YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to:
• Express your opinions and have them be respected.
• Have your needs be as important as your partner’s needs.
• Grow as an individual in your own way.
• Change your mind.
• Not take responsibility for your partner’s behavior.
• Not be physically, sexually, or emotionally abused.
• Break up with someone you are afraid of.
• Be happy and healthy.

Talk to your parents or another adult family member, a school counselor or teacher, or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline at 1-866-331-9474.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
womensministries@gc.adventist.org
www.adventistwomensministries.org
www.enditnow.org

Department of Women’s Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA
Telephone: 1 (301) 680-6608

WHAT ARE YOU BEING ABUSED?
1. Are you frightened by your partner’s temper?
2. Are you afraid to disagree with your partner?
3. Are you constantly apologizing for your partner’s behavior, especially when he or she has treated you badly?
4. Do you have to justify every place you go, everything you do?
5. Does your partner constantly put you down and then say he or she loves you?
6. Have you ever been hit, kicked, shoved, or had things thrown at you?
7. Do you not see family or friends or do things just because of your partner’s jealousy?
8. Have you been forced into having sex when you didn’t want to?
9. Are you afraid to break up because your partner has threatened to hurt you himself/herself?
10. Do you feel less confident about yourself when you’re with him or her?
11. Do you feel scared or worried about doing or saying “the wrong thing”?
12. Do you find yourself changing your behavior out of fear or to avoid a fight?

If one or more of the above questions applies to your relationship, you are being abused and you can make choices. You can:

1. End the relationship and choose not to see your partner.
2. Get help from someone you trust, preferably an adult.
3. Go to your counseling center at school.
4. Call your local domestic violence program.

ARE YOU BEING ABUSED?
Teen dating abuse is a pattern of abusive behavior used to have power and control over another person. It can be:

• Any kind of physical violence or threat of physical violence to gain control.
• Emotional or mental abuse, such as playing mind games, making you feel crazy, constantly texting you, or constantly putting you down or criticizing you.
• Destroying your homework.
• Deciding what school activities in which you can participate.
• Sexual abuse, including making you do something you don't want to do, or making you feel badly about yourself sexually. Threatening to rape you.

SOME EFFECTS OF RELATIONSHIP AND DATING VIOLENCE

Abusing self (cutting)
Difficulty in making decisions
Inability to concentrate
Poor communication skills
Loss of self-confidence
Nightmares
Scared
Guilt
Insomnia
Withdrawal
Anger
Promiscuity
Paranoia
Insomnia
Shame
Depression
Anxiety
Aggression
Eating disorders

Abusive relationships have good times and bad times. What makes dating violence so confusing is that love is mixed with the abuse. This can make it hard to tell if you are being abused. If you’re not sure, see the warning signs checklist. You deserve to be treated in a loving, respectful way all the time by your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Myths and ATTITUDES

The Abuser

“A guy needs to be in control of the relationship.”

“Some girls ask for it, that’s why they stay.”

“The girl is to blame when the guy hits her.”

“When a guy gets angry, he can’t help it.”

“It’s understandable to hit her; maybe next time she’ll learn not to make me angry.”

The Victim

“I love him. I’m the only one who can help him.”

“I shouldn’t have nagged him.”

“It was my fault he got angry.”

“If I change, he’ll change.”

ARE YOU ABUSIVE?

1. Do you constantly check on your partner and accuse her or him of being with other people?
2. Are you extremely jealous or possessive?
3. Have you hit, kicked, shoved, or thrown things at your partner?
4. Have you threatened your partner or broken things in your partner’s presence?
5. Have you forced your partner to have sex with you or intimidated your partner so that he or she is afraid to say no?
6. Have you threatened to hurt your partner?
7. Have you threatened to hurt yourself if your partner breaks up with you?

If one or more of the above questions applies to your behavior, realize that you are inflicting physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse on your partner. If you can recognize that what you are doing is wrong, then:

1. You do have to take responsibility for your actions.
2. You can’t blame your behavior on your partner or others.
3. You can change the way you act if you get supportive counseling.
4. You can go to the nearest counseling center.
5. You need to do something about it as soon as possible. If not, it’s going to get worse, and your violence will increase.
6. You might be breaking the law with your abusive behavior.