



Teen Dating Violence and Abuse

What Is It?

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, dating violence is defined as the physical, sexual or psychological/emotional violence within a dating relationship. Dating abuse occurs in both casual and serious relationships, and in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.¹

Teen Dating Violence Prevalence

- Based on the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 9.8 percent of high school students nationwide reported being the victim of physical violence at the hands of a romantic partner during the previous year.²

2009 YRBS surveyed 16,410 students in grades 9 to 12 from 158 public and private high schools across the country.

- In a study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating.³

Analyses focus on 117 adolescents aged 12 to 21 years (50 percent female) from Wave II of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health who reported exclusively same-sex romantic or sexual relationships in the 18 months before interview.

- A study published in the November 2007 issue of the *Journal of Pediatrics* found that as many as 1 in 5 adolescent females and 1 in 10 adolescent males have been abused physically or sexually by a dating partner.⁴

Study compared 23 boys and 102 girls who reported having experienced dating violence with 671 male and 720 female adolescents with no history of intimate partner abuse in 1999 and in 2004.

- The 2009 YRBS found that black non-Hispanic students were the most likely to be victims of dating violence (14.2 percent), followed by Hispanic students (11.5 percent) and white non-Hispanic students (8 percent).⁵

2009 YRBS surveyed 16,410 students in grades 9 to 12 from 158 public and private high schools across the country.

- A 2009 study published in the *Journal of Early Adolescence* found that half of all 6th graders surveyed said they are dating and 42.1 percent of these children reported being victims of “dating” physical violence.⁶

Survey interviewed 5,404 6th grade students from four diverse U.S. sites.





- Analysis of longitudinal data from the Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study (Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio), indicated that early involvement with antisocial peers at ages 10 to 15 years was linked to dating violence perpetration for Hispanic and African American males and females.⁷

Survey interviewed 765 people ages 16 to 20 years old.

Health and Education Impacts

- Girls and boys experiencing teen dating violence are more likely to suffer long-term negative behavioral and health consequences, including suicide attempts, depression, cigarette smoking and marijuana use.⁸

Survey interviewed a nationally representative sample of 800 teens age 12 to 17 years old and their parents living in the continental U.S. and in nine focus groups conducted in four U.S. cities with teens between 12 and 18 years old.

- Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting to lose weight) and engage in risky sexual behaviors (first intercourse before the age of 15 years old, not using a condom during last intercourse).⁹

According to a study of 4,163 female 9th to 12th grade students who participated in the 1997 and 1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.

- Being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner leaves teen girls up to six times more likely to become pregnant and more than two times as likely to report an STD.¹⁰

A study of 1,641 9th to 12th grade female students who reported to have had sexual intercourse and completed the 1999 and 2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.

- The Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement report of the 2009 YRBS found that 20 percent of students surveyed who were hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the 12 months before the survey received mostly D's/F's in school.¹¹

2009 YRBS surveyed 16,410 students in grades 9 to 12 from 158 public and private high schools across the country.

- The 4th R, a 21-lesson, school-based curriculum that addresses healthy relationships, sexual health, and substance abuse, was evaluated with 1722 Canadian 9th grade students in a cluster randomized trial. At the 2.5 years follow-up (end of 11th grade), the prevalence of physical dating violence perpetration was higher among students who did not receive the curriculum versus students who did receive it. (9.8 percent vs. 7.4 percent).¹²

Survey interviewed a total of 1,722 students aged 14 to 15 from 20 public schools (52.8 percent girls).





Abusive Digital Behaviors

- A 2009 MTV and Associated Press survey found that 50 percent of 14 to 24 year olds have experienced some type of digital abuse, and over 10 percent have had a boyfriend or girlfriend call them names, put them down, or say mean things to them on the Internet or via cell phone.¹³

Survey interviewed 600 teens and 647 adults from across the country.

- According to the 2010 Pew Research Center Teens and Mobile Phones survey¹⁴,
 - One in four (26 percent) 12- to 17-year-old cell phone users have been bullied or harassed through text messages and phone calls.
 - Fifteen percent of teens say they have received a sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude image of someone they know by text, but only 4 percent of teens have sent such a message.
 - 75 percent of all 12 to 17 year olds now own cell phones, up from 45 percent in 2004, and 88 percent of teen cell phone users are text messengers.

Survey interviewed a nationally representative sample of 800 teens age 12 to 17 years old and their parents living in the continental U.S. and in nine focus groups conducted in four U.S. cities with teens between 12 and 18 years old.





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