

Crisis Connection

Technology, Teens & Domestic Violence: High-tech stalking epidemic in dating abuse

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There is a dark side to the revolution in electronics above and beyond pedophiles trolling the 'net for underage victims. Teenagers are using the advances in communication technology to abuse other teens. According to a recent survey, there is an epidemic in high-tech stalking and dating abuse.

The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* first surveyed high school students in 2005. It found that a little less than 10% report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt by their dating partner in the previous twelve months. Studies from larger cities reported higher abuse rates. In Chicago it was 15.4%.

But physical abuse, it turns out, may be only the tip of the iceberg of abuse. *Liz Claiborne, Inc.*, commissioned *Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU)* in 2005 and 2006 to determine levels of abuse among American teenagers. The findings are in, and they are alarming. The research provides the first clear evidence, according to TRU, that technology has made teen dating abuse more pervasive and hidden. A growing number of teens in dating relationships are being controlled, abused and threatened by their partners.

All of this is happening in a technological netherworld hidden from parents and adults in general.

Here are some of the surveys findings:

- 1) 30% of teens said that they've been text messaged or emailed 10 to 30 times an hour by a partner wanting to check up on them.
- 2) 19% said that their partner spread rumors about them using a cell phone, email, IM, text, Web chat, blog or networking site like MySpace or Facebook.
- 3) 18% said that their partner used a social-networking site to harass them.
- 4) 17% said that their partners made them afraid not to respond to a cell phone call, email, IM or text message.
- 5) 16% claim that their partners bought a cell phone or minutes for them.
- 6) 11% report that their partners shared private or embarrassing photos/videos of them.
- 7) 10% said that they had been threatened in calls or messages.

A TRU researcher said that the extensive use of text messaging “suggests someone is really needing to control someone else in an extreme way.”

Only a minority of teen victims of partner harassment and abuse tell their parents, even teens who report being checked on 10 times per hour by email or text messaging by their abusive partners. Most don't tell their parents because they don't think the behavior is serious enough to justify telling. More than a quarter fear that their parents will react by taking away their computers or cell phones or prevent them from seeing their partner.

There is also evidence that physical abuse is up in the last two years. Teens report increases in verbal abuse (13 to 16%), being hit (11 to 12%), threatened (11 to 12%), and bruised (5 to 8%). Parents are not told about the physical abuse either. The survey found that 75% of parents were not told of physical abuse that caused injuries; half were not told of threats of violence if their children ended their dating relationship; and 58% were not told of partners slapping, hitting or strangling their children.

A complete copy of the 20-page research report can be obtained from http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/surveyresults_2007mstr.htm.

Liz Claiborne Chooses Crisis Connection Inc.



A group of educators, domestic violence experts, government officials, medical professionals and corporate leaders have come together with Liz Claiborne Inc. and the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to create a national high school curriculum specifically designed to educate teens on the issue of dating violence. This "Love Is Not Abuse Curriculum" aims to teach teens how to recognize, deal with and ultimately prevent the growing incidences of physical and verbal abuse and sexual pressure within their age group.

"The sheer number of teens impacted by domestic violence issues is shocking, and our company wants to reach out to these kids right now so that they have the resources to deal with this issue as they enter adulthood," says Jane Randel, Vice President, Corporate Communications, Liz Claiborne Inc. "Our hope is that this curriculum will help educate teens on how to identify all forms of relationship abuse and understand what types of actions are and are not acceptable in a healthy dating relationship."

Crisis Connection Inc., the local, not-for-profit, domestic and sexual violence victim advocacy program has been selected by the Liz Claiborne Foundation to teach the curriculum in Forest Park, Southridge and Jasper High Schools.

Pilot schools chosen from across the U.S. for this program include:

- Herbert Hoover High School, San Diego, CA
- Furness High School, Philadelphia, PA
- Wilson High School, Tacoma, WA
- Oakland Alternative High School, Tacoma, WA
- Lakes High School, Lakewood, WA
- Central High School, Pueblo, CO
- Centennial High School, Pueblo, CO
- Newton North High School, Newton, MA
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge, MA
- Sebring High School, Sebring, FL
- West Hills High School, Santee, CA
- **Jasper High School, Jasper, IN**
- **Southridge High School, Huntingburg, IN**

- **Forest Park High School, Ferdinand, IN**
- West High School, Sioux City, IA
- Woodbury Central High School, Merville, IA

Please visit the Liz Claiborne “**Love is Not Abuse**” site for more information
www.loveisnotabuse.com



1-866-331-9474 1-866-331-8453 TTY

[national teen dating abuse helpline](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

In response to the alarming rates of teen dating abuse through technology and the severe knowledge gap between parents and their teens, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) and Liz Claiborne Inc. joined together to launch loveisrespect.org, **The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline (NTDAH)**. This 24-hour national web-based and telephone resource was created to help teens (ages 13-18) experiencing dating abuse and is the only helpline in the country serving all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Although there are national hotlines for adults, teens have special needs and require specific expertise, information and communication mechanisms for overcoming dating violence. Cumulative research from the NDVH indicates that 10 percent of the 17,000 calls answered monthly at the Hotline are from teenagers and young adults.

The first of its kind, NTDAH will operate via telephone and Web **24 hours a day** and will be staffed by both teen and adult advocates. Teens (and parents) anywhere in the country can call toll free, 866-331-9474 or log on to the interactive Web site, loveisrespect.org, and receive immediate, confidential assistance. The site will offer secure, live interactive chat to teens, which will present them with a familiar technology and an accessible means for communication. While online or on the phone, teens will be given support as well as referrals to local resources in their hometown to provide them with the help they need.