

Violence in dating relationships usually happens between people who know and trust each other, and statistics show that girls and women most often experience it from boys and men. It isn't about love - it's one person trying to control/have power over the other person. It's never okay.

### Definition

It can take the form of:

**Physical abuse** - hitting, blocking, shoving, biting, choking, threatening with a weapon

**Emotional abuse** - insulting, pressuring, blaming, smashing stuff, possessiveness, stalking (unwanted repeated contact), isolating, cheating to make someone feel insecure

**Sexual abuse** - unwanted sexual contact, forcing your date to do sexual things, pushing or tricking someone into sex, forced kissing

**Financial abuse** - controlling money, making someone depend on you for money

**Spiritual abuse** - insulting someone's beliefs, stopping someone from following their faith or religion

### Warning Signs

Dating violence can start as emotional and move to physical or sexual abuse, but it doesn't always go in that order. Some warning signs can be:

- Jealousy, possessiveness (e.g., getting mad when you hang with friends, checking on you all the time)
- Trying to control what you do, where you go, and who you talk to
- Making all of the decisions
- Driving fast or behaving dangerously
- Accusing you of lying or cheating
- Not taking "no" for an answer
- Insulting who you are, what you say, your friends and family, or what you look like

Other warning signs of dating violence:

- Threatening you, making you feel afraid, uncomfortable, or confused
- Tricking you
- Embarrassing or making fun of you, saying that you're nothing
- Blaming you for their problems

### Important Tips

Here are some tips that you or your friends might find helpful when going out with someone:

- Trust your instincts: listen to yourself when your date's behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable
- Meet in public places and go out in groups with friends you trust
- Be assertive: know what you want, what you're not going to take, speak your mind, and leave if you feel uncomfortable
- Get to know your date: are your date's values similar to yours?
- Talk to others who have gone out with your date before: what do

they think?

- Stay close to family/friends you trust; you might need them to be there for you and help you out
- Have a backup plan: know the address of the place you're going to, tell someone where you're going and who your going with, bring your own bus fare or taxi money, pay your own way so that no one can tell you that you owe them anything

**Remember:** if you feel afraid about getting your boyfriend or girlfriend angry, that can be a sign of dating violence.

1

2

3

4

## Take Action

It's important to recognize dating violence and know what you can do about it.

- Remember that no one has the right to control you. It doesn't matter who they are or how long you've known each other.
- It's not your fault. You didn't "ask for it". It's not okay to blame the victim.
- No one deserves violence. You deserve to be treated with respect.
- Tell someone you trust about the violence, like a friend or adult.
- You can call a crisis phone line to talk about the abuse. You can also choose to report it to the police.

Control and abuse don't just disappear from relationships. They may even get worse in time. You can learn about what abuse looks like and help your friends.

5

## Resources

Emergency: 911 or local police

The Assaulted Women's Helpline:  
1-866-863-0511  
1-866-863-7868 (TTY)  
(anonymous, confidential, and services provided in up to 154 languages)

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Femaide (French crisis line):  
1-877-336-2433  
1-866-860-7082 (TTY)

Community Connection (Niagara Region, Georgian Bay, Toronto): 211

Sexual Assault Centres: [occcc.ca](http://occcc.ca)

Shelters: [shelternet.ca](http://shelternet.ca)

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres:  
[satontario.com](http://satontario.com)

6



Metropolitan Action Committee on  
Violence Against Women and Children

158 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, M5R 2T8  
1-877-558-5570 | 416-392-3031 (TTY)

[info@metrac.org](mailto:info@metrac.org)

More info and statistics:

[www.metrac.org](http://www.metrac.org) | [www.owjn.org](http://www.owjn.org)



Funding provided by the Government of Ontario, Ontario Women's Directorate. Adapted from "Dating Violence", Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Essex County, Windsor.

May 2007



about dating violence