

# Teen Dating Violence

## *Myth* Versus **FACT**

*Myth* It can't happen to me.

**FACT** More than 1 in 10 teens experience physical violence in their dating relationships.

*Myth* Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.

**FACT** Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign that the person sees you as a possession. It is the most common early warning sign of abuse.

*Myth* Teen dating violence isn't really that serious.

**FACT** Thirty percent of all women who are murdered in this country are killed by their husband or boyfriend. According to a Mass. study, that same high percentage applied to teen women, aged 15-19, as well. Also, 60% of all rapes reported to the rape crisis centers are committed by acquaintances, and the majority of victims are aged 16-24.

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

**FACT** The US Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 95% of the reported incidents of assaults in relationships are committed by males.

*Myth* Alcohol or drugs cause men to batter.

**FACT** Many men who batter do not drink heavily or use drugs, and alcoholics or drug users do not beat their partners. Further, batterers who do drink and use drugs don't necessarily give up battering when they give up these habits. While some abusers do beat their partners while they are under the influence, drugs and alcohol often act as their excuse.

*Myth* Victims bring on the abuse themselves. They ask for it.

**FACT** Perpetrators believe they have the right to use abuse to control their partner and they see the victim as less than equal to themselves. The victim has no control over the abuser.

*Myth* If a person stays in an abusive relationship, it must not really be that bad.

**FACT** People stay in abusive relationships for a number of reasons: fear, economic dependence, confusion, loss of self-confidence, not recognizing that what's happening is abusive, belief that the abuser needs their help or will change.

*Myth* Most batterers are bums or crazy people.

**FACT** Batterers are found in all classes and types of people and all kinds of relationships: rich, poor, professional, unemployed, black, white, urban and rural, gay or straight.

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