

**“If You See It,  
Speak It!”**

**Understanding Abuse in  
Dating Relationships**

**What is it?  
Where can I go for help?  
How can I help a friend?**

**A Handbook for Youth  
in the District of Parry Sound**

??

# What is dating violence?

??  
??

“Dating violence” involves committing an act of violence (or threatening to do so) in a dating relationship (i.e., where the couple isn’t living together). This includes acts or threats of sexual, physical, and/or emotional/psychological abuse.

## Did you know ...

- ◆ Young people are more likely to reveal issues of dating violence to their peers than to adults (e.g., parents, teachers).
- ◆ Survivors of dating violence (primarily young women) may blame themselves for abuse they receive.

# HOW SERIOUS IS DATING VIOLENCE?

It's estimated that only **1%** of date rapes are reported to police in Canada. (*Ontario Women's Directorate, 1995*)

Women accounted for **80%** of dating-violence victims known to police in 2008. (*Statistics Canada, 2008*)

**31%** of sexual assaults occur in dating and acquaintance relationships. (*The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993*)

**57%** of dating-violence incidents reported to police were committed by a former partner. (*Statistics Canada, 2008*)

**50%** of all women who reported an incident of dating violence were between the ages of 18 and 34. (*Johnson, H., 1996*)

Among 15-to-19-year-old teens, the police-reported rate of dating violence experienced by females was **10 times** higher than the rate for males. (*Statistics Canada, 2008*)

# TYPES OF ABUSE

## PHYSICAL

ANY UNNECESSARY/  
UNWANTED PHYSICAL  
CONTACT WITH SOMEONE  
WHICH RESULTS IN BODILY  
HARM, DISCOMFORT,  
AND/OR INJURY

- HITTING
- PUNCHING
- KICKING
- RESTRAINING
- STRANGULATION
- ASSAULT WITH A WEAPON
- WITHHOLDING FOOD OR MEDICAL CARE

## SEXUAL

ANY TYPE OF SEXUAL  
CONTACT, TO WHICH A  
PERSON DOES NOT  
VOLUNTARILY CONSENT

- UNWANTED SEXUAL TOUCHING
- RAPE
- COERCING SOMEONE INTO SEXUAL ACTIVITY
- TREATING HER/HIM AS A SEX OBJECT

## EMOTIONAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL

ANY ACT THAT DIMINISHES  
DIGNITY OR SELF-WORTH,  
PROVOKES FEAR, AND/OR  
INTENTIONALLY INFLECTS  
PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

- YELLING
- FALSE ACCUSATIONS
- INTIMIDATION/THREATS
- DEGRADATION
- ISOLATING SOMEONE FROM FRIENDS/FAMILY MEMBERS
- RACIAL SLURS

## OTHER


- HARMING PETS
- DESTROYING PROPERTY
- COERCIVE USE OF CHILDREN
- SEXUAL HARASSMENT
- CRIMINAL HARASSMENT ("STALKING")
- FINANCIAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION
- NEGLECT
- RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL ABUSE

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

If your dating partner has “only” pushed you around, you may feel that the abuse is trivial and not worth worrying about. Any abuse is, however, serious, and if so-called “minor” incidents continue, the abuse is likely to become more frequent and more severe.

### Has your boyfriend/girlfriend:

- |     |    |                              |
|-----|----|------------------------------|
| YES | NO | pushed you forcefully?       |
| YES | NO | restrained you?              |
| YES | NO | slapped you?                 |
| YES | NO | pulled your hair?            |
| YES | NO | twisted your arm?            |
| YES | NO | punched you?                 |
| YES | NO | bitten you?                  |
| YES | NO | burned you?                  |
| YES | NO | kicked you?                  |
| YES | NO | tried to strangle you?       |
| YES | NO | assaulted you with a weapon? |



It's okay to be angry,  
but it's not okay for people  
to hurt themselves,  
other people or pets, and/or  
the property of others.

# EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

The severity of emotional and psychological abuse is often underestimated in dating relationships. Being degraded, yelled at, and threatened on an ongoing basis, however, can result in lowered self-esteem, significant trauma, and/or fear.

## Has your boyfriend/girlfriend:

YES	NO	degraded you?
YES	NO	yelled or screamed at you?
YES	NO	swore at you/called you names?
YES	NO	repeatedly accused you of doing things you didn't do?
YES	NO	tried to control your activities (e.g., where you go, what you do, with whom you spend your time)?
YES	NO	made you account for time not spent with him/her?
YES	NO	threatened or intimidated you?
YES	NO	tried to isolate you from your friends or family members?
YES	NO	threatened to harm your friends or family members?
YES	NO	destroyed your possessions?
YES	NO	threatened to harm him/herself or commit suicide if you end the relationship?

# SEXUAL ABUSE

Any form of sexual contact with another person, without her/his voluntary consent is illegal — even in a dating relationship.

## Has your boyfriend/girlfriend:

YES	NO	taken advantage of you sexually while you were under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
YES	NO	said, "If you really love me you'll have sex with me."?
YES	NO	touched you in ways that made you feel uncomfortable?
YES	NO	treated you as a sex object?
YES	NO	insisted on viewing pornographic material to "get you in the mood", even though you didn't want to?
YES	NO	used force or violence (and/or threatened to use force or violence) to get sex?
YES	NO	made you have sex with others?
YES	NO	committed any other unwanted sexual act against your will?

**IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY TYPE OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL, OR SEXUAL ABUSE IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP, DISCUSS THIS WITH PEOPLE YOU TRUST AND WHO CAN HELP YOU.**

# WARNING SIGNS

## Are you or someone you know dating a person who:

- ⇒ **DOESN'T LISTEN TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS AND ALWAYS HAS TO HAVE HIS/HER "OWN WAY"?**
- ⇒ **MONITORS YOUR ACTIVITIES AND WHEREABOUTS (E.G., PHONES AND TEXTS YOU ALL THE TIME) AND MAKES YOU "CHECK IN" WITH HIM/HER?**
- ⇒ **TRIES TO KEEP YOU FROM SEEING OR TALKING TO OTHER PEOPLE?**
- ⇒ **FREQUENTLY DEGRADES OR CRITICIZES YOU?**
- ⇒ **GETS EXTREMELY JEALOUS OR POSSESSIVE?**
- ⇒ **MAKES FALSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST YOU?**
- ⇒ **THREATENS TO HURT YOU (AND/OR YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS)?**
- ⇒ **MAKES YOU FEEL NERVOUS — AS THOUGH YOU ARE ALWAYS "WALKING ON EGGHELLS"?**
- ⇒ **HAS LARGE MOOD SWINGS (E.G., GETS ANGRY AND ABUSIVE AND THEN IS SWEET AND APOLOGETIC)?**
- ⇒ **IS PHYSICALLY VIOLENT?**
- ⇒ **HAS A HISTORY OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR IN HIS/HER PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIPS?**
- ⇒ **PRESSURES OR FORCES YOU INTO HAVING SEX OR GOING FURTHER SEXUALLY THAN YOU WANT TO?**



# What Can I Do?

## IF I AM A WITNESS TO ABUSE ...

- ✓ Tell a reliable adult (see page 11).
- ✓ Listen to the survivor and provide her or him with comfort and understanding.
- ✓ Encourage the survivor to get help on an ongoing basis (see pages 11 and 12).

## IF I AM THE ABUSER ...

- ✓ Tell a reliable adult (see page 11).
- ✓ Take responsibility for your actions — by learning and practicing different techniques for dealing with anger and frustration.
- ✓ Get help (e.g., through counselling). In the District of Parry Sound you can contact:

(a) COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:  
1-800-461-5424 OR

(b) PARRY SOUND FAMILY SERVICE: 705-746-9789

## IF I AM A SURVIVOR OF ABUSE ...

- ✓ Tell a reliable adult (see page 11).
- ✓ Realize that you are not responsible — the abuser is the only person at fault.
- ✓ Use the “Teen Safety Plan” (see page 10).
- ✓ Get help (see pages 11 and 12).



# Teen Safety Plan

A safety plan helps to lower your risk of being hurt by an abuser and includes information specific to your life.

1. In an emergency, I can call the **police (911)**.

2. I can also contact the **women and children's shelter**:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I can call the following **friends/family** at any time:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

4. This **code word** will alert friends/family that I need help:

\_\_\_\_\_ .

5. **Safe places** that I can go to at any time include:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Where can I get help  
in the District  
of Parry Sound?***

**FAMILY**

**Muskoka/Parry Sound  
Sexual Assault Services  
1-877-851-6662**

**Esprit Place Family  
Resource Centre  
1-800-461-1707**

**DOCTORS**

**TEACHERS**

**Community Mental  
Health Services  
1-800-461-5424**

**Children's  
Aid Society  
1-877-  
224-9354**

**GUIDANCE  
COUNSELLORS**

**FRIENDS**

**PEER  
SUPPORT  
WORKERS**

**Supervised Access  
Program  
1-800-563-4201**

**COACHES**

**If you or someone  
you know is in  
immediate danger,  
call 911!!**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
TREATMENT CENTRES**

**North Bay General Hospital:  
705-474-8600, ext. 2350**

**Orillia Soldier's Memorial Hospital:  
1-877-377-7438**

**St. Joseph's Health Centre (Sudbury):  
705-675-4743**

**24-Hour "Women's  
Sexual Assault  
Help Line"  
1-800-461-2929**

**Assaulted Women's  
Help Line (services  
in 154 languages)  
1-866-863-0511**

**Kids' Help Phone  
1-800-668-6868**

**This handbook was developed for the  
*District of Parry Sound*  
*"Domestic Violence  
Coordinating Committee" (2012).***

The printing of this document  
was funded by the  
*Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.*