

# TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

## *Prevalence*

In recent years, more and more researchers, health practitioners, and youth service providers have become aware of the problem of teen dating and sexual violence. Teen dating violence is



shockingly common. In 2006, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that nationally one in 11 adolescents has experienced physical abuse. CDC also cited a 2001 report in the Journal of the American Medical Association stating that one in five high school girls have been sexually abused by a dating partner. Many youth also experience emotional abuse, harassment, and stalk-

ing in dating relationships. Teen dating violence is a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of or actual physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse to control his or her partner. This form of violence can include verbal abuse, written materials, use of weapons, the destruction of property, stalking, and other forms of intimidation. Sexual violence can involve sexual harassment, including any unwanted sexual attention such as catcalls, gestures, sexual gossip, or verbal or written comments about a person's body; inappropriate sexual contact including sexual battery, touching, kissing, caressing and rubbing; and sexual assault, including rape or attempted rape.

Resource: <http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/NCVRW/TDV>

## *Legal Framework—Texas Education Code 37.081*

TEC 37.0831 (formerly HB 121) mandates that each school district in Texas adopt and implement a dating violence policy, TCFV has been working with a statewide interagency group to develop model policies and collaborate with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Association of School Boards for effective implementation of the new law.

Compliance with TEC 37.0831 requires that the district policy address seven standards.

Those standards are:

- Include a definition of dating violence in your dating violence policy
- Address safety planning
- Address enforcement of protective orders
- Include school-based alternatives to protective orders
- Address training for teachers and administrators
- Address counseling for affected students
- Include awareness education for students and parents.

## **POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- ◆ Prevalence of Dating Violence
- ◆ Legal Framework
- ◆ Victim Red Flags
- ◆ Perpetrator Red Flags
- ◆ Local District Policy
- ◆ Campus Protocol
- ◆ Teen Dating Violence and Technology
- ◆ Things to Remember

## **STATISTICS:**

Physical/Verbal Abuse

- ◆ 1 in 5 teens report being slapped, hit, or pushed by a partner
- ◆ 1 in 3 teens know a friend or peer who has been hit, slapped, or pushed, or choked by a partner.
- ◆ 1 in 5 high school girls report being sexually abused by a partner.
- ◆ More than 1 in 4 teens report repeated verbal abuse.
- ◆ 1 in 4 teens have been prevented from spending time with friends or family.
- ◆ 1 in 5 teenage girls said a boyfriend threatened violence or self-harm when attempting to break up.

### *Victim Red Flags*

- ◆ Student becomes more passive or quiet than usual
- ◆ Isolation from usual peer group
- ◆ Change in grades
- ◆ Seems sad or withdrawn
- ◆ Change in way student dresses since new partnership
- ◆ Bruising or injuries
- ◆ Physical: one person's arm is always firmly around another person
- ◆ Social: no eye contact; more passive behavior
- ◆ Electronic: constantly checking in via text, email, calling, etc.

### *Perpetrator Red Flags*

- ◆ Extreme jealousy
- ◆ Controlling behavior
- ◆ Quick involvement (saying "I love you" very soon, talking of forever)
- ◆ Unpredictable mood swings
- ◆ Alcohol and drug abuse
- ◆ Explosive anger
- ◆ Isolates partner from friends and family
- ◆ Shows hypersensitivity
- ◆ Blames others for problems
- ◆ Verbally abusive
- ◆ Checks up on partner by calling, texting, driving by, always needing to know where partner is



### *Dating Violence and Technology*

The use of technology is frequent in teen dating violence. Excessive text messaging, instant messaging or inappropriate postings to social networking sites, such as MySpace or Facebook, constitute teen dating violence.



"One in four teens in a relationship (25%) say they have been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner through cell phones [and] texting"(Liz Claiborne, Inc/Teen Research Unlimited, 2007). Additionally, **19% of teens** in relationships say their partner has used a cellular device or the internet to spread rumors about them (Liz Claiborne, Inc/Teen Research Unlimited, 2007).

The use of technology also involves fear and the threat of violence. **Seventeen percent** of teens reported "their partner has made them afraid not to respond to a cell phone call, email, IM or text message because of what he or she might do (Liz Claiborne, Inc/Teen Research Unlimited, 2007). Additionally, "one in ten (**10%**) claim they have been threatened physically via email, IM, text, chat, etc" (Liz Claiborne, Inc/Teen Research Unlimited, 2007).

Resource: [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)

### *Campus Protocol*

Any suspicion of abuse should be reported to an administrator or counselor immediately.

Administrators and counselors will follow-up with students and assist with any necessary reports to authorities (CPS, police).

### *Things to Remember:*

- ◆ There is no excuse for relationship violence.
- ◆ No one deserves to be abused.
- ◆ Violence is not the victim's fault. Only the abuser is responsible.
- ◆ It must be very difficult for the abused to leave the situation.
- ◆ The victim is not alone. There are people for them to talk to for support.

### *Websites:*

- ◆ [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)
- ◆ [www.safeplace.org](http://www.safeplace.org)
- ◆ [www.cdc.chooserrespect.org](http://www.cdc.chooserrespect.org)
- ◆ [www.seeitandstopit.org](http://www.seeitandstopit.org)

### *Local District Policy - FFH*

**Definition:** Dating violence occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.