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## Guidelines

to provide unaccompanied children with aftercare services once they are found.

- Dating violence-

Instituto Príncipe Real

## Partners



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## 1. Introduction

Dating violence is a type of violence in the context of violence in intimate relationships, but it concerns mostly the younger age groups, and although it does not differ greatly from the violence that may occur in marital relationships, it also occurs in contexts outside cohabitation and presents some particularities.

One of these particularities, and the fact that we refer to a younger age group, relationships arise between people who are involved and inserted in a group that, in this age group, directly influences the behaviour and attitudes of each one. At an earlier age, where cognitive maturity has not yet been reached, emotions and affections may be more turbulent, personality traits are not yet fully defined, and relationships are marked by inexperience, are social representations and patterns social relations that will stand out in these relations of intimacy. It is also in this context, and at a moment of affirmation of personal identity, that one can install relational patterns of violence in the context of dating.

58% of young people who date or have dated reported already having suffered at least one form of violence from the current or former partner, "said a statement from the secretary of state's office, quoted by the Portuguese agency, which advances some of the conclusions of the National Study on Dating Violence 2019.

Still, "67% of young people consider some of the behaviours of violence as natural", demonstrating that there is a "high prevalence and legitimacy of specific forms of violence".

## 2. What is it?

It is an act of punctual or continuous violence committed by one partner (or both) in a dating relationship, in order to control, dominate and have more power than the other person involved in the relationship.

Includes four types of behaviour:

- **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.
- **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another person mentally or emotionally and/or exert control over another person.
- **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.

## 3 .Main types of violence in courtship

### 1- Emotional violence

It happens when someone says or does something to make the other person feel stupid or worthless.

Emotional pain is common in relationships; It is human to feel negative emotions in response to fights or unpleasant events in a relationship.

However, it is not healthy to feel that feelings, thoughts and emotions are regularly threatened by the couple.

Emotional abuse is a constant rejection of the right to express feelings. It is a violation or ridicule of the most important values and beliefs of the person.

This type of violence includes the following manifestations:

- Insults, criticism, shouting or devaluation.
- Blame the couple for all the problems in the relationship.
- Use the silence treatment.
- Withholding approval or support as a form of punishment.
- Do not allow the couple to have contact with family and friends.
- Jealousy.
- Humiliate and make fun of the couple.
- Invasion of privacy
- Destruction of property or possessions.
- Intimidate the person or cause fear to gain control.
- Threatening to hurt yourself if the couple does not cooperate.

## **2- Psychological violence**

Psychological violence is difficult to define since it involves a spectrum of abuse that offers no physical evidence.

It happens when someone uses threats and fear in an individual to gain control. Psychological abuse can be included as an element of emotional or verbal abuse.

Many experiences this type of violence in the form of restriction, devaluation, unrealistic requests or threats. It may also include the withdrawal of information or affection to extract certain behaviour from the individual victim of the abuse.

Many signs that this type of abuse occurs are similar to those of emotional violence, but you can also add:

- Play with the feelings of the couple.
- Ignore or minimize the feelings of the victim.
- Make the victim feel vulnerable and dependent.

### 3- **Verbal violence**

It occurs when someone uses language, whether written or spoken, to cause harm to the victim.

Although this type of abuse is often practiced in secret, sometimes the abuser may make hurtful statements in public places or in front of family and friends.

The behaviour can vary: they can be small and repetitive comments, or loud screams that seek to denigrate the victim.

This type of violence shares characteristics and signs similar to emotional and psychological.

### 4- **Physical violence**

Physical violence appears when the abuser uses a part of his body or an object to control the actions of the victim.

Generally, the victim has visible marks on his body: cuts, bruises and bruises are common.

However, other victims are exposed to pushing, pulling hair, slapping, kicking, biting, strangulation, punches, among others.

An abuser may lock up the victim at home, deprive him of food, medicine or sleep; You can also refuse to help her if she is sick or injured. Physical violence can include any damage, intentional or unintentional.

Prolonged abuse can lead to physical and mental problems, such as depression, heart conditions, breathing problems, post-traumatic stress, anxiety and brain injuries.

### **5- Sexual violence**

It happens when a person is forced to participate in some sexual activity without their consent.

It may involve rape or any other non-consensual sexual act. It can also happen when sex is used as a weapon.

Additionally, an abusive individual can also use sex to judge his partner or assign a value to him; that is, you can criticize or declare that the person is not good enough in sex or that sex is for the only thing that works.

#### **Sexual abuse may include:**

- Unwanted touching and kissing
- Forcing you to have sex
- Not letting you use birth control
- Forcing you to do other sexual things

### **6- Economic violence**

This type of violence occurs when someone controls their partner's financial resources without their consent or misuses those resources.

Violence in relationships is about power and control. The abuser will use all necessary means to maintain that authority, so he often controls finances.

This violence manifests itself when a person controls the entire household budget and does not let the victim have access to their own bank accounts.

The abuser can also open accounts or request credit cards and accumulate debts on behalf of the victim, or simply prevent the couple from having a job and earn their own money.

### **7- Digital violence**

This type of violence involves the use of technologies, such as messaging and social networks, to harass, harass, stalk or intimidate the couple.

Many times this behaviour is a form of verbal or emotional violence carried out online.

Some signs of digital violence include:

## **4. Warning signs that one is a victim of violence.**

Some of the following signs are just parts of be a teenager. But, when these changes occur suddenly or without explanation, there could be reason to concern.

- Sudden changes in costumes or makeup
- Bruises, scratches or other injuries
- Failing notes or stop participating in school activities
- Avoid friends
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Sudden changes in mood or personality; feel anxiety or depression, behave in an aggressive or angry, be secretive
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits, avoid looking in the eyes, suffer "crying" or be hysterical
- Think constantly about the boyfriend or girlfriend



- Use alcohol or drugs
- Pregnancy. Some teenagers believe that having a baby will make things better; some girls are forced to have sex.

Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online without consent. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Teens often think some behaviours, like teasing and name-calling, are a “normal” part of a relationship—but these behaviours can become abusive and develop into serious forms of violence. However, many teens do not report unhealthy behaviours because they are afraid to tell family and friends.

Anyone can be a victim of dating violence. Both boys and girls are victims, but boys and girls abuse their partners in different ways. Girls are more likely to yell, threaten to hurt themselves, pinch, slap, scratch, or kick. Boys injure girls more and are more likely to punch their partner and force them to participate in unwanted sexual activity. Some teen victims experience physical violence only occasionally; others, more often.

## 5. Control dating violence

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

### **Controlling behavior may include:**

- Not letting you hang out with your friends
- Calling or paging you frequently to find out where you are, whom you're with, and what you're doing
- Telling you what to wear
- Having to be with you all the time

### **Verbal and emotional abuse may include:**

- Calling you names
- Jealousy

- Belittling you (cutting you down)
- Threatening to hurt you, someone in your family, or himself or herself if you don't do what he or she wants.

**Physical abuse may include:**

- Shoving
- Punching
- Slapping
- Pinching
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Hair pulling
- Strangling

**Sexual abuse may include:**

- Unwanted touching and kissing
- Forcing you to have sex
- Not letting you use birth control
- Forcing you to do other sexual things
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Anyone can be a victim of dating violence. Both boys and girls are victims, but boys and girls abuse their partners in different ways. Girls are more likely to yell, threaten to hurt themselves, pinch, slap, scratch, or kick. Boys injure girls more and are more likely to punch their partner and force them to participate in unwanted sexual activity. Some teen victims experience physical violence only occasionally; others, more often.

The consequences of violence can act as warning signs or symptoms that, if identified and recognized by friends or trusted adults, can help prevent violent behaviour, reduce the impact of victimization, and stop the dating relationship:

## 6. Psychological consequences of dating violence:

- 1.- Depressive and anxious episodes.
- 2.- Eating and sleep disorders.
- 3.- Isolation.
- 4.- Some young women opt for suicide.
- 5.- Low school and / or work performance.
- 6.- Recurrent fear.
- 7.- Start of addictions.
- 8.- Low self-esteem.
- 9.- Teen pregnancies.
- 10.- Sexually transmitted infections.
- 11.- A constant deterioration in all areas of the individual: physical, psychological, affective, social, family and school or work.

But what are the causes that contribute to violence in the courtship?

Girls in this stage have little or no experience in relationships. What they know about them is strongly influenced by television, movies, music or youth magazines that often reproduce and reinforce macho and sexist attitudes and behaviour.

The inexperience in affective relationships, in the appropriate behaviours in them and, above all, their false perception of how they should be, puts them in a situation of risk.

The culture of romantic love exerts an enormous influence in the period of adolescence and allows the establishment and maintenance of relationships that could be considered potentially destructive. An overly romantic view of love can contribute to young girls tolerating a suffocating relationship in which the feeling of love is used as a justification of the control that the couple can exercise. This same vision helps young people to relate from a stereotyped role that associates control with masculinity.

The adolescence is a period of rebellion and affirmation in front of the adult world, which can harm the revelation of a situation of violence. Young women fear the different reactions of the elderly: that they underestimate what happens to them, that they "control" them or overprotect them, that they denounce their partner, or they distance them from it. In summary, prioritize your safety by limiting your freedom.

They do not identify psychological abuse behaviours as violence. When they think about abuse they do it thinking about serious physical aggressions, those that take a woman to the hospital or kill her.

They consider jealousy as a normal show of love that will be present in all relationships. They do not detect control behaviours as indicators of violence.

Some sexist stereotypes are still present among young people, like the stereotype of "woman object", very present in boys.

Girls and boys are able to identify situations of discrimination against women in society and in their environment, but in their own relationship they do not identify abusive behaviours and minimize the importance of situations of violence.

When describing their "ideal partner" the boys do it as a sexual object and the girls choose the "bad boy", cheeky or rebellious, who is the attractive model; the models of attraction are not equal among the youth, on the contrary, it attracts the one or the one closest to the traditional stereotype.

## 7. What are the consequences?

Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have severe consequences and short- and long-term negative effects on a developing teen. For instance, youth who are victims of TDV are more likely to:

- Experience symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Engage in unhealthy behaviours, like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- Exhibit antisocial behaviours, like lying, theft, bullying or hitting
- Think about suicide

Violence in an adolescent relationship sets the stage for problems in future relationships, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence perpetration and/or victimization throughout life. For instance, youth who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

Although when questioned the majority of the young people affirms to reject the resort to the violence, many accept it and tolerate the use of this against itself, on the part of the dating. There are subtle tactics, masked forms of exerting power and control over the other person, which may be totally imperceptible. Sometimes they express themselves in the form of concern for the relationship and well-being of the partner and can be confused with manifestations of love.

Some situations of sexual violence in courtship in which young people get involved, relate to the idea that sex is mandatory or "part of" the relationship. On the other hand, when sexual violence occurs, the victim may not identify it as an experience of violence (for example, they find it "normal" to give in and accept having sex because the boyfriend insists or threatens ends the relationship if they do not). Normally, they also do not question behaviours such as controlling the way of dressing, consulting messages on the mobile phone, requesting the sharing of the email password and social networks and understanding them as duties and / or obligations between the couple.

**The number of requests for help from victims of dating violence increases year after year. Experts warn that it is urgent to intervene early to combat the phenomenon and that psychological trauma can in many cases be more serious than physical trauma.**

Data from the Portuguese Observatory on Dating Violence in 2017 are important. Every year, case reports involving aggression among young people are increasing. Complaints mostly came from former victims (54.3%) and from witnesses (42.7%), with only 3.2% of the cases being reported by current victims. According to data from the Observatory, last year 84.7% of the reports of dating violence were female.

The story of Magdalene, who prefers not to reveal the true identity, is common to many young people: "I was in love and everything I thought I wanted was there. After the day he hit me with a bump, things have changed. I was afraid of him and we were in the same school, so I was always afraid. "

## **8. How can we stop teen dating violence it before it starts?**

Supporting the development of healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships has the potential to reduce the occurrence and prevent its harmful and long-lasting effects on individuals, their families, and the communities where they live. During the pre-teen and teen years, it is critical for youth to begin to learn the skills needed—such as effectively managing feelings and using healthy communication— to create and foster healthy relationships.

### **Why teenagers do not inform their parents or friends about violence**

Those who are part of unhealthy relationships can:

- Be afraid that parents will force them to finish the relationship
- Feeling embarrassed

- Be afraid of feeling sore
- Be convinced that it is their fault or that their parents will blame them or they will be disappointed
- Be confused; could think that all the Relationships are like this
- Be afraid of losing privileges, such as being able to leave late or use the car

Teens can also:

- Have little or no experience in relationships healthy dating
- Have low self-esteem and "need" the relationship for feel loved, valued or cared for
- Believing that having a relationship with someone is the most important thing important of his life
- Confuse love with jealousy  
Not realize the abuse
- Do not think that friends or others would believe what happens
- Having lost contact with friends
- Feel that the abuser is a good person, sometimes
- Feeling so attracted that it's too hard to be separated

## 9.What is the role of mothers and fathers?

The role of mothers and fathers is crucial for the prevention and intervention of cases of violence in adolescent courtship. In case of prevention, several studies have pointed out that the style of parenting plays a crucial role for those people who perpetuate the violence in the courtship and those who fall victim to it.

A study published found that teenagers who perpetuated dating violence displayed an authoritative parenting style on the part of their mothers and fathers. The study found that this parenting style fostered low impulse control, an important characteristic in those who attack other people.

Another study published, found that the type of attachment between mothers / fathers and daughters / os was also an important determinant for those adolescents who perpetuated the violence in the courtship.

So, knowing all this information, what can parents do at the intervention level? How can you support your adolescent children to help them not get caught up in these toxic dynamics of their relationship?

### **Open constant dialog spaces**

Starting from curiosity, instead of judgment

Modelling how a healthy and loving relationship looks

Create a culture of trust and love between mothers and fathers and children

Encourage them to have a strong sense of self-love

If we are aware of the type of relationships that our teenagers engage in, as well as strengthen their capacity to love themselves, we can make an effective change in the alarming rates of dating violence.

### **tips to prevent violence in courtship**

In a healthy relationship both members respect each other, trust each other and accept the differences. There is an effective communication of their needs, they listen to each other and work to resolve conflicts in a rational and non-violent way. But maintaining a healthy relationship requires that adolescents have certain skills that many times have not been taught. The lack of these skills coupled with the growing exposure to violence in our society can lead to unhealthy and even violent relationships among young people.



Violence in courtship includes psychological or emotional violence, as well as control or jealous behaviour, physical and sexual violence. Violence in courtship can lead to a series of negative consequences on adolescent health.

Society has the responsibility to provide adolescents with the resources, skills and space necessary for their physical and emotional well-being in their relationships. Educators, social workers and parents can help adolescents access services to report the violence in their courtship. In addition, the research has shown the effectiveness of some programs to prevent violence in courtship.

### **10- Some aspects of prevention to take into account:**

All teens should be educated about what healthy relationships are. With the aim that most of them can understand and identify the healthy and unhealthy relationships they have in their lives, as well as forms of communication, conflict resolution techniques and strategies to avoid or end unhealthy relationships.

You can also perform interventions in certain people who are in an environment or who seem to be at risk of developing this type of relationship.

Since physical violence usually appears during conflict, interventions should focus on communication skills and conflict resolution in the context of sentimental relationships. Violence in courtship occurs within relationships and needs to be understood in that context. Anti-violence campaigns should focus on how intimidation by one of the partners can result in violence and give them tools to deal with the conflict effectively and avoid violent behaviour. Those campaigns that only focus on condemning the perpetrators of violence are less effective.

We must assume that many times, even if we ask directly about the existence of violence, they will hide it from us. That is why we can give them information about this type of violence and say that we are there in case they need our help at some point.

Currently there are computer programs to prevent violence in courtship. These programs usually include questions, individualized feedback, videos and personal stories that are selected to educate and motivate adolescents to create healthy relationships and learn skills to do so. Some of these programs have different resources depending on the degree to which the person is based on a series of data collected in their history.

In conclusion, all adolescents have the right to maintain healthy relationships that ensure their well-being whether physical or emotional. Violence in courtship affects young people and can have long-term physical and psychological negative effects. Providing young people with communication and conflict resolution strategies, support and sufficient resources to avoid or end violent relationships is essential to ensure their well-being. While some underlying risk factors such as poverty, violence as a social norm must be taken into account to end violence in the courtship.

### **11. How can we stop teen dating violence it before it starts?**

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### **12. WHAT TO DO?**

If you are a victim of dating violence:

While you may not feel secure in making a final decision or asking for help, there are some strategies that can protect you.

- choose public and busy places to be with your / your boyfriend. Isolated sites may put you at risk.

- choose activities where you are with your / your boyfriend in the presence of other people (eg, your group of friends).
- change routines (ie, your school and home school course) and try to be in the company of friends or classmates.
- when you leave, tell someone you can trust where you are going and at what time you return.
- record important phone contacts on your mobile phone, so you can get help easily if you need to.
- if you feel you are in danger, immediately seek someone or a safer place (eg, a place where more people are). You can also call helplines. The professional that answers your call will send you to the place where you find the necessary means to protect you.