



Helping Families 101:



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Dating violence is...

a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors that one person uses against another in order to gain or maintain power and control in the relationship. The abuser intentionally behaves in ways that cause fear, degradation and humiliation to control the other person.

It involves a violent situation between unmarried couples, which could include teens and adults.

Just because a person isn't physically hurting you doesn't mean they aren't abusing you. Dating violence can be physical, sexual, verbal or emotional.

Abusers...

use a variety of tactics to gain power and control over their partners that include:

- **Peer pressure:** Threatens to expose a weakness, spread rumors or tell lies about the individual to a peer group.
- **Isolation/exclusion:** Controls what another does, who he/she sees and talks to, and where he/she goes. Uses jealousy to justify actions.
- **Sexual coercion:** Manipulates or makes threats to get sex, gets her pregnant, threatens to take children away, and gets someone drunk or drugged to have sex.
- **Threats:** Makes and/or carries out threats to do something to hurt another. This includes threatening to leave, commit suicide, to report him/her to the police, make him/her drop charges, or make him/her do illegal activities.
- **Minimize/deny/blame:** Doesn't take abuse concerns seriously, says it didn't happen or shifts responsibility for abusive behavior.
- **Intimidation:** Causes fear with looks, actions, gestures, destroys property, abuses pets or displays weapons.
- **Social Status:** Treats another like a servant, makes all the decisions, or defines the relationship roles.
- **Anger/emotional abuse:** Puts him/her down, makes him/her feel bad about him/herself or feel guilty, calls names or plays mind games.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline number is 800-799-7233 or 800-787-3224 TTY; it's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is confidential.

For additional information, visit www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence or www.michigan.gov/datingviolence.

Source: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.



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Statistics

- Women between 16- and 24-years-old are the most vulnerable to intimate partner violence.
- About one in five female high school students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- As many as one-third of high school and college-aged youth experience violence in an intimate relationship during their dating years.
- Violence against women occurs in 20 percent of dating couples.
- Between 25 percent and 33 percent of adolescent abusers reported that their violence served to “intimidate,” “frighten,” or “force the other person to give me something.”
- 26 percent of pregnant teens reported being physically abused by their boyfriends. Of those, about half said the battering began or intensified after he learned of her pregnancy.
- 40 percent of teenage girls, ages 14 to 17, report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.
- Dating and domestic violence impacts all groups of people; victims come from all races, religions and culture. Women are six times more likely than men to experience violence committed by an intimate partner.

Know what to do...

- Trust your instincts if you feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- You have the right to say no; change your mind; have control over your own body; set your own limits and have those limits respected; not be physically, sexually, verbally or psychologically hurt by anyone; ask for help when you need it; pursue your own interests; be friends with anyone you choose; and break up and fall out of love with someone and not feel afraid.
- Teens talk to their friends about these problems instead of leaning on adults. As a friend, be sure to:
 - Listen
 - Believe what they are telling you
 - Not judge them about decisions they have made
 - Try to understand
 - Be supportive
 - Remind them that they are not responsible for the abuse
 - Protect their privacy
 - Support their right to make their own choices
 - Provide resource information.

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