

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Teens and Dating Violence

While dating, domestic and sexual violence affect women regardless of their age, teens and young women are especially vulnerable. Women age 16 to 24 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault,¹ and people age 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.² Add to that the 15.5 million U.S. children who live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year³ and you have a huge number of young people in this country whose lives are affected – sometimes shaped – by violence.

Prevalence of Violence

- Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of *physical, emotional* or *verbal abuse* from a dating partner – a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth.⁴
- Nationwide, nearly one in ten high-school students (8.9 percent) has been *hit, slapped or physically hurt* on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.⁵
- Nearly one in three *sexually active* adolescent girls in ninth to twelfth grade (31.5 percent) report ever experiencing *physical or sexual violence* from dating partners.⁶
- One in four teen girls *in a relationship* (26 percent) says she has been threatened with violence or experienced verbal abuse, and 13 percent say they were physically hurt or hit.⁷
- One in three teens reports *knowing a friend or peer* who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by a partner, and 45 percent of girls know a friend or peer who has been pressured into having either intercourse or oral sex.⁸
- One in five tweens – age 11 to 14 – say their friends are victims of dating violence and nearly half who are in relationships know friends who are verbally abused. Two in five of the youngest tweens, ages 11 and 12, report that their friends are victims of verbal abuse in relationships.⁹

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence

- Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting to lose weight), engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.¹⁰
- The one in five female public high school students in a Massachusetts study who reported ever experiencing physical or sexual violence from a dating partner were four to six times more likely than their non-abused peers to have been pregnant, and eight to nine times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.¹¹
- Compared with nonabused girls, those who experienced both physical and sexual dating violence are three times more likely to have been tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV, and more than twice as likely to report an STD diagnosis.¹²