

CONTACT THE
FAMILY GUIDANCE
CENTER AT
828-322-1400



#17 Hwy 70 SE
HICKORY, NC 28602
FGCSERVICES.COM



February 2015

Spotlight On Domestic Violence

First Step Newsletter

A Program of
The Family Guidance Center

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM.

FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Sounding the Alarm

This newsletter is dedicated to teens and their parents; it contains some very important information about teen dating violence and what to do should you find yourself or your teen in an abusive relationship.



Dating is an exciting time in the lives of most teens. Some begin dating at an early age; in fact, about 72% of 8th and 9th graders are "dating". Very few teens, if any, ever think about the potential danger

of dating violence. Unfortunately, parents rarely think about it either. In our talks to parent groups, we've learned that most parents do talk to their teens about drugs and alcohol, but not domestic violence. Yet **1 in 3 teens have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship...** that is why we are sounding the alarm. It is happening all across the country and right here in Catawba County.



Early Warning Signs of an Abuser

- Checking cell phones, emails or social networks without permission
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Constant belittling or put-downs
- Explosive temper
- Isolation from family and friends
- Making false accusations
- Erratic mood swings
- Physically inflicting pain or hurt in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling someone what to do
- Repeatedly pressuring someone to have sex

If you are in an Abusive Relationship
Call 828-322-1400



LOVE IS NOT ABUSE



Clues That Your Teen May Be In An Abusive Relationship

- Physical signs of injury
- Truancy, dropping out of school
- Failing grades
- Indecision
- Changes in mood or personality
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Pregnancy
- Emotional Outbursts
- Isolation



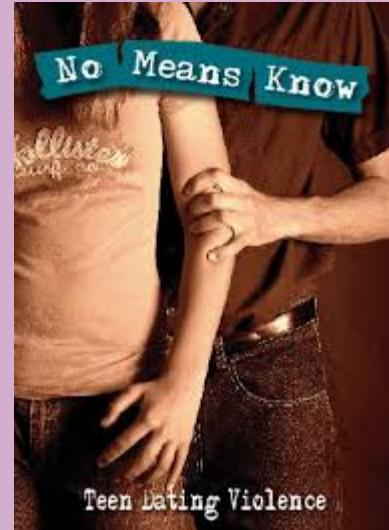
How To Date Safely

- Consider double-dating the first few times you go out with a new person
- Before leaving on a date, know the exact plans for the evening; make sure a parent/friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home. Let your date know that you are expected to tell the person when you get in.
- Be aware of your decreased ability to react under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- If you leave a party with someone you do not know well, make sure you tell another person you are leaving and with whom. Ask a friend to call and make sure you arrived home safely.
- Assert yourself when necessary. Be firm and straightforward.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation.

Use of Technology in Abuse

In a survey of teens ages 13 to 18, results showed that alarming numbers of teens are being controlled, abused and threatened via cell phone and computer use. It includes the use of email, text messaging, instant messaging, phoning, and community networks such as web chats, social sites and blogs.

- 30% of teens say they've been text messaged up to 30 times an hour by their boyfriend/girlfriend trying to find out where they are, what they're doing or who they are with
- 25% of teens say they have been called names, harassed or put down by their boyfriend/girlfriend via cell phone and text messaging
- 19% of teens say their boyfriend/girlfriend used a cell phone or the internet to spread rumors about them
- 10% of teens said they've been threatened physically, via email, instant messaging, text or chat rooms



The use of technology to control and abuse dating partners shows the relentlessness of abuse as the various devices give abusers access to their partner 24 hours a day. One girl said that her boyfriend's most effective way to terrorize her was through email. If she didn't answer her cell phone, he'd email her threatening messages. She said she was scared all the time and afraid to leave him.



"LIKE" us on Facebook to keep up with FGC news and see facts and information on abuse.

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Cycle of My Life

By Pamela, Age 16

It all starts out wonderful until he strikes
Constantly hearing I'm sorry
Until it doesn't matter anymore
Forgiving every time, forgetting never
Calling out for him to stop
Never stopping until it is almost too late
Never thinking about the consequences of
his actions
Just making me think out every possible
consequence of mine
Hearing I'm sorry all over again
Meeting him with open eyes
Awaiting the gifts I know will pour forward
Until it all stops-
And the cycle begins all over again

A Note To Parents

Life is hectic and you have many demands on you. But, growing up is tough for your tweens and teens. They are inexperienced and innocent, they want to fit in with their peers and to belong. This can get them into trouble. One teenage girl who was being abused said she stayed with him because, at least, she had somebody! Parents, we must stay connected to them, and, above all, LISTEN, and stay alert to signs. Check their cell phones, computers to ensure that they're being safe, that no one is threatening or bullying them. Your teens should be told that you will be checking their devices—they'll be angry—but this is one of the conditions of their having them. Let them know that they can talk to you about anything, then listen, with patience and love.

If you or someone you know
is being abused,
call 828-322-1400

YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE

We are very grateful for the community's great support of our agency. We could not operate our shelter or our Thrift Store without your donations.

Special Thanks To

- Rock Barn Ladies' Golf Association for donating a carpet shampoer to our shelter plus much more
- New Horizon Ministries for your Christmas donation to the women and children in our shelter
- Old St. Paul's Lutheran Church for the blankets, books, toothpaste/brushes and more for our shelter
- Two very special women, Ellen and Pat, who were Christmas Angels for several of our families

Your BIG HEARTS and generosity touch the lives of our families in more ways than you can imagine. You lifted their spirits and helped them realize that others do care about them, thank you.

Spread the Word Amazon Smile

Make your shopping on-line count for Family Guidance Center. Just click on Amazon Smile where you get the same items, prices, easy shopping and everything that you get on Amazon. You can also use your Amazon Prime benefits on Amazon Smile. A percentage, 0.5%, of your purchase price will be donated by Amazon to Family Guidance Center.
Now, go shopping and enjoy!



**Don't forget the Purple Ribbon
for your shopping
enjoyment!**

