

Office of Adolescent Health

Dating Violence and Adolescents

Adapted from <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/DatingViolence/>

Some adolescents get involved in unhealthy dating relationships. About one in ten adolescents have been hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon on purpose by someone they were dating.¹ Controlling and demanding behaviors often happen before violence occurs. For example, one partner may tell another what to wear and with whom to spend time.² Over time, controlling and demanding behavior may become increasingly violent and that violence can have negative effects on physical and mental health throughout life (including depression, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts).^{3 4 5} Adults can help by paying attention and talking to adolescents about how to build healthy, respectful relationships.⁶

Learn More about How to Prevent and Stop Dating Violence in Your Community

- One of the goals of the Office of Adolescent Health's [Pregnancy Assistance Fund](#) is to improve services for pregnant and parenting teens who are experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- First enacted in 1994, [the Violence Against Women Act](#) provides funding to states and communities to develop specialized law enforcement units, provide services to men and women who encounter abuse or violence, and improve prosecution of these crimes. The Act seeks to protect both males and females that experience dating violence. Since its passage, the annual incidence of domestic violence has dropped by more than half.^{7, 8}
- [The Office on Violence Against Women](#), within the U.S. Department of Justice, administers financial and technical assistance to communities across the country that are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Did you know?



About half of students who experience dating violence report some abuse occurring on school grounds.

- The Office on Women’s Health offers [an array of resources on dating violence](#) that highlight helpful strategies for teens and their families, including [how to leave an abusive relationship](#) and [how to avoid date rape drugs](#). The CDC’s [Dating Matters Initiative](#) provides tips for maintaining healthy teen relationships and preventing dating violence.

Footnotes

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 65(6). Retrieved February 7, 2018, from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf.

² Break the Cycle. *Warning Signs*. Retrieved January 21, 2016, from <http://www.breakthecycle.org/dating-violence-warning-signs>.

³ Banyard, V.L., Cross, C. (2008). Consequences of teen dating violence: Understanding intervening variables in ecological context. *Violence Against Women*, 14(9), 998–1013.

⁴ Johnson, W., Giodano, P., Longmore, M., Manning, W. (2014). Intimate partner violence and depressive symptoms during adolescence and young adulthood. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 55(1), 39–55.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). Physical dating violence among high school students— United States, 2003. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 55, 532–535. Retrieved January 21, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5519a3.htm>.

⁶ Break the Cycle. *A parent's guide to teen dating violence*. Retrieved January 21, 2016, from http://www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/hanbook_-_parents_of_teen_0.pdf.

⁷ Catalano, S.M. (2013). *Intimate partner violence: Attributes of victimization, 1993–2011*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved January 21, 2016, from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipvav9311.pdf>.

⁸ Truman, J., Lynn, L. (2014). *Criminal victimization, 2013*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved January 21, 2016, from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv13.pdf>.

Content created by Office of Adolescent Health

Content last reviewed on February 8, 2018

