions.
  - “How’s school?”
  - “Are you dating (going out with) anyone?”
- Don’t immediately ask pointed questions up front.
  - E.g. “Did someone hurt you?”
- Lead into the general issue of teen dating violence.
  - *Then give your teen patient helpful information, such as something explaining the warning signs.*
- Doctors should explain “confidentiality” up front to their teenage patients, including the fact that they may be required to report certain things to the authorities, regardless of the teen’s wishes.
- Doctors should understand that teens are concerned about confidentiality concerning sexual activity and substance abuse.
- Understand that teens are reluctant to tell a doctor about illegal behavior or any information that could get back to their parents/family. Some of the issues are:
  - *‘Dr. as a family friend’ is a problem that may keep teens from being honest with you.*
  - *Teens want their parents to think they’re OK so it’s very hard for a teen to tell their parents if they are in an abusive relationship*
  - *One suggested approach is: “What you’ve said makes me concerned. I want to get help for you, and to do that I think we need to talk to your parents and find treatment,” etc.*
- Some teens don’t care if the doctor talks to their parents as long as the teen doesn’t have to tell their parents about the problem – but you should know that before you discuss issues with parents.
- If needed, the doctor should refer the teen patient to a qualified counselor/therapist.

- The doctor's office should be a source of information for teens.
  - *The doctor should give the patient a list of teen-appropriate hotlines and support groups*
  
- It's embarrassing for teens if they have to pick up pamphlets with titles about certain teen issues, like "Teen Dating Violence," or "Herpes," etc. Instead, have information in your office for teens with a general title like "Today's Teen," with small sub-topics relating to teen dating violence and other important teen issues.
  - *Information should include topics concerning abstinence, STDs, substance abuse, and other issues teens deal with today.*
  - *The information in your office should include helpful phone numbers and other resources so teens can get help with relationship problems.*
    - *The information you provide should be helpful to all teens, so please make sure it's culturally appropriate for your area!*
  
- Doctors should be sure that appropriate medical information for teens is posted in medical building elevators, in the doctor's front office, on exam room walls, in hospitals, on bathroom doors in public restrooms, and in the school nurse's office.
  
- Develop a gender-neutral, very cool, media campaign targeting youth, concerning teen dating violence.
  
- Doctors should perform follow-up with child abuse victims, since many older victims of violence often suffered child abuse too.



# Judges & Court Personnel



# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Judges & Court Personnel



- All teen dating violence cases should be heard in an official juvenile or family court.
- In cases involving youth, the victim should be treated as **most important** – not as a silent participant, or observer in their own circumstances.
- Judges should not assume that only females are victims and only males are perpetrators.
- Judges should require the submission of accurate and thorough reports by everyone involved in a teen dating violence case.
  - *Insist the reports include language about the abusive act and other important things, like body language.*
  - *During sentencing, judges should make sure they have **all** information involved in each case.*
- Judges should be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create additional legal problems.
- Judges should require the police officer involved in the case to appear in court as a witness.
- Judges should speak in terms that teens can understand!
  - *Some teens better understand their own language, and some only speak their native language, for instance Native teens in Alaska. So, it's important for judges and others in the court system to be able to communicate when it appears the teen is having difficulty understanding what you are saying.*
- Judges should offer youth the opportunity to speak, and listen to what they have to say.
- Judges should consider a victim's request to be present during the entire court proceedings.
- Judges should consider the victim's request to testify by closed circuit television.
- Judges should consider the victim's request to decide if and when the victim's parents are present in the courtroom.

- Judges should require the perpetrator’s parents or legal guardian to be present during **all** courtroom proceedings.
- Judges should allow a victim’s request to have pertinent, personal information discussed in a closed courtroom.
- Judges should give victims the opportunity to testify on the trustworthiness of the witnesses for the other side.
- Judges shouldn’t disregard body language when they’re hearing a case.
- Judges should be trained on the reality and seriousness of psychological abuse when they consider protective order cases.
- All protective orders should appropriately address “no contact” or “restricted contact,” for the safety of the victim.
  - *Judges should explain the “no contact” language in the protective order to **everyone** involved.*
- Judges should explain the protective order to the perpetrator and make sure they understand it, and then follow it.
  - *Judges should clearly explain the consequences if they don’t follow it.*
- Court systems should establish “zero tolerance” for violations of the protective order.
  - *Punishment should be mandatory!*
  - *Judges should lock up the perpetrator if they don’t abide by the protective order.*
- Appropriate court personnel should hear and know the whole story concerning teen dating violence.
- Courts should recognize that “teen dating violence” means all situations when at least one of the people involved is a teenager, no matter the age of the other person.
- Court personnel should keep an open mind about the victim’s and perpetrator’s sexuality and gender identification.
  - *Recognize that dating violence occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.*
- All court personnel should regard the victim as an ‘abused person.’
  - *These cases shouldn’t be easily disregarded as ‘teens squabbling,’ or a ‘lover’s spat.’*
- Court personnel should interview the perpetrator and the victim separately – not in the same room.
- Victims should be able to talk with the probation officer, so they understand **all** the information involved in the case, as well as understand the victim’s fears.
  - *Courts should support and work to form specialized ‘youth courts.’*

- Judges should work with legislators to pass legislation creating ‘youth juries’ that would assist the court in making final sentencing decisions.
- There should be quality counseling for both the victim and perpetrator, offered through the court system.
  - *Using the available court resources appropriately, require quality counseling for the perpetrator...Come on, give them the opportunity to get it right! With the proper help, they might be OK in the future!*
  - *Quality counseling of **their choice** should be ensured for the victim.*
- Probation officers should have smaller caseloads and be required to do their jobs well and thoroughly.
  - *Probation officers should be trained on important issues, including cultural differences.*
  - *They should be required to monitor their cases closely: Keep up with the kid and what’s happening in their life.*
  - *Find the kids who don’t report in, and investigate their activities.*
- Probation officers should closely monitor activities like: 3-way calling, instant messaging (IM), text messaging, email involving friends, letters, etc., from the perpetrator to the victim.
- Judges should support in-school and after-school community programs that keep youth busy.
  - *There should be after school programs that keep teenagers busy in healthy social ways...ways that encourage healthy relationships!*
- Judges should encourage age-appropriate youth education through ‘peer groups,’ to teach other youth about relationship violence and proper relationship behavior.
  - *This type of education should start early – about age 10, when kids are first starting to think about ‘relationships.’*
- Judges should help educate children in an age appropriate way so they understand the court process.
  - *So they won’t be so fearful of the legal process or hesitant to seek legal help if they do end up needing it as a teenager.*
  - *Use videos, coloring books and something fun to teach younger children about the legal process and court procedure, so they will consider it ‘helpful’ instead of ‘scary’ as they grow older.*
- Judges should support appropriate, quality training of social workers for kids who may need specific help (e.g. victims and perpetrators).
  - *As a prevention measure, not just when they’re so bad off that they’re already in the legal system.*
- Courts should distribute literature on the warning signs of teen dating violence.
- Include the topic of “bullying” in judicial and service-provider training.



# Victim Attorneys & Prosecutors





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Judges & Court personnel

- If a teen comes to you for help, give them *immediate* personal attention – with good eye contact.
  - *Slow down and be patient so they'll open up to you!*
- Make sure your teen client knows the court system is accessible to them – even though they are minors.
- Make sure you are accessible to your teenage client.
- Explain legal procedures in simple language.
  - *Don't speak 'legalese' to teenagers!*
  - *Some teens better understand their own language, and some **only speak** their native language (for instance, Native teens who live in Alaska). So, it's important for everyone in the court system to be able to communicate when it appears the teen is having difficulty understanding what is being said.*
- Attorneys should ensure their client's privacy to the maximum extent allowed by the law.
- Prosecutors should clearly explain their role in teen dating violence cases.
  - *Explain that prosecutors represent the State, and are not the teen's attorney.*
- All the attorneys should make sure they have **all** information involved in the case.
  - *Victim attorneys and prosecutors need to look at all the records and reports to be fully educated.*
  - *Make sure you are aware of cultural issues that might impact the circumstances and the outcome.*
    - *Attorneys should be aware of cultural differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create additional legal problems.*
- Include the perpetrator's former probation department reports in the case materials.
- Ask questions about the victim's and perpetrator's friends, in order to better understand what happened and why. (Teenage culture is different from the adult social environment. If you don't understand it, you won't be effective!)
  - *Look at their entire social environment –Get the big picture!*



- Take the victim's experience seriously.
  - *Attorneys and prosecutors need to treat victims with respect and make them feel validated.*
- Protect teen victims in court.
  - *Help them avoid interactions with the perpetrator.*
- Support your teen client's choice to have a parent present during proceedings, or not.
- Support a victim's right to have personal information discussed in closed court.
- Attorneys should support their teen client's preference if the teen wants to talk in the judge's chambers so they can speak more openly, without feeling fear.
  - *Don't make them tell their story in front of everyone unless they want to.*
- Raise concerns to the court in order to change the perpetrator's situation, so the victim is safe and isn't punished.
  - *The victim shouldn't (wrongfully) have to be the one to change classes or schools!*
  - *Victims shouldn't be afraid to attend their classes or be in the hallways and cafeterias, or in transit between school and home, or during after-school activities.*
- When you seek protective orders, ask the judge to include protections that will ensure your client will not be retaliated against by the perpetrator, the perpetrator's friends, or others.
- Encourage the victim to have no contact with the perpetrator (and vice versa if you're representing the accused) during the investigation and court procedures, including no instant messaging, no cell phone contact, no email, no text messaging, etc.
  - *Victim attorneys and prosecutors should do everything they can, to ensure the victim is protected in a restraining order.*
- If appropriate, refer your teenage client to a qualified 'victim's counselor.'
- Attorneys should be aware of the victim's and perpetrator's needs.
  - *Both victim attorneys and prosecutors should know about resources and support services for teens' needs – whether they are victims or perpetrators.*
  - *Make referrals to other organizations or professionals for appropriate and effective assistance.*
  - *Cultural differences and needs should be addressed too!*




- Find appropriate ways to get to know teens and understand the teenage environment.
  - *It will make you a better representative of your teenage client's interests.*
  - *If you're a prosecutor, you should make the effort to fully understand teenagers so your work will be appropriate and effective.*
  
- Raise awareness of protective order issues and laws among prosecutors and attorneys through required Continuing Legal Education (CLE) classes.
  - *Contact state and local bar associations' publications representatives about featuring informative articles on teen dating violence and protective order issues.*
  
- Attorneys should support appropriate, quality training of social workers for kids who may need specific help (e.g. victims and perpetrators).
  - *As a prevention measure, not just when they're so bad off that they're already in the legal system.*
  
- Include the topic of "bullying" in attorney training.



# Law Enforcement Officers





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Law Enforcement Officers

- Create a teen dating violence unit within the police department, with officers who are interested in working with the community's teens and are trained in teen dating violence matters.
- Police should focus on **prevention** rather than punishment.
- Law enforcement should develop and actively participate in school-based activities and programs that educate younger kids on the law and the possible consequences for breaking the law, *before* they get involved in a cycle of abusive behaviors.
- Police and School Resource Officers (SRO) should conduct more dating violence presentations in high schools and make quality, teen-appropriate information available to students from **all** races and cultures.
- If you work with teens and might be called to a teen dating violence-related scene, you should make sure you've been trained on cultural issues and differences which, if wrongly interpreted, could exacerbate or create unwarranted problems.
  - *Some teens better understand, or only speak their native language, so it's important to have the ability to verbally communicate if the teen is having difficulty understanding you.*
- Police officers should make sure their police reports fully describe the abusive act and are thorough.
- Police officers should be encouraged to file charges in teen dating violence cases, based on probable cause.
- Law enforcement officers should encourage parents to file protective orders for their child if they suspect someone is abusing them.
- Law enforcement organizations should support victimized teens' ability to file their own petitions to seek protective orders.
- Police officers and domestic violence organizations need to work together to educate people who work with teens, concerning the types of adult violence that might get a start in violent teen relationships.

- Police should work more closely with domestic violence shelters to address safety needs specific to teen dating violence cases.
- There should be an SRO, or a special liaison that the students are comfortable with, in *all* schools.
  - *School Resource Officers should be aware of cultural issues and differences!*
- School Resource Officers need to integrate within the schools and student populations, and interact with the students more often so they are able to recognize when something occurs that is out of character. ***Get in there!***
- When fights (verbal and physical) and other abusive types of behavior occur within schools, School Resource Officers should intervene and, if appropriate, take the perpetrator and victim to the school counselors to talk about the problematic relationship and help develop a permanent and safe solution.
  - *To guarantee safety, separate the teens and ensure they meet **separately** with the counselor.*
  - *If necessary, an SRO should call the local police.*

# Domestic Violence Organizations





# Teen Dating Violence Prevention Recommendations for Law Enforcement Officers

- Please don't call teen dating violence "domestic violence" and don't treat it the same or many teens won't take your advice. Our relationships are different than adult relationships, and we view things differently than adults!
- If you haven't been educated or trained on teen dating violence issues and how they're different from adult issues, seek training and get educated. Know the realities and differences. **Get in there!**
  - *Be aware of cultural differences and needs too!*
- Domestic violence organizations should educate and train their entire staff on what can be done to help **teen** victims of dating violence.
- Domestic violence organizations and police officers need to work together to educate other people who work with teens, concerning the characteristics of adult domestic violence that may get a start in violent teen relationships.
- Paying special attention to cultural differences and needs, domestic violence organizations specializing in services to teens should:
  - *Help create teen support groups in the high schools.*
  - *Develop internet-based tools: instant messaging, counseling, and appropriate referral information – all dealing with teen dating violence issues.*
  - *Use **live** dramatic presentations (e.g. "The Yellow Dress") and **real** testimonials to teach teens about the reality and seriousness of teen dating violence.*
  - *Develop effective teen-influenced slogans and warning signs to put on posters, bumper stickers, pencils, and t-shirts, etc. and get teens to help you distribute them in all high school in your area.*
- Learn about the signs a teen might give off that will tell you they are or may be abusive.
  - *Though they have a reputation for being aggressive or violent, they're act very nice with a person they are pursuing.*
  - *They act very respectful of you and other adults, but you've heard stories that they're abrasive and rude, or have a reputation for being a bully.*
  - *They treat their parents badly.*
  - *He is very disrespectful of his mother.*
  - *They seem sullen, angry, and don't have many friends.*
- Domestic violence organizations should place teen dating violence warning signs and prevention information in places like high school restrooms and locker rooms.
  - *The information should be culturally diverse and include advice for both victims **and** perpetrators, and for males **and** females.*

- Develop a general awareness education program for school personnel, educating them on teen dating violence.
  - *The program should be proportionate to the size and character of the school.*
  - *Help school administrators create school policies that don't interfere with the victim coming forward, rather encourages them to do so.*
  - *Give culturally sensitive presentations that also utilize legal terminology in a clear and simple manner that can be easily understood.*
  - *Don't use 'legalese!'*
  
- Don't insist on running the 'awareness show' alone! Instead, ask us teenagers what we've experienced, what we think, and what our suggestions are...and ask us to help spread the knowledge!
  
- As the adult, don't tell teens how they feel or what they did wrong; don't tell them what to do or how to do it. Instead, use qualified teens to help you do that so the teen audiences will listen and take the advice.
  
- Encourage the creation of teen-led organizations to address teen dating violence – because teens are **really** effective working with other teens!
  
- Domestic violence organizations should train 'student leaders' about teen dating violence and how they can help their peers, while at the same time being careful not to leave anyone out – including the LGBT students.
  - *'Student leaders' should be a diverse and respected group of students that represents every group and 'clique' in the school.*
  
- Use qualified teens for outreach efforts in middle and high schools.
  - *Target 5th and 6th graders, when they are first entering into relationships, and teach them what a healthy relationship is.*
  - *Don't attempt to talk to students about teen dating violence issues without a qualified teen there to make the presentation with you; let the teen tell teen stories and give advice to the audience...with your gentle participation and guidance!*
  
- Be aware that some teens will try hard to demonstrate no signs of abuse when they are being victimized (e.g. a 'perfect student;' someone who goes about their daily responsibilities like a robot; someone who constantly dresses in clothing that covers them up; or someone who talks about their relationship as if it's unusually 'perfect.').
  
- Domestic violence organizations should also be supportive of a teen perpetrator's need for help and effective services.
  - *Don't ignore their need for effective services! Help teen perpetrators get the quality and effective services they need so they don't grow into abusive adults.*
  - *Don't talk badly about them to the victim, or simply suggest they be 'put away.'* Remember, the victim probably had feelings for them and still may care about them.
  - *Teens don't want other teens to just be locked up and lose their chance to have a good life!*
  
- Domestic violence organizations should create special shelters and community organizations to deal specifically with teen dating violence.





U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice  
and Delinquency Prevention