



UNDERSTANDING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2013 Special Report

What is teen dating violence?

Teen dating violence is a pattern of behavior where an individual exerts power and control over their partner through fear, intimidation, and often the threat or use of violence.¹ Teen dating violence can happen in person or electronically, may occur between current or former dating partners, and can be physical, psychological/emotional, or sexual.¹

- **Physical:** When a partner is pinched, hit, shoved, slapped, punched, or kicked.
- **Psychological/Emotional:** Threatening a partner or harming his or her sense of self-worth. Examples include name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping him/her away from friends and family.
- **Sexual:** Forcing a partner to engage in a sex act when he or she does not or cannot consent. In addition, this can be nonphysical, like threatening to spread rumors if a partner refuses to have sex.

Background:

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a self-administered, school-based anonymous survey that has been conducted in Florida public high schools every two years since 1991. It is part of a national survey effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth in the United States.

Methods:

Students are randomly selected through a two-stage cluster design. A representative random sample of Florida public high schools is selected followed by a random sample of classes within the selected high schools. Data are statistically weighted to yield results that are representative of all Florida high school students. Students completing the 2013 YRBS were asked three dating violence questions:

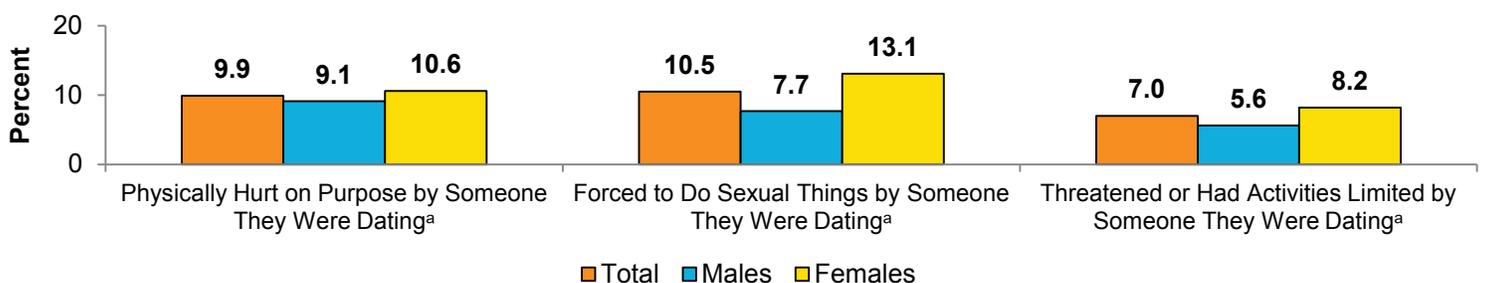
- “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose? (Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon.)”
- “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do? (Count such things as kidding, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse.)”
- “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with threaten you, limit your activities against your will, or make you feel unsafe in any other way?”

Response options for each question included: “0 times,” “1 time,” “2 or 3 times,” “4 or 5 times,” “6 or more times,” and “I did not date or go out with anyone during the past 12 months”. The difference in prevalence between two different populations is statistically significant if the 95% confidence intervals of the two prevalence estimates do not overlap.

Results:

In 2013, 9.9% of high school students were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating one or more times during the past 12 months, 10.5% were forced to do sexual things (kissing, touching or forced to have sex) by someone they were dating one or more times during the past 12 months, and 7.0% were threatened or had their activities limited against their will by someone they were dating one or more times during the past 12 months. Females were significantly more likely than males to have been forced to do sexual things and be threatened or have their activities limited against their will by someone they were dating one or more times during the past 12 months (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students by Sex, Florida YRBS, 2013



^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

Teen dating violence is a widespread issue that has serious short-term and long-term effects.¹ Many teens do not report dating violence because they fear the abuse may escalate and that they will not be believed.¹ Florida Statute 1006.148, requires school districts to adopt and implement a policy prohibiting dating violence and abuse by any student on school property, during a school sponsored activity, or during school-sponsored transportation, and providing procedures for responding to such incidents of dating violence or abuse, including accommodations for students experiencing dating violence or abuse.² The YRBS measures the number of times a student has experienced teen dating violence behaviors in increments of one time, two to three times, four or five times, and six or more times. In 2013, the number of occurrences of teen dating violence behaviors varied significantly by sex (Figure 2).

Physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating:

- Females were significantly more likely to experience just once.
- Males were significantly more likely to experience on six or more occasions.

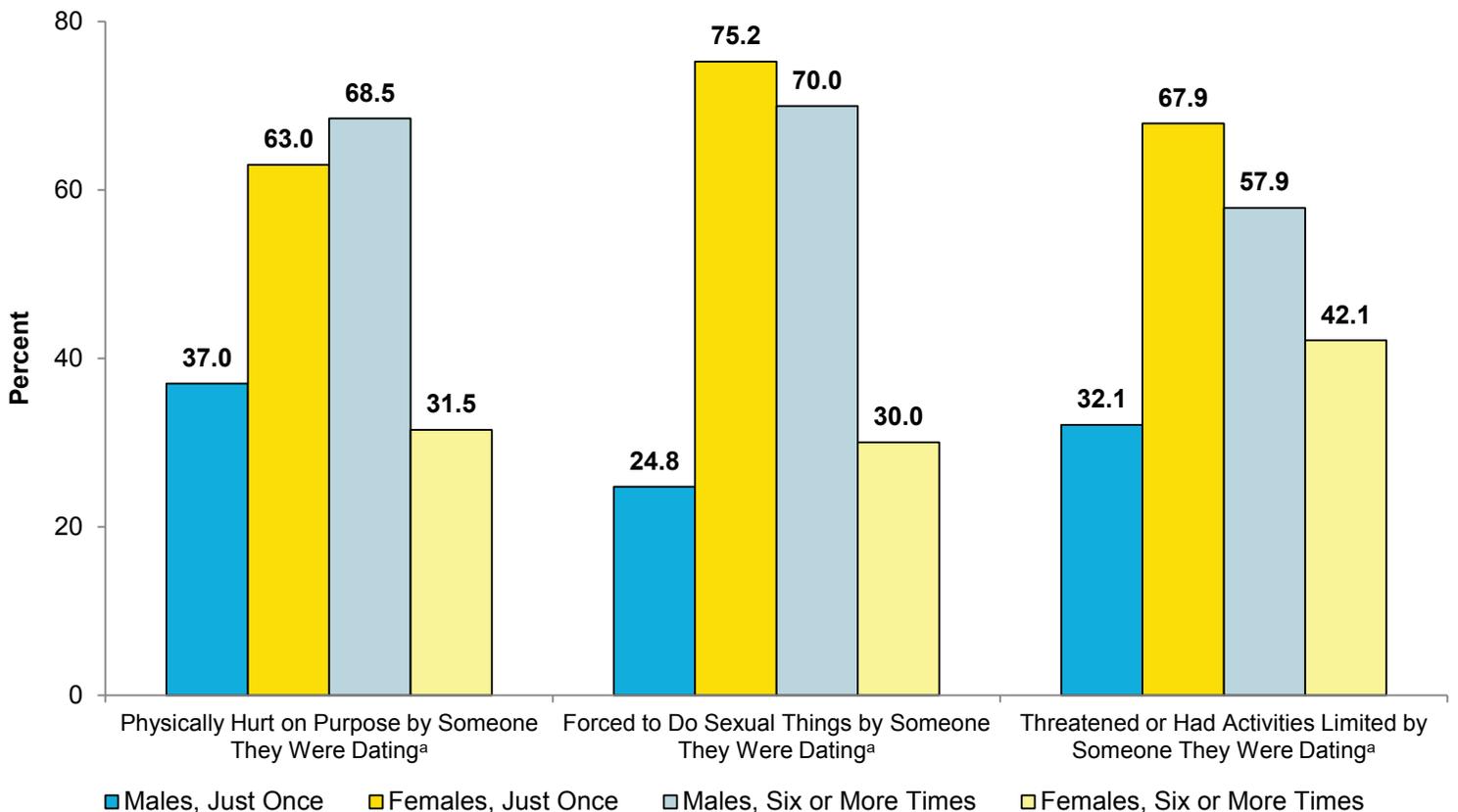
Forced to do sexual things by someone they were dating:

- Females were significantly more likely to experience just once.
- Males were significantly more likely to experience on six or more occasions.

Threatened or had activities limited by someone they were dating:

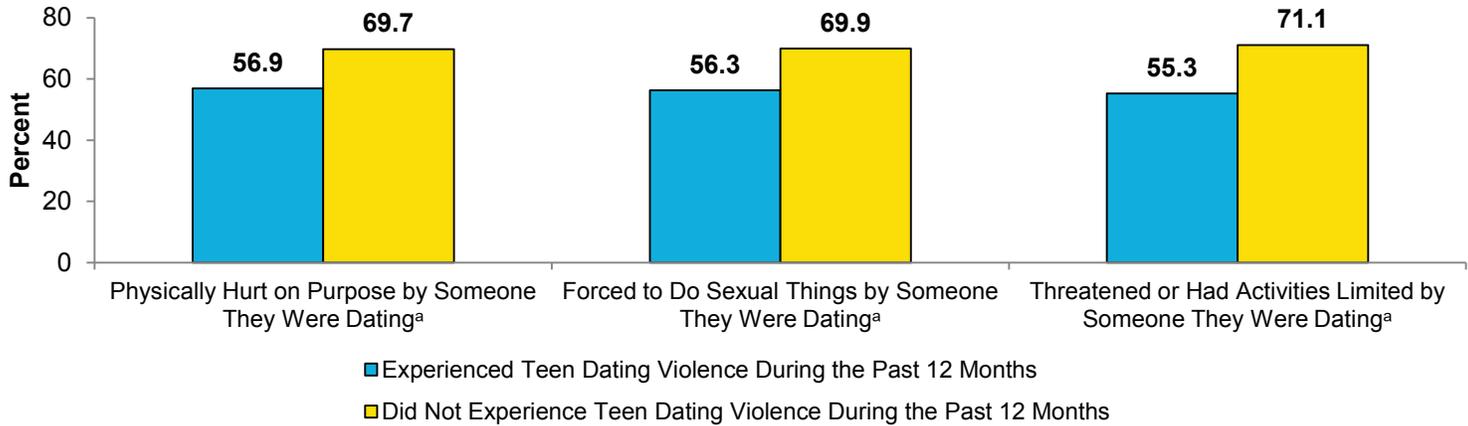
- Females were significantly more likely to experience just once.
- Males had a higher prevalence of experiencing six or more times, but there was no significant difference between sexes.

Figure 2. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students by Number of Occurrences and Sex, Florida YRBS, 2013



^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

Figure 3. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students Who Ate Dinner at Home With at Least 1 Parent/Guardian on 4 or More Nights During the Past 7 Days, Florida YRBS, 2013

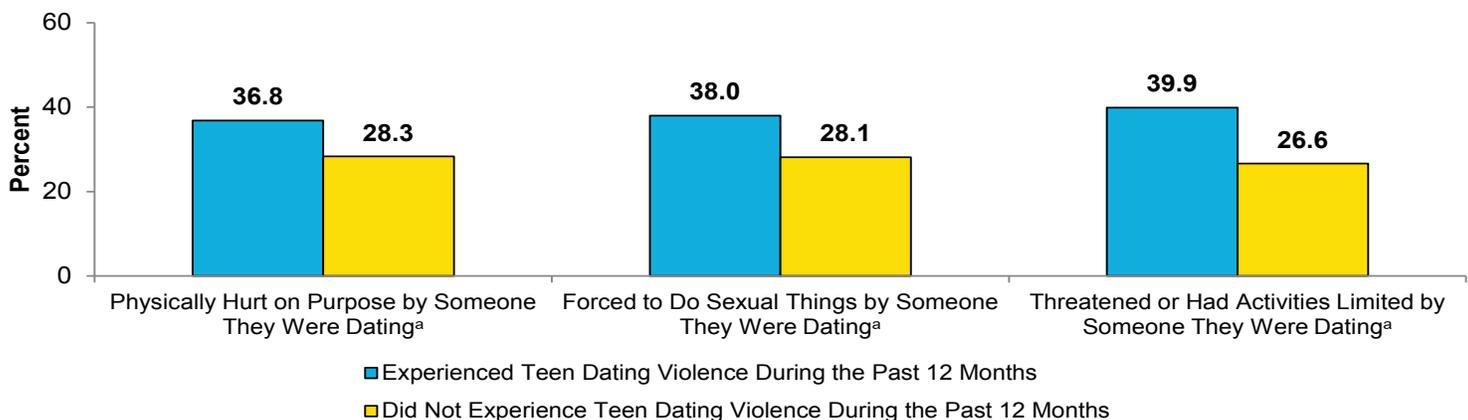


^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

In 2013, students who were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating, students who had been forced to do sexual things they did not want to do by someone they were dating, and students who were threatened or had their activities limited by someone they were dating were all **significantly less likely to eat dinner at home four or more times during the past seven days with at least one parent or guardian** compared to students who were not physically hurt, not forced to do sexual things, or not threatened by someone they were dating (Figure 3). Social connections to family, like eating dinner at home and involvement with the community, are protective and resiliency factors for youth.²

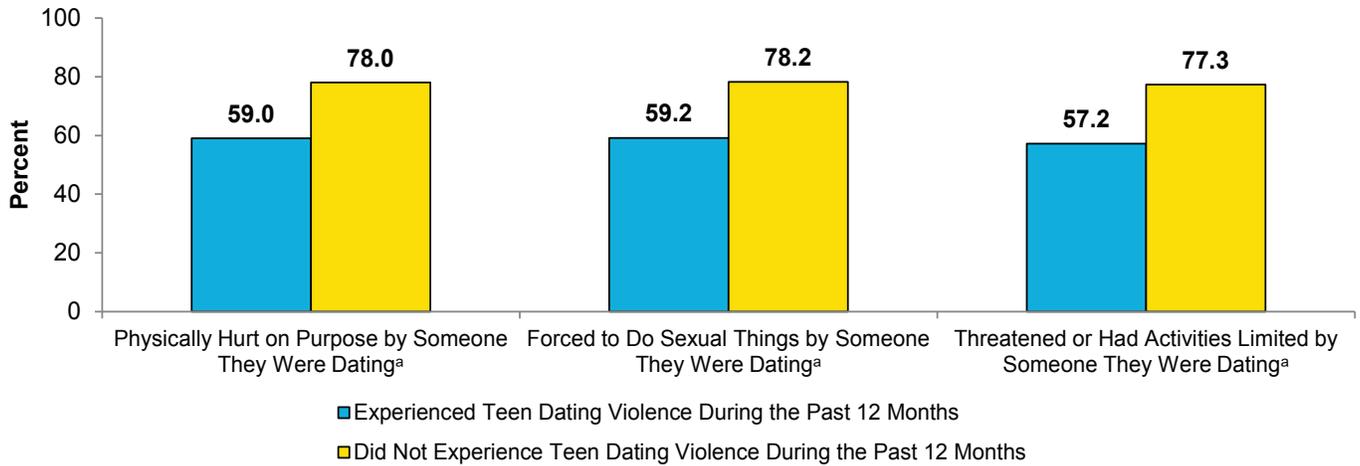
In 2013, students who were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating, students who had been forced to do sexual things they did not want to do by someone they were dating, and students who were threatened or had their activities limited by someone they were dating were all **significantly more likely to have talked to a teacher or adult in their school about a personal problem** compared to students who were not physically hurt, not forced to do sexual things, or not threatened by someone they were dating (Figure 4). Prevention strategies through school-based programs are used to train influential adults, such as teachers and coaches, to work with youth to prevent teen dating violence.¹

Figure 4. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students Who Talked to a Teacher/Adult at School During the Past 12 Months About a Personal Problem They Had, Florida YRBS, 2013



^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

Figure 5. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students Who Knew Where to Report Physical or Sexual Abuse, Florida YRBS, 2013

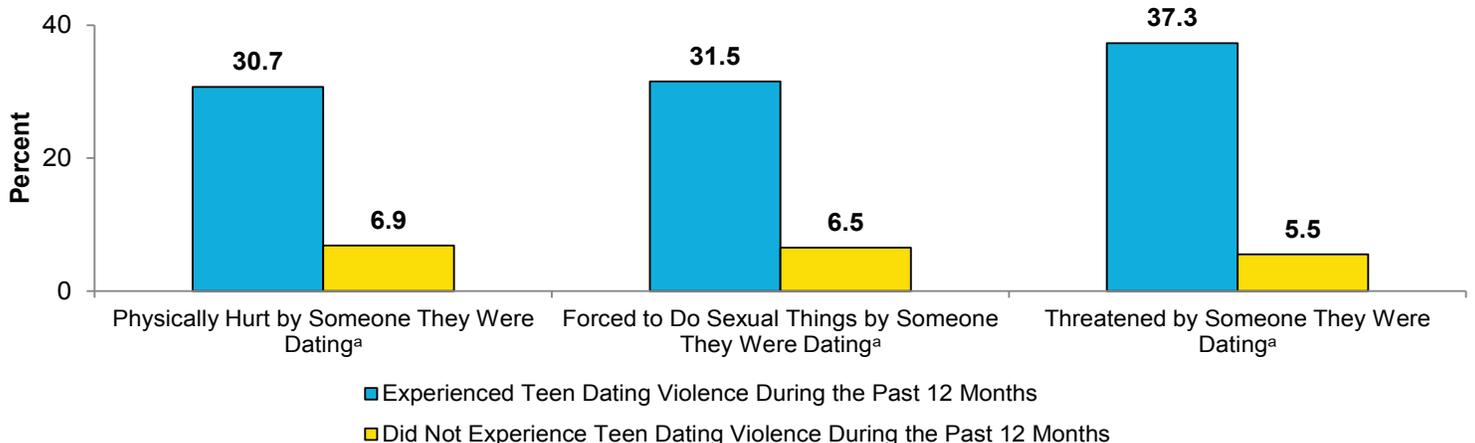


^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

In 2013, students who were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating, students who had been forced to do sexual things they did not want to do by someone they were dating, and students who were threatened or had their activities limited by someone they were dating were all **significantly less likely to know where to report physical abuse or sexual abuse if they or a friend was experiencing it** compared to students who were not physically hurt, not forced to do sexual things, or not threatened by someone they were dating (Figure 5). Students who do not know where to report abuse may not report it to anyone, allowing the perpetrator to continue acts of violence without any consequences.²

In 2013, students who were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating, students who had been forced to do sexual things they did not want to do by someone they were dating, and students who were threatened or had their activities limited by someone they were dating were all **significantly more likely to have attempted suicide during the past 12 months** compared to students who were not physically hurt, not forced to do sexual things, or not threatened by someone they were dating (Figure 6). Students who experience dating violence often feel confused, ashamed, embarrassed, and isolated. These feelings can lead to self-harm, suicide planning, and suicide attempts.³

Figure 6. Teen Dating Violence Behaviors Among High School Students Who Attempted Suicide During the Past 12 Months, Florida YRBS, 2013



^a 95% confidence intervals denote significant difference

Conclusions from 2013 YRBS:

Overall, Florida teen dating violence is more likely to occur among females. When broken down into the number of times a student was a victim of teen dating violence, females were more likely to have only been a victim once, where males were more likely to have been a victim of teen dating violence on six or more occasions.

Students who were victims of teen dating violence behaviors were more likely to:

- Not eat dinner at home with at least one parent/guardian four or more times a week.
- Talk to a teacher/adult at their school about a personal problem.
- Not know where to report physical or sexual abuse.

What can you do about teen dating violence?⁴

If you observe that someone you know may be a victim of teen dating violence, **DO**:

- Listen to what the student, family or friend is saying without interrupting.
- Find out what the person would like to do about the relationship and support them regardless of their decision.
- You may let them know that abuse usually gets worse over time. Let them know that you will be there for them if they ever need you.
- Expect the person to be confused about their feelings and about what to do. Expect them to change their mind, maybe even a few times.
- Watch your body language and respect the person's right to privacy and personal space.
- Help the person become informed of available resources, some of which are listed on this page.
- Decide how you should proceed with informing any other persons, especially if you feel the person's safety may be in danger.

Be careful **NOT** to:

- Judge the person.
- Give advice. Instead, talk to them about the choices they have and help them find persons able to help.
- Ask unnecessary questions; the victim may shut down if they feel like they are being pressed to share information that they aren't ready to talk about.
- Overreact.
- Confront the person's abusive partner about the abuse - confronting the abuser may put you in danger, and may put the victim at increased risk.

Teen Dating Violence Resources:

- There are resources for teens, family, friends, and educators. The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence connects friends, families and victims. They can be reached at the statewide confidential hotline at 1-800-500-1119, 1-800-621-4202 (TDD), or at www.fcadv.org.
- For frequently asked questions, visit www.fcadv.org/resources/media/faq.
- To help end teen dating violence and abuse, visit www.IAmCourageous.org.
- Resources for educators are available at www.fcadv.org/educators or by emailing Prevention@fcadv.org.

Sources of Literature:

¹"Teen Dating Violence," CDC, September 17, 2014, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html> (August 12, 2014).

²V.A. Foshee et. al., "Assessing the effects of Families for Safe Dates, a family-based teen dating abuse prevention program." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2012; 51:349-356.

³"D. Exner-Cortens, et. al., "Longitudinal associations between teen dating violence victimization and adverse health outcomes," *Pediatrics*, 2013; 71:71-78.

⁴"Teen Dating Violence Prevention," Florida Department of Education, September 17, 2014, <<http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/TeenDatingViolence.asp>> (September 17, 2014).

For more information about the YRBS, please contact the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Surveillance and Evaluation Section at (850) 245-4401, or visit our website at: www.floridahealth.gov/yrbs. For an interactive database of YRBS data, visit the CDC's YRBS web site at: www.cdc.gov/yrbs. This document was developed by the Bureau of Epidemiology for the Florida Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools in cooperation with the CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health Project Number 1U87PS004277-01.