



Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Tweens and Teens and Dating Violence

While dating, domestic and sexual violence affect women regardless of their age, teens and young women are especially vulnerable. Young people age 12 to 19 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 in Tweens

- 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
- In a national online survey, 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.⁵
- A survey of 7th graders in a high-risk community found that more than one in three boys (35.2 percent) and nearly one in four girls (24.1 percent) reported being a victim of physical dating violence in the past year.⁶
- The same study found that nearly one in four 7th grade girls (24.9 percent) and more than one in five boys (21.2 percent) reported perpetrating physical violence in a dating relationship in the past year.⁷
- A small study of middle school Latino youth 11 to 13 years old found that 14 percent of girls and 13 percent of boys disclosed experiencing physical dating violence in the past year.⁸
- Boys are more likely to inflict injuries as a result of perpetrating dating violence than girls.⁹ This trend – where girls slap and push and boys hit and punch – continues into adulthood. Women suffer from much higher rates of domestic violence and incur more injuries. In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published data collected in 2005 that finds that women experience two million injuries from intimate partner violence each year.¹⁰ And the cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking is in the billions of dollars.¹¹

Prevalence of Violence in Teens

- 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.¹²
- Nationwide, nearly one in ten high-school students (9.8 percent) has been *hit, slapped or physically hurt* on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.¹³
- Teens in same-sex relationships experience rates of violence and abuse similar to rates experienced by teens in heterosexual relationships. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health finds that nearly one in four teens and young adults (ages 12-21 years) in same-sex romantic or sexual relationships reported some type of partner violence victimization in the past year-and-a-half. One in ten reported experiencing physical violence by a dating partner. Females were more likely to report victimization than males.¹⁴
- Nearly one in ten 15-year-old girls disclosed experiencing physical dating violence and one in four disclosed experiencing psychological abuse.¹⁵
- Nearly one in three *sexually active* adolescent girls in 9th to 12th grade (31.5 percent) report ever experiencing *physical or sexual violence* from dating partners.¹⁶
- 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.¹⁷
- One in three teens reports *knowing a friend or peer* who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by a partner.¹⁸

Some Parents Are Out of Touch

- In a 2009 survey of parents, three in four parents say they have had a conversation with their teen about what it means to be in a healthy relationship – but 74 percent of sons and 66 percent of daughters said they have not had a conversation about dating abuse with a parent in the past year.¹⁹
- Though more than four in five parents (82 percent) feel confident that they could recognize the signs if their child was experiencing dating abuse, a majority of parents (58 percent) could not correctly identify all the warning signs of abuse.²⁰
- Of the teens in an abusive relationships, fewer than one in three (32 percent) confide in their parents about their abusive relationship.²¹

¹ Truman, Jennifer and Rand, Michael. 2010. *Criminal Victimization, 2009*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv09.pdf>.

² Baum, Katrina, Catalano, Shannan, Rand, Michael and Rose, Kristina. 2009. *Stalking Victimization in the United States*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/svus.pdf>.

³ McDonald, R, Jouriles, E, Ramisetty-Mikler, S, et al. 2006. Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner-Violent Families. *Journal of Family Psychology* 20(1): 137-142.

⁴ Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008_focus_teen_dating_violence.pdf.

⁵ Tween and Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study, Teenage Research Unlimited for Liz Claiborne Inc. and the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline. February 2008. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/pdf/Tween%20Dating%20Abuse%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

⁶ Swahn MH, Simon TR, Arias I & Bossarte RM. 2008. Measuring Sex Differences in Violence Victimization and Perpetration Within Date and Same-Sex Peer Relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 2008;23(8):1120-1138.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Yan, Fang; Howard, Donna; Beck, Kenneth; Shattuck, Teresa; and Hallmark-Kerr, Melissa. 2010. Psychosocial Correlates of Physical Dating Violence Victimization Among Latino Early Adolescents, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, First published on July 7, 2009. doi:10.1177/0886260509336958

⁹ Swahn, Monica; Simon, Thomas; Hertz, Marci; Arias, Illeana, et al. 2008. Linking Dating Violence, Peer Violence, and Suicidal Behaviors Among High Risk Youth. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2008; 34(1), 30-38.

¹⁰ Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. February 2008. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm.

¹¹ Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. 2003. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPVBook-a.pdf>.

¹² Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at <http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf>.

¹³ Eaton DK, Kann L, Kinchen S, et al. 2010. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance --- United States, 2009. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 59(SS5);1-148. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5905.pdf>.

¹⁴ Halpern CT, Young ML, Waller MW, Martin SL & Kupper LL. 2004. Prevalence of Partner Violence in Same-sex Romantic and Sexual Relationships in a National Sample of Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 35(2): 124-131.

¹⁵ Hebert M, Lavoie F, Vitaro F, McDuff P & Tremblay RE. 2008. Association of Child Sexual Abuse and Dating Victimization with Mental Health Disorder in a Sample of Adolescent Girls. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 21(2): 181-189.

¹⁶ Decker M, Silverman J, Raj A. 2005. Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. *Pediatrics*. 116: 272-276.

¹⁷ Liz Claiborne Inc. 2005. Omnibuzz® Topline Findings-Teen Relationship Abuse Research. Teenage Research Unlimited. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/surveyresults.htm>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Impact of the Economy and Parent/Teen Dialogue on Dating Relationships and Abuse. 2009. Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited for the Family Violence Prevention Fund and Liz Claiborne. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/pdf/Liz%20Claiborne%20Teen%20Dating%20Abuse%20and%20the%20Economy%20Research%20RPT.pdf>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.