



UNIQUE ASPECTS OF TEEN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Although abuse in teen dating relationships can be similar to abuse in adult relationships, there are some unique problems for young people facing abuse. They include:

Being unable to tell anyone – teenagers often won't tell their parents about their abusive relationship because they fear losing newly earned privileges and freedoms.

A lack of resources and services – there are far fewer resources and services, such as support groups and shelters, for teens than there are for adults.

Teen relationships are not taken seriously – adults often think of teen relationships as only “puppy love”. Adults seem to think that because teenage relationships are often short term and may seem superficial that they are easy to break off. In fact, teenagers can experience relationships as intensely as adults, and might find it very hard to leave.

Pressure to be in a relationship – some teens feel pressure to have a boy/girlfriend to fit in with their friends or to prove their popularity. The pressure to be in a relationship may be so great that any partner, even an abusive one, is better than being alone.

Being unable to avoid the abuser – if both partners attend the same school, a victim will have a difficult time avoiding the abuser. It may be very hard to break up with him if she is faced with him and his friends everyday at school.

Lack of role models or comparisons – if a teen is dating for the first time, he/she may have nothing to compare the experience to. Therefore, if they are abused, they may think that this is normal for a dating relationship.

Adolescent insecurities – teens may fear any or all of the following:

- Rumors or stories being told about them
- Not being believed/being blamed
- Not being supported
- Not being liked/abandonment by friends/becoming unpopular