

teens: ask the questions

You have the right to know!



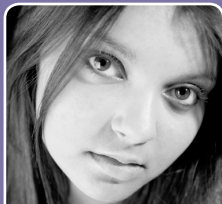
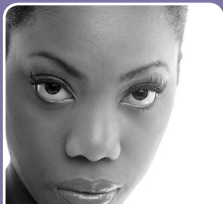
METRO

Metropolitan Center for Women and Children

24 HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE

504-837-5400

ALL SERVICES ARE
FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL





CAN I REALLY BECOME A VICTIM OF VIOLENCE? WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF VIOLENCE?
WHAT IS DATING VIOLENCE? **WHO CAN EXPERIENCE DATING VIOLENCE?** WHAT ARE THE
WARNING SIGNS? WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIPS?
HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS? HOW CAN I KEEP MYSELF SAFE? **WHAT DO I**
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Why has this brochure been prepared?

Sometimes your feelings may be discounted and your concerns not taken seriously. Sometimes you just don't know where to go for real help, help that addresses adolescent concerns and provides specific services for your needs. This brochure underscores that you are important; that you have the right to choose healthy relationships for yourself; and that there is help for you to make the right decisions.



What are the different kinds of violence that I need to know about?

The major kinds of violence done to women and children include sexual violence, domestic violence, and dating violence. Because you are a teenager or young adult engaged in dating, this brochure will focus on sexual and dating violence.

What is dating violence?

Dating violence is any intentional sexual, physical or psychological attack on one partner by the other in a dating relationship. Statistics about dating violence are alarming: one in three high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship. 40% of teen age girls 14-17 say they know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.

Dating violence is something that happens to other people, not me, right?

Dating violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, or socioeconomic status. Because of this fact, it is important for YOU to know the warning signs and methods of self-protection. YOU are important and your safety is our concern.

Victims and abusers of dating violence come from all social and economic backgrounds, faith communities, and racial and ethnic groups. Dating violence can also occur in same-sex relationships.

What are some of the warning signs of dating violence?



Dating violence is about power and control.

- Keeping silent about the abuse
- Unexplained bruises, scratches or injuries
- Fear of partner
- Partner's controlling and jealous behavior
- Partner's constant criticism and, at times, public humiliation
- Isolation from friends and family because of partner's pressure and jealousy
- Partner threatens you if you want to break up
- Verbal/emotional abuse

All forms of abuse are harmful and need to be taken seriously.

What are some of the characteristics of a dating violence abuser?

- Putting pressure on partner to keep proving her love, sometimes in illegal ways, such as stealing
- Warning partner to stay away from others
- Putting pressure on partner for sex or similar acts
- Minimizing partner's feelings and rights
- Using intimidation to belittle partner
- Criticizing partner's looks and making partner feel that if she leaves him, she will be alone
- Using drugs or alcohol and pressuring partner to do the same
- Expressing extreme jealousy and possessiveness of partner
- Hitting, scratching, bruising, or using some other form of physical violence
- Stalking, calling constantly, or texting to check on partner



What can I do?

- Know the warning signs. If you are in a relationship that makes you uncomfortable, awkward or tense, trust your feelings and get out of it.
- If you are in a violent or potentially violent relationship, remember that the violence will not just go away. You cannot change your partner, and you are not responsible for the abuse. You may need counseling or advice so you can begin to heal. Seek help; if not from your parents, then from one of the numbers provided in this brochure.
- Be on the lookout for friends who are in abusive relationships. Suggestions about how to help your friends are answered later in this brochure.
- If you are hurting someone else, have the courage to get help. It is never okay to harm someone else. Physical and sexual violence are illegal. You can learn new ways to deal with your anger; you can learn how to communicate in positive ways and to obtain love in a healthy way. Don't be too ashamed or too proud to talk to someone you trust or to call any of the numbers listed on this brochure.



Can I make a safety plan for myself?

A safety plan is a good idea for everyone, but it is especially important if you find yourself in an abusive relationship. Here are a few tips:

- Keep close to your friends and participate in enjoyable activities with them.
- Think about talking to family members.
- Try not to be alone even if it means telling your friends.
- Change your routine; take a different route to school; get a cell phone if you can or keep extra change in your pocket to use a pay phone.
- Keep a list of important numbers, including Metro's number, for easy access.
- Do not go with the abuser to an isolated location.
- Trust yourself. If you feel afraid, let others know.
- When you get ready to break up with the abuser, do so in a public place. Tell other people that you are doing so and let them know when and where.

You have the right to say no.

And remember, abusive behavior is not normal.

How can I help my friends?

Do not try to rescue your friend or place yourself in a dangerous situation with the abuser. Don't be a mediator.

- Don't ignore the abuse. Talk to them; let them know you are concerned. They may be angry at first, but it is important that you have the courage to let them know you care.
 - Do not, however, try to rescue your friend or place yourself in a dangerous situation with the abuser. Don't be a mediator.
 - Validate your friend's feelings and acknowledge that just by speaking to you, he/she has taken a major step in healing.
- Help your friend by sharing what you have learned about dating violence and the resources you have found.
 - Call the police if you actually witness an assault or tell an adult such as your parent, the principal of your school, or a guidance counselor.
 - Ask your school to post important hotline numbers listed in this brochure.
 - Use the topic for a report at school. Get the librarian involved and ask him/her to have books on teen dating violence in the library.
 - If your school allows outside speakers, ask the principal to bring in Metro's community educator to speak to a class or to the student body about dating violence.
 - If your school has an active student council, talk to the members and involve them in a campaign to promote healthy teenage relationships.



Be an example of how to have healthy relationships.

What should I do if my own friend is the abuser?

- Talk to an adult first about any action you would like to take. Your safety comes first, and confronting an abuser is sometimes dangerous.
- If you do talk to your friend about being an abuser, keep the tone non-confrontational by emphasizing a positive approach to solve differences.
- The most powerful impact you can make on your friend is to model a healthy relationship.
- Call the police if you witness an assault.

What are the signs of a healthy relationship?

- A healthy relationship requires trust, honesty, and respect.
- In a healthy relationship both partners are treated equally.
- Both partners support each other's goals, decisions, and opinions.
- Both partners feel comfortable expressing feelings.
- Both partners feel good about who they are.

What are some myths about dating abuse?

Some of the myths you might hear, either from your partner or your friends, include the following:

Myth: "He is only jealous because he loves you."

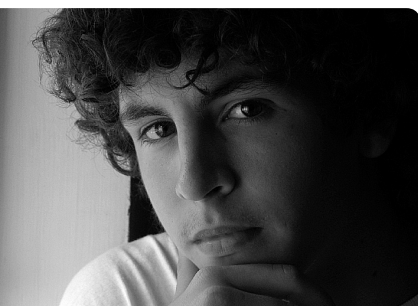
Truth: Jealousy is only an excuse used by possessive partners who want to control through manipulation and insecurity. Don't buy it!

Myth: "He hits me because I provoke him."

Truth: You do not provoke a violent reaction in anybody. This myth is an example of blaming the victim.

Myth: "Men hit or rape because they cannot control their impulses of sexual desires."

Truth: Men can and must control themselves. Every person has the right to say no and the right not to be hit or abused in any way.



Where can I go for help?



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TOLL FREE

1-888-411-1333

VIA LINK

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All services are free and confidential.



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