

What Are the Early Warning Signs of Teen Dating Violence?

Researchers who study teen dating violence have identified several early warning signs that a dating relationship might be likely to turn violent. These warning signs do not mean a relationship will definitely turn violent. However, if you notice several of them in your relationship or partner, you may need to re-evaluate your dating relationship. These warning signs include:

- ❖ Excessive jealousy.
- ❖ Constant checking in with you or making you check in with him or her.
- ❖ Attempts to isolate you from friends and family.
- ❖ Insulting or putting down people that you care about.
- ❖ Is too serious about the relationship too quickly.
- ❖ Has had a lot of bad prior relationships - and blames all of the problems on the previous partners.
- ❖ Is very controlling. This may include giving you orders, telling you what to wear, and trying to make all of the decisions for you.
- ❖ Blames you when he or she treats you badly by telling you all of the ways you provoked him or her.
- ❖ Does not take responsibility for own actions.
- ❖ Has an explosive temper (“blows up” a lot).
- ❖ Pressures you into sexual activity with which you are not comfortable.
- ❖ Has a history of fighting, hurting animals, or brags about mistreating other people.
- ❖ Believes strongly in stereotypical gender roles for males and females.
- ❖ You worry about how your partner will react to the things you say or you are afraid of provoking your partner.
- ❖ Owns or uses weapons.
- ❖ Refuses to let you to end the relationship.

What can you do if you notice these signs in your relationship?

- ❖ Trust your intuition! If you believe there may be a problem in your relationship, you are probably right. Do not ignore the warning signs. Research has found that those who have a tendency to engage in relationship violence escalate their abuse over time. In other words, it gets worse over time, not better.
- ❖ Spend time with people you care about other than your partner. Stay in touch with your friends.
- ❖ Keep up with activities that you enjoy and that make you feel good about yourself.
- ❖ You might consider looking into what help or resources might be available in your school or area. You might also want to consider calling a domestic violence hotline or shelter for more information before you experience a crisis.

There are things you can do to ensure your safety at home and at school. For more information, see:

<http://missourifamilies.org/features/divorcearticles/divorcefeature26.htm>

If you or someone you know is experiencing dating violence, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

For more information, go to

<http://missourifamilies.org/features/divorcearticles/relations59.htm>

Source: *Stephanie McGhee, Graduate Student, Human Development & Family Studies, University of Missouri-Columbia*