

# Dating Abuse Statistics



Young adult dating violence is a big problem, affecting youth in every community across the nation. Learn the facts below.

## Too Common

- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.
- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
- One in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- One quarter of high school girls have been victims of physical or sexual abuse.

## Why Focus on Young People?

- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence -- almost triple the national average.
- Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18.
- The severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.
- About 72% of eighth and ninth graders are "dating".

## Long-lasting Effects

- Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and further domestic violence.
- Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls 6x more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get an STI.
- Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.

## Dating Violence and the Law

- Eight states currently do not include dating relationships in their definition of domestic violence. As a result, young victims of dating abuse often cannot apply for restraining orders.
- New Hampshire is the only state where the law specifically allows a minor of any age to apply for a protection order; more than half of states do not specify the minimum age of a petitioner.
- Currently only one juvenile domestic violence court in the country focuses exclusively on teen dating violence.

## Lack of Awareness

- Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.
- Eighty one percent of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.
- A teen's confusion about the law and their desire for confidentiality are two of the most significant barriers stopping young victims of abuse from seeking help.

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