

DATING VIOLENCE

Myths & Facts

- Myth:** It can't happen to me.
- Fact:** 1 in 9 high school girls surveyed in Toronto reported physical abuse.
- 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.
- Truth:** At least 73% of high school students in both Toronto and London reported either themselves, or someone they knew, had been in an abusive dating relationship.
- Myth:** Men are abused by women just as often as women are abused by men.
- Truth:** More than 93% of charges related to assault in Ontario are laid against men. (Solicitor General of Ontario, Law Enforcement Activity in Relation to spousal Assault in Ontario for the Years 1986 and 1987). Most charges laid against women are counter-charges laid by assaultive partners or stem from acts of self-defence.
- Myth:** Alcohol causes a man to abuse his partner.
- Truth:** Many men who abuse do not drink heavily, and many alcoholics do not beat their partners. Further, abusers who do drink don't necessarily give up abusing when they give up drinking. While some abusers do beat their partners while they are drunk, the alcohol acts as their excuse.
- Myth:** Victims bring about the abuse themselves.
- Truth:** 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.
- Truth:** 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 abusers are bums or crazy people.
- Truth:** Abusers are found in all classes and types of people: rich, poor, professional, unemployed, black, white, urban and rural.
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*Adapted from Preventing Teen Dating Violence by Carole Sousa,
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Further adapted by the London Abused Women's Centre, 2002*

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