

SAFETY PLAN FOR TEENS

- Stay in touch with friends and stay involved in activities you enjoy.
- Consider telling family members about what is happening.
- Try not to be alone. Tell your friends about the abuse and have them walk to classes with you and spend time during lunch together.
- Change your routine. Don't always come to school the same way or arrive at the same time. Always have someone with you.
- Always keep extra change or a cell phone with you so you can make a call for help. Domestic violence centers can provide you with a cell phone that calls out to 911 if you are in need of one.
- Make a list of telephone numbers: including 911, crisis line (211) and supportive friends whom you can call when you are upset or in danger.
- Try not to be alone with the abuser. Do not go by yourself to an isolated or deserted location.
- Before leaving the shelter, let other people know where you plan to be and when you are expected to return.
- **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!** If you feel you are in danger, get help immediately.
- Break up with your partner in a public place. Let other people know that you plan to break up with your partner and let them know where you will be and when.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO IS DEALING WITH THE PAIN OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

- Listen to her/him. Give her/him your undivided attention. Let her/him know that you have heard what she/he has said.
- Believe her/him. Believe what she/he is telling you.
- Understand what she/he is saying. Devote your efforts to understand the thoughts, feelings and experiences she/he has chosen to share with you.
- Validate her/his feelings and strength. By disclosing to you, she/he has just taken a major step in dealing with the pain of relationship violence.
- Help her/him devise a safety plan.
- Help your friend to understand that the violence is not her/his fault.
- Help your friend to understand that it is okay to talk about the problem.
- Support her/his right to control her/his own life.
- Provide helpful resource information.
- Protect her/his right to confidentiality.
- Do not try to "rescue" your friend or be a hero and try to handle the situation on your own.

Adopted from Domestic Violence Project/SAFE House, Ann Arbor, MI



RUNAWAY YOUTH

National Runaway Switchboard
1.800.RUNAWAY

Florida Network of Youth and Family Services
1.888.922.4324 • www.floridanetwork.org

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV)
1.800.500.1119 • www.fcadv.org

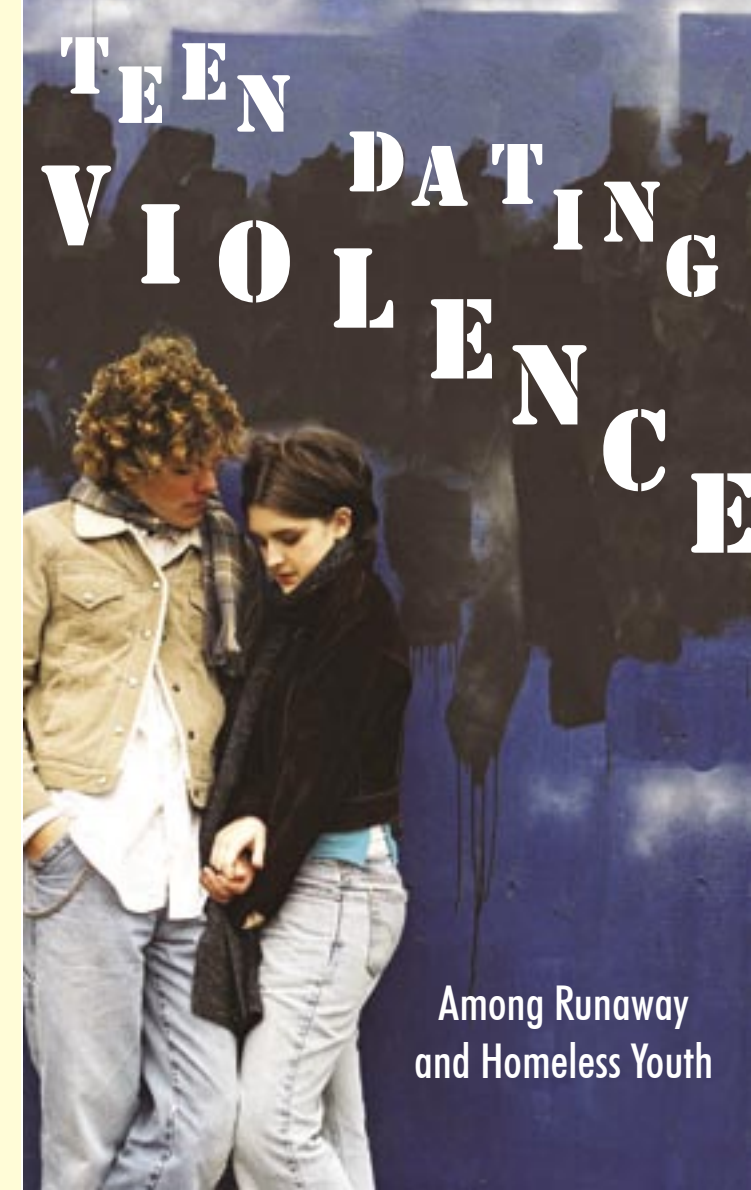
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV)
1.888.956.7273 • www.fcasv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.SAFE

National Youth Violence Prevention Center
1.866.SAFEYOUTH • 1.800.243.7012 (TTY)

The Florida Coalition Against Domestic and the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence have collaborated with the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services to address Teen Dating Violence Among Runaway and Homeless Youth. For more information on the project including referrals check out their websites as listed above. A map that includes Florida's runaway youth centers and domestic and sexual violence centers is available online.. Unfortunately, Florida's certified domestic violence centers do not provide emergency shelter services to youth, so FCADV encourages referral to FL Network programs. Many of Florida's domestic and sexual violence centers do provide community education and training on teen dating violence. FCADV encourages the collaboration among local FL Network service providers and domestic violence/rape crisis centers to offer training on both teen dating violence and the issues of runaway youth.

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Among Runaway
and Homeless Youth

Homeless youth are more likely than other teens to have been sexually abused before leaving home, and living on the streets makes them even more vulnerable to rape and sexual violence.

DEFINITIONS

Runaway Youth - The term “runaway youth” typically refers to children between the ages of 10 – 17 who have runaway from their family or home or who are homeless.

Dating Violence - “Dating violence” is any intentional sexual, physical or psychological attack on one partner by the other in a dating relationship. This definition reflects the belief that all forms of abuse are harmful and need to be taken seriously.

Who is affected by dating violence?

Like homelessness or running away, dating violence can affect anyone. Victims and abusers come from all social and economic backgrounds, faith communities, and racial and ethnic groups. Dating violence also occurs in same-sex relationships.



Most youth in runaway shelters have left home because of a difficult family situation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Taken from FCADV’s *Teen Dating Violence Among Runaway and Homeless Youth Power and Control Wheel*

PEER PRESSURE: Pressuring partner to steal for her/him to prove his/her love. Telling lies about partner to others living on the street or in shelter.

ISOLATION/EXCLUSION: Telling partner that everyone else on the street is out to get her/him and not to talk to anyone else without permission. If she/he does, she/he will “pay for it”. Using jealousy to justify actions.

SEXUAL COERCION: Telling partner he will break up with her and not protect her from others on the street if she does not have sex with him.

WARNING SIGNS

- Teens generally do not tell others when they are involved in a violent relationship
- A teen may believe that reporting a problem would get them into more trouble.
- Most often, if a teen chooses to tell anyone, that person will be their friend and peer.
- Unexplained bruises, scratches, or injuries
- Fear of partner
- Controlling behavior
- Making all the decisions
- Checking up on partner’s whereabouts
- Accounting for partner’s time
- Extreme jealousy and possessiveness of partner
- Lash out, criticize, or insult partner
- Minimization of violence or abuse
- Loss of interest in things that were once important
- Sudden change in appearance of behavior
- Spending less time with friends and family
- Sudden changes in mood or personality (anxious or depressed, acting out, or being secretive)
- Begin using drugs or alcohol

THREATS: Telling partner that if she doesn’t do what he says, he will leave her and turn her over to the streets where others will take advantage of her.

MINIMIZE/DENY/BLAME: When partner complains about life on the street he/she convinces her/him to shut up. He/she says she/he is at fault for choosing to runaway and that no one is stopping her/him from going home.

INTIMIDATION: Partner doesn’t like how she/he is behaving, so he/she dumps their food and belongings in the dumpster saying the “next time it will be her/him.”

USING SOCIAL STATUS: Making her panhandle. Telling her she owes it to him and if she won’t do what he says she can leave because there are plenty of girls that want to be with him.

ANGER/EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Telling partner she/he is fat, ugly and lucky that she/he is with them because no one else would.

Dating violence is about power and control.

The following is from National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center and is titled, Teen Dating Violence found at <http://www.safeyouth.org>.

What You Can Do

1 Know the warning signs that you’re in a dating situation or relationship that could have the potential to become violent. If you’re in a dating relationship that in any way feels uncomfortable, awkward, tense or even frightening, trust your feelings and get out of it. It could become, or may already be, abusive. Always remember: You have every right to say no.

2 If you are in a violent, or potentially violent relationship, realize that the violence will not just stop or go away. You cannot change your boyfriend or girlfriend’s behavior by changing your behavior, nor are you in any way responsible for the abuse. Your boyfriend or girlfriend may need counseling or other outside help to change and you may need support so that you can begin to heal.

3 Be on the lookout for friends that may be in violent dating situations or relationships.

4 Take action if you suspect that someone you know is being abusive. If you feel you are not in danger, talk to the person about his or her use of violence, and make sure that the person understands that it is both wrong and illegal. If the person is ready to make a change, help him or her to get help.

5 If you are hurting someone else, have the courage to get help!

No matter what the other person does to provoke you, no matter how justified you feel, no matter what your friends do, it is never okay to harm someone else. Remember that physical and sexual violence are illegal and can land you in jail.

You can learn new ways to deal with your anger, to fight fair, to communicate, and to give and get love in relationships. Don’t let shame or fear stop you-talk to a parent, a teacher, a religious leader, a doctor, a nurse, or a guidance counselor immediately. You also can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE, and they can direct you to individuals and groups in your community who can help you to make a change.

1-800-RUNAWAY

