

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND COLLEGE

Statistics

- The average annual rate for nonfatal intimate partner violence between 2001 and 2005 was highest for females between the ages of 20 to 24 years. *Dept of Justice, Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S., Dec. 2007.*
- During 2006, The University of Texas at Austin reported 91 incidents of relationship violence. *Voices against Violence, <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~vav/>, 2007*
- Data from a spring 2004 assessment indicates that 15% of college women and 9.2% of men are in an emotionally abusive relationship. Data also revealed that 2.4% of college women and 1.3% of men are in a physically abusive relationship. *American College Health Association Assessment Survey, 2005, <http://www.acha.org>*

Overview of the Issue

- Few students report incidents of dating violence to authorities. Reasons may be fear of disciplinary action if alcohol was involved or confidentiality issues in such a closed, isolated environment.
- Relationship violence occurs when one person uses violent, abusive or manipulative tactics to maintain power and control over the other person in the relationship. While this is reported most often in dating couples, it can include friends as well.
- Victims of dating violence can now get a protective order in the state of Texas.
- Different types of dating violence are not mutually exclusive. A perpetrator may combine physical with sexual abuse, or stalking with physical aggression.

What You Can Do

- For violence prevention messages to be credible, males must be portrayed as part of the solution, not just the source of the problem. Most men on campus are not perpetrators, but remaining neutral is not an option.
- Develop a communication system with a roommate or friend. Exchange information regarding class schedules, and emergency information.
- If you suspect that a friend is a victim, listen; do not judge or blame. Help them find a safe place, seek medical attention if needed, report to authorities if decided, and seek support.
- Do not try to force your friend to do anything he/she does not want to do. Let them make their own decisions.

Impact on Victims

- Dating violence may impact a victim's education negatively. Rather than face their abuser in class, the dining hall or the dorm, they may decide to drop out of school.
- Supportive friends and family can hold abusers accountable.
- Victims often struggle with fear, anger, helplessness, shame, lack of faith in friends, self-blame, depression and other difficult feelings. Supportive friends and family can help victims heal.

Quotable

College and university students have to deal with many new experiences and are often away from parental influence for the first time. When violence intersects this crucial period of development, it can be devastating and seen as shameful. Victims need to be believed, supported and encouraged to seek help.