

Dating/Partner Violence- FAQs 2021

Dating/partner violence is more common than you may think. Approximately 32% of college relationships include physical assault.¹

What is dating/partner violence?

Dating/Partner violence is a pattern of behaviors between individuals who are or have been involved in an intimate relationship in which an individual inflicts emotional, financial, psychological, sexual and/or physical harm to his or her intimate partner to assert power and control. Dating/ partner violence is used to describe abuse within an intimate relationship regardless of marital status and does not depend on whether the couple lives together. Some behaviors within dating/partner violence are considered criminal.

Who can be a victim of dating/partner violence?

Persons who are involved or have been involved in an intimate relationship can be victimized. An intimate relationship can be one where the two parties are or were at some point dating, engaged, in a sexual relationship, in a partnership, or married. It can also involve individuals who may or may not have children together. Dating/partner violence happens in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Who commits dating/partner violence?

Violent or abusive behavior may be committed by anyone against a current or former partner. Some who commit dating/partner violence may exhibit low self-esteem, possessiveness or extreme jealousy over partner, unrealistic expectations from self or others, impulsiveness, rigid ideologies about gender roles, and a need to control or dominate others. Intimate relationships should be healthy, respectful and consensual. No one has the right to abuse his or her partner.

What does dating/partner violence look like?

Dating/partner violence can seem sudden or may escalate over time. It may include actions or threats of actions such as:

- Constantly insulting or putting down partner and/or humiliating partner in public or in front of loved ones
- Coercing or forcing partner to engage in unwanted or nonconsensual sexual acts
- Controlling partner's movements or decisions and/or finances
- Threatening partner bodily harm or harm to loved ones or pets
- Using physical violence such as choking, pushing or hitting
- Stalking partner before, during or after the end of a relationship
- Continuous repeated attempts to communicate with partner via phone, emails, social media, internet, etc.

Victims can experience more than one type of abusive behavior. The majority of women (81%) who experienced stalking also experienced physical violence by their intimate partner. Fifty seven percent of the rapes experienced by college students happened on dates.³ This shows that sexual assault and/or stalking can sometimes be components of dating/partner violence.

What can you do if you or someone you know is a victim of dating/partner violence?

- It is important to seek support to understand what your options mean and seek accompaniment through the process. Contact NOVA's Confidential Victim Advocate at 703-323-2136 or at cokirkland@nvcc.edu to receive support. Being violated is a crime and against NOVA student conduct policy. For more information on NOVA's sexual misconduct policy, visit the [Title IX](#) webpage. NOVA's Office of Wellness and Mental Health can help you think

about your options and talk about how the incident(s) has (have) impacted you. You have the right to file a police report, file a report with the Office of Wellness and Mental Health, or contact the Title IX Coordinator.

- Go to a safe place and seek medical attention, if needed. If you are a victim and need shelter or basic needs, call the NOVA Victim Advocate at 703-323-2136 or email cokirkland@nvcc.edu. We can also give you referrals to local resources.
- In case of an emergency, first call 911 or notify campus police at 703-764-5000.
- If you are a victim of dating/partner violence, know that the abuse is never your fault and there are resources available for you.

*** Please see the [VA code § 18.2-57.2](#) for the legal definition of assault and battery against a family or household member and [VA code § 18.2-57](#) for assault and battery against others to see which may apply to your situation. There may be additional codes that apply. Please contact law enforcement if are not sure whether or not what has happened to you is a crime.**

References

1. Mahoney, P., Williams, L. M., & West, C. M. (2001). Violence Against Women by Intimate Relationship Partners. In *Sourcebook on Violence Against Women* (p. 143). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
2. Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. (1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Study*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/169592.pdf>
3. Warshaw, R. (1994). *"I Never Called it Rape:" The Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

For more information, contact NOVA Confidential Victim Advocate at

703-323-2136 or cokirkland@nvcc.edu or wellness@nvcc.edu