

# Family Violence Prevention Fund

## The Facts on Teenagers and Intimate Partner Violence

Dating violence affects women regardless of their age, but teens are particularly vulnerable. In fact, women age 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rate of intimate partner violence.<sup>i</sup> Teen dating violence is prevalent and teens may also be exposed to domestic violence in their homes. Teens and young adults who are disconnected from social supports such as school, family, and work are at particular risk for domestic violence.

- In a study of eighth and ninth graders, 25 percent indicated that they had been victims of dating violence, including eight percent who disclosed being sexually abused.<sup>ii</sup>
- Approximately one in five female public high school students in Massachusetts reported ever experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from dating partners.<sup>iii</sup>
- In a survey of 232 high school girls, 17.8 percent of the subjects indicated that they had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will by a dating partner.<sup>iv</sup>
- Among female students between the ages of 15-20 who reported at least one violent act during a dating relationship, 24 percent reported experiencing extremely violent incidents such as rape or the use of weapons against them.<sup>v</sup>
- Girls who reported that they had been sexually or physically abused were more than twice as likely as non-abused girls to report smoking (26 percent versus ten percent), drinking (22 percent versus 12 percent), and using illegal drugs (30 percent versus 13 percent). In addition, 32 percent of girls who had been abused reported bingeing and purging, compared to 12 percent of girls who had not been abused.<sup>vi</sup>
- In a study of 724 adolescent mothers between the ages of 12-18, one of every eight pregnant adolescents reported having been physically assaulted by the father of her baby during the preceding 12 months. Of these, 40 percent also reported experiencing violence at the hands of a family member or relative.<sup>vii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Rennison, Callie Marie and Sarah Welchans. 2003. *Intimate Partner Violence 1993-2001*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved January 9, 2004. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ipv01.htm>.

<sup>ii</sup> Foshee, VA; Linder, GF; Bauman, KE; Langwick, SA; Arriaga, XB; Heath, JL; McMahon, PM; Bangdiwala, S. 1996. "The Safe Dates Project: Theoretical Basis, Evaluation Design, and Selected Baseline Findings." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 12(5 Suppl):39-47.

<sup>iii</sup> Silverman, J., Raj, A., Mucci, L., Hathaway, J. 2001. "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Abuse, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 286(5): 572-579.

<sup>iv</sup> Jezl, D., Molidor, C. & Wright, T. 1996. "Physical, Sexual & Psychological Abuse in High School Dating Relationships: Prevalence Rates and Self-esteem Issues." *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 13(1): 69-87.

<sup>v</sup> Symons, P., Groer, M., Kepler-Youngblood, P., Slater, V. 1994. "Prevalence and Predictors of Adolescent Dating Violence." *Journal of Child & Adolescent Pediatric Nursing*. 7(3).

<sup>vi</sup> Schoen, C., Davis, K., Collins, K., Greenberg, L., Des Roches, C., Abrams, M. 1997. *The Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls*. The Commonwealth Fund. New York, NY.

<sup>vii</sup> Wiemann, C., Aguaracia, C., Berenson, A., Volk, R., Rickert, V. 2000. "Pregnant Adolescents: Experiences and Behaviors Associated with Physical Assault by an Intimate Partner." *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 93-101.

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