

# YOUTH SURVEY

## FAIRFAX COUNTY

# TEEN DATING ABUSE

## in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

**81%** of teens did not report any TDA



**5%** of teens report physical abuse by a dating partner



**16%** report emotional abuse by a dating partner



**49%** of teens who report being victims of TDA also report symptoms of depression



**3%** report being pressured to have sex by a dating partner

## What You Need to Know

The Fairfax County Youth Survey asked teens about their dating relationships.

Teen Dating Abuse (TDA) is a pattern of controlling behaviors in a dating or close personal relationship that may be emotional, physical or sexual.

Eighty-one percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students surveyed say they had not been victims of TDA.

However, approximately one in six teens have had a boyfriend or girlfriend who always wanted to know where they were, called them names or put them down verbally.

About two percent of students surveyed have had a boyfriend or girlfriend hit, slap or physically hurt them on purpose, and three percent have been pressured to have sex when they did not want to.

Both girls and boys reported being victims of teen dating abuse, but girls report verbal and sexual abuse at a higher rate. LGBTQ youth also report higher rates of verbal and sexual abuse than their peers.

Teen dating abuse is often thought of as just physical injuries, but before you see bruises, there may be other early warning signs that a relationship is not healthy or safe.

## What Can You Do?

### KNOW THE SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- ▶ Mutual respect.
- ▶ Trust.
- ▶ Honesty.
- ▶ Compromise.
- ▶ Individuality.
- ▶ Equality.
- ▶ Good communication.
- ▶ Anger control.
- ▶ Problem-solving.
- ▶ Fighting fair.
- ▶ Understanding.
- ▶ Self-confidence.

Adapted from the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Love is Not Abuse

### KNOW ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

#### DATING PARTNER BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Extreme jealousy or possessiveness.
- ▶ Constant checking in through phone calls and text messages.
- ▶ Isolation from family or friends.
- ▶ Repeated name calling and put-downs.
- ▶ Controlling victim's choices or actions.
- ▶ Loss of temper or violent behavior.

#### VICTIM BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Apologizing/making excuses for dating partner.
- ▶ Concern over angering him/her.
- ▶ Giving up important things/loss of interest in activities.
- ▶ Dramatic change in weight (up or down), appearance, dress, or grades.
- ▶ Unexplained injuries.

### IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

- ▶ Stay calm and tell your teen you are concerned for his/her safety and you are there to listen.
- ▶ Let your teen know the abuse is not their fault and that abuse is never ok.
- ▶ If your teen is injured, go to your doctor or the emergency room.
- ▶ If your teen is in danger, report the abuse to law enforcement.
- ▶ Contact a teen dating abuse hotline or helpline to help your teen develop a personal safety plan and to get information or additional assistance.
- ▶ Your teen's safety is the most important thing of all. Don't allow further contact with the dating partner.

## Who Can Help?

NATIONAL TEEN DATING ABUSE HELPLINE  
24 hours/7 days  
866-331-9474, TTY 866-331-8453

FAIRFAX COUNTY DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
24 hours/7 days  
703-360-7273, TTY 703-435-1235  
<http://bit.ly/fairfaxDVhotline>

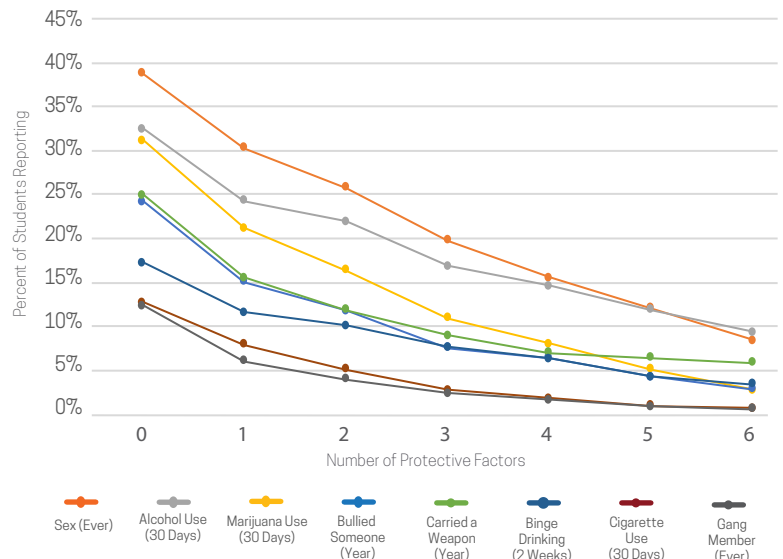
FAIRFAX COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION CENTER (DVAC)  
8 am—4 pm  
703-246-4573, TTY 711  
<http://bit.ly/fairfaxDVAC>

# 3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



## Protective Factors

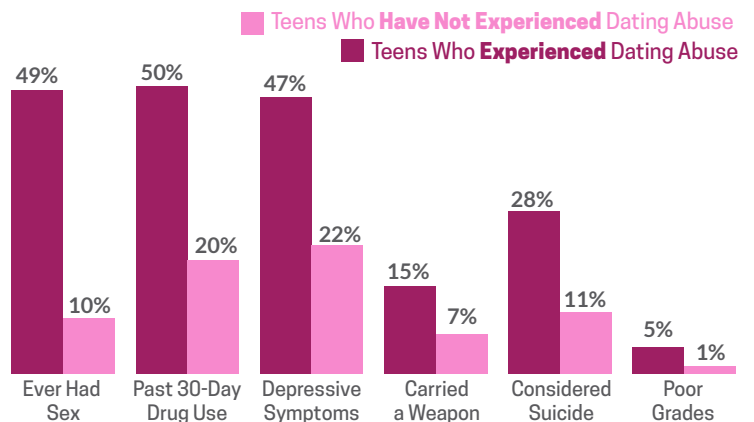
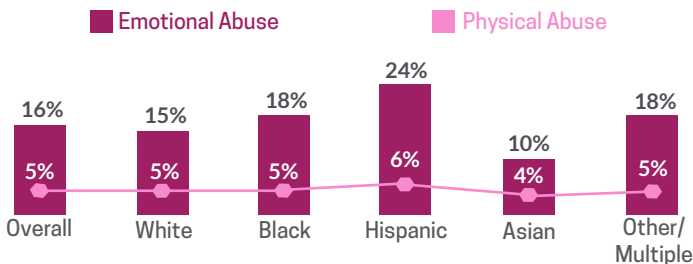
Having high personal integrity  
Having community adults to talk to  
Performing community service

Participating in extracurricular activities  
Having teachers recognize good work  
Having parents available for help

## Teen Dating Abuse in Fairfax County

Youth of all races and ethnicities experience physical dating abuse at similar rates, but there are disparities in experiences of emotional abuse.

Teens who have experienced dating abuse are at higher risk of engaging in risky behavior or experiencing poor outcomes.



## WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey)

Fairfax County Prevention System  
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

Fairfax County Office for Women and Domestic & Sexual Violence Services  
<http://bit.ly/fairfaxOFWDSVS>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepart-nerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepart-nerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)

Break the Cycle  
[www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)

## Related Factors

Youth who report experiencing dating abuse are more likely to report ...

- Being sexually active.
- Using drugs or alcohol.
- Being depressed, and considering, and/or attempting suicide.
- Carrying a weapon.
- Having poor grades (mostly Ds/Fs).

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall semester of 2017.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication  
September 2018