

What are the consequences of dating violence?

As teens develop emotionally, they are heavily influenced by experiences in their relationships. Healthy relationship behaviors can have a positive effect on a teen's emotional development. Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have severe consequences and short- and long-term negative effects on a developing teen. Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience the following:

- Symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Engagement in unhealthy behaviors, such as tobacco and drug use, and alcohol
- Involvement in antisocial behaviors
- Thoughts about suicide

Additionally, youth who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

Why does dating violence happen?

Communicating with your partner, managing uncomfortable emotions like anger and jealousy, and treating others with respect are a few ways to keep relationships healthy and nonviolent. Teens receive messages about how to behave in relationships from peers, adults in their lives, and the media. All too often these examples suggest that violence in a relationship is normal, but violence is never acceptable. There are reasons why violence occurs.

Violence is related to certain risk factors. Risks of having unhealthy relationships increase for teens who:

- Believe that dating violence is acceptable
- Are depressed, anxious, or have other symptoms of trauma
- Display aggression towards peers or display other aggressive behaviors
- Use drugs or illegal substances
- Engage in early sexual activity and have multiple sexual partners
- Have a friend involved in dating violence
- Have conflicts with a partner
- Witness or experience violence in the home

Dating violence can be prevented when teens, families, organizations, and communities work together to implement effective prevention strategies.