



Facts about Teen Dating Violence

What is Teen Dating Violence?

Dating violence occurs in a dating relationship when a person uses physical, emotional or sexual abuse to gain power and to keep control over another person or people. Keep in mind teens have their own language when talking about relationships, dating and intimacy. Try to learn the language your teen uses to be able to talk to them about these topics.

How does dating violence affect Latin@ youth?

The effects of dating violence on youth are profound. Youth who are experiencing dating violence typically display some or all of the following behaviors and characteristics:

- Psychosomatic issues, e.g., stomachaches, ulcers, headaches
- Subtle reactions: loss of appetite, overeating, sleep difficulties, nail biting or stuttering
- Low self-esteem and feelings of failure
- Anger: aggression, hostility or destructiveness
- Disruptive behavior or violence toward peers
- Wearing high-necked or long-sleeved clothing in warm weather
- Juvenile delinquency, e.g., truancy, vandalism, drinking or drug abuse

Immigrant youth may experience different barriers in their lives that exacerbate the stress of living with dating violence.

- Undocumented youth experience many fears. Calling the police, telling a school counselor or parents might open up an investigation that could ultimately lead to the deportation of the boyfriend/girlfriend.
- When someone is in the midst of a crisis, it is common to go back to one's first language or switch between languages. Youth who do so cannot utilize resources or confide in counselors or teachers who speak only English. Language accessibility is important for youth, too.