



Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet

Locating the Defendant

Teen dating violence is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent against a current or former dating partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, stalking, threats, or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behavior to gain power and maintain control over the dating partner.

Types of Abuse

- **physical:** beating, shaking, choking, slapping, hitting, shoving, kicking, pushing, biting, burning, assault, etc.
- **sexual:** when a partner uses physical force, threats, or manipulation to coerce any sexual act or contact without the other partner's consent, including rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment
- **emotional:** behavior that undermines the other partner's sense of self-worth, such as name-calling
- **economic:** when a partner makes or attempts to make the other partner financially dependent on them, diminishing the victim's capacity to support themselves
- **psychological:** isolating a partner from friends and family and causing fear by intimidation and threats, resulting in trauma such as anxiety

Dating violence can also include using social media and technology—including the Internet, social networking sites, phones, or text messaging—to harass, pressure, stalk, or victimize.

Legal Remedies

An "order of protection" is a civil order that is available to victims of domestic violence, including dating violence. It requires the abuser to stay away from you and your home, workplace, and school.

Order of Protection

A judge can issue an order of protection against a dating partner if they have physically abused, threatened to physically abuse, or sexually abused the other partner. A "dating relationship" means a romantic or intimate social relationship between two individuals.

Arkansas law allows a minor to obtain an order of protection against an abusive dating partner. However, the law does not allow a minor to petition for the order of protection on his or her own behalf. Either an adult family or household member or a domestic violence advocate must petition on behalf of the minor.

Statistics

- about one in three high school students in Arkansas report experiencing dating violence
- 40% of adolescent girls in the United States are victims of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner
- 50% of high school students have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a dating partner
- 30% of teens report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, or physically hurt by a partner
- nationally, two thirds of youths in a dating relationship are victims of teen dating violence

Resources

The National Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474 or text "LOVEIS" to 22522

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)

The National Sexual Assault Hotline

1-800-656-4673

The Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

1-866-331-9474

For more information, visit the National Institute of Justice at nij.gov and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov.

This fact sheet is a collaboration of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc. These nonprofit organizations provide free legal assistance to eligible Arkansans who meet income, asset, and other guidelines. Legal assistance may also include advice and counsel, brief services, or full representation depending on the situation. For more information about civil legal aid in Arkansas, please visit arlegalservices.org. For information specific to Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc., visit arlegalaid.org. Apply for services online or by calling 1-800-9-LAW-AID (1-800-952-9243).

The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.

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