

Teen Dating Violence

It Happens in Utah

**Stories of Utah Teens Who Have
Survived Dating Violence**





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Remaining silent no more.

The voices in this booklet are strong and passionate, and tell real life stories of Utah teens who have faced immense adversity and discovered within themselves incredible strength. These teens are our sons and daughters, our friends and classmates who have experienced a relationship that was abusive. They have found the courage to come forward and share their stories in the hope that no one will remain silent about this issue anymore.

The Utah Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program would like to thank these courageous teens for sharing their stories and for helping to educate others on the reality of dating violence in Utah.

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14-year-old, **Sandy, Utah**

My name is Sara. I am 16 years old. When I was 14, I met a 17-year-old guy named Jordan. He was really nice to me at first and I loved the attention I got from him. He started treating me like his girlfriend and it made me feel special. Not long after I met him, I was hanging out with him at his house. His mom was home and we were watching TV in his bedroom. He started kissing me and then wanted to have sex. I was scared, but I liked him and wondered what sex was like, so I went along with it. I hated it. When he was done, he acted like it was nothing and took me home. I didn't tell anyone and just went to my room and texted him telling him I didn't like it and didn't want to have sex again. He told me that it wouldn't happen again so I felt safe being around him.

A few days later I went with him to his friend's house. Things seemed fine and I was having a good time. Then he took me to the bedroom and my heart was pounding. He forced me to have sex with him again. This happened several times over the next four months. Each time he promised he wouldn't do it again and made me feel like I was safe and I could trust him. He always told me he was sorry after each time.

At home, I kept with drawing from my family because I didn't want my parents to be mad at me. I finally decided to tell someone I had had sex so I told my cousin who lives out of state. She told her dad who called my mom and told her everything. My mom was mad— she had known I had spent time at Jordan's house. She had even talked with his mom to make sure that when I was at his house that she was home and I was safe. When I told Jordan that my mom had found out, he got mad and told me that we needed to come up with a different story so he wouldn't get in trouble. His mom called me and threatened to ruin my whole high school experience if I didn't like and make it go away. I felt like I needed to protect him to protect myself.

My mom was worried about me having sex. At this time she thought it only happened one time and did not know that I had been raped. I had been a victim of sexual abuse earlier in life, and since my mom is a therapist, she knew that I needed to talk to someone. I started going to counseling and after a few sessions I broke down and told my therapist the truth about what had happened. She had already called Child Protective Services about me having sex the first time because of my age, and said that she would be reporting the rest of the incidents. I was really mad at her. I didn't want Jordan to get in trouble. I didn't want to have to talk to anyone else about it. My counselor told me about the Children At Risk Intervention team at the Sandy Police Department and asked if I would be o.k. talking to them for support. I was nervous to meet them and talk to them about what happened, but they made me feel safe and seemed like they really cared and wanted to help me.

Not long after meeting with them, we found out that because all of the rapes happened outside of Sandy, I had to go to a different police department to give my report. I met a detective at the Children's Justice Center and was so scared to talk to him. He made a lot of promises about filing the charges and making sure I was safe from Jordan. I didn't want to talk and tell him what had happened but knew I needed to so that Jordan would not do this to anyone else.

After Jordan found out that I had told on him, he told all his friends and other people at school. They started treating me like crap. I didn't want to be at school anymore. I skipped classes to avoid

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being there. The advocates at Sandy Police Department talked to my school. First, the school said that because Jordan wasn't even in our school district, that he would get kicked out and not be able to attend school there. I felt safe at school and felt like they cared.

I was told Jordan was arrested and put in jail because he had turned 18 during the period of

time the rapes occurred. One day I saw him at school so I went to the office to find out what was going on and why he was there when they had promised me they would keep me safe. They told me that because he had not been found "guilty" they could not do anything to him.

“Six counts of sexual misconduct with a minor, when it should have been at least forcible sexual abuse”

Things kept getting worse. Even the football coach was saying things about me and telling people to stay away from me. My grades dropped and I never wanted to go to school. Jordan texted me and wrote things about me on MySpace. He had his friends text me and tell me that I should kill myself. One time I went to a school football game people booed me from the game.

The detective I talked to at the Children's Justice Center told me that if Jordan bothered me or texted me, even through his friends, to let him

know. I told the detective what was going on and he didn't do anything, even though he told me he would help me if Jordan bothered me. I tried to call him and he wouldn't call me back. When we had appointments to meet about it, he wouldn't be there, even with the appointments being at his office, on his time. To this day I have only seen that detective the one time at the Children's Justice Center. I gave up. I couldn't take it anymore so I withdrew from school and enrolled in a different high school that was 20 minutes away from my house. It was a school that I didn't fit in at. I had a hard time making friends and didn't do well in school there either.

As time went on, Jordan was charged with six counts of sexual misconduct with a minor when it should have been at least forcible sexual abuse. That is when I started really believing he was really getting away with it like he said he would. His mom was getting away with her threat, too. I felt like I couldn't go to my school anymore and couldn't be with my friends. It seemed like all he was going to get was a slap on the wrist. He was still going to school and having fun with his friends while I was suffering.

Through all of this time, I had a hard time sleeping because I would have nightmares every time I fell asleep. Over and over, I dreamed that Jordan killed me and then I'd wake up and couldn't

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stop thinking about it during the day. Sometimes when I was out with friends, I would see something that reminded me of one of my dreams and the horrible feelings would come back. I had flashbacks not only of what Jordan really did to me, but also nightmares of what I was afraid he might do to me. I had to start taking medication just to be able to feel somewhat normal.

I, along with my family, had hoped that the court process would help me feel better about things. I spent time in therapy preparing what I wanted to say to the judge about how I had been affected by Jordan's actions. I did have the opportunity to state my feelings in court, but it didn't seem to matter. All Jordan had to do was go to counseling for a few months and write me an apology letter. When I finally got the letter, all it said was that he was sorry he didn't realize that by having sex with me I might have a difficult time emotionally because I was young. So, basically, he didn't take accountability for forcing me to have sex and didn't have any understanding of how his actions affected me.

I met other girls who had this happen to them by Jordan and none of them wanted to talk to the police because they saw how I was affected and that it seemed to make things worse. All I can hope for is that one day Jordan has to face the reality of his choices and that he doesn't hurt anyone else. I am still in counseling every week. I am doing a lot better and do not have the nightmares or flashbacks. My relationship with my parents has gotten better and I'm starting to feel better about myself. Although I'm going back to my own high school this year, I plan to complete my credits as fast as possible so I can be done with high school. My life is very different now. I do not have as many friends and am not close with the people that I used to be close to, because they were not supportive or understanding of what I went through. I have a difficult time trusting people and still do not like to be around guys and even struggle with physical touch from my dad and brother. I have a hard time going to school and have had to face comments and judgment from people. I hope that other girls do not have to go through this. I think the system needs to be changed so that victims are safe from the harassment I had to go through as a result of pressing charges against Jordan.

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17-year-old, Ogden, Utah

I dated this guy for six months. He was a really an outgoing person, enjoyed socializing and loved being the center of attention. When we were together, he didn't like the attention I got from other people. If we went to a party together and he wasn't the center of attention, we would leave and he would take me home. I was not allowed to go to any party without him. If for some reason we couldn't be together on the weekend, he would call me seven or eight times to make sure that I was at home and that I wasn't going anywhere.

He always made sure other people thought he took good care of me and never abused me. He never yelled at me in public, he would always wait until we were in private or at his house. He was very controlling. I was not allowed to talk on the phone with anyone if we were together. If for some reason I had to, then I had to put the phone on speaker and he would listen to the whole conversation. He would check my cell phone to see who I had called and who had called me. If he saw a name he didn't recognize, especially if it was a male name, he would demand to know who it was and how I knew them.

“During this relationship I felt suffocated, like I was stuck in a locked closet.”

One time we got into an argument. I was trying to leave his house and he grabbed me and strangled me. The next day he apologized and promised me he would never, ever do it again. His possessiveness kept me away from all my friends and family. He was manipulative and would often make me think it was my fault if he did anything wrong.

When I caught him cheating on me, he told me it was my fault because I trusted him. He frequently called me demeaning names, insulted me, and said hurtful things to make me feel bad. He would constantly tell me that without him I was nothing, that he was the only guy who would love me in this world, and everything he did to me was out of love. I often felt like I was walking on eggshells because I didn't know when he was going to explode.

During this relationship I felt suffocated, like I was stuck in a locked closet. I was not able to make any decisions on my own, especially when it came to financial decisions. Whenever I got any money, whether it was from my paycheck or even birthday money from my Grandma, he would take it and tell me that I didn't need it.

That relationship has had a really negative impact on my life. It took me a long time to recover, and even now I still suffer from some of the emotional scars that were left.

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19-year-old, LaVerkin, Utah

When I was 19, I was very shy. I trusted everyone and thought the entire world was full of sunshine and flowers, like everyone was trying to make the world a better place. I felt like I could trust everyone and that I was safe at a "church college."

Then I met Greg. He was in my church group that met every week for activities my church calls Family Home Evening. He came over to our apartment and was so charming. He loved to flirt and even bragged about the many girlfriends he once had. He was cute. But, he was not my type and I didn't think that I was his type either.

One day I was caught off guard when I met him unexpectedly. The sun was just starting to set on that fall evening. The air was brisk and it was starting to cool down from a hot day. I was walking home after a day of classes. In order to get to my apartment, there were two paths I could take. One would take me around a large park, the tennis courts and then up a steep hill. The other path went right through the park. You can guess which path I took. The park was almost everyone's choice.

At the beginning of the park there is a large sign that says, "Park closed after dark." Since the sun was right at dusk I figured that it was still open and decided to walk through it. I walked quickly in the autumn air; my mind was full of the day's events. I had briefly seen Greg at the school building I was just at.

I wasn't really paying close attention to my surroundings. Greg appeared from behind a tree and startled me. As soon as I realized it was him I relaxed and a general conversation ensued. We took a few steps toward home and then he stepped in front of me, preventing me from going any further on the path. I tried to walk around him but couldn't. I was uncomfortable with the situation, but since I wanted to be nice I just stood there and continued on with the conversation.

"We're having pizza at my apartment tonight, you should come," he said.

"Ha! Tonight I have way too much studying to do." Sorry, I told him.

"Really, you should come; it will be a great time."

"I have learned that I am a powerful person who deserves to be loved and treated with respect...not belittled, humiliated, or threatened."

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"Thanks, but no thanks," I replied. At this time I tried to walk around him again to continue going home.

The sun was down and it was getting dark quickly. It was at that moment that Greg's countenance changed. He went from an upbeat, happy guy to someone who had a dark, alternative motive. His smiles changed to a scowl and his eyes seemed sinister. He was then more forceful in his conversation. He began asking me private questions that I became very uncomfortable with. Quickly I wanted to flee the situation but was unable to with him standing in front of me.

Then I found myself thrown to the ground behind a bush with a large hunting knife under my chin. The blade was cold, and when I think about it, I can still feel it under my chin. I was too scared to fight back. He then stabbed the knife in the ground at eye level, right where I was looking. It has never left my memory. I had never been so scared in my life. I literally froze. I couldn't move. Even if I wanted to move, my body would not cooperate.

Greg then proceeded to rape me.

When he was done, he quietly stood up and walked away. I remained frozen. When I finally was able to move, the sky was dark. The stars were twinkling like there was nothing wrong in the world. They shone bright like they did the night before when everyone in the world was good. I told one friend and begged them not to say a word to anyone. They didn't. I didn't tell anyone for three years. During those three years and the years that followed, I suffered intense depression and contemplated suicide frequently.

There were many warning signs in my attack, but I was too worried about being rude or inappropriate to this guy that he was able to bully me into whatever he wanted. Since, I have learned that I am a powerful person who deserves to be loved and treated with respect. I do not deserve to be belittled, humiliated, or threatened. I am a person with courage to become the best person I can be, despite the challenges forced upon me by others.

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16-year-old, Ogden, Utah

I met him in high school; he was a year older than me and very popular and well liked, especially by the girls. When we first started going out, everything was so perfect. I felt so lucky to have him as my boyfriend. We were inseparable and spent virtually all of our free time together. He didn't really like me hanging out with my other friends alone, especially guys. He said he trusted me, but he didn't trust the other guys. At first I actually thought it was very sweet for him to be so protective of me. I didn't think much of it at the time, I was in love and wasn't looking for any warning signs.

As time passed, the controlling behavior became worse and worse. One day I was sitting in my class, just hanging out with some friends and he just showed up at my class. He was furious. He said he had called me several times and demanded to know why I hadn't answered my phone. I apologized and tried telling him I didn't hear my phone ring. He said he didn't believe me and became even more angry because I had been sitting there talking to some of my guy friends. He then dragged me out of the classroom, threw me against the lockers, and started choking me. I was scared and embarrassed; I didn't want to tell anyone.

The following day he apologized and said he loved me and was just worried about me, that's why he was mad. He said he didn't mean to choke me and didn't know why he did it. He promised it would never happen again. I believed him. I thought things might change, that it would get better. I wanted to be a good girlfriend and be supportive. Everyone makes mistakes and I thought he deserved a second chance. I know he had some problems at home, I thought that might be the reason for his behavior.

I tried my best to follow his rules. His controlling behavior continued to the point where I had lost all of my friends and no one wanted to hang out with me because they were all scared of him. I didn't realize how isolated I was. I tried my best to please him, but it was never good enough. He would constantly accuse me of not being there for him or that I was not supportive enough. I had to be with him all the time and answer the phone every time he called. If he couldn't get a hold of me, there were times he would just show up at my class or my house and would get really mad and yell at me for not answering my phone.

I was fed up. When a friend told me that he had cheated on me, I decided to end the relationship. I couldn't take it anymore. It was not an easy break up, we had been together off and on for four

“As time passed, the controlling behavior became worse and worse.”

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years, so it was very difficult. Every time I had tried to break it off, he would call me or my family and say that I was all he lived for and that he would kill himself if I left him.

I went back to him a couple more times for that reason alone. I really did love him and cared about him, I didn't want him to hurt himself, or worse. After he made the same threat over and over, I stopped believing him; he was never going to kill himself. This was just a game he was playing; he wanted me to feel guilty so I wouldn't leave him. The last time I tried to leave him, he threatened to kill my whole family. I was able to get help and support from my family and my school. After that I was finally able to end that horrific relationship.

Now when I look back, there were so many warning signs I chose to ignore. I loved him and believed he loved me. I believed he would change; that's why I believed his repeated lies. I should have listened to my instincts, to my family, and to my friends, but I ignored them all. If I could go back in time, I would have chosen my boyfriend more carefully; I wouldn't have dated just anyone. Just because all my friends were dating someone, didn't mean I had to. I am glad I had this experience, though. I have learned a lot from it and it's never too late to end any relationship, there is always help and support out there.

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16-year-old, Moab, Utah

My first real dating relationship ended violently. After that dating experience my self-esteem went downhill, my trust of guys was gone, and I thought I wasn't good enough for anyone. I started going out with jerks and did things I normally wouldn't do, just so they would like me. I thought that a "jerk" was what I deserved. When I was eighteen I met someone. He was lot older than me and for some reason he seemed different. I thought he was more mature and I fell for him quickly.

The first two months were awesome! He called me all the time "Just to say hi," and he texted me sweet things constantly. He always wanted to be with me and took me everywhere. I was so happy to find someone who liked me so much. When we had been together for three months, he asked me to move into his apartment with him. Eager to leave my parents' house, I said yes.

The next month I found out I was pregnant. We were both really excited. He was ecstatic. Things were great until I was six months along. He started going through my stuff and picking fights over small things, such as pictures of me or my friends and my clothes he said were "slutty." He started accusing me of cheating and said the baby wasn't his. He put me down about everything. He would go out with his friends and leave me home all night. He secluded me from my friends or family.

The month before I had our daughter, we ended up moving into a beautiful new home. Things were great, he quit putting me down, we just enjoyed being parents. We did great with no fights. The happiness did not last long. After six months he started back in with accusations. It only got worse. When we would fight he would throw things at me, call me names and push me around. He would come in later and apologize. I forgave him every time. I always made excuses for him and never let anyone know how bad it was...it never got better. He started hitting me and hurting me physically, mentally and emotionally and he would do it in front of our daughter.

I later found out he had been doing everything he accused me of; cheating, lying, etc. All the signs were there but I ignored them. I made excuses for them. When I confronted him he beat me badly enough to bust my eye open, in front of my child. I thought I was going to die that day. I ended up taking my daughter and moved back to my mom's house.

A couple of months later I was back with him. I told myself he was the best I could get because nobody wanted someone with a kid. It was only a matter of days before the abuse started again. I ended up staying with him another two years before law enforcement physically separated us.

It has taken a lot of work but I have learned this wasn't my fault. I have learned who I am and where

**"It was
only a
matter of days
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I want to be in life. I have learned to cope with what's happened and I'm slowly re-building my self-esteem and confidence. I still have trust issues and I'm still afraid of my daughter's dad, but I've learned to deal with those issues. I hope that by telling my story it will help someone in a bad relationship realize they are not alone and that they are worth more.

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12-year-old, South Ogden, Utah

My problems started when I was 12 and we moved to a new house and I had to change schools. I loved my old school and had lots of friends. In the new school no one was friendly to me and I got really sad. One girl started to act like my friend although she was not like anyone I would have hung out with before. I knew my parents wouldn't like her because of the way she dressed and because she smoked. I always went to her house and my parents were so busy with their jobs they didn't seem to care. Pretty soon I started smoking, too. She took me to a party where I met Joe. He seemed to like me. At the next party he gave me beer and pretty soon we were making out.

I didn't know much about sex but now I know he raped me. I didn't say anything because he acted like my boyfriend and I was happy to be a part of a group of kids. He made me have sex with him pretty often and I just thought that was what sex was all about...but I got pregnant. I didn't know I was pregnant, but one day my Mom took off work and took me to the doctor. When my mom and I found out I was pregnant...it was awful.

My dad and mom were so angry and told me I was a disappointment. They told me I had to get an abortion because I was too young and they both worked and no one was going to take care of my mistake. My parents just said I was suffering for my sins. I did have the abortion to make my parents happy. At school I finally told my friend what happened because she told Joe, and he and his friends beat me up for killing his baby. Then everyone called me the "baby killer".

**"I am
still
afraid of him."**

I had to transfer schools again. I started hanging out with the wrong crowd again and got pregnant again when I was 14. I had the baby and moved out of my parents' house. My boyfriend got me to use drugs and he ended up going to prison. I went to a teen parents' school and tried to make a better life for my little girl. The only person who would help me was my grandmother. She paid for an apartment and gave me a car and money every month if I would stay in school. It was hard and I was lonely and I got involved with another guy for two years, and when my ex-boyfriend got out of prison, he broke into my apartment and beat me up and took our daughter. I was in the hospital and he went back to prison but not before he got me pregnant again. I got into drugs again and my baby was born addicted and I was put into a rehab program when my baby was three days old. I had to stay there for three months and my grandmother got custody of my children.

I do not want my ex to know where I live because I am still afraid of him. He has lost all parental rights. My parents divorced during this timeframe and have new partners, but they are helping my grandmother and me and things have gotten better. My little sister is going to college and we have become friends. I want her to have a better life and I hope other girls will know that you never have to have sex with someone if you don't want to...that is called rape.

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Barbara Higgins, **Sandy Police Department**

"I never imagined this would happen to me."

"This doesn't happen to people like me."

"This type of thing happens to other people."

"I didn't see this coming."

"I thought I had an open relationship with my son/daughter."

"He was the perfect guy...at first."

"I was trying to help her; she's had a hard life."

"I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT IT WAS ABUSE."

I frequently hear these comments from victims of teen dating abuse and their families. If you think there is a certain class of people who are victims and perpetrators of teen dating abuse, you are wrong. It can happen to anyone, in any city, in any school, in any religion, in any socioeconomic group, in any ethnic group--anywhere.

Teen dating abuse is commonly referred to as "teen dating violence." There is much more to it than violence. "Abuse" can include emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. All three can be found in unhealthy dating relationships. Unfortunately, many teens who have little experience with dating, who are in need of approval and acceptance by their peers, and are looking for validation, can find themselves in unhealthy relationships.

Teens are surrounded by messages from music, video games, and the media in which women are demeaned and disrespected. Men are often perceived as needing to be tough and free from responsibility. Where are our teens finding messages about healthy relationships?

Parents have a responsibility to be communicating with their children. Officer Ben Derrick of the Sandy Police Department has investigated cases of teen dating violence and abuse. He says, "Parents sometimes make assumptions their children/teens are dealing with the same challenges and stresses they dealt with when they were young. However, times have changed, specifically in areas like technology, including texting, and sexting". It is also important to remember it is the perception of the child that matters as it relates to dating and violence, not what the parent thinks is relevant."

Parents should know who their teen's friends are. Where do they live? Who are their parents? Is your teen comfortable having their friends over to your home? When was the last time you had a conversation with your teenager lasting longer than five minutes?

Law enforcement can only do so much when it comes to teen dating abuse/violence. First, they need to know about it. Many victims don't tell an adult, but will tell a friend. Do teens know what to do when a friend tells them about abuse? Many don't. If parents know their teenager's friends, this can often encourage communication when there is a problem. As a community we need to be working to increase communication and education with our teens and let them know they are not alone, we are here to help. They need to know there is life after abuse.

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Teen Dating Bill of Rights

I have the right to...

- be treated with respect and not be criticized
- have a partner who values me, encourages me, and wants the best for me
- be safe
- maintain my own body, feelings, property, opinions, and boundaries
- privacy
- be listened to seriously
- disagree, assert myself respectfully, and say "no" without feeling guilty
- NOT be abused physically, emotionally, or sexually
- keep my relationships with friends and family
- have my needs be as important as my partner's needs
- NOT be my partner's property or servant
- NOT take responsibility for any acts of violence my partner makes
- have a partner who gives as much to me as I give to him/her
- decide how much time I want to spend with my partner
- pay my own way
- NOT take responsibility for my partner's behavior, choices, or mistakes
- set my own priorities, make my own decisions, and grow as an individual
- fall out of love or leave any relationship.

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FOR HELP 24/7 CALL

Utah Domestic Violence LINK Line
1-800-897-5465

Utah Rape and Sexual Violence Crisis Line
1-800-421-1100

VICTIM ADVOCATE PROGRAMS

(Assist victims with advocacy, court, and abuse in the community)

Draper Victim Advocate Program **(801) 576-6355**
Midvale Victim Advocate Program **(801) 256-2505**
Murray Victim Advocate Program **(801) 284-4203**
Salt Lake City Victim Advocate Program **(801) 799-3756**
Salt Lake County Victim Advocate Program **(801) 743-5860**
Sandy Victim Advocate Program **(801) 568-7283**
South Salt Lake Victim Advocate Program **(801) 412-3660**
West Jordan Victim Assistance Program **(801) 566-6511**
West Valley Victim Advocate Program **(801) 963-3223**
Tooele City Victim Advocate Program **(435) 882-8900**

WEBSITES

Choose Respect www.chooserespect.org/scripts/index.asp

End Abuse <http://endabuse.org/programs/teens/>

Men Can Stop Rape www.mencanstoprape.org/index.htm

My Strength www.mencanstoprape.org/index.htm

National Institute of Justice www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/new.htm

National Sexual Violence Resource Center www.nsvrc.org/

Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault www.ucasa.org/home.html

Utah Department of Health www.health.utah.gov/vipp/

Utah Teen Dating Scene www.facebook.com/utahteendatingscene

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What You Should Know About....

DATING VIOLENCE

Dating violence happens when one person in a relationship repeatedly acts or threatens to act in a way that physically, mentally, verbally and/or sexually injures the other person. It doesn't happen just once but again and again. It is not the same as getting angry or having fights. In a violent relationship, one person is afraid of and/or intimidated by the other person.

Dating violence occurs everywhere and to all kinds of people.

Young people of all cultures, races, religions, sexual orientations, genders and social classes can be victimized by their partner. It is also true that dating violence occurs in same-sex relationships.

Alcohol and/or drugs do not cause dating violence.

These substances may make the violence worse, but they are not the cause of or the excuse for abusive behavior.

Dating violence often gets worse.

Dating violence may escalate as the relationship becomes more serious. Dating violence may also result in serious injury and even death.

The violence is never the victim's fault.

Violence is a choice and is used to control another person. No one deserves to be victimized.

Leaving an abusive relationship is not as easy as it seems.

There are many reasons why it may be difficult to leave, such as fear of the other person, feeling responsible for the relationship, pressure from friends to stay together, and being afraid to be alone. Most of the time the victim wants the relationship to continue but wants the violence to end.

Domestic violence affects all of us--our families, our communities, and our relationships.

More than three million children witness acts of domestic violence every year. One-third of teenagers and young adults have experienced violence in an intimate relationship.

There is no room for fear in a healthy relationship.

Respect, communication, honesty and trust are the basis for a healthy relationship. This means being able to talk to your partner without feeling afraid.

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What You Should Know About....

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Your partner should like you for who you are.

Respect in a relationship means that each person values who the other is and understands - and would never challenge - the other person's boundaries. Each partner should have mutual respect for the other.

There's no way you can have a healthy relationship if you don't trust each other.

It's OK to get a little jealous sometimes - jealousy is a natural emotion. But how a person reacts when he or she feels jealous is what matters.

Honesty goes hand-in-hand with trust because it's tough to trust someone when they are not being honest.

Be honest and open about your feelings. Tell the truth even if you think it will hurt the person. It hurts worse when that person finds out you lied to them.

Your partner should support you in the good times and the bad.

Be supportive of your partner's choices. You should be a shoulder to cry on, a cheerleader, and a friend to your partner as they should be to you.

You need to have give-and-take in your relationship.

It's not like you have to keep a running count and make sure things are exactly even, but you'll know if it isn't a fair balance. Things get bad really fast when a relationship turns into a power struggle, with one person fighting to get his/her way all the time.

You should NEVER feel like you're losing out on being yourself.

In a healthy relationship, everyone needs to make compromises. You both should have your own lives, your own families, friends, interests, hobbies, etc. Neither of you should have to pretend to like something you don't, give up seeing your friends, or drop out of activities you love. And you should also feel free to keep developing new talents or interests, making new friends, and moving forward.

Speak honestly and openly so that miscommunication is avoided in the first place.

Never keep a feeling bottled up because you're afraid it's not what your partner wants to hear or because you worry about sounding silly. And if you need some time to think something through before you're ready to talk about it, the right person will give you space to do that if you ask for it.

It Happens in Utah