

# facts on

## Youth Dating Violence

### Youth Dating Violence

Youth dating violence (YDV) is a range of abusive behaviours experienced by youth in romantic or dating relationships. Behaviours include physical violence, sexual violence, and emotional and psychological abuse. YDV can be experienced in person or online. Online YDV may include cyber bullying and harassment; monitoring of locations, activities, and companions; and forced password sharing and account access.

### Prevalence of Youth Dating Violence<sup>1, 2</sup>

- Approximately 30% of Canadian youth report experiencing YDV
  - 28% report psychological abuse
  - 18% report cyber abuse
  - 12% report physical abuse
  - Less than 10% of victims of YDV seek formal help (e.g., teachers, health professionals, and law enforcement)
- Approximately 14% of Canadian youth report being a perpetrator of YDV

### Signs of Youth Dating Violence

Early signs of YDV are often subtle forms of psychological/emotional abuse including verbal criticism, personal and public degradation (e.g., shaming), jealous and possessive behaviours, and threats of aggression. These subtle behaviours are often overlooked.

### Additional Signs of YDV<sup>2</sup>

<b>Changes in physical appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stops wearing makeup, or wears a lot more</li> <li>• Starts wearing baggier clothes</li> <li>• Frequent bruising</li> <li>• Self-harm behaviours</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship lacks balance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantly checking in with texts and sending photos to prove location</li> <li>• Makes excuses for partner's behaviour</li> <li>• Extreme jealousy</li> <li>• Belittled by partner or called names</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in behaviour with peers or in the classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of friendships and isolation</li> <li>• Late or absent from school or activities</li> <li>• Unable to concentrate and reduced academic performance</li> <li>• Passive, compliant, withdrawn or bullying and acting out</li> <li>• Anxious that partner will show up or know where they are</li> </ul>

#### For More Information

##### Contact:

1319 Colony Street  
 Saskatoon, SK S7N 2Z1  
 Bus. 306.651.4300  
 Fax. 306.651.4301  
 info@skprevention.ca  
 www.skprevention.ca

#### The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute is supported by:

Government of Saskatchewan  
 Kinsmen Telemiracle Foundation  
 SaskAbilities Council  
 University of Saskatchewan  
 Community-At-Large

## Risk Factors for Victimization

- Experience of and exposure to familial violence
- Been bullied/are being bullied
- Physical or learning disabilities
- Racialized youth, Indigenous youth, newcomer youth
- 2SLGBTQIA+ youth
- Living in poverty and low socioeconomic status
- Having a much older partner
- Substance use

## Risk Factors for Perpetration

- Prior trauma exposure (e.g., family and community violence, child maltreatment)
- Bullying others
- Disregard and violation of the physical and emotional rights of others
- Deliberate aggression, lawlessness, manipulation, deceit, and lack of remorse
- Poor emotional intelligence and emotional dysregulation
- Poor communication skills
- Lack of impulse control
- Having an aggressive partner
- Substance use, especially alcohol

## Potential Outcomes of Youth Dating Violence

- Mental health: depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, self-harm, development of eating disorders, problematic substance use
- Sexual health: risky sexual behaviours, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies
- Injury (from physical abuse)
- Poor academic performance and decreased social networks

**YDV is a risk factor for experiencing future partner violence in adulthood.**

## Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- *For Children and Youth:* education about healthy relationships, consent, communication skills, conflict management, digital literacy, and safe internet use; teach youth to recognize the signs of YDV and discuss the importance of reporting abuse; provide information on available and accessible community resources
- *For Parents and Caregivers:* talk openly with youth about healthy relationships, consent, and dating; model healthy relationships and related skills; encourage and support youth involvement in positive social networks; engage in positive parental monitoring (e.g., effective discipline, open communication, conflict negotiation, knowledge of youths' activities)
- *For Organizations, Educators, and the Public:* learn about YDV including recognizing the signs, how to intervene, and how to effectively respond to disclosures; teach and model equity and cultural safety; implement policies that may reduce YDV and outline well-informed strategies to handle disclosures and provide support

If you or someone you know is experiencing dating violence, please visit [https://abuse.sk.211.ca/?\\_ga=2.96201749.82878291.1692113057-2143918027.1689103384](https://abuse.sk.211.ca/?_ga=2.96201749.82878291.1692113057-2143918027.1689103384) to connect with resources in your community.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Exner-Cortens, D., Baker, E., & Craig, W. (2021). The national prevalence of adolescent dating violence in Canada. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 69(3), 495-502. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.01.032>

<sup>2</sup>PrevNet. (2023). Youth Dating Violence Prevention 101. <https://youthdatingviolence.prevnet.ca/learn-more/everyone/>

---

For more information and resources related to YDV, view *Youth Dating Violence: A Literature Review* at <https://skprevention.ca/resource-catalogue/sexual-health/youth-dating-violence-a-literature-review/>.