

# Teen dating violence and abuse

### What is teen dating violence and abuse?

It is a form of intimate partner violence. It is defined as the physical, sexual, psychological and or emotional abuse within a dating relationship. Young adult dating violence is a widespread and serious problem. Although, many teenagers do not report the abuse because they are afraid to tell family and friends.

## Why is it an important issue?

Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18. Abusive relationships in adolescence has serious consequences and put victims in a higher risk of further domestic violence. Teenagers believe certain behavior, like teasing and name-calling, are a 'normal' part of a relationship - as such, these behaviors can become abusive and develop into serious forms of violence.

## Young adults who are victims of violent and abusive relationships are also at a high risk of:

- Experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety
- o Engaging in unhealthy behaviors, like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- o Exhibiting antisocial behaviors, like lying, theft, bullying or hitting
- Negative body image and self-esteem
- Eating disorders
- o Depression
- Risky sexual behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

### How do I respond to dating violence and abuse?

- o Learn how to identify abuse
- Speak to a Shamsaha advocate, or someone you trust and create a support system will allow you to feel empowered through family, friends, and others to lead a healthy life and establish healthy relationships
- Refer to safety planning