

IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY IN ALL THOSE LOVE SONGS

Love does hurt. Conflicts, problems, and arguments are a normal, healthy part of any relationship, no matter how in love you are.

What's not normal, however, is when a person in the relationship tries to control the other - making them feel guilty for spending too much time with other people, pursuing their favorite activities, calling to check up on them all the time, pressuring them sexually, putting them down, or using threats/physical force to get them to do what the person wants.

These are examples of dating violence - a pattern of behavior in which one person in a relationship tries to control the other. Controlling someone else isn't normal or okay - it's abuse. If it involves physical force, it's also against the law.

Dating violence can happen to any gender. However, most abusive relationships involve a male trying to control the female.

If you think you may be in an abusive relationship, or know someone who is, it's important to find help. The problem won't go away on it's own. In most cases, it will only get worse.

"Controlling someone else isn't normal or okay - it's abuse."

THE FACTS

Most people don't realize how prevalent dating violence is.

- Over 71% of women first experienced intimate partner violence before the age of 25.
- Nearly 1/3 of women report being physically or sexually abused by a male partner at some point in their lives.
- Young women between the ages of 18 and 24 experience the highest rates of violence by current or former dating partners.
- In one year, more than 10 million men and women are physically abused by their partner.



RESOURCES

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)

Text "START" to 88788

Crisis-intervention, information, and referrals, available 24 hours a day, in English and Spanish.

in the know

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DATING VIOLENCE

LOVE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY





WARNING SIGNS

Does your partner:

- Behave unpredictably, sometimes as if they have two personalities?
- Lose their temper quickly?
- Call to check up on you all the time?
- Pressure you to give up activities or spending time with family or friends?
- Put you down, in private or in front of others?
- Use physical force, or the threat of it, to get you to do or agree to something you don't want to?
- Pressure you sexually?
- Make excuses for their behavior, blaming drugs or alcohol, or saying that if you changed it wouldn't happen?
- Apologize after a violent episode and say it will never happen again?

WHY DON'T THEY JUST LEAVE?

The first signs of abuse are usually subtle. Often someone who is abusive starts by wearing down their partner's self-esteem – insulting them, and making them feel dependent on the partner and the relationship.

Abusive people often blame the victim, telling them if they didn't act a certain way or say the wrong thing, the abuse wouldn't happen. The victim may believe it's their fault, and that if they change, the abuse will stop.

If there is physical violence, or the threat of it, they may be scared to leave the relationship.

Young people especially may not know what is and isn't normal in dating relationships. Healthy relationships are based on accepting a person for who they are and on respect. Trying to control another person is never healthy – it's abuse.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you think you're in an abusive relationship, don't suffer in silence.

Start by talking to a friend. You should also seek help from a counselor, or any adult you trust, such as a parent, teacher or older sibling. Your partner won't change unless they get help, and abuse and violence usually worsen over time. In the meantime, stay safe – screen your phone calls and stick with friends. If you've been physically assaulted, you have every right to call the police.

IF YOU THINK A FRIEND IS BEING ABUSED

Talk to them in private about your concerns. Say "I'm worried about you because..." Tell them it's not their fault, and avoid being judgemental. Above all, encourage them to seek help from an adult they can trust, such as a parent, teacher, counselor or older sibling. No one deserves abuse. If the abuser knows your trying to help, make sure you stay safe.

IF YOU THINK YOUR FRIEND IS ABUSING SOMEONE THEY'RE DATING

You owe it to them to confront them privately about your feelings. Say "I care about you and I didn't like seeing you treat your partner that way." Above all, encourage your friend to seek help. They're not a bad person, but they won't be able to change on their own. If your friend has a bad temper, make sure you stay safe.



IF YOU THINK YOU MAY BE ABUSING SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT

You need to get help to learn different ways of handling your feelings. There is no excuse for hurting someone else, physically or with words. If you continue to act abusively it will be impossible to ever have a truly happy, healthy relationship, and that is a huge loss in the big picture of your life.

