



## Red Flags Fact Sheet

### About Red Flags

To combat the pervasive problem of dating violence among young Texans, the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), with a grant from the Texas Office of the Attorney General, has launched the Red Flags campaign. Through online and grassroots outreach, Red Flags will reach young men and women with two principle messages – “Control Isn’t Love” and “Know When to Raise Them” – aimed at helping them to identify and deal with the early warning signs of dating violence.

The “Red Flags” name is a metaphor for these dating violence warning signs, and the campaign seeks to empower young adults to listen to their instincts and raise a red flag when they spot jealousy, control, put-downs and other behaviors that just don’t feel right. Red Flags is ultimately about promoting positive dating relationship for young Texans marked by freedom, respect, happiness, equality and safety. For more information about Red Flags and tips for dealing with dating violence, visit [www.knowtheredflags.com](http://www.knowtheredflags.com).

### About Texas Council on Family Violence

As the state coalition against domestic violence, TCFV has been the voice of the movement against domestic violence in Texas and a national leader in the work to end domestic violence since 1978. TCFV provides public education, training and technical assistance, advocacy and public policy advocacy on the issue of domestic violence in Texas. As a statewide coalition, TCFV members include domestic violence service providers, criminal justice personnel and allied professionals. Additionally, TCFV operates the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which is the only toll-free, 24-hour hotline providing crisis intervention and connecting victims of domestic violence to more than 5,000 domestic violence service providers across the nation. TCFV is a nonprofit organization funded by both private and public sources.

### Dating Violence Defined

The term “dating violence” describes a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviors in which one partner in a relationship uses a number of abusive behaviors—emotional, physical, or sexual—to control the other partner. encompasses more than just physical harm – behaviors like excessive calling and text messaging or controlling someone’s actions are also considered dating violence. These behaviors usually escalate over time and can cause long-term emotional damage. A full list of these “red flags” can be found at [www.knowtheredflags.com](http://www.knowtheredflags.com).

### The Research Behind the Red Flags Project

A 2006 statewide survey\* of 16-to 24-year old Texans revealed that this group recognizes the problem of dating violence and has a basic understanding of healthy relationships, but they may not connect warning signs to more recognizably violent behavior. Research also points to a need for education about the kinds of behaviors that constitute dating violence, how the problem escalates and how to talk to victims beyond the oft-given advice to break up so they can leave violent relationships safely.

### **Incidence**

- 75 percent of young Texans have personally experienced dating violence or know someone who has.
- 50 percent have personally experienced dating violence, either as targets or as abusers.
- Dating violence affects everyone – 60 percent of females and 40 percent of males report having a personal experience, either as targets or as abusers.
- Among females, 49 percent have experienced verbal abuse, 33 have experienced physical violence and 33 percent have experienced sexual violence.
- Thirty-three percent of males have experienced verbal abuse, 22 percent have experienced physical violence and 6 percent have experienced sexual violence.
- 42 percent of respondents also reported seeing or hearing a parent or guardian's domestic violence experience(s).

### **Attitudes**

- Respondents rate more tangible violent behaviors such as explosive temper or threats to harm as "worrisome" or "scary," at rates as high as 87 percent.
- More subtle violent behaviors like controlling money or extreme jealousy are more likely to make respondents "uncomfortable" or "nervous."

### **Reporting**

- 3 out of 4 respondents who have personally experienced dating violence told someone about the experience.
- 45 percent of those who did not report the experience cited shame or embarrassment as their reason for keeping quiet.

### **Getting Help**

- 43 percent of respondents say their first reaction upon discovering a peer's dating violence experience would be to tell that person to break up with their partner.
- 27 percent say their first response would be to tell a family member.

### **Healthy Relationships**

- Respondents rated the top three characteristics of a healthy relationship as honesty, trusting each other when you're apart, and feeling safe to express feelings.

### **Online & Dating Habits**

- 46 percent of respondents reported making friends easily online.
- 83 percent of respondents began dating in their teens, with 15 being the average age for onset.
- Respondents who began dating at age 13 or 14 were significantly more likely to have personally experienced dating violence.

\* March 2006 online survey of 918 unmarried Texans ages 16-24, conducted on behalf of the Texas Council on Family Violence by GCI Group and Equation Research.