

Teen Dating Violence

What to watch for and how to help

Anyone can experience dating violence, but it is especially common in teens and young adults, often happening via technology. According to the Cyberbullying Research Center, youth who share their passwords with their significant other are nearly three times as likely to be victims of electronic dating violence.” Read on to learn some of the signs of dating violence, and what to do if you suspect that someone you know is experiencing it.

What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is best described as a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that increases in severity over time.

While dating violence can come in the form of physical assault or even rape, it often starts with seemingly harmless teasing and name calling. It can occur in person, or via technology (social media, telephone, text

message, email, etc.), and can be physical or psychological.

Warning Signs

Dating violence may be occurring if an individual is exhibiting the following signs:

- Checking his or her partner’s cell phone or email without permission
- Putting his or her partner down
- Acting severely jealous or insecure
- Exhibiting an explosive temper
- Becoming isolated from family or friends
- Making false accusations
- Experiencing frequent mood swings
- Physically hurting his or her partner
- Acting possessive
- Telling his or her partner what to do

The Next Steps

If you suspect that a teen you know is experiencing dating violence:

- Don’t ignore the situation—talk to him or her about it in private.
- While it may be tempting to discuss the possibility of ending the relationship, understand that this may not seem like an option to the individual.
- Encourage group dates, as dating violence takes place more often when couples are alone together.

If he or she doesn’t want to talk about it, provide the following resources, where he or she can text, call or live chat with a peer advocate:

Live chat at www.loveisrespect.org

Text “loveis” to 77054

Call 1-866-331-9474 or 1-866-331-8453 (TTY)

Did You Know...?

A recent survey reported that 9.4 percent of high school students had been intentionally hit, slapped or physically injured in some way by their significant others in the previous year.