

DATING VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER

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Campus Dating Violence fact sheet

16444

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

Crime victims can call
1-800-FYI-CALL
M-F 8:30am-8:30pm
or e-mail us at gethelp@ncvc.org

What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of these.

Incidence of College Dating Violence

- 32% of students report dating violence by a previous partner, and 21% report violence by a current partner.^a
- 39%-54% of dating violence victims remain in physically abusive relationships.^b
- 12% of completed rapes, 35% of attempted rapes, and 22% of threatened rapes occur on a date.^c
- 60% of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.^d
- An estimated 5% of college women experience a completed or attempted rape in a given year.^c
- In one year, more than 13% of college women indicated they had been stalked, 42% by a boyfriend or ex-boyfriend.^c
- 51% of college males admit perpetrating one or more sexual assault incidents during college.^f

Influence of Alcohol and Drugs

- 75% of men and 55% of women involved in acquaintance rape had been drinking or taking drugs prior to the incident.^b

Reporting Victimization

- 50% of dating violence victims report the violence to someone else: of these, 88% report the violence to a friend and 20% to criminal justice authorities.^a
- 44% of victims raped by a steady boyfriend or spouse report the assault, compared to 77% of victims raped by a stranger.^b
- The beliefs that dating violence is a private matter or not important enough and fear of reprisal are reasons given for not reporting the violence.^g

The Dating Violence Resource Center, a program of the National Center for Victims of Crime, provides training and technical assistance to the Office on Violence Against Women grant recipients in order to increase awareness of and commitment to addressing teen dating violence and to help craft community-specific responses to meet the needs of teenage victims of dating violence.

- a C. Sellers and M. Bromley, "Violent Behavior in College Student Dating Relationships," *Journal of Contemporary Justice*, (1996).
b B. Caponera, "Guidelines for Counseling Adolescents in Sexually Coercive Relationships," (New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, 1998).
c B. Fisher, F. Cullen, and M. Turner, "The Sexual Victimization of College Women," (Washington: NIJ/BJS, 2000).
d I. Johnson and R. Sigler, "Forced Sexual Intercourse on Campus," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, (1996).

Victims and Dating Violence

- Victims may remain in an abusive relationship for many reasons, including: fear of the perpetrator, self-blame, minimization of the crime, loyalty or love for the perpetrator, social or religious stigma, or lack of understanding.
- Sexual assault victims experience more anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide than non-victims.^b
- Initial reactions to rape and sexual assault include anger, depression, embarrassment, and guilt.^b

Dating Violence and the Law

- All 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws against dating violence behaviors such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. However, the specific term "dating violence" is almost never used in these laws.
- In 39 states and the District of Columbia, victims of dating violence can apply for protective orders against the perpetrator. Age requirements and the language of the laws vary by state.

Who Can Help

- Crisis hotlines or campus helplines can provide immediate assistance and referrals to sexual assault or domestic violence programs that provide shelter, counseling, support groups, legal assistance, and medical services/accompaniment.
- University and college health centers often offer counseling services. Campus police or school judicial programs can provide sanctions for on-campus violations.
- Legal options include reporting to the police, obtaining protective orders, and cooperating with criminal prosecution.

- e B. Fisher and F. Cullen, "Extent and Nature of the Sexual Victimization of College Women," (Washington: NIJ, 2000).
f A. Berkowitz, "College Men as Perpetrators of Acquaintance Rape and Sexual Assault," *College Health*, (1992).
g T. Hart and C. Rennison, "Reporting Crime to the Police," (Washington: OJP, 2003).

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Abstract: This 1-page fact sheet presents basic facts about dating violence, including where to turn for help from campus officials and legal options for victims. Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of these. Nearly a third of college students report dating violence by a previous partner, and 21 percent report violence by a current partner. Three-quarter of men and 55 percent of women involved in acquaintance rape had been drinking or taking drugs prior to the incident. Only 20 percent of dating violence victims report the violence to criminal justice authorities. Victims may remain in an abusive relationship for many reasons, including fear of the abuser, self-blame, minimization of the crime, loyalty or love for the abuser, social or religious stigma, or lack of understanding. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws against dating violence behaviors, and in most jurisdictions victims can apply for protective orders against the perpetrator.

Availability: National Center for Victims of Crime, 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 480, Washington, DC 20036; Telephone: 202-467-8700, TTY: 800-211-7996, Fax: 202-467-8701, Web site: www.ncvc.org (Dating Violence Resource Center)

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