

# Teen Dating Violence

## STATISTICS



prepared by

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# STATISTICS

Subjects in the following studies range in age from 13 to 20 years and are students at high schools in metropolitan areas in the western and mid-western United States, as well as in New Zealand. Subjects represent racially and ethnically diverse communities. The U.S. studies utilized groups of 600-4,000 students; the New Zealand study was composed of 304 students. Female and male students were represented in comparable numbers.

## INCIDENCE

- Approximately one in five female students (20.2% in 1997 and 18.0% in 1999) reported being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. [Silverman, J., Raj, A., Mucci, L. & Hathaway, J. (2001). Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and suicidality. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286 (5), Aug 1, 572-579.]
- For students who had ever dated, 36.4% of the girls and 37.1% of the boys reported they had experienced physical violence in the dating relationship. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- 45.5% of females and 43.2% of males reported they had received some form of physical aggression during the course of dating. [O’Keefe, M. & Treister, L. (1998). Victims of dating violence among high school students: are the predictors different for males and females? *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 195-223.]
- 17.5% of the girls and 13.3% of the boys reported having had at least one experience of physical violence in a dating relationship. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students’ dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]
- 40% of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hurt or beaten by a boyfriend. [Children Now/Kaiser Permanente, December 1995]
- 89% of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 say they have been in dating relationships. [Children Now/Kaiser Permanente, December 1995]

### USE OF VIOLENCE BY BOYS VS. USE OF VIOLENCE BY GIRLS

- Girls reported that their dating partners were the ones who started the abuse 70% of the time; whereas boys reported their dating partners to be initiators of abuse only 27% of the time. The boys were much more likely to state that they initiated incidents. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- For boys reporting they had been subject to a partner's use of physical violence, 17.1% reported that the reason for this violence was because they (i.e. the boys) had been making sexual advances toward their dating partner. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]

### TYPES OF ABUSE

#### *Physical Abuse*

- Of high school girls, ages 14 to 18, surveyed in the Massachusetts Youth Behavior Survey, about 20% reported that they had been hit, slapped, shoved, or forced into sexual activity by a dating partner. [Massachusetts Youth Behavior Survey, 1999]
- Girls in the study reported they were victims of physical violence significantly more often while their male partners were making sexual advances. 37% of the girls reported the reason they were subjected to physical violence was because their partner had been making sexual advances toward them, whereas only one male reported the same. This suggests that a large percentage of girls are being abused because they are refusing unwanted sexual advances. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]

#### *Emotional/Psychological Abuse*

- Regarding emotional violence, which included monopolization (keeps tabs on where I am going), degradation (slams down my opinions) and isolation (ignores me as if I don't exist), 81.5% of females and 76.3% of males reported having experienced at least one such insult in a dating relationship. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]

### *Sexual Abuse*

- 76.9% of female students and 67.4% of male students reported that they had experienced one or more incidents of unwanted sexual activity (e.g. unwanted kissing, hugging, French kissing, genital contact – “being felt up” – and sex). [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence, 15* (1), 23-36.]
- Possible reasons for engaging in unwanted sex:
  - to show that they loved their partner                      34.7 % females                      44.2% males
  - thought it was what their partner wanted                      36.9% females                      35.6% males
  - alcohol/drug use                                                              26.9% females                      29.8% males[Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence, 15* (1), 23-36.]

### **SETTINGS**

- A substantial number of abusive incidents occurred in a school building or on school grounds. 42% of the males and 43.2% of the females who reported abuse stated that this abuse occurred in a school building or on school grounds. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women, 4* (2), 180-194.]
- 50% of the female students and 40% of the males reported that unwanted sexual activity had occurred at parties. Other places included a partner's house, a friend's house, hanging out with friends, and at school. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence, 15* (1), 23-36.]
- During the time of the abuse, 40% of the girls and 49% of the boys reported that either another boy or girl or group of people was present. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women, 4* (2), 180-194.]

## PERCEPTION OF CAUSES/REASONS FOR ABUSE

- 25 - 33% of adolescent male abusers reported that their violence served to “intimidate,” “frighten,” or “force the other person to give me something.” [Brustin, S., (1995). Legal Response to Teen Dating Violence, *Family Law Quarterly*. 29 (2) 336.]
- Reasons given for the violence were:

• Anger	21.1% females	41.7% males
• Alcohol	21.1% females	29.2% males
• Jealousy	15.8% females	20.8% males
• Getting own way	15.8% females	20.8% males
• Retaliation	21.1% females	16.7% males

[Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]

- 18.4% of females reported that the reason their boyfriends used physical violence was to “show who was boss.” [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]
- Young people tend to interpret the violence of their partner as signifying love. In one study, 25-35% of the victims interpreted violence as love, 60% felt it had no effect on the relationship, and 40% felt it worsened their relationship. [Levy, B. (1993). *In love and in danger: A teen's guide to breaking free of abusive relationships*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press.]

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DATING VIOLENCE

- Of 117 boys who reported physical abuse, 36.8% reported they were drunk at the time of the violence. Only 9.4 % of girls reported they were drunk when they were hit. 55% of girls reported that their partners were drunk at the time of the incident. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]

## CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

- 49% of all female homicide victims in New York City are killed in intimate partner homicides. Of these intimate partner homicides, teenagers comprise approximately 8% of the total victims. [Wilt, Susan, Susan Illman and Maia Brodyfield, *Female Homicide Victims in New York City, 1990-1994*, New York City Department of Health, 1996]
- 21% of female students reported having been physically hurt in a dating relationship. 56% of that 21% described the impact as “hurt at the time, but didn’t last,” but 40% also indicated more lasting effects, such as bruising. 19% of male students reported having been physically hurt by a female partner, and 71% indicated that the hurt was immediate but not lasting. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students’ dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36]
- Boys reported no effect (*did not hurt at all*) or little effect (*hurt me a little*) in more than 90% of the incidents. Girls, 47.8% of them, reported serious harm (*hurt me a lot*) and physical injury (*caused bruises, needed medical attention*) in 33.6% of the incidents. Girls reported not being hurt at all in only 8.7% of the incidents. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- More than 50% the of boys reported “laughing” at the experiences of a physical altercation, whereas 33.3% reported “ignoring it.” Girls significantly more often reported having “fought back,” having “tried to talk to their partner,” or having “obeyed their partner,” after experiencing violence. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- 36% of the girls indicated they defended themselves when they experienced a violence act by their partner. This is one way of accounting for some of the incidents of violence that boys report occurring toward them. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- Girls reported that their relationships worsened or ended 64% of the time, when severe violence occurred in the dating relationship, and they reported their relationships worsened or ended 55.9% of the time, when they were victims of moderate violence. The girls reported their relationships improved only 4% of the time after severe violence and 6.8% of the time after moderate violence had occurred. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]

### SEEKING SUPPORT

- After students talked to someone about the violence, a majority of them felt supported (62.5% females, 62.5% males) and some felt the issue was sorted out (40% females, 18.8% males). [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]
- Girls did not talk to anyone in 55.2% of the cases and told a friend in 41.4% of the cases. Boys did not tell anyone in 45.5% of the cases and told a friend in 18.2% of the cases. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]
- Of those students who did reach out for comfort, 30% of the girls and 40% of the boys felt supported. [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]
- Less than 3% of students overall reported a violent incident to an authority figure (e.g. police, social worker, counselor, or teacher). Only 6% of physically or sexually abused adolescents recounted the incident to a family member. 61% percent of the adolescents who reported abuse stated they told a friend. Over 30% told no one at all about being victimized by their dating partner. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- Girls who reported experiencing severe abuse reported this to a family member, teacher, social worker, or other authority figure only 6% of the time. Boys stated they told an authority figure or family member only 11% of the time. These findings suggest that when severe abuse is occurring in dating relationships, parents, teachers, counselors, and other authorities are not informed and therefore cannot intervene to change it. [Molidor, C. & Tolman, R. (1998). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, 4 (2), 180-194.]
- The students either did not tell anyone about the sexual violence (46.1% females, 46.8% males), or only told a friend (53% females, 43.2% males). [Jackson, S., Cram, F., & Seymour, F. (2000). Violence and sexual coercion in high school students' dating relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15 (1), 23-36.]