Dating Violence

Often, dating and romantic relationships are fun, exciting, enhance our sense of well-being and make us feel cared for and good about ourselves. We envision supportive partners who treat us kindly with love and respect. But violence can and does occur in intimate relationships, even in college. For approximately one out of four college students who date, dating violence is a reality involving physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Dating violence is controlling, abusive and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. Abusive partners may use a combination of the following tactics to control, manipulate and abuse a partner:

- Physical – Hitting, pinching, shoving, restraining, destroying property, choking, threats of harm
- Sexual – rape, sexual abuse, or any coercion or manipulation of a partner to engage in sexual behaviors
- Emotional – insults, name-calling, yelling, threats, stalking, extreme jealousy, humiliating a partner in public or private, isolating a partner from friends or family, threatening to “out” a partner who is gay, lesbian or transgender, making someone account for their time, threats to harm themselves

Dating abuse occurs in all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and religious groups. Abuse in relationships exists in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships at approximately the same rate as in heterosexual relationships.

INCIDENCE AND REPORTING OF COLLEGE DATING VIOLENCE

- 32% of students report dating violence by a previous partner, and 21% report violence by a current partner.
- 39%-54% of dating violence victims remain in physically abusive relationships.
- 50% of dating violence victims report the violence to someone else: of these, 88% report the incidence to a friend and 20% to the authorities.
- The beliefs that dating violence is a private matter, not important enough and fear of retaliation are reasons given for not reporting the violence.

VICTIMS AND DATING VIOLENCE

Victims may remain in an abusive relationship for many reasons, including: fear of the perpetrator, self-blame, minimization of the crime, loyalty or love for the perpetrator, social or religious stigma, or lack of understanding. However, everyone is deserving of respectful, supportive relationships that are free of violence and abuse.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS!

Dating Relationship Rights
You have the right:
- to be free of fear
- to state opinions and express your feelings
- to be treated fairly and honestly
- to share equally in decision making
- to decide whether to engage in sexual activity or not
- to determine how serious you want a relationship to be
- to privacy and time for yourself
- to cultivate friendships of your choice
- to end the relationship

Legal rights
Illinois Domestic Violence Act
Dating violence is a serious issue and a crime. Law enforcement officers are required to provide assistance to victims. An Order of Protection, a written court order, can be obtained to require an abusive dating partner or household or family member to stop the abuse and may require them to do other things such as stay away from the victim or vacate a shared residence.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Student Code of Conduct

Dating violence is also a violation of the Illinois Student Conduct Code: "Physical abuse, intimidation, harassment, coercion, and/or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person, or creates in such person a reasonable fear that such a result will occur." More information about definitions and sanctions related to abuse in relationships, dating abuse or domestic violence can be viewed in the University Student Code at: www.admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/.

Supporting Someone in an Abusive Relationship

Sometimes offering support to a friend who is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship can be difficult. They may not be ready to take our well-intentioned "advice." It is helpful for us as support people to get help for ourselves to help us support our friends, family members and loved ones who may be struggling in an abusive situation.

WHO CAN HELP

- Contact the police department at 9-911 if you are on campus of 911 if you are off campus.
- The Counseling Center is designed to help students address many academic, relational, and emotional concerns. Please call 333-3704 during business hours.
- Emergency services after-hours are provided by Provena Behavioral Health Crisis Line at (217) 359-4141.
- The Women's Resources Center provides advocacy, support services and outreach for sexual assault and relationship abuse issues. Contact them at 333-3137 or visit their Web site at: http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/women/index.html, to see a complete listing of available resources for dating violence, including information about safe houses.

References


If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu