



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Day 11

Stop Dating Violence

About Dating Violence

Take teen dating relationships seriously

Don't underestimate the intensity of young people's feelings or minimize the importance of their relationships. Be aware that both male and female teens can be abused — emotionally, physically and sexually — in a relationship.

Pay attention to warning signs

Young people feel a high level of loyalty to their peers. Most do not tell their parents about violence in their dating relationships. Instead, they idealize their partners and internalize the blame. Some symptoms, like bruising and other injuries, are obvious but you should also take note if your teen is often upset, sad or angry.

Other symptoms of abuse among adolescents may include sudden changes in behavior, extreme mood swings, persistent depression, a drop in school performance, withdrawal from activities, self-destructive or risky behavior, drug or alcohol abuse, eating disorders or sudden alienation from peers or family.

Teach young people to recognize the danger signals

An abused youth may:

- believe she or he must be in a relationship to be happy
- give up friends and enjoyable activities for a partner
- be afraid to express opinions
- accept or excuse a partner's inappropriate behavior
- believe jealousy or possessiveness are signs of love

A youth may be abusive if he/she:

- controls the relationship using threats, intimidation, criticism or ridicule
- becomes angry easily or is a "poor loser"
- attempts to justify violent behavior
- is excessively jealous or tries to limit a partner's contact with others

If a young person reveals dating violence

- Listen without judging; believe that they are telling the truth
- Recognize your own feelings are separate from the young person's feelings
- Realize your limitations in providing support; help the youth gain access to other resources
- Discuss options: counseling, contacting the police, seeking medical help, etc.
- Let the youth be in control and support her/his decisions

If you suspect your child is being abused but you cannot get the child to talk about it, encourage her or him to speak to a school guidance counselor, family doctor or another trusted adult.

It's not just wanting
you all to himself.
It's psychological abuse.

#OurActionsMatter

