



Crime Prevention Tips Youth Dating and Relationship Violence



Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Youth Dating/Relationship Violence means: Any form of violence or abusive behaviour towards a youth by a boyfriend or girlfriend, or by an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend.

Being in a relationship does not give anyone the right to be violent or abusive.

Boundary Setting: You are the only person who should be able to control your boundaries. Abuse happens when one person violates another person's boundaries. That's why it's important to be very clear for yourself, and very clear to others, what your boundaries are. If you have weak or uncertain boundaries, others are more likely to abuse you; if you have strong and clear boundaries, you will be more likely to remain in control of your life and keep yourself safe emotionally and physically.

Understanding Power & Control Tactics: Consider the following definition of abuse: "Abuse is any attempt to gain power or control over another person using physical, emotional or sexual tactics." Power and control are at the centre of an abusive relationship. In other words, abuse is when there is a pattern of one person trying to gain power and control over the other. One of the most obvious or blatant ways to control another person is by using violence – such as hitting a person, holding them down or sexually assaulting someone. However, there are other ways of controlling a person that do not include physical violence and are not so easy to spot. Instead of using physical or sexual violence, many abusers may use verbal, emotional, psychological or financial tactics to control the other person.

What is Abuse: Many types of dating violence are crimes. All types of dating violence-physical, sexual, and emotional-are harmful. Dating violence can happen to youth who are casually dating as well as youth in serious relationships. Violence and other forms of abusive behaviour can happen once or many times in
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What is an abusive relationship?

Abusive relationships may involve crimes of violence. Punching, slapping, shoving, and other types of physical violence are crimes of assault. So is threatening to hurt someone with or without a weapon and harassment such as continually phoning when you ask them not to. Forcing someone to have sex is another type of violence, the crime of sexual assault. A relationship doesn't have to involve hitting or forced sex to be abusive. Dating violence may involve various other actions by one person in the relationship to control or intimidate the other person. It may involve:

- Destroying or threatening to destroy property (ie-punching walls)
- Threatening to hurt someone else (ie-a friend of the other person)
- Threatening to hurt himself/herself or commit suicide.
- Hurting or threatening to hurt a pet
- Insulting, criticizing, or yelling at the other person
- Making rude or degrading sexual comments
- Bullying the other person into doing something such as having sex, drinking, or doing drugs
- Being extremely jealous or possessive
- Giving orders or making all the decisions
- Controlling contact with friends or family to isolate the other person
- Checking up on the other person all the time (ie- constantly calling, stalking)

Boyfriends or girlfriends who are abusive often blame their actions on the victim.

Always remember that **dating violence is the fault of the person who commits it.**

This TIP Sheet was compiled in partnership with Burnaby RCMP, Domestic Violence Unit.



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a dating relationship. Sometimes an abusive boyfriend or girlfriend refuses to accept that a relationship isn't working or is over. But if young people stay together in an abusive relationship and don't get help, the violence or abuse often gets worse. If you are in dating relationship that is violent or abusive, or have been in the past, help is available.

It is not your fault: Talking about abuse is difficult. Many victims feel ashamed or feel their family and friends will not believe them. But, remember—nothing you do gives anyone the right to abuse you. There is no excuse for abuse. It is not your fault.

Cycle of abuse: There is a cycle to abuse. The tension builds for awhile until the abuser acts violently. After the 'explosion' or violence, there is a period of calm or quiet. The abuser may say he is sorry and promise it will never happen again. However, in time the tension may build and the abuser may become violent again. The cycle of abuse continues.

Who does it happen to?

Dating violence can happen to anyone in a relationship. It can happen to females and males, regardless of sexual orientation. Dating violence can happen to youth with any sort of background—various cultures, wealthy or not. Dating violence can happen at the beginning of a relationship or later on. And it can happen whether or not drinking is involved.

How may youth victims be affected?

Youth who are hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend may feel:

- shocked
- numb
- violated
- powerless
- ashamed
- scared
- anxious
- confused
- angry
- depressed
- alone
- a loss of trust
- a loss of self-confidence
- a sense of grief

These emotions can cause other health problems, such as stomach trouble, headaches, or sleeping or eating problems. Physical violence can result in bruises, broken bones, or other physical injuries.

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Steps to take if you need help

- If you feel like you are not in a safe place, go to one. To find a transition house or safe home, look in your phone book under emergency numbers or call VictimLINK.
- If you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical help, contact the police or ambulance services, by calling 911 or the emergency number of your community.
- Tell someone you trust what happened. If a family member, friend, or teacher or other adult can provide emotional support or help you in practical ways, ask for help.
- Contact Victim Services by calling VictimLINK. Victim Services can help you directly and can also refer you to counseling and other services.
- If you want to contact the police but the situation is not urgent, call the non-emergency number for police in your community.
- If you may need medical care but the situation is not urgent, see your doctor or go to a walk-in clinic.
- If you have questions about dating violence, or your rights, don't hesitate to ask a Victim Services worker.

VictimLINK

(victim services information and referrals)

Call toll free in BC: **1-800-563-0808**, 24 hours a day. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call Information Services Vancouver TTY service at 604-875-0885; if calling from outside the Lower Mainland, call collect. Multilingual.



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How may youth victims be affected?

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The first step in dealing with dating violence is to talk about it with someone. Emotional support is important to feeling better and to getting out of an abusive relationship.

Why don't some victims seek help?

Some victims don't ask for help because they:

- are too embarrassed
- are scared of being hurt again
- don't want to get their boyfriend/girlfriend in trouble
- don't know how to get help
- are unsure what abuse is
- are worried about not being believed
- find it hard to communicate
- think things will get better
- don't want to lose their boyfriend/girlfriend

What about reporting to the authorities?

Police

Victims of dating violence may wish to contact the police:

- To help them be safe and preventing the risk of relationship violence
- Because, for some, involving the justice system is important to the healing process

A support person can be with a victim from victim Services and other agencies whether or not the police are involved.

Child Protection Social Workers

B.C.'s child protection law (the Child, Family and Community Service Act) applies to children and youth under 19. If anyone believes that a person under 19 'needs protection' (as defined in the act), that person must tell a child protection social worker.

What kind of help is available?

Police can help victims of dating violence by:

- Responding when someone is in immediate danger
- Investigating an incident to see if a crime occurred and, if so, and making an arrest
- Providing information about other agencies that can help
- Applying for a peace bond to protect someone who is legitimately afraid that another person will harm them

Victim Services:

- Victim Service are located in community agencies or police stations. Victim Services provide:
- Emotional support
- Justice system information
- Safety planning
- Referrals to counseling and other services
- Help in accessing crime victim assistance benefits

Youth who are injured from violent crime can apply to the Crime Victim Assistance Program for benefits, to help pay for medical or dental expenses, counseling, protective measure, or other things to help them recover. Call 1-866-660-3888

The VictimLINK line provides information and referrals to all victims, as well as immediate crisis response to victims of sexual and family violence. Call 1-800-563-0808.

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- -If you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical help, contact the police or ambulance services, by calling 911 or the emergency number of your community.
- -Tell someone you trust what happened. If a family member, friend, or teacher or other adult can provide emotional support or help you in practical ways, ask for help.
- Contact Victim Services by calling VictimLINK. Victim Services can help you directly and can also refer you to counseling and other services.
- If you want to contact the police but the situation is not urgent, call the non-emergency number for police in your community.
- If you may need medical care but the situation is not urgent, see your doctor or go to a walk-in clinic.
- If you have questions about dating violence, or your rights, don't hesitate to ask a Victim Services worker.

RESOURCES

BC NurseLine:

A service that anyone can call to get health information and advice from a nurse.

Call toll free in B.C. At 1-866-215-4700 24 hours a day

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call 1-866-889-4700

Translation services in over 130 languages on request Crime Victim Assistance Program

Call toll free in B.C. At 1-866-660-3888

E-mail: SGCrimeVictimAssistanceProgram@gov.bc.ca

Helpline for Children

Call 310-1234 (no area code required), 24 hours every day

To use the TTD *(Telephone Device for the Deaf), call 1-866-660-0505

Victim LINK (victim services information and referrals)

Call toll free in B.C. At 1-800-563-0808, 24 hours a day

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call Information Services Vancouver TTY service at 604-875-0885; if calling from outside the Lower Mainland, call collect. Multilingual.

Youth Against Violence Line:

A service that young people can call to seek help or report incidents of youth violence or crime.

Call toll free in B.C. At 1-800-680-4264, 24 hours every day

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call Information Services Vancouver TTY service at 604-875-0885; if calling from outside the Lower Mainland, call collect. Multilingual