Dating violence affects women regardless of their age, but teens are particularly vulnerable. In fact, women age 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rate of intimate partner violence.¹ Teen dating violence is prevalent and teens may also be exposed to domestic violence in their homes. Teens and young adults who are disconnected from social supports such as school, family, and work are at particular risk for domestic violence.

- In a study of eighth and ninth graders, 25 percent indicated that they had been victims of dating violence, including eight percent who disclosed being sexually abused.²

- Approximately one in five female public high school students in Massachusetts reported ever experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from dating partners.³

- In a survey of 232 high school girls, 17.8 percent of the subjects indicated that they had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will by a dating partner.⁴

- Among female students between the ages of 15-20 who reported at least one violent act during a dating relationship, 24 percent reported experiencing extremely violent incidents such as rape or the use of weapons against them.⁵

- Girls who reported that they had been sexually or physically abused were more than twice as likely as non-abused girls to report smoking (26 percent versus ten percent), drinking (22 percent versus 12 percent), and using illegal drugs (30 percent versus 13 percent). In addition, 32 percent of girls who had been abused reported bingeing and purging, compared to 12 percent of girls who had not been abused.⁶

- In a study of 724 adolescent mothers between the ages of 12-18, one of every eight pregnant adolescents reported having been physically assaulted by the father of her baby during the preceding 12 months. Of these, 40 percent also reported experiencing violence at the hands of a family member or relative.⁷

More Facts on Teen Dating Violence

**DATING VIOLENCE**
In a study of eighth and ninth graders, 25 percent indicated that they had been victims of dating violence, including eight percent who disclosed being sexually abused.\(^{i}\)

Approximately one in five female public high school students in Massachusetts reported ever experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from dating partners.\(^{ii}\)

Women aged 16-24 experience the highest per capita rate of intimate partner violence.\(^{iii}\)

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**
In a survey of 232 high school girls, 17.8 percent of the subjects indicated that they had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will by a dating partner.\(^{iv}\)

Of 273 high school students surveyed in the Chicago area, 16 percent identified past sexual victimization by a dating or ex-dating partner within the last year.\(^{v}\)

Among female students between the ages of 15-20 who reported at least one violent act during a dating relationship, 24 percent reported experiencing extremely violent incidents such as rape or the use of weapons against them.\(^{vi}\)

**PREGNANCY AND FAMILY PLANNING**
Teens are at a higher risk of abuse during pregnancy than adult women: 21.7 percent of teens experience abuse as opposed to 15.9 percent of adults.\(^{vii}\)

High school girls reporting experiences of violence from dating partners were found to be approximately 4 to 6 times more likely than their nonabused peers to have ever been pregnant.\(^{viii}\)

In a study of 724 adolescent mothers between the ages of 12-18, one of every eight pregnant adolescents reported having been physically assaulted by the father of her baby during the preceding twelve months. Of these, forty percent also reported experiencing violence at the hands of a family member or relative.\(^{ix}\)

In a study of young mothers on public assistance, half (51 percent) reported experiencing birth control sabotage by a dating partner.\(^{x}\)

The experience of interpersonal violence is correlated with rapid repeat pregnancy (RRP: defined as pregnancy onset within 12-24 months of the previous pregnancy outcome,) among low-income adolescents. In a study of 100 women aged 13-21 receiving prenatal care, those who experienced any form of abuse during the year-long study were substantially more likely to miscarry than were their nonabused peers, and spontaneous abortion was also very strongly associated with RRP.\(^{xi}\)

**EFFECTS**
Younger girls report more severe violence—62 percent in girls aged 11-15.\(^{xii}\)

Female teens cause more minor injuries to their partners than male teens, but are also likely to receive more significant physical injuries and are more likely to be sexually victimized by their partners.\(^{xiii}\)
HEALTH CARE
Of 2,224 ninth to twelfth graders surveyed, 76 percent wanted the ability to obtain confidential health care, but only 45 percent perceived their regular provider to provide this, and only 28 percent had discussed confidentiality explicitly.\textsuperscript{xiv}

Sixty percent of abused girls said they felt doctors should talk to them about sexual and physical abuse, but only 21 percent of abused girls reported ever having a discussion with their health care provider about physical or sexual abuse. Only seven percent of abused girls said they had told their physician about being abused.\textsuperscript{ xv}

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDERED AND QUEER YOUTH
In a survey of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, 40 percent answered ‘yes’ to the question, “have you ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone you were going out with?”\textsuperscript{xvi}

In a survey of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer identified youth, 49 percent of the respondents reported feeling abused by a partner in a past relationship.\textsuperscript{xvii}

ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE, EATING DISORDERS AND SUICIDE
Girls who reported that they had been sexually or physically abused were more than twice as likely as non-abused girls to report smoking (26 percent versus 10 percent), drinking (22 percent versus 12 percent), and using illegal drugs (30 percent versus 13 percent). In addition, 32 percent of girls who had been abused reported bingeing and purging, compared to 12 percent of girls who had not been abused.\textsuperscript{xviii}

Suicide ideation and actual suicide attempts were approximately 6 to 9 times as common among adolescent girls who reported having been sexually and physically hurt by dating partners.\textsuperscript{xix}

SCHOOL
In a study of young women at a shelter for displaced teens aged 12-20, 44.4 percent of nonbattered women were attending school, whereas only 22 percent of battered women were in school. Fifty percent of the nonbattered women reported that they made good grades, whereas only 34.1 percent of the battered women reported good academic performance.\textsuperscript{xx}

\textsuperscript{viii} Silverman et al., Op. Cit.


Center for Impact Research. (2000).


