

Dating Shouldn't Hurt

What is dating violence?

Dating violence happens when one partner in a dating relationship is abused or mistreated.

- It can occur in opposite-sex and same-sex relationships.
- It knows all ages, economic statuses, races, and ethnicities.
- It can take place at any point in the dating relationship beginning, middle, or end.
- It can be a pattern of abusive behavior that is repeated and often escalates over time or it can be a single act of violence.
- It can include physical, emotional, mental, or verbal abuse.
- It involves about one in three high school students.
- It is reported to include 20 percent of dating couples.

It is NOT a positive relationship when . . .

- . . . you are subject to verbal abuse by being belittled or mocked; or your opinion is not valued; or you are afraid to share your thoughts, feelings, or concerns; or your date swears at you.
- . . . you are pressured to have sex or to do something you don't want to do; or your "no" is ignored; or sex is expected as payment for a date.
- . . . you are threatened or made to feel uncomfortable.
- . . . you are slapped, pushed, kicked, or punched.
- . . . your date has temper tantrums or is extremely possessive or jealous; or you are blamed for your date's problems.
- . . . you, your family, and your friends are treated with disrespect or you are isolated from family and friends.

If you are experiencing some form of violence: seek help . . . end the relationship . . . avoid being alone with the abuser . . . take time to heal.

You need time to heal spiritually and emotionally. There are many people who can listen, give advice, and support your decisions. **You are not alone.**

Talk to someone you trust

Confide in your parents, a sister or brother, a close friend, a youth leader, your minister, your teacher, your coach, a doctor, a counselor, staff at a local shelter for abused women, or a crisis line counselor.

Remember

You are important and have an inherent right to be treated justly. You are a wondrous, unique creation of God. You are deserving of love. God wills for all of God's creation to know abundant life.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); lines 29-32

Helping a friend who is being abused?

Don't ignore the signs of abuse; Listen; Be supportive; Allow your friend to lean on you; Offer to go with your friend for help.

Often the most important things we can say to others are "I'm sorry," "I care about you," "I love you," "How can I help?" and "I will support you."

Additional Resources

Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network. www.pdcusa.org/dhewalpadvln. Call 1-888-728-7228, x5800 for assistance in locating help through this network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE.

National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-621-4000.

Love Doesn't Have to Hurt Teens Web site at www.apa.org/pl/joliteen.

Anguished Hearts: Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, 2004. PDS #70-270-03-025. To order call 1-800-524-2612.

Turn Mourning into Dancing: A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence. Approved by the 213th General Assembly, 2001. PDS #OGA-01-018. To order call 1-800-524-2612.

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