

What is dating violence?



Dating violence is when one person purposely hurts or scares someone they are dating. Dating violence happens to people of all races, cultures, incomes, and education levels. It can happen on a first date, or when you are deeply in love. It can happen whether you are young or old, and in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Dating violence is always wrong, and you can get help.

Dating violence includes:

Physical abuse like hitting, shoving, kicking, biting, or throwing things



Emotional abuse like yelling, name-calling, bullying, embarrassing, keeping you away from your friends, saying you deserve the abuse, or giving gifts to "make up" for the abuse.

Sexual abuse like forcing you to do something sexual (such as kissing or touching) or doing something sexual when you cannot agree to it (like when you are very drunk).

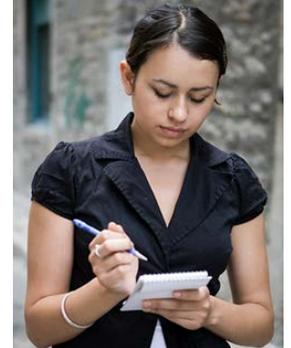
Dating violence often starts with emotional abuse. You may think that behaviors like calling you names or insisting on seeing you all the time are a "normal" part of relationships. But they can lead to more serious kinds of abuse, like hitting, stalking, or preventing you from using birth control. Dating violence can cause serious harm to your body and your emotions. If you are in an abusive relationship, get help.

Leaving an abusive dating relationship

See a doctor or nurse to take care of any physical problems. And reach out for support for your emotional pain. Friends, family, and mental health professionals all can help. If you're in immediate danger, dial 911.

If you are thinking about ending an abusive dating relationship, keep some tips in mind:

- Create a safety plan, like where you can go if you are in danger.
- Make sure you have a working cell phone handy in case you need to call for help.
- Create a secret code with people you trust. That way, if you are with your partner, you can get help without having to say you need help.
- If you're breaking up with someone you see at your high school or college, you can get help from a guidance counselor, advisor, teacher, school nurse, dean's office, or principal. You also might be able to change your class schedules or even transfer to another school. If you have a job, talk to someone you trust at work. Your human resources department or employee assistance program (EAP) may be able to help.
- Try to avoid walking or riding alone.
- Be smart about technology. Don't share your passwords. Don't post your schedule on Facebook, and keep your settings private.



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