

### How to help her?

- You may get mixed messages and she can't ask for help but don't get discouraged.
- Help her feel better about herself. Don't blame or criticize her.
- Help build a support system with adults, family and other friends. Invite her places.
- Don't spread gossip or rumors.
- Listen and do not judge. Trust is essential.
- Don't put yourself at risk.
- Do not make decisions for her.
- Accept what she says.
- Tell her you care about her and are worried about her. Don't give up on her.
- Assist with setting up a safety plan.
- Don't make her choose between you or him. Don't give ultimatums.
- Encourage her to tell a trusted adult. If she won't and is in danger, tell her you are going to tell an adult that will help.
- Encourage her to get counseling. Call Blackburn Center.
- Talk with her in private. Allow her to talk.
- Let her know why you're concerned. Be specific about incidents and identify them.

### How to help him?

- He has to recognize the pressures he's under and take responsibility for himself.
- Be specific about what you saw and how it made you feel. Identify his actions.
- Take a stand and give him a reality check that he can be arrested and it is a crime.
- Urge him to seek help by talking to a coach, counselor, mentor or clergy.
- Offer to get information on the topic.
- Don't make him feel ashamed of himself.
- Talk about non-violent ways to handle anger. Don't put yourself at risk.
- Don't accept his excuses or blame.
- Don't threaten him with violence.
- Don't laugh at degrading jokes as this signals acceptance of abusive behavior.
- Reject the behavior not the person.

### Helpful Websites

[www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org)  
[www.empowered.org](http://www.empowered.org)  
[www.fvpf.org](http://www.fvpf.org)  
[www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org)  
[www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org)  
[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)  
[www.menovercomingviolence.org](http://www.menovercomingviolence.org)

### Resources for this Brochure

*Family Violence Prevention Fund; National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence; Human Relations Media: Dealing With Teen Dating Abuse; Liz Claiborne Women's Work Teen Handbook; The National Center For Victims of Crime and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.*

### BLACKBURN CENTER SERVICES

- 24-Hour Hotline for crisis counseling and referrals
- Counseling and Therapy
- Support Groups
- Emergency Shelter for battered women and their dependent children
- Medical and Legal Advocacy
- Student Awareness Programs
- Community Education Programs
- In-Service Trainings

**All services are free and confidential.**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### **24-Hour Hotline**

724-836-1122 or  
1-888-832-2272

#### **Administrative & Counseling Offices**

724-837-9540  
Fax: 724-837-3676

#### **Website:**

[www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org)

# DATING VIOLENCE

### A resource developed by



### Did you know?

- **90-95% of teen dating violence is perpetrated by a boyfriend towards a girlfriend.**
- **70% of teenage and college women who are sexually assaulted, are raped during the course of a date.**

*(The National Center For Victims of Crime and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2002)*

**Anyone can be involved with an abuser. Sometimes the abuse happens monthly and other times daily. It can happen in straight or gay relationships. Both men and women are victims but the majority of dating violence is perpetrated by young men towards young women. Female patterns of abusive behavior towards a boyfriend is as low as 5-10%.**

### **Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship**

- He has a history of bad relationships.
- He blames her or others for his problem.
- He gets serious too quickly—is too quick to say “I love you”.
- He believes he is superior and doesn’t take her opinions seriously.
- He has unpredictable mood swings—she worries about his reactions.
- He is jealous and possessive—checks up on her all the time.
- He blames or faults her for the mistreatment—says she provoked him or “she pushed my buttons”.
- She makes excuses for his behavior or apologizes for his behavior towards her.
- He is controlling, bossy and makes all the decisions.
- He uses guilt trips like “If you loved me you would do this or that” or “I need you so much”.
- Family and friends warn her about the relationship and are concerned for her safety.
- He may use drugs and/or alcohol as an excuse for being abusive.
- She frequently cancels plans at the last minute for reasons that sound untrue.
- He loses his temper, may even break things or hit things when he is mad.
- She seems worried about upsetting him or making him angry.

### **Warning Signs Continued**

- She gives up things that used to be important to her such as spending time with family or friends or other activities. She is becoming more and more isolated.
- Her weight, appearance or grades have changed dramatically. These could be signs of depression which could indicate abuse as well.
- She has injuries that cannot be explained or the explanations do not make sense.
- He always apologizes for his abusive behavior—says “I promise I’ll never do it again” but the behavior repeats itself.
- He pressures her for sex.
- He threatens to hurt her or makes suicide threats.

**There are many signs of dating violence.** Dating violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors which doesn’t usually start with him hitting her out of the blue—it generally starts after a history of verbal and emotional abuse to bring her sense of self-worth down. By the time the physical violence starts, her self-esteem is seriously damaged.

### **Why is he abusive?**

- Societal pressures to be a ‘real man’: real men don’t cry; real men take charge; real men must be tough, strong, breadwinners, learn to fight, never show affection for another man, play sports and **BE DOMINANT OVER THEIR PARTNER.**
- He is unable to express or manage his emotions.
- He is insecure and confused about aggression and power.
- He has learned that violence is a tool to get what he wants and to control others.
- He learns to manipulate to get his way.
- He doesn’t know how to get help.
- He grew up in an abusive household.
- He believes he has the “right” to do it.

### **If you are being abused, you might...**

- Believe it’s your fault.
- Feel angry, sad, lonely, depressed or confused.
- Feel helpless to stop the abuse.
- Feel anxious, trapped, threatened, ashamed or humiliated.
- Worry about what might happen next.
- Feel like you can’t talk to family or friends.
- Be afraid of getting hurt.
- Feel protective of your boyfriend.
- Feel bad about yourself because he says you are stupid, lazy, ugly, worthless, helpless, crazy or things like that.

**THESE ARE NORMAL REACTIONS TO BEING ABUSED. YOU ARE NOT ALONE AND IT ISN’T YOUR FAULT.**

### **Why doesn’t she just leave?**

- Once her self-esteem has been broken down, it can be very hard to leave.
- Violence comes in cycles where he will apologize and say he’ll never do it again.
- She may think she can change him.
- She doesn’t want the relationship to end just the abuse. He isn’t always abusive.
- Peer pressure and social status to have a boyfriend and feel accepted.
- Couples share the same friends. The break up will pose questions and problems. What if our friends don’t believe me? What if they choose him?
- Boys who are violent in private can appear calm and caring in public.
- She feels ashamed, guilty and embarrassed.
- He convinces and persuades others that it is her fault and she is “crazy” or “a slut”.
- She doesn’t know what to do and where to go for help.
- Friends and family don’t support her or don’t understand why or how this happens.
- She believes she deserves it and/or blames it on another situation like her upbringing.