



Teen Dating Violence: Louisiana School Based Curricula

Louisiana Teen Dating Violence Law

According to LA R.S. 17:81, all Louisiana school districts are required to:

- Provide age and grade appropriate classroom instruction relative to dating violence for students in grades seven through twelve.
- Provide instruction to all school employees having contact with students in such grades relative to the definition of dating violence, dating violence warning signs, and how to properly address suspected or reported dating violence involving students.
- Include the definition of dating violence in student code of conduct.
- Collect data about the number of incidents of dating violence reported to school employees and the actions taken by school employees to assist victims of dating violence.

What Is Dating Violence?

[Teen dating violence](#)^[PDF 187KB] is defined as the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between current or former dating partner. Several different words are used to describe teen dating violence. Below are just a few.

- Relationship abuse
- Intimate partner violence
- Relationship violence
- Dating abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Domestic violence

Dating violence is widespread with serious long-term and short-term effects. Many teens do not report it because they are afraid to tell friends and family. A 2011 CDC nationwide survey found that 23% of females and 14% of males who ever experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age. [The 2013 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) found approximately 10% of high school students reported physical victimization and 10% reported sexual victimization from a dating partner in the 12 months* before they were surveyed.

*Vagi, K. J., Olsen, E. O., Basile, K. C., & Vivolo-Kantor, A. M. (2015). Teen dating violence (physical and sexual) among US high school students: Findings from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169, 474-482.

When Does Dating Violence Happen?

According to the CDC 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.

Why Teach Prevention in Schools?

- Because teens spend a significant portion of their lives in school.
- Schools are ideally positioned to provide preventative measures at an early stage before teens find themselves in violent relationships.
- It's where teens and tweens learn about relationships.
- Schools can teach teens and tweens what healthy relationships look like.
- It's where teens gather.
- It's where friendships develop.

How Can Schools Teach Healthy Relationships?

Per Louisiana law dating violence abuse instruction should start in grades seven through twelve while taking health education. School-based activities for abuse prevention can help build skills for healthy relationships and benefit a teen's emotional development. In healthy relationships, both partners give and get respect, make decisions and have freedom.

Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence has a model policy for school districts to use, but it is not mandatory that schools adopt it. Not all Louisiana schools have a policy to bring prevention programs to schools. They also may not have staff trained to educate or help students on this topic.

It is recommended to use evidence based programs that have been found to be successful in dealing with Teen Dating Violence, as it has been thoroughly researched and verified as effective.

What Programs Do We Recommend?

- **Safe Dates:** helps teens recognize the difference between caring, supportive relationships and controlling, manipulative, or abusive dating relationships. Safe Dates can be used as a dating violence prevention tool for both male and female middle-and high-school students. Evaluation of the Safe Dates curriculum indicated that it had prevention effects with boys and girls for both physical and sexual dating violence. www.hazelden.org/web/public/safedates.page
- **The Fourth R:** is a comprehensive school-based program designed to include students age 14-15, teachers, parents, and the community in reducing violence and risk behaviors, including dating violence. http://youthrelationships.org/about_fourth_r.html
- **Shifting Boundaries:** is a prevention program for middle school students that focuses on sexual harassment and precursors to dating violence. Evaluation results found that the school-level intervention prevented sexual violence victimization experienced from dating partners.

<http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/teen-dating-violence/Documents/shifting-boundaries-all-schools.pdf>

- Relationship Smarts PLUS (RS+): was created to help teens learn, often for the first time, how to make wise choices about relationships, dating, partners, sex, and more. In its evaluation, RS+ prevented verbal but not physical aggression perpetration among high school students. <http://www.dibbleinstitute.org/love-u2-relationship-smarts-plus-new/>:
- Coaching Boys into Men: This program consists of a series of coach-to-athlete “teach-easy tactics and trainings” that illustrate ways to model respect and promote healthy relationships and choices among youth. Instructs coaches on how to incorporate themes associated with teamwork, integrity, fair play, and respect into their daily practice and routine. In its evaluation, CBIM prevented dating violence perpetration among participating male athletes at 1 year follow-up. <http://coachescorner.org>
- Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships: teaching 11 to 14 year olds about healthy relationships. This innovative approach to prevention brings together entire communities to promote healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence in middle schools. <http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/> and <http://www.startstrongparents.org/resources/parents>

Resources:

Break the Cycle. (2016). Dating Abuse Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/Dating%20Abuse%20Statistics%20Mar%202016.pdf>

Break the Cycle’s School Policy Kit. “Sample Policy.” CD-ROM. Hazelden, 2010

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Understanding Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/teen-dating-violence-factsheet-a.pdf>

Futures Without Violence and Break the Cycle. (2016). School and District Policies To Increase Student Safety and Improve School Climate: Promoting Healthy Relationships and Preventing Teen Dating Violence. Retrieved from http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/FWV_StartStrongPolicies_R4.pdf

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. (2014). Teen Power and Control Wheel. Retrieved from http://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Teen_P_C_wheel.pdf