

Teen Dating Violence and Abuse is a serious public health problem.

My name is Alisson Wood and I resided in Stratford CT.

Teen Dating Violence and abuse is a significant public health issue in this country. According to the 2007 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey, during the 12 months before the survey, nearly one in ten high school students nationwide had been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend (also known as dating violence). Even more alarming, dating violence is occurring at a much younger age. In a 2009 study by the CDC, researchers found that nearly half of sixth grade students (42.1%) who reported being in a relationship also reported experiencing physical dating violence in the past 3 months.

In addition to undermining young people's individual growth and academic potential, dating violence and abuse also puts young people at risk for serious injury and even death, with 8% of boys and 9% of girls having been to an emergency room for an injury received from a dating partner (Foshee 1996), and increases their risk for engaging in risky sexual behavior which can lead to unintended pregnancy, STDs and HIV infection (Silverman et al 2001). Among girls age 15-20 who reported being sexually active and experiencing dating violence from a male partner, 26% report that their partners were actively trying to get them pregnant by manipulating condom use, sabotaging birth control use, and making explicit statements about wanting them to become pregnant (UC Davis Health System: Newsroom 2007). Dating Violence is associated with higher levels of drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse with rates more than twice as high in girls who report physical or sexual dating violence than in girls who report no violence (CDC 2006, *Plichta 1996*). Also, In a study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating.

Regardless of race, culture, or socio-economic background, teen dating violence and abuse impacts the lives of more than 1 million people and their families each year, often perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of violence and abuse and victimization. In order to give young people a healthier start in life, promoting healthy relationships must be seen as a public health priority.

Thank you for your time,

Alisson Wood

82 Horace St. Stratford, CT