

## You Are NOT Alone...

You may feel alone, but dating violence is something *many* young people face.

When a person is abused, they often do not tell anyone. They may be confused or feel alone. They might also feel afraid to tell the truth. Not speaking out can lead to continued abuse, a low self-esteem, depression, and even thoughts of suicide. It can also lead to a life-long pattern of unhealthy relationships.

When someone is abused, it is also important that the abuse gets reported. This does not necessarily mean that the abuser will always get into trouble, but it does mean that a person being abused will start to be safe.

Dating violence is **NOT** okay and unhealthy relationships should **NOT** be tolerated. Break the silence and end the abuse.

## Breaking Up Safely:

If you suspect that you are a victim of dating violence, tell an adult. Speak to a trusted individual at your school or in your home.

Don't post your whereabouts online. Have a buddy around when walking alone.

Plan for your safety. Speak to someone who specializes in dating violence and safety planning.

Contact your local resources. These agencies offer **FREE** services to persons of all ages who are abused.



Call 911 if you fear immediate danger.



*Education and prevention are critical for both parents and teens. Be proactive by learning about the issues, know area resources, and seeking help anytime you or someone you know is in need.*



## Contact these agencies for help:

Local hotline 508-999-6636

State-wide hotline 877-785-2020

- ◆ The Women's Center 508-996-3343  
405 County Street, New Bedford, MA 02740
- ◆ SSTAR Fall River 508-675-0087  
386 Stanley St., Fall River, MA 02720
- ◆ New Hope, Inc. HOTLINE  
1-800-323-HOPE (4673)
- ◆ New Hope, Inc. 508-824-5205  
18 Broadway, Suite 210, Taunton, MA 02780
- ◆ New Hope, Inc. 508-226-4015  
140 Park Street, Attleboro, MA 02703
- ◆ Massachusetts Suicide Hotline for Teens  
1-800-252-4673

## Check out these sites!

- ⇒ Visit our "**Just For Teens**" page under "Resources" at [www.BRISTOLDA.com](http://www.BRISTOLDA.com)
- ⇒ **Learn more about cyber-abuse:**  
[www.ATHINLINE.org](http://www.ATHINLINE.org)  
[www.THATSNOTCOOL.com](http://www.THATSNOTCOOL.com)
- ⇒ **Learn more about dating violence:**  
[www.BREAKTHECYCLE.org](http://www.BREAKTHECYCLE.org)  
[www.NNEDV.org](http://www.NNEDV.org)  
[www.JANEDOE.org](http://www.JANEDOE.org)
- ⇒ **Learning and advice for parents:**  
[www.NETSMARTZ.org](http://www.NETSMARTZ.org)  
[www.ONGUARDONLINE.gov](http://www.ONGUARDONLINE.gov)

OFFICE OF THE BRISTOL COUNTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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# TEENS, TECHNOLOGY,



# and DATING VIOLENCE



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## What is dating violence?

Dating violence, sometimes called dating abuse, domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, all refer to the same thing—unhealthy relationships. These relationships involve one partner having power and control over the other.



Studies show that **1 in 3 teens** admits to experiencing abuse in a dating relationship. Since teens are new to dating, they often fail to see the ‘warning signs.’ They also may not think they are being abused because they have never been hit, but abuse takes many forms.

In fact, the most common type of dating abuse among teens involves verbal and emotional abuse. Physical abuse and sexual abuse also occur. Regardless of which form of abuse is used, none of these are okay.

### Ask yourself:

#### **Are you in a healthy relationship?**

If something doesn’t feel right, then it probably isn’t. Are you afraid of your boyfriend or girlfriend? Do you feel like you are walking on eggshells around them? Are you afraid to make them upset?

#### **Does your boyfriend or girlfriend...**

Get jealous easily?  
Control every aspect of your life?  
Cut you off from friends and family?  
Blame others for their problems?  
Constantly criticize you?

## How Technology is Used in a Relationship to Hurt Someone

Today, technology has made dating abuse even more prevalent. Unhealthy relationships are growing as technology becomes a part of our every day lives. Computers, cell phones, tablets, and social media allow us to better communicate, however greater communication may give an abusive partner more control in a relationship.

### Four Harmful TECH-Tactics

An abusive partner may use or threaten to use any of these in an unhealthy relationship:

**Cyber-bullying:** Using social media, web messaging, texting, chat rooms, or other outlets to embarrass, make fun of, or harass someone. This includes spreading rumors, posting embarrassing photos, creating fake usernames, hacking into accounts, sharing personal information, or making threatening comments.

**Sexting:** Sending, forwarding, or sharing a nude or sexually explicit photo, as well as information and conversations that were meant to be private. A partner may also make threats to send private information in order to maintain control.

**Internet Stalking:** Being monitored or followed by someone who is watching you online. Public profiles, sharing photos, activities, and check-ins can all lead to stalking. This could be by a complete stranger, an internet friend, or by a past or present boyfriend/girlfriend.

**Excessive Texting and Calling:** Having dozens to hundreds of calls and text messages coming in. This may include the caller demanding that you answer or questioning what you are doing and who you are with.

## Technology is just one “tactic” someone uses in an unhealthy relationship.

**Unhealthy relationships may also involve any one of the following:**

#### **Emotional and verbal abuse:**

Spreading rumors, putting you down, insulting you, making you feel crazy, isolating you, and trying to control who you see and what you do.

#### **Intimidation and threats:**

Threatening to spread rumors or to use technology to hurt you, making you afraid by looks and gestures, scaring you by throwing things, making threats to hurt you, your family, friends, or threatening to commit suicide.

#### **Denying blame and making up:**

Turning everything into your fault, making excuses for their behaviors, and acting like it is no big deal. They may apologize and make promises that it will never happen again.

#### **Physical abuse:**

Hitting, pushing, and shoving you, acting or lashing out erratically, making you feel afraid, or restraining you so you can’t walk away.

#### **Sexual abuse:**

Touching you without consent, making sexual comments, convincing or forcing you to do something you don’t want to do, using drugs/alcohol to take advantage.

⇒ If your partner makes you feel “bad,” you may be experiencing abuse.

