

Break The Silence

Teen Dating Violence Seminar

What is "Teen Dating Violence"?

"I had to hit her. It was her fault I got so mad. She knew I didn't like her talking to other boys. So the only way to make her stop was to slap her around. After all, she was my girl. She belonged to me." – Mark 16. "Date Abuse," by Herma Silverstein.

"I was allowed to talk to only two people at school. Both were girls, and he had his friends watch me to make sure I was obedient." – Salina, 13. "In Love and Danger," by Barrie Levy.

When you think of teen dating violence, what do you think about first? Do you think about hitting, punching, slapping, and kicking? Dating violence is much more than just physical violence.

Celebrities Chris Brown and Rihanna sparked very serious discussion about teen dating violence. There was media frenzy about the couple after the horrific incident. According to CNN, on February 8th, the incident began



Sources: www.cnn.com

when Rihanna, who was riding in the sports car driven by Brown, found a text message on his cell phone. A verbal argument followed by the physical attack. It went on to describe the assault in great detail, saying Brown punched her numerous times and put her in a head lock, restricting her breathing and causing her to start to lose consciousness. He threatened to kill her, according to the statement, and also bit her ear and her fingers. Eventually, Rihanna began screaming for help and Brown exited the vehicle and walked away. A resident in the neighborhood heard her plea for help and called 911, causing a police response. Did Rihanna know that she was in an abusive relationship? No. **And sadly, many teens (and adults) are in abusive relationships and don't even know it.**

The Statistics

- ★ About 1 in 3 high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship.
- ★ 40% of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 say they know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.
- ★ Many teens think abuse is normal.
- ★ Cell phone calls and texting mean constant control: 1 in 3 teens say that they are text messaged 10, 20, 30 times an hour by a partner keeping tabs on them.
- ★ The majority of parents of teen victims are unaware of the abuse.

Source: US Dept. of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alabama Coalition Against Dating Violence, and Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey.

What are the types of dating abuse? What Do I Need to Know?

Again, abuse is not just physical, but can be verbal, emotional, and sexual. Here are some examples of each:

Physical Abuse is any intentional unwanted contact with the victim's body by either the abuser or an object within the abuser's control. Physical abuse *does not* have to leave a mark or bruise. It doesn't even need to hurt. It includes the following behaviors:

- Scratching
 - Punching
 - Biting
 - Kicking
 - Throwing something at you
 - Using their fist to "almost" hit you
 - Pulling hair
 - Choking
 - Pushing
 - Using a weapon or other object such as a gun, knife, box cutter, scissors, etc.
 - Slapping
 - Shoving
 - Grabbing
 - Twisting of the arm or wrists
- Rape
 - Unwanted kissing or touching
 - Forcing the victim to go further than they want
 - Forcing to share private or embarrassing pictures or videos on cell phones and computers
 - Pressure to have sex early in the relationship
 - Threatening to leave the relationship if sex is not apart of the relationship

Verbal/Emotional Abuse is anything that the abuser says or does to the victim that causes the victim to be afraid, lowers the victim's self esteem, or manipulates or controls the victim's feelings or behavior. It includes the following behaviors:

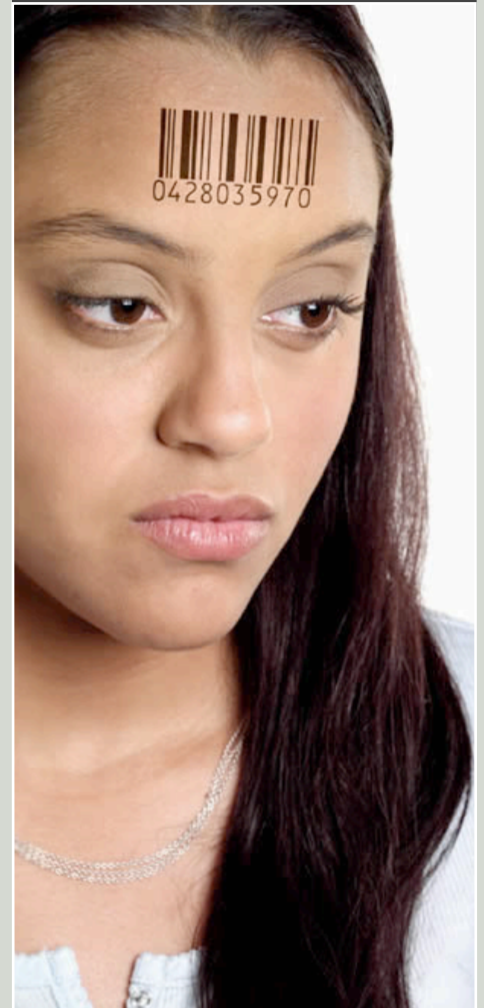
- Name-calling and put-downs (calling someone "retarded", stupid, "nobody would want you...", etc.)
- Yelling and screaming
- Becoming violent, possessive and jealous
- Always "checking up on you"...always asks "Where are you?"
- Intentionally embarrassing the victim in front of other people
- Keeping the victim from seeing or talking with friends and family
- Telling the victim what to do
- Using online communities or cell phones to control, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; constant texting, phone

Sexual Abuse is any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the victim's right to say "no" to sexual advances. It includes the following behaviors:



DATING VIOLENCE DEFINED

Dating violence is a pattern of controlling behavior that one partner uses to get power over another. Dating abuse can happen to **anyone, at any age**, no matter what race or religion they are, and no matter what their level of education or economical background.



calls, embarrassing posting on MySpace, Bebo, or Facebook pages; threats to expose the victim's secrets

- Spreading rumors on cell phones or online
- Making the victim feel responsible for the violence, like it's the other person's fault; blames problems on other people - it is never their fault.
- Stalking
- Threatening to commit suicide in order to manipulate the victim (example.. "I'm going to kill myself if you try to leave me....")
- Threats of violence and harm
- Your partner drinks a lot or uses drugs and blames you for their violent behavior

"My mother left my father when I was three, after he was physically abusive to her. Now she works at a battered women's shelter. I feel that when my mom was my age before she got into an abusive relationship with my dad. If she had heard a group of teens her age talking about abuse, maybe it would have prevented her from getting into that situation. She would have known some of the symptoms." – Alicia, age 16.



Everyone deserves a relationship that is healthy, safe and supportive. If you are in a relationship that is hurting you, it is important for you to know that *the abuse is not your fault*. It is also important for you to start thinking of ways to keep yourself safe from the abuse, whether you decide to end the relationship or not. While you can't control your partner's abusive behavior, you *can* take action to keep yourself as safe as possible.

Helping a Friend in an Abusive Relationship....

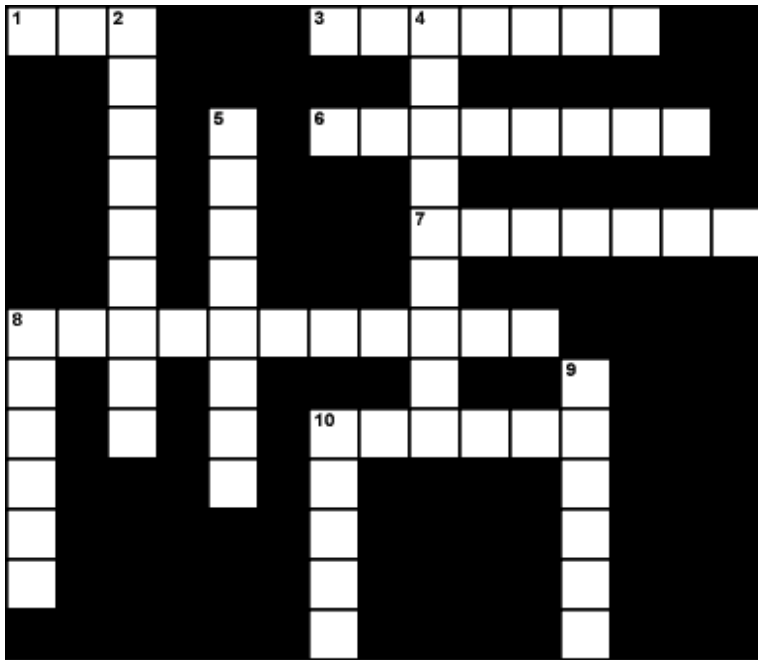
Girl Talk

- **DO listen to what she has to say.**
- **DO let her know why you are concerned.** Be specific. Refer to certain incidents you have witnessed; not the relationship in general. Tell her how it makes you feel and how his behavior is having an impact on her – "He puts you down and makes excuses for what he did...I'm worried about your safety."
- **DO help her to understand that the abuse is not her fault** and that no-one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do.
- **DO listen to her and help her to think about her relationship, whether she wants to break up or stay, and how she can protect herself from any more abuse.**
- **DO encourage her to talk to a counselor or other adult that she trusts.**
- **DON'T** blame her for the abuse, make her feel ashamed, be critical or ask judgmental questions like "what did you do to make him treat you like that?" or "why don't you just break up with him?"

Guy Talk

- **DO be specific about what you saw and how it made you feel.** "I didn't like when you told your girlfriend that she was stupid in front of all of us. How do you think she felt?"
- **DO give him a reality check.** There are consequences to what he is doing from getting expelled to going to jail. "Man, that's a crime and you could be arrested."
- **DO take a stand.** "I'm not going to sit here as your friend and watch you mistreat her and not say anything about it."
- **DO urge him to get help by talking to Minister Alondio or other clergy, a counselor, a coach, or any trusted adult.**
- **DO know that most guys who hurt their girlfriends don't consider themselves "batterers" – many are in denial of it.** It's hard for us as friends/family to believe it too; but reaching out and talking to someone we think is violent is an act of friendship and it may seem the hardest thing to do.
- **DON'T make him feel ashamed.** You care about your friend, and want his behavior to change. But, they have to want to change.

DATING VIOLENCE CROSSWORD



Across

- The number of high school students out of 10 who experience some form of relationship violence.
- Over 85% of all sexual assaults are committed by acquaintances or _____.
- When one is so possessive that he/she no longer considers his/her partner a person, but treats them as _____ instead.
- This physical abuse is a crime.
- The abuser often exhibits this type of behavior over the abused.
- Statistically, one woman is sexually assaulted every _____.

Down

- Threats, putdowns, and someone trying to control what you do are examples of _____ abuse.
- A common form of abuse where the abuser tries to keep the abused from family and friends.
- The type of abuse where one partner forces the other into sexual activity. (2 words)
- Abused people often believe that in time, the abuser will _____.
- Abusive behavior that causes harm with words.
- Over 95% of assaults are committed by _____.



ANSWER KEY

Getting Help

Get support. If someone you're going out with controls your free time, you start to feel like you have nowhere else to turn, but this is the time you need that support most. Talk to Minister Alondio Hill, Minister Angela Hill, an adult mentor, a friend, a teacher, a counselor, **anyone** who will support you as you stand up for yourself.

Keep yourself safe everyday:

- Carry a cell phone or change for a pay phone at all times. Have important phone numbers (family, friends, and domestic violence hotlines) with you.
 - Ask your friends to keep their cell phones with them while they are with you in case you get separated and need help.
 - Stay out of isolated places.
 - If possible, go to different malls, banks, grocery stores, movie theaters, etc. than the ones the abuser goes to or knows about.
 - Change your usernames, email addresses, and/or cell phone number. See if your phone company can block the abuser's phone number from calling your phone.
 - Avoid speaking to the abuser. If it is unavoidable, make sure there are people around in case the situation becomes dangerous.
 - Develop a code word or signal with your family and friends to alert them of when you are in danger. Ask them to notify the police of your location if you use the code word.
 - Tell the person who is abusing you that you do not want to see him or her **or** break up with this person over the phone so they cannot touch you. Do this when your parents or guardians are at home so you know you will be safe in your house.
 - 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline** - 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
 - Crisis Center/Teen Link** - 328-5465 Free Confidential. 3:00 pm to 10:00 pm www.crisiscenterbham.com/teen.htm
 - YWCA of Alabama** – 322-YWCA
 - Alabama Domestic Violence Hotline** – 1-800-650-6522
 - Crisis / Suicide Line** - (205) 323-7777 / 24hrs
 - National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline** - 1-866-331-9474 www.loveisrespect.com Talk one-on-one with a trained advocate 24/7. Live chat 4pm - midnight. No names. No judging.
 - Break the Cycle** www.breakthecycle.org
 - Girls Incorporated** www.girlsinc.org provides tips on issues surrounding girls and young women.
- Girls Incorporated of Central Alabama** – Julean Kirkpatrick, Program Coordinator/Case Manager @ 599-5554/ jkirkpatrick@girlsincentral-al.org

Sources: The American Psychological Association with consultation from the Partners in Program Planning in Adolescent Health (PIPPAH), whose members include: American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law, and Commission on Domestic Violence, American Dietetic Association, American Medical Association, and National Association of Social Workers. ©1998-2009 Center for Young Women's Health Children's Hospital Boston. All rights reserved. © 2007 TEAR (Teens Experiencing Abusive Relationships). © 2002 UHaveTheRight.net.