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

83% of teens did not report being the victim of TDA 😊
14% report emotional abuse by a dating partner 🤗
3% report being pressured to have sex by a dating partner 💁

5% of teens report physical abuse by a dating partner 👀
52% of teens who report being victims of TDA also report symptoms of depression ⛈

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

However, 14% of teens have had a boyfriend or girlfriend who always wanted to know where they were, called them names, or put them down verbally.

About five percent of students have been physically hurt on purpose by a dating partner. 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. LGBQ 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

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.

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

Who Can Help?

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

FAIRFAX COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE | 24 hours/7 days
703-360-7273, TTY 703-435-1235

FAIRFAX COUNTY DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTION CENTER (DVAC)
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
703-246-4573, TTY 711
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.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other/Multiple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Protective Factors**

- Accepting responsibility for one’s actions
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service

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

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**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).

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**WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System

Fairfax County Domestic & Sexual Violence Services

Veto Violence
https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov

Break the Cycle
www.breakthecycle.org

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2019.