



Teen Dating Violence and LGBTQIA+

**A Resource to Support Judges and  
Other Professionals Interacting with  
Teen Victims and Offenders**

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

# Teen Dating Violence and LGBTQIA+ Youth: A Resource to Support Judges and Other Professionals Interacting with Teen Victims and Offenders



## Background

Teen dating violence, commonly known as dating violence, dating abuse, or relationship violence affects a wide range of young people from multiple backgrounds. This publication will explore some of the experiences and impacts of dating violence amongst LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity), intersex, asexual/aromantic/agender, and two-spirit) youth.

A [glossary](#) of terms can be found at the end of this document.

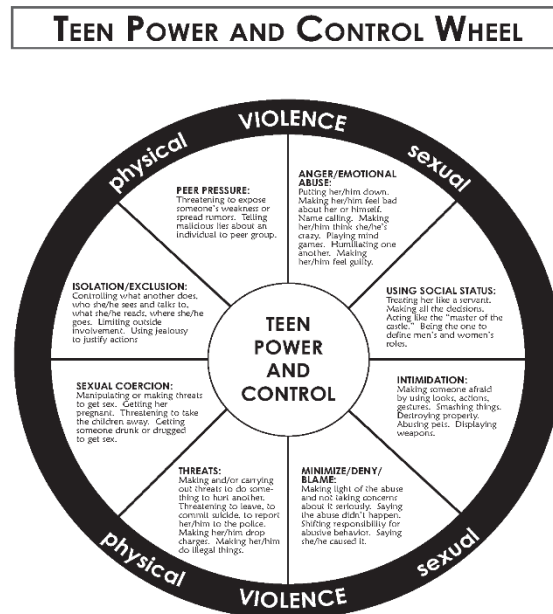
Dating violence is defined as a pattern of unwanted abusive behaviors that occur over time and is used to exert power and control over a partner in a relationship. In incidents of teen dating violence, these relationships are usually intimate or exclusive in nature but may also be casual or without traditional labels such as “dating,” “boyfriend or girlfriend,” “romantic partner,” or “intimate relationship.” Within this publication, we will use the term relationships with the notion that these are more than platonic situations between peers. Information shared throughout this resource supports the policies of many juvenile justice systems which emphasize their overall purpose as one that serves the safety, moral, emotional, and physical welfare of the minor. Importantly, this resource will also address practical tips for supporting victims and offenders of teen dating violence through a social-ecological lens which considers intersectionality and the complex nature between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that cause teens to experience dating violence.

## Scope of the Problem

Dating violence includes behaviors that threaten, harm, or exert power and control over another person in a relationship. Like domestic violence in adult relationships, teen dating violence includes a pattern of assaultive and coercive behavior. It is also important to understand that not all unhealthy or abusive relationships are the same, below is a few common examples.

## Examples of Teen Dating Violence

- Extreme jealousy and/or controlling behaviors
- Sexual coercion, pressure, and lack of consent
- Not respecting and/or ignoring boundaries
- Verbal threats, yelling, and intimidation
- Use of technology/online harassment
- Physical harm or endangerment
- Distribution of non-consensual intimate images
- Shame, embarrassment, and victim-blaming
- Isolation and purposely causing distance between family and friends



National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

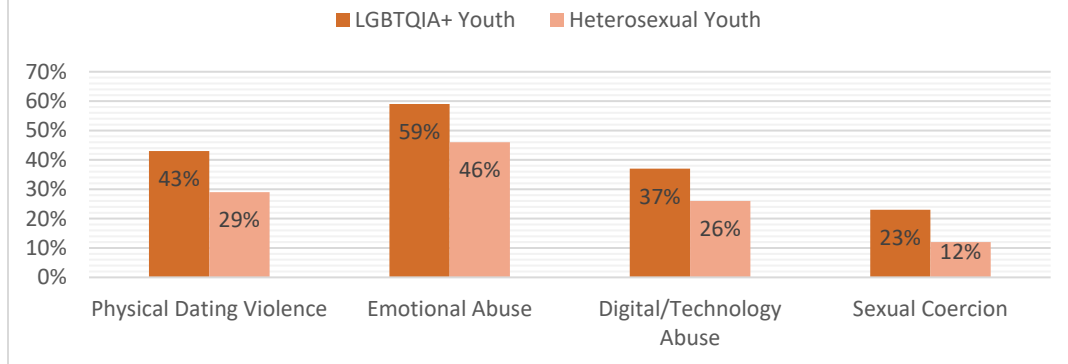
Dating violence is common and affects 1 in 12 high school students per year<sup>1</sup> Abusive behavior can be categorized as physical, verbal, emotional and/or sexual. Within each of these general categories of abuse, tactics related to physical harm, verbal threats, intimidation, rape, sexual assault, technology abuse, and financial control are common. Abusive behaviors are not always visible and can occur online or in-person, which makes the frequency and nuances of abusive behavior difficult for victims, family, and friends to recognize. Incidents of dating violence tend to escalate due to jealousy, arguments, break ups, and insecurities. Abusive partners in a relationship are typically controlling and possessive and may demonstrate these behaviors in subtle or extreme ways. Some examples of abusive behavior that are more subtle include telling a partner what they can or cannot wear, controlling who their partner talks to and when, monitoring their partner's phone, and requiring a partner give them access to passwords and other social media accounts. Without an understanding of or experience with healthy dating behaviors and boundaries, some victims understand these abusive behaviors to be protective or signals of commitment and love. In fact, these behaviors are indicators of control and can be a precursor to more physical and extreme acts of violence.

LGBTQIA+ teens experience dating violence at higher rates than their heterosexual peers. Research shows that teens identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual report higher rates of experiencing unwanted physical and sexual activity.

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<sup>1</sup> [Preventing Teen Dating Violence](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention

## Technology, Teen Dating Violence and Abuse



*Urban Institute's Technology, Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study*

Dating violence amongst LGBTQIA+ youth may be uniquely different based on the dynamics of the relationship and how a person chooses to share their relationship, gender identity, and sexual orientation with others. A specific threat in LGBTQIA+ dating violence relationships is a threat of being “outed” which is when the abusive partner threatens to share that they are in an LGBTQIA+ relationship which they have kept a secret. Disclosure could be to a close family member or friend of the victim or by posting on social media. The fear of being outed can be extreme and may cause the victim to stay in a relationship rather than have this information made public.

Human trafficking is a major concern nationally, and while it is a concern in heterosexual relationships, it poses a specific risk to the LGBTQIA+ community due to the prevalence of secrecy and silence in LGBTQIA+ relationships. Which is linked to societal stigmas, fear of being outed, and systems of oppression. Signs of human trafficking in LGBTQIA+ relationships may include youth living at their place of work, in crowded home situations not with family, and constantly being monitored or transported by “guards” or “chaperones.” Other signs include a teen referring to their dating partner who is typically much older than they are as a “pimp” or “manager” and that discusses controlling behaviors, limited

decision-making power, little access to financial resources, and no communication with friends or family. A full list of questions to consider which may indicate human trafficking can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign website, and in the reference section at the end of this publication. These indicators combined with secrecy and silence that may exist for some youth in LGBTQIA+ relationships can be very dangerous. Especially for LGBTQIA+ teens who have run away from home, and for those who are already living under the poverty line. As with all warning signs or indicators, it is important to understand that these are examples of behaviors typically found in abusive situations and not a full list or guarantee that a teen is experiencing dating violence and human trafficking. Further information must be gathered to determine the extent of the abuse and control.

Furthermore, LGBTQIA+ teens experience negative stigmas related to the nature of their relationships. In a 2019 study done by the Trevor Project, 71% of LGBTQIA+ youth reported discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>2</sup> These experiences include trauma and isolation, which lead many youths to increased substance use, suicidal ideations, harassment, risky behaviors, stress, and anxiety. "Between 30 percent and 40 percent of LGBTQIA+ youth report recurring suicidal ideation, and a significant number made suicide attempts. 60 percent of gay and bisexual young men use substances, compared with less than 4 percent of heterosexual youth population."<sup>3</sup>

Overall, dating violence has a high impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of youth. Youth who experience dating violence experience an overwhelming amount of negative social, emotional, and physical outcomes. Dating violence has been linked to poor mental health, stress, anxiety, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Youth who experience dating violence are also more likely to struggle academically, which contributes to early dropout rates, suspension, and expulsion. These negative outcomes can contribute to juvenile delinquency and an increase in cases seen in the juvenile court system. Homicide is the most extreme outcome of dating violence. Data continues to show that women represent most homicide victims, nearly half of female homicide victims under the age

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<sup>2</sup> [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2019](#), The Trevor Project

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

of 44 were killed by a current or former partner.<sup>4</sup> According to a 2019 multi-state study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) pediatrics, out of the 2,000 homicides of youth ages 11 to 18, 150 homicides were perpetrated by an intimate partner. Additionally, this study found that “victims of intimate partner homicide were largely female and killed by a firearm, and these homicides often involved broken relationships or jealousy.”<sup>5</sup>

### Understanding LGBTQIA Identity and Representation

Incorporating a framework of intersectionality to better understand the scope and impact of teen dating violence on LGBTQIA+ teens will aid in increased knowledge of the direct link between oppression and violence. Intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, who used it to describe the experiences of Black women who experience sexism and racism. It has since been used to expand awareness of how people with multiple marginalized identities continue to experience heightened forms of victimization with long lasting health effects. Through an intersectional lens, we can begin to understand the interactions between various identities amongst LGBTQIA+ youth and the layers of oppression an individual may experience. While it is true that people in the LGBTQIA+ community experience higher rates of dating violence, race and ethnicity also contributes to certain demographic groups having a higher risk of dating violence. “Teen dating violence was most prevalent among girls (10% physical, 13% sexual); adolescents were racially identified as Native North American (13% physical, 10% sexual), Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (12% physical, 14% sexual), or multiracial (11% physical, 12% sexual), and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning their sexual orientation (LGBQIA+) adolescents (19% physical, 20% sexual). The intersectional groups with the highest rates of physical and sexual dating violence included Latinx GBQ

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<sup>4</sup> [National Violent Death Reporting System](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>5</sup> Id.

boys (26% physical, 26% sexual) and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander GBQ boys (29% physical, 32% sexual).”<sup>6</sup>

Adopting an intersectional framework and understanding of multiple layers of obstacles and barriers, increases support for marginalized LGBTQIA+ youth. For example, a Black queer teen may find seeking resources more difficult because of racism, anti-Blackness, queer phobia, and lack of community resources that are specific to their needs as a non-heterosexual male in their community. Likewise, a Latine or Latinx (the gender inclusive forms of the word Latino/a) teen who is non-binary, may find seeking information in their community that is tailored to supporting “women” or “Latinas” biased or not inclusive because of lack of representation and inclusivity of gender-neutral terms and imagery. Additionally, many communities have a history of prejudice of people in the LGBTQIA+ community that are rooted in cultural, patriarchal, or religious views. There are also regional differences in what LGBTQIA+ youth may experience as prejudices and oppression. The examples given above are just a few examples of what individuals may face, but they are in no way indicators of everything LGTBQIA+ or marginalized groups may experience. Racial and ethnic cultural groups as well as teens with disabilities are not a monolith, so it is important to avoid stereotypes and over generalizations while building an understanding of various experiences of youth. Positive and negative effects can be exacerbated based on the type of exposure to resources in their community, and whether they were inclusive of culturally sensitive LGBTQIA+ narratives.

Over the years, LGBTQIA+ representation has become more visible and accessible. Although inconsistent, legal protections have increased for the LGBTQIA+ community, including access to support and resources within

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<sup>6</sup> Fix RL, Nava N, Rodriguez R. Disparities in Adolescent Dating Violence and Associated Internalizing and Externalizing Mental Health Symptoms by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Sexual Orientation. *J Interpers Violence*. 2021 Mar 6;886260521997944. doi: 10.1177/0886260521997944. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33678044.



the juvenile justice system. The field needs increased training and resources to help professionals understand the rights of and strategies for protecting diverse groups of LGBTQIA+ teens.

For many LGBTQIA+ youth, there are a wide variety of terms they use to describe their own identity. An approach to understanding and supporting LGBTQIA+ teens should not be based on only your knowledge of current terms being used. As teens continue to find new ways to define and broaden their relationship definitions and experiences, it is important to check in with members of the LGBTQIA+ community, allies in the field, and review emerging trends on the topics of terms and language use. According to The Trevor Project's 2019 National Survey on LGBTQIA+ youth, more than 100 different terms to label sexuality and relationships were shared. This youth study found that more than 1 in 5 LGBTQIA+ youth described themselves as "something other than gay, lesbian, or bisexual."<sup>7</sup> While 78% responded that their sexual orientation was gay, lesbian, or bisexual, a full 21% selected the option for "something else."<sup>8</sup> Additionally, The Trevor Project notes that it is common for people to share different labels of their identities with different individuals in their lives. For example, a teen may use a label with an older family member that they feel that family member would be more familiar with, defining themselves as gay or bisexual with family. This same young person may then use more fluid or a wide range of LGBTQIA+ identities with peers and allies in the queer and trans community who have more familiarity. No matter how LGBTQIA+ teens choose to define their relationship, with one label or multiple labels, one constant remains: relationships, no matter how casual or exclusive, should be safe and individuals in relationships have the right to respect, communication, and healthy boundaries.

### **Supporting LGBTQIA+ Teens Experiencing Teen Dating Violence**

There are several promising practices to best support teens in dating violence relationships. For LGBTQIA+ teens we will focus on 1) centering the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ teens, 2) building inclusive and

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<sup>7</sup> [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2019](#), The Trevor Project

<sup>8</sup> Id.

culturally responsive practices, and 3) providing practical, LGBTQIA+ friendly tips and resources for victims and offenders of teen dating violence. LGBTQIA+ teens feel best supported when their identities are represented, acknowledged, respected, and when inclusivity is consistent. When working with LGBTQIA+ teens, it is important to recognize and understand gender identity, sexual orientation use of pronouns, and labels that are used to define their relationships.

Cultural responsiveness requires both cultural competence and cultural humility and is defined as the ability to effectively interact with people across cultures.

[National Center for Cultural Competence](#)

Supporting teens in abusive relationships requires the ability to listen and share information in ways that promotes their autonomy and builds trust and rapport. Efforts of prevention, intervention, and response are most successful when professionals center the unique experiences and lived realities of youth. This requires

culturally responsive efforts that address cultural humility and standards of care that are inclusive and proactive in meeting the diverse needs of teens.

To achieve cultural responsiveness, victim services should include a multi-level practice of respect for differences and an eagerness to learn and apply these differences to better support victims and offenders in need. Understanding how culture, stigmas, and identity impacts an individual through a social-ecological framework<sup>9</sup> is especially important when working with LGTBQIA+ teens. Use of this four-level model includes the intersection of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that play into risk and protective factors for victims and offenders of dating violence. At the intersections of each level of the model, culture, identity, and access to resources can contribute to what support looks like for teens in abusive relationships.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>10</sup> Id.

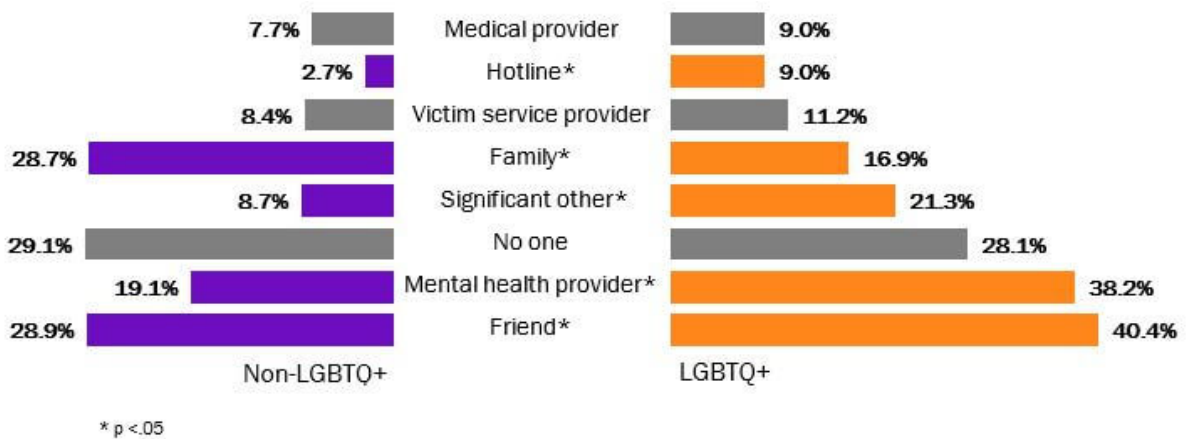


*The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention*

Another key component to supporting victims and survivors of teen dating violence is vetting and knowing the resources that are available and shared. Work with stakeholders to compile a list of resources used by the court. Ensure the resources available have information to support LGBTQIA+ youth. If you do not have any LGBTQIA+ specific resources, assign court staff and stakeholders to research possible options and bring them back to the group for review. In your review of resources, ensure they are LGBTQIA+ friendly. Consider whether an LGBTQIA+ teen would feel seen, supported, and heard if they reached out for support through that resource. For example, do these resources promote inclusivity with their use of gender-neutral terminology? Are the depictions of teen relationships through text or images inclusive of LGBTQIA+ couples? Those working to support LGBTQIA+ teens should take the time to gather information directly from the communities they are working with to ensure a robust set of resources are compiled. All survivors' needs are multi-faceted, which requires a multi-pronged approach to building specific, responsive support services that build and adapt their inclusive processes accordingly.

**Supporting Victims of Teen Dating Violence:** It is very common for victims and survivors of abuse to isolate or withdraw from their family and friends. This is linked directly to victim-blaming and gaslighting or instilling self-doubts. Reaching out for help after experiencing abuse is not only confusing but can also be dangerous for victims. When LGBTQIA+ teens do reach out to adults or professionals in the field for help, those adults typically minimize the intent and impact of the harm. Without trauma-

informed practices, professionals in the field further isolate victims and contribute to feelings of helplessness. Research from a recent study by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, found that LGBTQIA+ individuals seek out help from others in different ways from their heterosexual and cisgender peers. The image below shows the differences in how non-LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+ individuals sought out help services. Help seeking measure in this study was not specific to teen dating violence but gives an overall impression of the differences between heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ individuals. The most notable differences were that LGBTQIA+ participants sought out hotline, mental health, and friend support more than their straight peers, while non-LGBTQIA+ individuals sought out help from their family at significantly higher rates.<sup>11</sup>



*Help-Seeking Experiences of LGBTQ+ Individuals, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority*

### Promising practices to increase your support of LGBTQIA+ teens

- Meet them where they are: mirror their language, respond to their concerns before your own, describe possible approaches to safety rather than telling the youth what they should do
- Understand terms to define intimate partner relationships. Breaking down the concepts of gender, sex, and identity is a crucial step in creating a foundation for better support to LGBTQIA+ teens.
- Build inclusivity and cultural responsiveness in your practice

<sup>11</sup> [Victimization and Help-Seeking Experiences of LGBTQ+ Individuals](#), Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

- Vet and connect to resources, include community partnership and shared learning
- Identify LGBTQIA+ inclusive services and ensure they are teen specific
- Be mindful of additional sensitivity, screening, and accommodations for teens with disabilities

It is important to keep in mind that generally, victims and survivors of dating violence are not represented by an attorney when they come into contact with the juvenile or criminal justice system. They may feel unprotected and lost. It is important for attorneys, judges, and counselors to make sure that they feel safe, heard, and cared for. Referring the victim to an advocate, confidential domestic abuse hotline, counseling service, or doctor who is LGBTQIA+ inclusive is helpful.

The youth maybe not be out to their parents and friends and that decision needs to be left to the youth. The threat of being involuntarily outed is a threat that may be employed by the abuser, and it is important not to further traumatize the victim by knowingly or inadvertently telling the parents that the youth is LGBTQIA+. While the court might not technically have jurisdiction over a victim, all juvenile courts are tasked with the best interests of the youth that appear before them and are dedicated to the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of the youth in their communities. Having resources available for victims of teen dating violence is an essential component of the juvenile court mission.

## Typical Help Seeking Behaviors

- Formally reaching out to a hotline or mental health providers. May come to professionals for support for a “friend” and may not disclose that it is happening to them.
- Informally reaching out to peers first or seeking out answers with peers online and social media.
- Usually want the abusive behavior to stop, may not be ready to leave the relationship, but are seeking validation and support.

**Addressing the Actions of the Offender:** Whether a case is referred to either the police, a prosecutor, or the court, the person most likely to come into contact with the juvenile justice system is the alleged offender. While most discussions of teen dating violence will focus on the victim, it is important to address the actions and needs of the offender. The juvenile court system is dedicated to improving the behavior and futures of the youth that are involved in the system. To that end, judges, attorneys, and other professionals must remember that the system is designed not to be punitive, but rather transformative. Keeping in mind adolescent brain development, trauma that may have been experienced, adverse childhood experiences, and learned behavior, we can attempt to correct undesirable behavior and help these youths lead better lives and make better decisions. In many areas, there already exists programs that address domestic violence, which can include dating violence and juvenile sex offenders. Since domestic violence programs may not be teen dating violence specific, care should be taken to tailor the program to the needs of the individuals especially for those under the age of 18. Referrals to the programs may be indicated, depending on the facts of the individual cases. If no such programs exist, the court and stakeholders might consider individual and/or family counseling, making certain that the programs and counselors are LGBTQIA+ affirming. Online resources, local colleges, and universities and LGBTQIA+ counseling centers will often have programs or referrals. Again, when in court, or in private discussions, an appropriate person should determine whether the youth is out to their parents, community, and cohort, and respect the youth's decision.

It is important to be attuned to the issues and needs of the youth that appear in the courtroom. This is true whether the youth is an offender or a victim. Keep in mind that the goal is to redirect undesirable behavior, address trauma and prevent future harm. While it may seem counterintuitive, the implementation of restorative justice techniques has shown to be highly successful and helps to remove the dating/domestic violence issues from the adversarial atmosphere of the courtroom to a neutral, safe environment.

## Practical Considerations for Judges and Courtroom Personnel

Judges, attorneys, and probation officers should all be trained to recognize signs of dating violence and how to address them. This is of particular importance to the staff who are making detention decisions. Holding LGBTQIA+ youth in secure care will exacerbate the trauma they may have experienced as the result of dating violence. In the case of LGBTQIA+ youth, they might be increasingly reluctant to engage in open dialogue, especially if they have not told their parents. Discretion, and the assurance of a safe and welcoming environment is essential.

### Tips to Consider:

- Acknowledge you own perceptions and/or biases of gender and sexual orientation and how they may affect your language, behavior, decision making and advocacy.
- Use gender neutral language. E.g., ask about the youth’s “partners’ or “important relationships.”
- Use the youth’s name and pronoun of choice if shared and allow them to dress in accordance with their gender identity.
- Avoid labeling youth because of unisex clothing, hairstyles, or androgynous appearance.
- Address homophobic behavior of attorneys, court personnel, service providers and parents. Explain why this behavior is disrespectful or hurtful in private.
- Ensure that there are no double standards for behavior between LGBTQIA+ youth and heterosexual youth.
- Have resources, including online sites, available to share with the youth, their families, and attorneys. Make these available in an appropriate time, place, and manner.
- Advocate for mentoring for LGBTQIA+ youth, from professionals and/or advocates and peer leaders.
- Make certain that any referrals for counseling, including domestic violence counseling, is LGBTQIA+ sensitive, and available to teens. If you do not currently have such resources available, recommend that

current providers get the appropriate training. If you are unaware of nearby resources, or providers, reach out to local colleges and universities: often, they have psychology or clinical counselling clinics that can help.

- Never make a referral of a youth who might be LGBTQIA+ to a counselor or provider who is not culturally affirming.

### **Resources for Continued Learning**

We recommend reviewing and sharing the following links to support your continued education on this topic. Some of these resources can be tailored to meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ teens in your community directly, or to share with other adult allies, mentors, family members in the lives of teens to support community outreach and education efforts on this topic.

#### **8 Things Every Judge Should Know About Teen Dating Violence**

Online article expanding on the basics of teen dating violence created by NCJFCJ for judges interacting with teen dating violence victims and offenders.

#### **A National Portrait of Restorative Approaches to Intimate Partner Violence: Pathways to Safety, Accountability, Healing, and Well-Being**

Through a comprehensive survey, distributed to a sample of programs across the country, this study documents how restorative approaches are currently being applied to intimate partner violence in the United States. Submitted by The Center for Court Innovation and Partners.

#### **Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence**

A publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Prevention Institute, which highlights the intersections, impact, and context of multiple forms of violence among youth.

#### **Office of Violence Against Women, Training and Technical Assistance Providers Directory**



The TA Provider Directory is a resource for both TA providers and grantees, potential grantees, and subgrantees. It provides information about other OVW TA providers, a description of their TA projects, the project point of contact information, and the grant programs served. Information on various projects, and focus areas, including culturally specific resources can be found here.

### **[Dating Violence Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth \(The Urban Institute\)](#)**

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. This study examines psychological, sexual, and cyber dating violence experiences among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth—as compared to those of heterosexual youth and explores variations in the likelihood of help-seeking behavior and the presence of particular risk factors among both types of dating violence victims.

### **[Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign](#)**

Resource and information from the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign which provides details on the warning signs of human trafficking as well as information on how to report the crime.

### **[eTAG \(end tech abuse across generations\)](#)**

A national resource project that addresses the use/misuse of technology in sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking (including cyber stalking) cases.

### **[Gay and Lesbian Medical Association \(GLMA\)](#)**

GLMA is a national organization committed to ensuring health equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and all sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals, and equality for LGBTQ/SGM health professionals in their work and learning environments.

### **[Love is Respect \(national dating violence hotline\)](#)**

love is respect is the national resource to disrupt and prevent unhealthy relationships and intimate partner violence by empowering young people through inclusive and equitable education, support, and resources. A project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, love is respect offers 24/7 information, support, and advocacy to young people between the ages of 13 and 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships. Call: 866.331.9474 Text: "LOVEIS" to 22522.

### **National Council on Juvenile, Family, and Court Judges (NCJFCJ)**

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is the oldest judicial membership organization in the country and provides all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice. The following materials were created to advance capacity building efforts in the area of teen dating violence.

- [\*Creating Effective Protection Orders in Teen Dating Violence Cases\*](#)
- [\*Just Between You and Me and The Entire World the Trouble with Teen Sexting\*](#)

**[National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)**: The National Human Trafficking Hotline connects victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and supports to get help and stay safe. The Trafficking Hotline also receives tips about potential situations of sex and labor trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the appropriate authorities in certain cases. 24/7 confidential help is available Call 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711) Text 233733 Chat via [website](#).

**[Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center \(SPARC\)](#)**: a federally funded project providing education and resources about the crime of stalking. SPARC aims to enhance the response to stalking by educating the professionals tasked with keeping stalking victims safe and holding

offenders accountable. SPARC ensures that allied professionals have the specialized knowledge to identify and respond to the crime of stalking.

## Glossary of Terms

This glossary consists of key terms and definitions that are used by the LGBTQIA+ community and professionals working in the field of dating violence prevention. This glossary can be used to understand how LGBTQIA+ teens define their identity, gender, and intimate partner relationships. This is not a full list of terms that are used by all members of the LGBTQIA+ community and should be used as a tool to expand knowledge and increase opportunities for continued learning.

**Abrosexual:** describes one's sexual attraction that is fluid and constantly changing.

**Ally:** A member of the majority or dominant group who works to end oppression by recognizing their own privilege and supporting or advocating for the oppressed population. For example, a straight cisgender person who supports and stands up for the equality of LGBT people.

**Asexual/Aromantic/Agender:** A person who does not experience sexual attraction, but may experience other forms of attraction (e.g., intellectual, emotional).

Asexual people may also identify as "bisexual," "gay," "lesbian," "pansexual," "queer," "straight," and many more. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Bisexual:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to two genders. For example, a person attracted to some male-identified people and some female-identified people. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Fluid:** refers to someone who experiences changes in their sexual attraction over time and/or depending on the situation. Some people may find that who they are attracted to and/or the intensity of those feelings change over different days or depending on who they are in a relationship with. Remember, while sexuality can be fluid, attempts to forcibly change a

person's sexuality, such as with the discredited practice of conversion therapy, are harmful and ineffective. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Gaslighting:** psychological manipulation of a person usually over an extended period that causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories and typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one's emotional or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator. (Merriam-Webster)

**Gay:** an adjective that describe people who are physically, romantically, emotionally and/or spiritually attracted to other people of the same gender. In the past, "gay" specifically referred to men who are attracted to men. Now, it is common for "gay" to be used by anyone who is attracted to their same gender. It's all up to you and which word fits you the best. (The Trevor Project)

**Gender:** is defined as the perception of an individual's sex on the part of society as male or female, sex is an individual's biologic or natal genetic makeup as XX or XY.

**Gender Binary:** A socially constructed system of viewing gender as consisting solely of two categories, "male" and "female", in which no other possibilities for gender are believed to exist. The gender binary is inaccurate because it does not take into account the diversity of gender identities and gender expressions among all people. The gender binary is oppressive to anyone that does not conform to dominant societal gender norms. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Gender Identity:** How an individual identifies in terms of their gender. Gender identities may include, "male," "female," "androgynous," "transgender," "genderqueer" and many others, or a combination thereof. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Gender dysphoria:** is a marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least 6 months duration.

**Gender Expression:** The multiple ways (e.g., behaviors, dress) in which a person may choose to communicate gender to oneself and/or to others. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Heterosexual/Hetero/Straight:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members another gender (specifically, a male-identified person who is attracted to some females or a person who is attracted to some males). (GLSEN.ORG)

**Intersex:** An umbrella term used to describe a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive and/or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the medical definitions of female or male. (GLSEN.ORG)

**LGBTQIA+:** is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. These terms can be used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Lesbian:** is a noun that describes women who are predominantly attracted to other women. It can also be used as an adjective. Some lesbian women prefer to identify as "gay," and that's ok. (The Trevor Project)

**Multisexuality:** refers to all identities that include romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one gender. This is in contrast to monosexuality, which is defined as identities involving attraction to people of a single gender, such as exclusively gay or straight identities. Multisexual identities include

**Non-binary:** is used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the margins of gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman. Some non-binary people may feel comfortable within trans communities and find this is a safe space to be with others who don't identify as cis, but this isn't always the case. (LGBT Foundation)

**Omnisexual:** refers to someone who is attracted to people of all genders, and for whom gender plays an important part of attraction.

**Pansexual:** is an identity term for romantic and/or sexual attraction to people regardless of gender identity or to people of all genders. For some pansexual people, gender is not a defining characteristic of the attraction they feel to others. Other pansexual folks may feel that gender is a significant part of their experience of attraction.

**Pronouns:** The pronoun or set of pronouns that a person would like others to call them by, when their proper name is not being used. Traditional examples include “she/her/hers” or “he/him/his”. Some people prefer gender neutral pronouns, such as “ze/hir/hirs,” “zie/zir/zirs,” “ey/em/eirs,” “per/per/pers,” “hu/hum/hus,” or “they/them/theirs” Some prefer no pronouns at all. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Queer:** refers to an identity that expands outside of heterosexuality. Due to its history as a reclaimed slur and use in political movements, queer still holds political significance. (The Trevor Project)

**Questioning:** A person who is in the process of understanding and exploring what their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression might be.

**Sexual Orientation:** The inner feelings of who a person is attracted to emotionally and/or physically, in relation to their own gender identity. Some people may identify as “asexual,” “bisexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” “pansexual,” “queer,” “straight,” and many more. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Skoliosexual:** is a term that refers to attraction to trans and nonbinary people.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity and/or expression are not aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth. “Transgender” is often used as an umbrella term encompassing a large number of identities related to gender nonconformity. (GLSEN.ORG)

**Two-spirit:** a person who identifies as having both feminine and masculine spirit, and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender, and/or spiritual identity. As an umbrella term it may encompass same-sex attraction and a wide variety of gender variance, including people

who might be described in Western culture as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, gender queer, cross-dressers, or who have multiple gender identities.

**Victim-blaming:** a social psychological phenomenon in which individuals or groups attempt to cope with the bad things that have happened to others by assigning blame to the victim of the trauma or tragedy. Victim blaming serves to create psychological distance between the blamer and the victim, may rationalize a failure to intervene if the blamer was a bystander, and creates a psychological defense for the blamer against feelings of vulnerability. (American Psychological Association)





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