



## **Research on Dating Violence**

Prepared for  
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### **Prevalence**

- Nearly 10% of students in grades 9–12 in 2009 reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the previous 12 months<sup>1</sup>.
- Nationwide, 7.4% of students in grades 9–12 report having at least once in their lifetimes been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to<sup>2</sup>.
- Nearly 3% of college women are victims of completed or attempted rape in a given 9-month academic year and, in the majority of cases, the victim and perpetrator know each other<sup>3</sup>.
- Among sexually active adolescent girls in grades 9–12, more than 31% report having experienced physical or sexual violence from dating partners<sup>4</sup>.
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students in grades 9–12 report being substantially more likely than their heterosexual classmates to have experienced dating violence and to have been forced to have sexual intercourse<sup>5</sup>.

### **Consequences**

- Being the victim of violence in adolescent dating relationships can have long-term negative consequences for both victims and perpetrators. Possible effects for both female and male victims include depression, anxiety, academic problems, posttraumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, association with delinquent peers, future victimization, and even thoughts of self-harm or suicide<sup>6, 7</sup>.

### **Risk Factors**

- Research suggests that early exposure to parental interpersonal violence and child maltreatment are related to teen dating violence, as well as adult interpersonal violence<sup>8</sup>.
- Early teen alcohol use directly predicts teen dating violence victimization among girls, while externalizing behaviors directly predict victimization and perpetration among boys<sup>9</sup>. Having a friend who uses violence against a date predicts the initiation of dating violence perpetration by both boys and girls<sup>10</sup>.
- Dating violence is associated with risky styles of alcohol consumption, including more frequent alcohol use, expectations that alcohol and aggression are related, drinking to cope, beliefs that release of inhibitions is related to alcohol consumption, and beliefs that being intoxicated provides a time-out from normal behavioral expectations<sup>11</sup>.

## Prevention

- Primary prevention efforts that increase child–parent bonding and improve children’s social skills may help them avoid externalizing and internalizing behaviors, reduce their alcohol consumption, and ultimately protect them from dating violence<sup>12</sup>.
- Research suggests that prevention strategies aimed at directly reducing dating violence among early adolescents need to be tailored based on gender and ethnicity: Interventions with boys need to focus on externalizing behaviors<sup>13</sup>, while those with girls need to address factors such as alcohol use<sup>14</sup>, depression, poor self-esteem, and aggression against peers<sup>15</sup>. Interventions with White boys and girls need to address anxiety, whereas interventions for Black boys and girls need to address anger<sup>16</sup>.
- The *Expect Respect* dating violence prevention program addresses multiple aspects of the ecology of schools, and there is evidence that its gender-separate support groups for at-risk girls and boys significantly reduce emotional and physical victimization and perpetration<sup>17</sup>.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2009. Surveillance Summaries, June 4, 2010. *MMWR*, 59(SS#5).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Fisher, B. S., Cullen, F. T., & Turner, M. G. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women* (NIJ Research Report NCJ 182369). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>4</sup> Decker, M., Silverman, J., & Raj, A. (2005). Dating violence and sexually transmitted disease/HIV testing and diagnosis among adolescent females. *Pediatrics*, 116, 272–276.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011, June). Sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, and health-risk behaviors among students in grades 9–12 — Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, Selected Sites, United States, 2001–2009. *MMWR Early Release*, 60.

<sup>6</sup> Teten, A. L., Ball, B., Valle, L. A., Noonan, R., & Rosenbluth, B. (2009). Considerations for the definition, measurement, consequences, and prevention of dating violence among adolescent girls. *Journal of Women’s Health*, 18, 923–927.

<sup>7</sup> Ayers, J., & Davies, S. (2011). Adolescent dating and intimate relationship violence: Issues and implications for school psychologists. *School Psychology Forum*, 5(1), 1–12.

<sup>8</sup> Maas, C. D., Fleming, C. B., Herrenkohl, T. I., & Catalano, R. F. (2010). Childhood predictors of teen dating violence victimization. *Violence and Victims*, 25, 131–149.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Foshee, V. A., Reyes, H. L. M., & Ennett, S. T. (2010). Examination of sex and race differences in longitudinal predictors of the initiation of adolescent dating violence perpetration. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19, 492–516.

<sup>11</sup> Rothman, E., F., Stuart, G. L., Greenbaum, P. E., Heeren, T., Bowen, D. J. Vinci, R., ... Bernstein, J. (2011). Drinking style and dating violence in a sample of urban, alcohol-using youth. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol & Drugs*, 72, 555–566.

<sup>12</sup> Maas, C. D., Fleming, C. B., Herrenkohl, T. I., & Catalano, R. F. (2010). Childhood predictors of teen dating violence victimization. *Violence and Victims*, 25, 131–149.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Foshee, V. A., Reyes, H. L. M., & Ennett, S. T. (2010). Examination of sex and race differences in longitudinal predictors of the initiation of adolescent dating violence perpetration. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19, 492–516.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ball, B., Kerig, P. K., & Rosenbluth, B. (2009). “Like a family but better because you can actually trust each other”: The Expect Respect dating violence prevention program for at-risk youth. *Health Promotion Practice*, 10, 45S–58S.