

# TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH

(TOVAM)

LOVED UNDERSTOOD APPRECIATED  
you are SAFE  
LOVED SUPPORTED  
STRONG  
NEEDED



NORTHWEST VICTIM SERVICES  
FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Artwork by Zhara Shakir-Sweet

"A LOT CAN UNFOLD IN RELATIONSHIPS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO DATING IN YOUR TEENAGE YEARS. UNFORTUNATELY IT IS NOT NEW THAT SOME TEENS HAVE GONE THROUGH EITHER PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, OR VERBAL ABUSE BY A PARTNER. IN ADDITION, SOME DATING TEENS HAVE EXPERIENCED THREATS, EXCESSIVE TEXTING, HUMILIATION, OBSESSIVENESS AND MORE.. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP NOTE OF SIGNS THAT A TEEN MAY BE EXPERIENCING PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ABUSE.

IN THE ARTWORK YOU SEE, I TRIED TO CAPTURE THAT. THIS REPRESENTS A SITUATION WHERE A GIRL IS IN A HARMFUL RELATIONSHIP. YOU CAN TELL BY HER BODY LANGUAGE AND BY THE CUT ON HER HAND, TO SYMBOLIZE PAIN AND THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF IT. THE TEEN LOOKS FRIGHTENED, UNCOMFORTABLE AND SCARED. ON THE LEFT SIDE, YOU CAN SEE AN OPEN HAND, FILLED WITH AFFIRMATIONS SUCH AS "YOU ARE STRONG", "YOU ARE LOVED" AND "YOU ARE NEEDED".

I CREATED THIS ART PIECE TO NOT ONLY DEMONSTRATE THE DANGERS OF DATING FOR TEENS, BUT TO SHOW THAT THERE ARE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORLD. TO GIVE HOPE THAT IT IS 100 PERCENT POSSIBLE TO REACH FOR HELP, OR ACCEPT A HAND FROM SOMEONE. ALTHOUGH TEEN DATING CAN BE DANGEROUS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TEACH THEM PROPERLY AND BE WELCOMING TO CONVERSATIONS ."

-ZHARA SHAKIR-SWEET,

-MY EMAIL FOR QUESTIONS IS [KNOWZIGGY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:KNOWZIGGY@GMAIL.COM)

-ART PAGE: [@ZH\\_ARTSY](https://www.instagram.com/zh_artsy) ON INSTAGRAM

FRONT COVER ARTWORK BY ZHARA SHAKIR-SWEET ,  
15-YEAR-OLD, CAPA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE CRUCIAL PROBLEM OF YOUTH DATING VIOLENCE AND WORKS TO REMOVE THE SILENCE ASSOCIATED WITH ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS. SINCE MANY TEENAGERS MIGHT NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK FOR HELP OR IDENTIFY THE WARNING SIGNS OF TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ARE ESSENTIAL IN PREVENTING ABUSE. ALONG WITH PROVIDING TOOLS AND HELP TO INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED, IT INVOLVES COMMUNITIES, PARENTS, AND EDUCATORS TO ESTABLISH A SECURE ATMOSPHERE THAT FOSTERS HEALTHY INTERACTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. ONE OF MY FAVORITE QUOTES FOR TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH IS: "REMEMBER, LOVE IS RESPECT, AND YOU DESERVE THAT". "DON'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS." - SAFE ALLIANCE



CHRISTOPHER BARR, 17-YEAR-OLD STUDENT AT ABRAHAM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL

**IF YOU ARE A TEENAGER MY AGE WHO KNOWS SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED DATING VIOLENCE THEN YOU SHOULD SUPPORT THAT PERSON BY ADVISING THEM TO CALL THE 211 HELPLINE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION SOCIAL SERVICES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. CALL 211 | TEXT YOUR ZIP CODE TO 898-211.**

**SCHOOLS CAN ALSO SPREAD AWARENESS TO ADOLESCENCE BY EDUCATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE INFLUENCE THAT DATING VIOLENCE CAN HAVE ON OTHERS. SCHOOLS CAN BEST DO THIS BY HOSTING ASSEMBLIES, TALKING ABOUT SENSITIVE TOPICS WITHIN HEALTH CLASSES, AND ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER.**

**SOCIETY AS A WHOLE CAN HELP UPLIFT ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO MAKE AT LEAST ONE CONSCIOUS CHOICE THAT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR FUTURE.**

**CRAIG COTTON III, 16-YEAR-OLD DUAL STUDENT AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA (CCP) & PARKWAY CENTER CITY MIDDLE COLLEGE (PCCMC)**



MY NAME IS CHACE WALTON AND I ATTEND HARAMBEE CHARTER SCHOOL. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE MY VIEWS ON TEEN VIOLENCE. IN MY OPINION, I THINK THAT BOTH GENDERS SHOULD TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT EQUALLY. GROWING UP I WAS TAUGHT THAT YOU SHOULD NOT HIT GIRLS BECAUSE I AM A MALE. THE SAME SHOULD STAND FOR FEMALES AS WELL. I AM CURRENTLY DATING SOMEONE WHOM I LOVE AND RESPECT. I TREAT HER LIKE I WOULD WANT MY MOTHER OR SISTER TO BE TREATED.

AS A TEENAGER, WE ARE MOSTLY INFLUENCED BY SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE STREETS. SOCIAL MEDIA TELLS US THAT WE HAVE TO UPHOLD A CERTAIN IMAGE (SMOKING, DRINKING AND GUNS) IN ORDER TO BE ACCEPTED. I THINK THIS IS WHERE VIOLENCE COMES FROM; LACK OF SELF-IDENTITY/EXPRESSION WHERE WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF OUTLETS. BY THE AGE OF 13, I WAS DOING MANY OF THOSE THINGS UNTIL I REALIZED WHAT I WAS TRYING TO BE WAS IGNORANT AND IT WAS HURTING MYSELF AND MY FAMILY.

I AM NOW FOCUSED ON MY FOOTBALL CAREER AND GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL. I AM CURRENTLY IN THERAPY TO HELP WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH. I HANG AROUND PEOPLE WHO SHARE THE SAME INTERESTS/GOALS WHICH HELPS ME MAKE BETTER DECISIONS.



13 YEAR OLD CHACE WALTON

# HISTORY OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

U.S. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA DECLARED THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY AS NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH IN 2011. THE RESOURCE CENTER FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEFINES TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AS A PATTERN OF ABUSE AGAINST TEENAGERS WHO ARE DATING OR INVOLVED IN ANY KIND OF ROMANTIC CAPACITY. THIS INCLUDES THREATS TO THE VICTIMS AND ABUSE THROUGH VERBAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, AND EVEN DIGITAL FORMS. VIOLENCE CAN OCCUR ACROSS ALL VARIETIES OF GROUPS, CULTURES, ORIENTATIONS, IDENTITIES, AND RELIGIONS.

THE STATISTICS JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR AN AWARENESS MONTH, WHICH SHOWS THAT DATING VIOLENCE IS MORE COMMON THAN WE THINK, ESPECIALLY AMONG TEENS. ONE IN THREE TEENS IN THE U.S. EXPERIENCES SOME KIND OF ABUSE (PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL) FROM SOMEONE THEY'RE ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED WITH, AND ABOUT 43% OF COLLEGE WOMEN REPORTED EXPERIENCING ABUSIVE DATING BEHAVIORS. THEY NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED TO TALK OPENLY ABOUT RESPECT, CONSENT, AND BOUNDARIES. THE EARLIER THEY ARE EXPOSED TO WHAT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS LOOK LIKE, THE BETTER IT IS FOR THEM.

# WHAT IS TEEN DATING ABUSE?

APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 3 TEENS EXPERIENCE DATING ABUSE. ABUSE CAN INCLUDE PHYSICAL, VERBAL, SEXUAL, OR EMOTIONAL HARM. THIS CAN BE EITHER IN-PERSON OR ONLINE.

IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS, A PARTNER MAY USE TECHNOLOGY TO GAIN POWER OR CONTROL. FOR EXAMPLE, ABUSIVE PARTNERS MIGHT THREATEN TO SHARE FAKE OR PRIVATE PICTURES ONLINE.

**ALWAYS CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.**

**PHILADELPHIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE AT ANY TIME AT 1-866-723-3014.**

[HTTPS://WWW.PHILA.GOV/2024-02-01-TECHNOLOGY-TEEN-DATING-ABUSE/](https://www.phila.gov/2024-02-01-technology-teen-dating-abuse/)

**RESPECT ONE ANOTHER!**

**LOVE SHOULD NOT HURT**

**#TDVAM2025**

**WEAR ORANGE DAY FOR LOVE DAY IS TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

**WE WEAR ORANGE TO SHOW SOLIDARITY AND RAISE  
AWARENESS ABOUT DATING VIOLENCE.**

**ALWAYS CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY. IF YOU BELIEVE SOMEONE NEEDS HELP, LET  
THEM KNOW THEY CAN CALL THE PHILADELPHIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE AT**

**1-866-723-3014.**



**1 IN 3**

teenagers who date will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in a relationship before they become adults.

**[HTTPS://YWCANEIN.ORG/TDVAM/](https://ywcanein.org/TDVAM/)**



# NORTHWEST VICTIM SERVICES

6023 GEMANTOWN AVENUE

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19144

215.438.4410



*Save the date*

**The 2025 National Crime Victims'  
Rights Week Theme is**

**KINSHIP**

**Connecting and Healing**

**The Crime Victims' Alliance of Pennsylvania  
introduces the  
Crime Victims' Rights Rally Committee**

**Melany Nelson | Northwest Victim Services | Chair**

**Karen Hinkle | Office of Victim Advocate**

**Denise Scotland | Pennsylvania Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence**

**Alexa Livelsberger | Highmark Caring Place**

**Colleen Kinney | Northeastern Counseling Services, LLC**

**Donna Welsh | Keystone Crisis Intervention Team (KCIT)  
Program Coordinator | NOVA**

**Codie Henry | PCAR - Respect Together**

**Jennifer Feicht | PA SAVIN Statewide Project Manager**

**Tiffiney Hall | PosiTiff, LLC**

**Michelle Brode | Alternative Behavioral Consultants**

**Reserve your exhibit space now!**

**Exhibit tables are available at no cost,  
however, space is limited.**

Please email Melany Nelson (MPN@northwestvictimservices.org)  
to reserve an exhibit table.



**Crime Victims'  
Rights Rally 2025**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**April 7, 2025**

**The Capitol Rotunda at  
11:00a.m.**

Visit us on Facebook :  
[@crimevictimsallianceofpennsylvania](https://www.facebook.com/crimevictimsallianceofpennsylvania)

For more information email:  
[MPN@northwestvictimservices.org](mailto:MPN@northwestvictimservices.org)