

## WHAT IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE?

Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Teens often think some behaviors, like teasing and name-calling, are a “normal” part of a relationship. However, these behaviors can become abusive and develop into more serious forms of violence.

Teen Dating Violence is defined as the physical, sexual, psychological or emotional aggression within a dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between a current or former dating partner.

Teen dating violence is widespread with serious long-term and short-term effects. Many teens do not report it because they are afraid to tell friends and family. The 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that nearly 12 percent of high school females reported physical violence and nearly 16 percent reported sexual violence from a dating partner in the 12 months before they were surveyed. For high school males, more than 7 percent reported physical violence and about 5 percent reported sexual violence from a dating partner.



### LEWISVILLE ISD GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

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# DATING ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

## WHY DOES TEEN DATING VIOLENCE HAPPEN?

Teens receive messages about how to behave in relationships from peers, adults, and the media. All too often these examples suggest that violence in a relationship is normal, but violence is never acceptable. Violence is related to certain risk factors. The risk of having unhealthy relationships increases for teens who:

- Believe that dating violence is acceptable
- Are depressed, anxious, or have other symptoms of trauma
- Display aggression towards peers or display other aggressive behaviors
- Use drugs or illegal substances
- Engage in early sexual activity and have multiple sexual partners
- Have a friend involved in teen dating violence
- Have conflicts with a partner
- Witness or experience violence at home

Communicating with your partner, managing uncomfortable emotions like anger or jealousy and treating others with respect are a few ways to keep relationships healthy and nonviolent. Dating violence can be prevented when teens, families, organizations and communities work together to implement effective prevention strategies.

*Source: CDC:  
[cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](https://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)*

## WARNING SIGNS

Being able to tell the difference between healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships can be more difficult than you would think. No two relationships are the same, so what's unhealthy in one relationship may be abusive in another. Although there are many signs to pay attention to in a relationship, look for these common warning signs of dating abuse:

- Checking cell phones, emails or social networks without permission
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Constant belittling or put-downs
- Explosive temper
- Isolation from family and friends
- Making false accusations
- Constant mood swings towards you
- Physically inflicting pain/hurt in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling someone what they can and cannot do
- Repeatedly pressuring someone to have sex

## CONSEQUENCES

As teens develop emotionally, they are heavily influenced by experiences in their relationships. Healthy relationship behaviors can have a positive effect on a teen's emotional development. Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have short- and long-term negative effects on a developing teen. Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety; engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol; exhibit antisocial behaviors; or think about suicide.



## RESOURCES

### **Break the Cycle:**

[breakthecycle.org](https://breakthecycle.org)

### **Denton County Friends of the Family 24-hour Crisis Line:**

(940) 382-7273 or (800) 572-4031

### **National Dating Abuse Helpline:**

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

### **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 24-hour Family Violence Hotline:**

1-800-252-5400 | [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org)