



Teen dating violence and abuse

What is teen dating violence and abuse?

It is a form of intimate partner violence. It is defined as the physical, sexual, psychological and or emotional abuse within a dating relationship. Young adult dating violence is a widespread and serious problem. Although, many teenagers do not report the abuse because they are afraid to tell family and friends.

Why is it an important issue?

Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18. Abusive relationships in adolescence has serious consequences and put victims in a higher risk of further domestic violence. Teenagers believe certain behavior, like teasing and name-calling, are a 'normal' part of a relationship - as such, these behaviors can become abusive and develop into serious forms of violence.

Young adults who are victims of violent and abusive relationships are also at a high risk of:

- Experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Engaging in unhealthy behaviors, like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- Exhibiting antisocial behaviors, like lying, theft, bullying or hitting
- Negative body image and self-esteem
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Risky sexual behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

How do I respond to dating violence and abuse?

- Learn how to identify abuse
- **Speak to a Shamsaha advocate**, or someone you trust and create a support system will allow you to feel empowered through family, friends, and others to lead a healthy life and establish healthy relationships
- Refer to safety planning