

# 14

SESSION

## Dating Violence

### Recognize and Prevent

Overview of Lesson	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
<p>Students examine the facts and stereotypes of dating violence. They learn signs of actual and potential dating violence and develop appropriate rights and responsibilities for dating relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity (NSCG V.D.2)</li> </ul>	<p>None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. (NHES 3)</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health. (NHES 5)</li> </ul>

# 14

## SESSION

### DATING VIOLENCE

#### RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT

In this session, teens will explore dating violence, an increasing concern. They will discover myths and facts about dating violence, examine their expectations of being a girlfriend or boyfriend, and identify some early warning signs of dating violence. They will create a Dating Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and consider how conflict management skills can help them achieve their rights and fulfill their responsibilities. Finally, teens will analyze a dating violence situation and suggest ways to deal with it.

#### TEENS WILL LEARN

- To define dating violence
- To learn the facts about dating violence
- To examine gender stereotypes
- To develop a list of rights and responsibilities all teens have in dating relationships
- To recognize some early warning signs of dating violence
- To avoid dating violence

### TEACHING STRATEGIES

These teaching strategies are included in this session:

- What I Know—What I Want To Know—What I Learned (K-W-L)
- True/False Statements
- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion
- Brainstorming
- Role-plays
- Journal Writing

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Handout 1: *Hard Truths About Dating Violence*
- Handout 2: *Early Warning Signs*
- Do-it-yourself poster: *Dating Rights and Responsibilities*
- *Handling Difficult Situations* poster (from the *Community Works* kit)
- Journal for Session 14



Because of the sensitive nature of this topic, you must have a community resource person for this session. This person should be knowledgeable and comfortable discussing dating violence and be prepared in case someone in the group discloses a personal experience with dating violence. Possible resource people include staff members of domestic abuse prevention centers, rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, gay and lesbian support centers, and crisis and counseling centers, as well as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers who specialize in treatment of domestic abuse. In this session it is especially important to contact resource persons in advance, determine if they are suitable for your group and topic, discuss the session plan, and be sure they understand their role. See the Introduction in Volume One for information on how to contact and work with a resource person.

### SUMMARY OF STEPS

#### PART 1

Step A. Warm-up

Step B. What Do You Think?

Step C. Defining the Problem of Dating Violence



70 Minutes

#### PART 2

Step D. Solutions to Dating Violence

Step E. Reflection



50 Minutes

## BEFORE THE SESSION

1. If it's not possible to work with a resource person, have *two* leaders because the topic of victimization often brings up tough emotional issues for people who have been victims of crime. With two leaders, one of you can help a teen who has been victimized while the other can continue with the session. This is also a good session to lead with someone of the opposite sex because it is an excellent opportunity to model positive male-female interactions. Co-presenting this information with a person of the opposite sex will help dispel the notion that this is a "women's issue" and only women should care about it.
2. Read the session plan.
3. Review the conflict management sessions (Sessions 7 and 8) for use in this session. It's wise to schedule this session after teens have had a chance to learn conflict management skills they can use here. Some ideas and skills that are applicable to preventing dating violence include making informed choices about when to use particular conflict management styles (such as not overusing confrontation or accommodation), using anger management strategies, knowing your triggers, and using active listening to communicate.
4. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, readers, creators of posters, etc. For more information about facilitating teen involvement, consult the Introduction in Volume One.
5. Hang the *Handling Difficult Situations* poster in the room.
6. Post the teen-created guidelines from Session 1 in the room.
7. Write the nine statements about dating violence listed in Step C on the chalkboard or newsprint. Keep them covered until the group reaches Step C.
8. Make one copy of Handout 1: *Hard Truths About Dating Violence*. Cut the sheet into pieces so that you have nine separate facts to hand out to nine teens. After teens have considered each true/false statement in Step C, #1, have a volunteer read the answer aloud. If you like, make an additional copy of *The Cycle of Violence* diagram on page 51 for the teen who will read the answer to the seventh myth in Step C. You can also draw the cycle on newsprint.
9. Make copies of Handout 2: *Early Warning Signs* for each teen.
10. Make one copy of the journal for all teens.
11. Make, or arrange with a teen to make before the session, the *Dating Rights and Responsibilities* do-it-yourself poster and put it up.
12. Prepare a list of local resources that can help with dating violence issues, or refer teens to the resources they compiled in Session 6: *Our Community's Resources*. This will be important for those in your group who may have been victims, and it will also give teens the ability to refer a friend to sources of help. Your resource person can help you compile this list.
13. Gather the materials you will need.



### Service-learning Project Idea

To get teens thinking about possible service-learning projects related to this session, ask what they think would be the most effective ways of sharing this information with other groups. Possible suggestions could include writing and presenting skits or role-plays, designing and exhibiting a set of posters or cartoons, or writing and distributing handouts or a newsletter on the subject.

14. To set the right tone for this session, be sure that you choose an even number of males and females as you select volunteers.
15. The key point of this session is that attitudes that foster dating violence are *learned*. Many teens learn the attitude that the male should have power and control and therefore it is okay for him to use verbal, emotional, or physical violence or abuse. This attitude can be unlearned. Abuse of dating partners comes from choices that people make. Teens can learn to make other choices.

## P A R T

## 1

## STEP A

## TEACHING STRATEGY

## ■ Icebreaker



10 MINUTES

## Warm-up

1. Introduce the resource person and tell teens that he or she will help present this session.
2. Review previous sessions.
  - Ask teens to think for a minute about the purpose of the *Community Works* program. Ask them to tell what they remember.
  - Ask group members to update newcomers and those who missed earlier sessions. Assign this task to teens on a rotating basis. Explain that it helps build public-speaking skills.
  - Remind teens that these sessions will help them get information and develop skills to avoid being the victims of crime, as well as help them develop skills to help others and their communities become safer.
  - Return their journals with your comments from the last session.
  - Tell teens that this session will ask them to look at the tough topic of dating violence. They will find out what dating violence is and learn what they can do to prevent it.
3. Remind teens of the guidelines they developed for these sessions. Be sure their list is posted on the wall. This would also be a good time to remind them of the confidentiality of some of the issues that they discuss and the mandatory reporting requirements that are part of your job responsibilities.
  - One way to increase teens' involvement and give them ownership of the session is to have them volunteer to go over the group guidelines at the start and recap the activities from the last session.
4. To warm up the group, choose an icebreaker (optional) from the Introduction in Volume One. (Allow additional time for this activity.)

## STEP B

## TEACHING STRATEGY

- What I Know—What I Want To Know—What I Learned (K-W-L)



20 MINUTES

## What Do You Think?

1. Write the headings “Know,” “Want To Know,” and “Learned” in three columns on top of the chalkboard or newsprint.
  - Ask teens what they know about dating violence. Write their comments in the “Know” column.
  - Ask what they *want* to know about dating violence. Write their comments in the “Want To Know” column.
  - Explain that they will come back to the last column at the end of the session to see what they learned.

2. Use the following definition to compare it with what teens said they know about dating violence:

*Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It can happen in straight or gay relationships. It can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of them.*

3. Note what teens say they know and want to know. Keep these points in mind and refer to them if and when information comes up that supports or calls them into question.

## STEP C

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

- True/False Statements
- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion
- Brainstorming



40 MINUTES

## Defining the Problem of Dating Violence

1. Uncover the nine statements about dating violence written on the chalkboard or newsprint.
  - Read each statement aloud and, as you do so, ask teens to move to one side of the room if they think a statement is true and the other side if they think it is false.
  - Distribute the nine sections of Handout 1: *Hard Truths About Dating Violence* that you prepared before the session. Give one answer to each of nine volunteers to read aloud after teens have considered each statement.
  - Use the information below to discuss each statement.
    - a. *Dating violence affects only a tiny percentage of the population.*

**False:** Studies show that approximately one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship. These numbers are higher than most people think because dating violence is often hidden. Dating violence can occur in hetero- or homosexual relationships. Often we think that only young women are victims but young men can also be victims of dating violence. The overall numbers are likely to be even higher because dating violence often remains unreported. Why do you think this problem is hidden?

- b. *The abuser is sometimes a loving person.*

**True:** Abusers are often described by their dates as playful, attentive, sensitive, exciting, and affectionate when they are not being abusive.

c. *Jealousy and possessiveness are signs of true love.*

**False:** No, they are not. They are signs that the person sees you as a possession and are the most common early signs of abuse.

d. *An occasional punch is okay; it is not abuse.*

**False:** It is abuse—and it is a criminal act: assault.

e. *Most batterers are poor or uneducated.*

**False:** Batterers are found in all classes: rich, poor, and in between; professional and unemployed; and in all ethnic groups.

f. *Men are battered by women just as often as women are battered by men.*

**False:** Ninety-five percent of the reported incidents of assault in relationships are committed by males, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Approximately 2 percent of the adult male population is seriously battered. In junior high or middle school, equal numbers of males and females use violence. However, violence by males is far more prevalent than other types of dating violence. When young women do use violence, they often act in self-defense. Another factor to consider is that, because of embarrassment, boys and men are less likely to report cases in which they have been victims of dating violence.

Additional activity: Give the *Cycles of Violence* diagram (on page 51) to a teen who reads the seventh myth below so that he or she can copy it on the chalkboard or newsprint to illustrate the point.

g. *Battered women are constantly being abused.*

**False:** Abuse is inflicted in a repeating cycle that is made up of three phases.

Phase 1—Tension building: A gradual increase in tension; the abuser uses name calling, constant criticism, and minor physical abuse.

Phase 2—Explosion: A major act of physical violence that results in serious physical injury.

Phase 3—Honeymoon: The abuser feels sorry for his behavior and acts in an apologetic, loving way. He may shower the victim with gifts, apologize, and promise not to hurt again. Eventually, though, the remorse (regret) gives way to minor incidents of abuse, and the cycle begins again.

Additional activity: You or a teen volunteer might draw a circle on newsprint or the chalkboard to illustrate this point. It is important that teens understand that this is a *cycle* that repeats itself over and over. The community resource person can help you to explain this in more detail, if necessary.

h. *There is nothing a victim of dating violence can do—and no place for abusers to get help.*

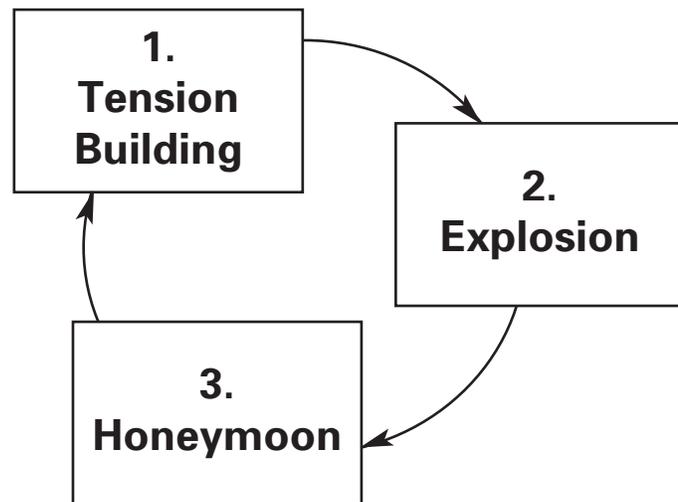
**False:** There is help—from counselors, teachers, parents, hotlines, and special programs. There are also some programs for men who have abused their wives or girlfriends.

**Note:** Local referrals are available through the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-7233 or [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org) (for counselors and support groups in your area); and the National Mental Health Association Resource Center, 800-969-6642 or [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org) (for counselors and support groups for young people); and the National Center for Victims of Crime, 800-FYI-CALL.

- i. *You don't need to worry about dating violence if you're gay.*

**False.** In a study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating.

### The Cycle of Violence



2. Work in small groups to examine teens' stereotypes of "girlfriend" or "boyfriend." (Be sensitive to gay teens; you may use the term "partner" instead in order to generalize the discussion.)
  - Explain that teens will be working in small groups to discuss what they expect a girlfriend and boyfriend to be like.
  - Divide teens into small groups and give each group some newsprint and a marker.
  - Tell teens to brainstorm lists of their expectations about the behavior of a girlfriend or boyfriend.
  - Have each group choose a recorder to write down its ideas and a reporter to present the ideas to the whole group.
3. Bring the whole group together again and discuss teens' stereotypes of girlfriend and boyfriend.
  - Have reporters from each small group present the groups' ideas.
  - Use what teens present to point out common expectations. It is likely that their lists will be similar in some ways. Answers might include the following:
    - Being a girlfriend may require a young woman to give up activities, talents, and other relationships and give priority to her boyfriend and their relationship.

- Being a boyfriend may make a young man believe that he must be sexually aggressive, make all of the decisions in the relationship, and be domineering and controlling of his girlfriend's activities and behavior.
- Ask teens how these expectations of what a girlfriend and boyfriend are supposed to do might lead to dating violence. The point here is that once teens think these stereotypes are normal, it is harder for them to act in non-stereotypical ways. When they broaden their views, it will become easier to behave differently.

Optional: Have the boys write the list for boyfriends and girls write the list for girlfriends—this might help with the breakdown of stereotypes.

4. Discuss some early warning signs of dating violence.
  - Have the resource person explain that teens need to be able to recognize early warning signs of dating violence.
  - Studies indicate that one can tell if dating violence is likely to happen. There are clear early warning signs to look for. The resource person should remind the participants that they should never wait for a violent episode to happen. If they are concerned about potential abuse, they should get help without delay.
  - Distribute copies of Handout 2: *Early Warning Signs*, and have the resource person read the warning signs aloud and explain them.
  - The resource person can suggest that teens who have individual (and personal) questions can speak to him or her after the session.

### Wrap-up for Part 1

Ask the group to develop three project ideas that they could do that would give some of this information to their peers. Surveys can help identify the things that are most important. Once the group has identified issues, then discussions can focus on how the issue can evolve into a service-learning project.

Part 2 of Session 14 will continue the discussion of dating violence. Teens will work together to consider ways to prevent sexual assault.

## P A R T

## 2

## STEP D

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Brainstorming
- Role-play
- Whole-group Discussion



40 MINUTES

## REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin Part 2 by reviewing Part 1. It is a good idea to have a resource person join the session for Part 2. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives for these sessions and give them an overview of what will be accomplished during this session. (Hint: Use the objectives set out at the beginning of this session.)

## Solutions to Dating Violence

1. The group develops a Dating Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.
  - Tell teens that they will work in pairs for this activity.
  - Give each pair paper and pencil and ask each pair to list at least three rights and three responsibilities that all teens should have when dating.
  - Before dividing the group into pairs, start them out with some examples, such as
    - I have the *right*
      - To ask for or refuse a date
      - To suggest activities
      - To tell someone not to interrupt me
      - To refuse affection
      - To refuse to lend money
    - I have the *responsibility*
      - To determine my limits and values
      - To respect the limits of others
      - To communicate clearly and honestly
      - To ask for help when I need it
      - To be considerate
  - After ten minutes, bring the pairs back together as a group, and use the *Dating Rights and Responsibilities* do-it-yourself poster to create a combined list.
  - Ask each pair to provide one or two rights or responsibilities.
  - Use check marks to indicate on the combined list each time a right or responsibility is mentioned by an additional pair. Teens can then see what rights and responsibilities are most important to them as a group.
  - The point here is to use positive peer pressure to normalize fair and civil behavior, with the ideas about fairness coming from teens themselves.
2. Teens can use conflict management skills to find alternatives to dating violence.
  - Take a few minutes to review with the group the ideas and skills they learned in Sessions 7 and 8 about conflict management, which can also be useful in preventing dating violence.
  - Have teens recap skills in giving and receiving negative feedback, using the *Handling Difficult Situations* poster.

- Some other ideas and skills that are applicable to preventing dating violence include making informed choices about when to use particular conflict styles (such as not overusing confrontation or accommodation), using anger management strategies, and using active listening to communicate.
  - The point here is to help teens understand that they can use conflict management skills to make sure they have their dating rights respected and to uphold their dating responsibilities.
  - The teens can then use these ideas and skills in the following situation.
3. Teens analyze a dating violence situation and suggest alternatives.
- Tell the group that the leader and the resource person will play the roles of the boy and girl in the following scripted role-play.
  - Teens should watch and listen closely so they can figure out what's going on, advise the boy and girl, and (possibly) step into the role-play themselves.
  - This scenario takes place in a high school hallway at the end of the school day. Feel free to change the location to a community setting if you think that would better suit your group.
  - The leader and the resource person (or the co-leaders) then read the following script. Partner 1 is a boy and Partner 2 is a girl.
- Partner 1: Hey! I've been looking for you.  
 Partner 2: Just got out of class—what's up?  
 Partner 1: I have got some great new CDs. Come driving with me.  
 Partner 2: I'd really like to, but I have to study for this math test. I told Rhonda I'd meet her at her place to study.  
 Partner 1: The test can wait. I want to spend time with you.  
 Partner 2: I can't. My father said he'd ground me if I mess up in math again. How about tomorrow?  
 Partner 1: Today. You're mine, aren't you?  
 Partner 2: Sure I'm your girl.  
 Partner 1: Then show me by how you act. [*He grabs Partner 2 by the arm.*]  
 Besides, the girls in fourth period said you've been talking to some other boy.  
 Partner 2: That's not true! I don't know what they're talking about!  
 Partner 1: Then show me you're mine! You're coming with me!  
 Partner 2: I can't. Let me go! I'm going home!  
 Partner 1: No, you're not! [*He looks like he's about to slap Partner 2 across the face. They both freeze for a few seconds.*]
- Have teens analyze the situation. Ask them what's going on, if there are any early warning signs, and what interests (especially needs) each person has here.
  - Have teens give advice to the boyfriend and girlfriend.
  - The adults resume the role-play and follow the teens' advice, or teen volunteers step into one or both roles and use the suggestions of their peers.
  - Debrief the role-play. Ask:
    - What was hard and easy about this role-play?
    - What would you like to have said or done in this situation?

- How might you have acted in a similar situation?
- What can and can't you use from this role-play in your life?
- The adult role-players should also discuss how they felt playing these roles and taking teens' advice.

**Note:** The key here is the ability to use conflict management skills. It's important to show teens how anger management can work in this situation. Remind teens that they have conflict choices—they have the tools, and they are the only ones who can do it for themselves. Also, point out that the boyfriend and girlfriend in this situation can ask others—such as friends, family, and school or community mediators and counselors—for help.

## STEP E

### TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Journal Writing
- What I Know—What I Want To Know—What I Learned (K-W-L)



10 MINUTES

### Reflection

1. Relate the session to teens' lives.
  - Go back and review the “Know,” “Want To Know,” and “Learned” activity from Step B to summarize what teens have learned.
  - Give teens a minute to reflect, then call on as many teens as possible and have each tell one thing he or she learned from this session on dating violence. Write their comments in the “Learned” column on the chalkboard or newsprint.
2. Turn learning into action.
  - Ask teens what advice they would give to other young people about how to establish good dating relationships and avoid dating violence. What do they wish they had known before?
  - Ask what local resources they might recommend to a friend who has a problem with dating violence. Remind them of the list of resources they compiled in Session 6: *Our Community's Resources*.
  - If this session has sparked special interest among teens and they are interested in doing a short service-learning project (approximately two hours or less) related to this session, consult the Introduction in Volume One for “Easy Steps to a Service-learning Project.”
  - Ask for volunteers for the next session's tasks, such as making posters, contacting community resource people, and setting up the room.
3. Distribute the journal for Session 14.
  - Explain, remind, or ask teens the purpose of the journal. Be sure they know it is to help them reflect on what they learned and for you to read and respond to what they write. Be clear that you will not be correcting what they write, just reading and responding.
  - Ask teens if they are willing to share their thoughts with the group.
  - Collect their journals to review them after the session and write short comments. Tell them you will return their journals with your comments at the next session. This gives the teens something tangible and provides them with a connection to previous sessions.



## HANDOUT 1

### Hard Truths About Dating Violence

1. *Dating violence affects only a tiny percentage of the population.*

**False:** Studies show that approximately one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship. These numbers are higher than most people think because dating violence is often hidden. The numbers are likely to be even higher because dating violence often remains unreported. Why do you think this problem is hidden?

2. *The abuser is sometimes a loving person.*

**True:** Abusers are often described by their dates as playful, attentive, sensitive, exciting, and affectionate when they are not being abusive.

3. *Jealousy and possessiveness are signs of true love.*

**False:** No, they are not. They are signs that the person sees you as a possession and are the most common early signs of abuse.

4. *An occasional punch is okay; it is not abuse.*

**False:** It *is* abuse—and it is a criminal act: assault.

5. *Most batterers are poor or uneducated.*

**False:** Batterers are found in all classes: rich, poor, and in between; professional and unemployed; and in all ethnic groups.

6. *Men are battered by women just as often as women are battered by men.*

**False:** Ninety-five percent of the reported incidents of assault in relationships are committed by males, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Approximately 2 percent of the adult male population is seriously battered. In junior high or middle school, equal numbers of males and females use violence. However, vio-

lence by males is far more prevalent than other types of dating violence. When young women do use violence, they often act in self-defense. Another factor to consider is that, because of embarrassment, boys and men are less likely to report cases in which they have been victims of dating violence.

7. *Battered women are constantly being abused.*

**False:** Abuse is inflicted in a repeating cycle that is made up of three phases.

*Phase 1—Tension building:* A gradual increase in tension; the abuser uses name calling, constant criticism, and minor physical abuse.

*Phase 2—Explosion:* A major act of physical violence results in serious physical injury to the woman.

*Phase 3—Honeymoon:* The abuser feels sorry for his behavior and acts in an apologetic, loving way. He may shower the woman with gifts, apologize, and promise not to hurt her again. Eventually, though, the remorse (regret) gives way to minor incidents of abuse and the cycle begins again.

8. *There is nothing a victim of dating violence can do—and no place for abusers to get help.*

**False:** There is help—from counselors, teachers, parents, hotlines, and special programs. There are also some programs for men who have abused their wives or girlfriends.

**Note:** Local referrals are available through the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-7233 or [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org) (for counselors and support groups in your area); and the National Mental Health Association Resource Center, 800-969-6642 or [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org) (for counselors and support groups for young people); and the National Center for Victims of Crime, 800-FYI-CALL.

9. *You don't need to worry about dating violence if you're gay.*

**False.** In a study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating.

*"Prevalence of Partner Violence in Same-Sex Romantic and Sexual Relationships in a National Sample of Adolescents," Halpern CT, Young ML, Waller MW, Martin SL, Kupper LL. Journal of Adolescent Health, Vol. 35, Issue 2, Pages 124-131, (August 2004).*

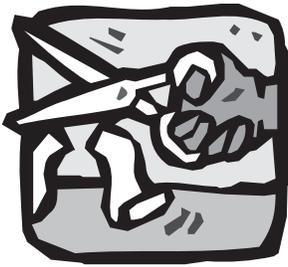


## HANDOUT 2

### Early Warning Signs

Is your relationship likely to become violent? (Remember, if you are worried about your relationship, you should get help. Don't wait for a violent episode to occur.)

1. Is your dating partner jealous or possessive?
2. Does your partner dislike your parents or friends?
3. Does your partner have traditional ideas of male and female roles? For example, "I want to go to the game tonight. I want you there with me! It's your place to be there with me!"
4. Do you get a lot of negative teasing from your partner, even (and sometimes especially) in front of friends?
5. Does your partner have a quick temper?
6. Does your partner "playfully" slap you and shove you?
7. Does your partner's behavior change because he or she drinks or uses drugs?
8. Do you feel it is your responsibility to make the relationship work? Are you expected to change your behavior to suit his or hers?
9. Are you afraid of what your partner might do when angry, whether angry with you or with someone else? Does he or she "take things out on you?"
10. Are you afraid to express feelings of your own or make decisions about what to wear, where to go, or whom to like?
11. Does your partner demand to know where you are at all times? Does he or she call you to check-up on where you are and what you are doing?
12. Does your partner make you afraid to say no to sex? Does your partner respect your wish to practice safe sex?
13. Are you afraid to end the relationship? (For example, are you afraid of what your partner may do to you or to himself or herself?)



**DO-IT-YOURSELF POSTER**

**Dating Rights and Responsibilities**

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>

**JOURNAL****Session 14**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

My biggest question about dating violence is

---

---

It surprised me to learn that

---

---

The three things I learned that I think will be most important to me are

---

---

---

I would like to share this information with

---

---

I would like to use what I've learned about dating violence by

---

---