

Types Of Abuse

Dating Violence is a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses, physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner.

Dating Relationship means a romantic or intimate social relationship between two individuals.

Break the Cycle engages, educates and empowers youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in a dating or domestic relationship. This abuse can be physical, sexual, verbal or emotional, or a combination of these.

What do I need to know?

Physical Abuse is any intentional, unwanted contact with your body by either the abuser or an object within the abuser's control. Physical abuse *does not* have to leave a mark or bruise. It doesn't even need to hurt. It includes:

- Scratching
- Throwing something at you
- Using a weapon
- Punching
- Pulling hair
- Slapping
- Biting
- Choking
- Holding you down
- Kicking
- Pushing

Sexual Abuse is any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with your right to say "no" to sexual advances. It includes:

- Rape
- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
- Not letting you use birth control or protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Forcing or pressuring you to go further than you want (even if you've had sex before)

Verbal/Emotional Abuse is anything that the abuser says or does that causes you to be afraid, lowers your self-esteem, or manipulates or controls your feelings or behavior. It includes:

- Name-calling and put-downs
- Stalking
- Yelling and screaming
- Threatening to commit suicide in order to manipulate you
- Intentionally embarrassing you in front of other people
- Threats of violence and harm to you or people you care about
- Keeping you from seeing or talking with friends and family
- Threats to expose your secrets (such as sexual orientation or immigration status), start rumors, or to take away your children
- Telling you what to do
- Using online communities or cell phones to control, intimidate, or humiliate you
- Making you feel responsible for the abuse

What can I do?

If you or someone you know has experienced any of these behaviors in a relationship, that relationship may be abusive. Break the Cycle can help. For more information, you can visit thesafespace.org.