

## What is College Dating Violence?

Dating violence is a pattern of **coercive controls** that **one person exercises over another**. Dating violence is not limited to physical violence; it also includes verbal, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse. Dating violence can also be through the use of **progressive social isolation**. Remember that dating violence is a **power game**; its purpose is for the **abuser to control the victim** by whatever means it takes.

## "It's Not That Bad..."

Commonly, people tend to think that abuse has to be severe for it to be considered dating violence. There are various types of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that define dating violence, and all of the forms have different levels of severity. That being said, **any and every** form of dating violence is serious in its own right. Even something that is a controlling behavior (i.e. checking phone text messages without asking) is dating violence. Constant criticisms and **threats of physical violence** are dating violence. Pushing and shoving during an argument, **even if there are NO BRUISES and/or MARKS**, is dating violence. Often people say "Oh well, the abuse is 'not that bad.'" Be aware that violence does not have to lead to broken bones and/or stitches to be taken seriously.

## How Can I help?

If someone you know is in a violent relationship...

**Support her/him** no matter whether she/he decides to leave or not. This prevents total isolation by the abuser.

**Do NOT** give ultimatums (i.e. leave the relationship or lose my support).

**Listen** and let her/him talk **freely and openly** about it.

**Develop a plan** with her/him to increase her/his **safety**.

**Offer** to get her/him **information**, but do not force the information upon them.

**Pay attention** and make note of abusive behaviors that you may witness. Also notice **changes in your friend's behavior** (i.e. cancelling plans frequently at the last minute, constantly apologizing for their partner's actions, constantly worrying about upsetting her/his partner).

IF YOU ARE EVER A WITNESS TO DATING VIOLENCE - **CALL 911**.

## Who is Impacted by Dating Violence?

Dating violence can impact **ANYONE!** It does not discriminate against **any** gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, and education level.

Dating violence **can be perpetrated by males and/or females**. Many men experience violence but never report it because they may not be believed and/or it will hurt their pride. Men **may** experience more emotional abuse rather than physical abuse, but that **does not** mean that women do not abuse their partners physically.

## Safety Planning for Students

- Make a code word to use with family, friends, or neighbors for when you need the police.
- Make a police report immediately after the abuse, even if you do not want the abuser arrested. The report may be helpful later. The abuser will not be notified of the report.
- Tell your roommates/RA about the situation so they are aware of what is going on and can help you if an abusive incident arises.
- Arrange a safe place to keep important school and personal materials so they are not destroyed. Make them easily accessible if you need to flee.

## Could YOU be Abusing YOUR Partner?

In my dating relationship, I...

- Regularly check my partner's text messages.
- Threaten to leave my partner if she/he does not do as I ask.
- Need to know where my partner is at all times.
- Restrain her/him to keep her/him from leaving during an argument.
- Make my partner feel guilty for not wanting to participate in sex acts with me.
- Feel annoyed and upset when my partner wishes to spend time apart.
- Become jealous when my partner talks to friends of the opposite sex.
- Threatens to harm myself and/or my partner if she/he ever ends the relationship.
- Follow my partner to make sure he/she is going where she/he has claimed to be going.

If you said "Yes" to any of the above behaviors, your relationship **may be** unhealthy. Love does not involve violence. You need to contact your local resources to learn how you can end the abuse in your relationship.

## Resources

WIRC-CAA Victim Services  
24 Hour Crisis Line  
(309) 837-5555  
[www.wirpc.org/victimservices](http://www.wirpc.org/victimservices)

Illinois Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence  
(877) 863-6338  
[www.icadv.org](http://www.icadv.org)

Western Illinois University  
University Counseling Center  
(309) 298-2453  
[www.ucc.wiu.edu](http://www.ucc.wiu.edu)

Monmouth College  
Counseling Center  
(309) 457-2114  
[www.monmouthcollege.edu](http://www.monmouthcollege.edu)

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## Not on My Campus!



## Dating Violence in College