

Help Seeking Behaviors Among Teens Who Have Experienced Dating Violence in the RGV



PATRICIA LERMA, NCC, LPC-ASSOCIATE
2024 JUDICIAL SUMMIT ON MENTAL HEALTH

NOV. 21-22

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

Introduction

Teen dating violence is the display of unhealthy behaviors, amongst youth who are intimately involved, such as aggression, coercion, intimidation, and manipulation in a physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and technological manner that results in harm or injury.

Teen dating violence is common. Data from CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2019 indicate that among U.S. high school students who reported dating during the 12 months before the survey:

About 1 in 12 experienced physical dating violence.

About 1 in 12 experienced sexual dating violence.



Terminology

Help Seeking Behaviors

- Personal
- Professionals

Barriers

- Stigma
- Cultural Norms

Facilitators

- Positive role models
- Awareness from different sources

ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Exposure to traumatic events
- Impact development, health outcomes, and academic and work attainment

Poly-victimization

- Having experienced multiple victimizations

Major Studies in Teen Dating Violence

1994-1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health

1995 National Survey of Adolescents – mental health issues

2006-2008 Growing Up with Media (GuwM)

1997-2014 National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSERV) - ACEs

2012-2021 National Survey of Teen Relationships (STRiV)

 Risk & Protective Factors

 Prevalence & Outcomes

 Rates & Types of Victimization

Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (2023)

📄 Spring semester (January – June) of odd numbered years

📄 Public & private schools

📄 Questionnaire – 87 questions

📄 Sample – 2 components

- Nationally representative data
- Supplemental sample to increase AI/AN participants

📄 20, 103 usable surveys

📄 155 schools

TABLE 2. Student demographic characteristics — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2023

Characteristic	No. (%)
Student sample size*	20,103 (100)
Sex†	
Female	9,884 (48.1)
Male	10,061 (51.9)
Race and ethnicity^{§,¶}	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,334 (0.3)
Asian	995 (4.3)
Black or African American	1,791 (13.3)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	105 (0.4)
White	9,700 (48.1)
Hispanic or Latino	3,994 (27.4)
Multiracial	1,814 (6.1)
Grade**	
9	5,680 (26.4)
10	5,410 (25.8)
11	4,811 (24.2)
12	3,961 (23.3)
Sexual identity††	
Heterosexual (straight)	13,289 (73.3)
Gay or lesbian	683 (4.0)
Bisexual	2,053 (11.4)
Describe sexual identity in some other way	760 (4.3)
Not sure about sexual identity/questioning	850 (4.4)

* Among the 20,386 completed questionnaires, 283 failed quality control and were excluded from analysis, resulting in 20,103 usable questionnaires.

† Does not include 158 students who did not indicate sex.

§ Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin might be of any race but are categorized as Hispanic; all other racial groups are non-Hispanic.

¶ Does not include 370 students who did not indicate race, ethnicity, or both.

** Does not include 48 students who responded, "ungraded or other grade" and 193 students who did not indicate a grade.

†† Does not include 465 students who responded, "I do not know what this question is asking" and 2,003 students with missing data.

YRBS (2023) United States

- 1) PHYSICAL dating violence
- 2) SEXUAL dating violence
- 3) SEXUAL violence by ANYONE
- 4) BULLIED on school property
- 5) ELECTRONICALLY BULLIED
- 6) physically forced to have sexual intercourse, lifespan

2,091	10.4%
1,186	5.9%
2,292	11.4%
3,860	19.2%
3,277	16.3%
1,709	8.5%

Out of 20,103 total surveys submitted

YRBS (2023) State of Texas

PHYSICAL dating violence

SEXUAL dating violence

SEXUAL violence by ANYONE

BULLIED on school property

ELECTRONICALLY BULLIED

physically forced to have sexual intercourse, lifespan

2,352	11.7%	
1,086	5.4%	*2019
2,010	10.0%	*2019
3,518	17.5%	
2,855	14.2%	
2,071	10.3%	*2019

Out of 20,103 total surveys submitted

YRBS - 3 School Districts in Texas

2023 – Houston (all 6 measures)

2021 – Fort Worth (all 6 measures)

2011 – Dallas (3 measure only)

2022 – 1,207 school districts in Texas, with 20 Education Service Centers

Teen Dating Violence in a Sample of High School Students in the Rio Grande Valley

Gabriela Ontiveros, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Abstract

“This study analyzes the extent of teenage dating violence (TDV) perpetration and victimization among a sample of high school students in the Rio Grande Valley and its relationship with the occurrence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and exposure to interparental violence. Two hundred and twenty participants out of 426 were eligible for analyses. Rates of male and female physical abuse perpetration and victimization were similar although females reported significantly higher perpetration and males reported higher victimization rates. Regression analyses indicated that females exposed to interparental violence reported higher rates of overall TDV perpetration and physical abuse perpetration.

Females with higher occurrences of ACEs and exposure to interparental violence were more likely to perpetrate physical abuse if they had difficulties regulating emotion. In addition, exposure to interparental violence was a significant predictor of emotional abuse perpetration in females. Males exposed to interparental violence were more likely to perpetrate emotional abuse if they had difficulties in emotion regulation.”

Region One Education Service Center – Rio Grande Valley



Regional	
Counties Served	8
Total Square Miles	10,715.3
Total Population (2020 Decennial Census)	1,670,799
Total Student Enrollment	439,336

Enrollment by Ethnicity/Race		
American Indian-Alaskan Native	245	0.06%
Asian	2,064	0.47%
Black-African American	6,121	1.39%
Hispanic	421,111	95.85%
Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islander	128	0.03%
White	8,928	2.03%
Two-or-More	739	0.17%

Campuses		
Elementary	389	
Middle School/Intermediate/Junior High	142	
High School	217	
Total	748	

McAllen ISD – Options @ Lamar Academy



Current Study

POPULATION/PARTICIPANTS

- ✓ Middle Schools & High Schools; possibly, homebound students
- ✓ 4 counties: Starr, Willacy, Cameron, & Hidalgo

SURVEYS/MEASURES

- ✓ Measure of Adolescent Relationship Harassment and Abuse (MARSHA)
- ✓ Adverse Childhood Experiences Revised (ACEs-R)
- ✓ Help Seeking Behaviors (HSB) measures
- ✓ Demographics

Intervention/Prevention Services

LAW & JUSTICE SYSTEMS

School district PDs → Municipal Courts/City PDs → Juvenile Courts → County DA Offices
→ Mental Health Court








SCHOOLS

Education Service Centers → After school programs
Communities In Schools → Hidalgo & Cameron counties
Boys & Girls Club
Parks & Recreation
Mentors, Sponsors, Coaches, Liaisons











Education/Awareness Initiatives

Curriculum – Long term lessons, units

-  The Fourth R Program
-  Expect Respect
-  The Safe Date Project
-  Break the Cycle's Ending Violence
-  The Youth Relationships Project
-  Shifting Boundaries
-  Dating Matters®: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships

Toolkits or Action Guides – Short term workshops, seminars

-  Young Hearts Matter Campaign – TCFV – Austin, TX
-  Texas School Safety Center – Texas State @ San Marcos
-  Center for Prevention of Abuse
 -  Love is Respect – Austin, TX
 -  Break the Cycle – Dallas, TX
-  Love Like That – Jersey Battered Women's Services, Inc.
-  National Indigenous Women's Resource Center – Lame Deer, Montana
-  VetoViolence - CDC



TDV and Mental Health

Physical

- Self Harm/Injury
- Eating Disorders
- Lack of self care
- Somatic Symptoms

Mental/Psychological

- PTSD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicide
- Stress
- Identity Issues

Emotional

- Anger
- Self-Esteem/Confidence
- Self Blame/Shame
- Embarrassment

Social

- Lying
- Criminal behavior
- Bullying
- Drug/Alcohol Use/Abuse
- Unprotected Sex

TDV Laws across the U.S. – Impact on Schools

United States

As of Fall 2020, there are 38 states that have at minimum 1 law, and 13 states that do not have any mandates. This includes the District of Columbia.

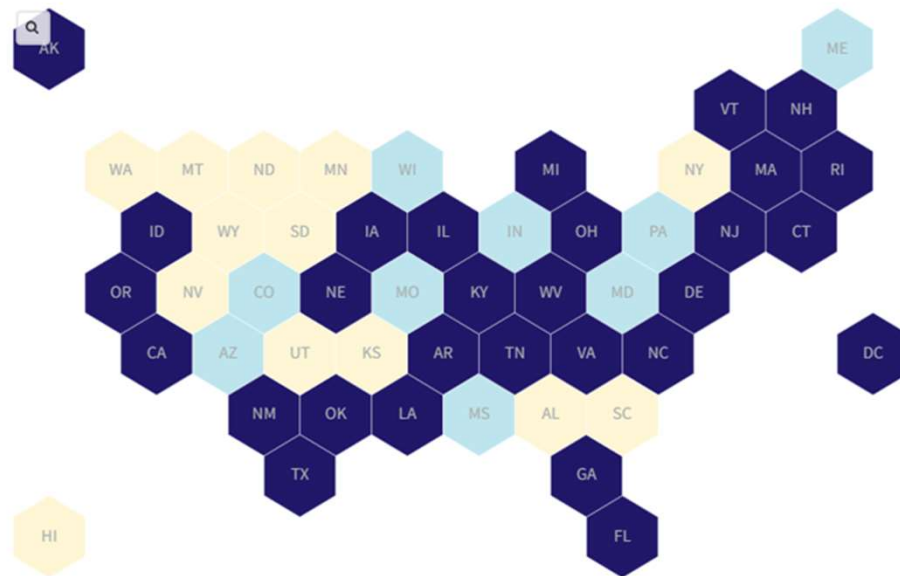
- **Prevention education:** All 38 states address prevention education, with 29 requiring and 9 encouraging these efforts.
- **Defining TDV:** Fewer than half of states with a law (15 of 38 [39.5%]) define TDV.
- **Districtwide policies:** Fewer than half of those with laws (14) require districts to develop a districtwide policy addressing TDV.
- **Funding:** 10 states dedicate funding for violence prevention programs and policies.
- **Consequences:** 12 states outline explicit consequences for not complying with the laws.

There is substantial variability in the content of these laws from state to state.

See whether teen dating violence education is required in your state

Use the search icon to look up a specific state or hover over each state for information.

■ No policy ■ Required ■ Encouraged



SOURCE: National Library of Medicine



TCFV's Work to Support Young People

Since 2001, TCFV and statewide partners have championed laws to keep Texas youth safer in their relationships and communities. Here are some important highlights:

2001

● Section 71.0021 is amended to include dating violence in the Texas Family Code.

2003

● Chapter 32 of the Family Code is expanded to allow supportive remedies, such as access to emergency shelter and counseling for certain minors, including victims of dating violence.

2007

● TCFV helped champion HB 121 (80R) requiring all Texas schools to adopt a dating violence policy through revisions to the Texas Education Code. Additionally, school campuses are required to provide awareness education to students, administrators, and parents.

2011

● Our work resulted in further updates to the Texas Family Code. TCFV worked to promote membership of family violence centers as part of school health advisory councils (SHACs).

● Section 82.002 of the Texas Family Code is amended, allowing minor victims of dating violence to apply for protective orders on their own behalf.

The purpose of this document is to offer an overview of Senate Bill 9 and examine the intersections with prevention education provided by family violence centers.

Texas Council on Family Violence

The 87th Legislative Session

2021

The 87th Legislative Session

During the 87th Regular Legislative Session, **SB 1109**, also called The Christine Blubaugh Act, was filed by Senator Royce West and championed by family members of Christine Blubaugh. Local law enforcement also stood with Sen. West and Christine's family in support of this bill. Christine was a teen from Grand Prairie, TX, who was murdered by her boyfriend in an act of teen dating violence. The bill, supported by TCFV, received wide support and passed through the Senate and the House. Despite the overwhelming support and final passage of the bill, Gov. Abbott vetoed SB 1109 citing the need for legislators to revisit the legislation and add language with parental opt-outs.

During the Second Special Session of the 87th Legislature in the Summer of 2021, Senator Joan Huffman filed and passed **SB 9**. This bill was significantly different from SB 1109 and included additional provisions. Some provisions took effect December 2nd, 2021, with others starting in the 2022-2023 school year.

SB 9 – Key Provisions

Overview and Intersections with Prevention Efforts

The language of SB 9 requires school campuses to engage in parental notification when offering '*curriculum and education*' around '*child abuse, family violence, dating violence and sex trafficking.*' These provisions broadly fall under various sections of Chapter 28 of the Education Code. SB 9 addresses the more formal provision of an established curriculum by a school campus as opposed to governing the engagements that family violence centers typically perform. These engagements can be (but are not limited to):

Curriculum and Instructional Materials under SB 9: School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)

The bulk of the text of SB 9 pertains to the aforementioned '*curriculum and education*' and requires school board trustees to select curricula based on the advice of the SHAC.

SB 9 and Parental Involvement

More levels of parental involvement are attached to this bill, including that they must opt-in to their child participating in curricula outlined in Chapter 28 of the Education Code. TCFV raised concern about these provisions during the First Called Special Session and maintains those around support for youth most affected by dating violence, child abuse, or trafficking if they are not opted-in to this critical education.

SB 9 and Reporting Provisions

SB 9 offers new considerations for the reporting of dating violence to parents that raise significant safety and privacy concerns. Found in Section 37.0831(b)(1)(C) of the Education Code, the new provision charges schools with developing and utilizing reporting procedures to immediately notify the parent or guardian of a student who is an alleged victim or perpetrator of dating violence. It is important to note that parental notification under this new law is separate and distinct from existing law related to mandatory reporting of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Required Education and Resource Materials on Teen Dating Violence

A new provision added to Section 37.0831 of the Education Code requires schools to *“make available to students: (1) age-appropriate educational materials that include information on the dangers of dating violence; and (2) resources to students seeking help.”*

This new requirement offers an opportunity for preventionists and advocates to connect with schools through offering materials, information, and resources, particularly around services available for young people.

Resources

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

- Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services
- <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofvps/teen-dating-violence-awareness-month-tdvam>

The Texas Council on Family Violence

<https://tcfv.org/program-resources/youth-adult-allies/>

The Texas Advocacy Project

<https://www.texasadvocacyproject.org/#>

Prevent IPV – Tools for Social Change

<https://preventipv.org/>

Resources with Hotlines

The Center for Prevention of Abuse

www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org

309-691-0551

Crisis Line: 1-800-559-SAFE (7233)

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.ndvh.org

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

TTY 1-800-787-3224

National Sexual Assault Hotline

www.rainn.org

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Love is Respect

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/>

PO Box 90249

Austin, Texas 78709

Administrative Line: 737-225-3150

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

<https://www.nsvrc.org/>

National Runaway Safeline

<https://www.1800runaway.org/youth-teens>

1-800-RUNAWAY

Resources for Special Populations

Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services

<https://www.adwas.org/>

Brown Boi Project

brownboiproject.org

HEART Rahim

<http://hearttogrow.org/>

LGBT National Help Center

1-800-246-7743

lgbthotline.org

Scarleteen

<https://www.scarleteen.com/>

StrongHearts

strongheartshelpline.org

The Trevor Project

1-866-488-7386

text START to 678678

thetrevorproject.org

Your Life Your Voice


1-800-448-3000

<http://yourlifeyourvoice.org/>



Patricia Lerma
Graduate/Research Assistant
UTRGV School of Rehabilitation
Services & Counseling

 patricia.lerma01@utrgv.edu

 (956) 330-4982



Questions, Concerns, Comments
