

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month



Dating Violence, similar to domestic violence, is a pattern of abusive tactics that are used to gain and maintain power and control in a dating relationship. Abuse can be emotional, verbal, digital, physical, sexual and/or financial. Unique aspects to teen dating violence include more use and abuse of technology, abusive partners going to the same school, and adults not taking teen relationships as seriously.

Warning Signs of Dating Violence

The partner constantly checks up on your teen through calls and texts (wanting to know where they are and who they're with); acts extremely jealous, possessive, or controlling; calls your teen degrading names; tells your teen what they can wear; pressures your teen into sexual activity; limits whom your teen hangs out with; believes they can make all the decisions in the relationship; makes your teen afraid to disagree; and blames your teen for things they didn't do.

Why do teens stay in abusive relationships?

Like with adults, there are many barriers that make leaving difficult for teens. Reasons include fear of being hurt or stalked by their abusive partner, being in love with the partner and hoping they will change, not recognizing their relationship as abusive or feeling it's normal, embarrassment about the abuse, feeling like it's their fault and they don't deserve better, fear that others will not support or believe them, feeling obligated to stay together for religious, social, or cultural reasons, and not knowing about supportive resources.

A Few Statistics

Some research suggests as many as 1 in 3 teens in the U.S. will be a victim of emotional, verbal, sexual, or physical abuse from a dating partner. Females aged 16-24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence. Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse. 81% of parents believe dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.

What can I do to be helpful to a teen that's getting abused?

- Listen, believe, and support them. Tell them that the abuse is not their fault, and the abuse is not God's will. Tell them that they are not alone and that help is available. They deserve a safe and healthy relationship.
- Talk to the teen in private. Tell them you're concerned for their safety and you want to help. Share information about Hope House services (see below) and suggest they call the helpline. Offer to take them to any counseling sessions to be supportive.
- Be non-judgmental. Make it clear you don't blame them and that you respect their choices.
- Role model respectful behavior and teach youth (early and often) about healthy relationships that are based on respect, equality, trust, honesty, good communication, and support. Show them www.LoveIsRespect.org and let them know they can call 1.866.331.9474, chat online, or text loveis to 22522.



For more information, resources, and recommended websites, please visit www.hopehousescw.org/teen-dating-violence.html

Free and Confidential Services

The mission of Hope House is to prevent abuse and provide support to victims of domestic and sexual violence. All services are free including a 24/7 helpline, individual counseling, legal assistance, support groups, children's programming, safety planning, 24/7 on-call emergency response, shelter, and community education. Please call Hope House to request a presentation for an adult or youth group.

Hope House of South Central Wisconsin
720 Ash St/P.O. Box 557
Baraboo, WI 53913
608-356-9123 or 608-356-7500
24-hour helpline: 1-800-584-6790
www.HopeHouseSCW.org
www.facebook.com/HopeHouseSCW

