



## Teen Dating Violence

*Valerie Lenis*

Studies show that 1 in 5 high schoolers will experience dating violence in their lifetime (*Futures without Violence*). With such severe statistics, it is crucial to understand teen dating violence and its warning signs. Teen dating violence is the emotional, physical, sexual, and/or technological abuse within a relationship between adolescent partners. This violence is intentional, learned, and will escalate over time. Some warning signs include extreme jealousy, isolation from friends and family, constant texting or calling, threatening, and many more. Given the prevalence of technology in the lives of young people, teen dating violence is increasingly occurring through social media, texting, and other apps. Consequences of teen dating violence can include trauma, depression/anxiety, and risk of substance misuse. Experiencing teen dating violence can also increase the possibility of experiencing violence in future adult relationships.

It is crucial for both youth and adults to be fully informed of teen dating violence in order to protect adolescents from experiencing it, and to help provide them with a healthy environment to mature in. Especially with teens, it is important to educate them on the elements of a healthy relationships, the red flags of a negative one, and the resources to seek help. Women's Support Services provides education on teen dating violence to local schools in hopes of increasing understanding and reducing the occurrence of abusive relationships. If you are interested in scheduling or attending a workshop, please contact Deanna Barry via email at [dbarry@wssdv.org](mailto:dbarry@wssdv.org), or by phone at (860) 364-1080.

Women's Support Services offers bilingual services and supports to victims of domestic abuse regardless of English proficiency, immigration status, and financial condition. WSS serves the Northwest corner of Connecticut and the border towns in New York and can help connect clients to the appropriate resources and agencies, such as Grace Smith House in Poughkeepsie. WSS is free of charge, and does not report to ICE.