

Teen Dating Violence and Comprehensive Sex Education

NCJW is committed to the elimination of and protection from all forms of harassment, violence, and abuse against women. NCJW has long been active in addressing these problems when they are faced by young women. Sexual coercion and reproductive control are common and devastating components of adolescent intimate partner violence. Unfortunately, one in three adolescent girls in the US is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner. These problems are only compounded when young women do not have access to comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education. Now, NCJW is working to raise awareness about comprehensive sex education's critical role in eliminating teen dating violence.

Dating violence is prevalent among teens

- ▶ Approximately **one in three** young women experience physical, emotional, or sexual partner violence. ¹
- ▶ Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 **experience abuse at almost triple the national average.** ²
- ▶ As many as **half of LGBTQ** relationships may be abusive—making abuse in same-sex relationships just as widespread as in heterosexual relationships. ³ As a result of heterosexism and homophobia, LGBTQ young people have limited access to information about healthy same-sex relationships.⁴
- ▶ **Two-thirds** of teens who are in an abusive relationship **do not** tell anyone. ²

Teen dating violence is more than physical abuse

- ▶ Teen dating violence can include “reproductive coercion” such as pressure to become pregnant and/or **birth control sabotage.** ⁵
- ▶ Young women testify to partners **demanding unprotected sex**, lying about “pulling out,” hiding or destroying birth control (e.g. flushing pills down the toilet), and controlling the outcome of a pregnancy. ⁵
- ▶ In a 2007 study, some boys acknowledged outright that they insisted on sex without a condom as a way to **establish power over female partners.** ⁵

Comprehensive sex education reduces teen dating violence

- ▶ In a 2008 study, young people who received comprehensive sex education used **significantly fewer acts of violence** toward a dating partner by the end of Grade 11. ⁶
- ▶ Among sexually active boys, those who received comprehensive sex education were **more likely to practice safe sex** 2.5 years later (i.e., always use a condom). ⁶
- ▶ Teaching young people about healthy relationships and ways to avoid physical dating violence can reduce physical dating violence and sexual dating violence by **60%.** ⁷

1 Davis, Antoinette. National Council on Crime and Delinquency. “Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence Among Teens.” 2008.

2 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. <http://www.ncadv.org/>

3 National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Domestic Violence in 2001.” 2002.

4 Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “Domestic abuse in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, & trans communities.” 1999.

5 Harris, Lynn. *When Partner Abuse Isn't a Bruise But a Pregnant Belly*. 2009. <http://www.Rhrealitycheck.org>

6 CAMH Centre for Prevention Science. *The Fourth R: Relationship Based Violence Prevention*. 2008. <http://youthrelationships.org>

7 Foshee, Vangie, et al. “An Evaluation of Safe Dates, an Adolescent Dating Violence Prevention Program.” 1998.