

**Achieving Healthy
Relationships:
How to Recognize and Respond
to Teen Dating Abuse**

Office of Middlesex District Attorney Marian T. Ryan

Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.

Teen Dating Abuse

Dating abuse is any behavior that one person uses in a relationship to gain and maintain control over their partner

National Survey

- Nearly half of 11 to 14-year olds (tweens) have been in a dating relationship
- 62% of tweens know friends who have been verbally abused; 36% (pressure); 20% (physical abuse)
- Among tweens who have had sex by age 14, 69% report having experienced one or more types of abuse

(TRU / Liz Claiborne, 2008)

Inside the Numbers

- 1 in 3 young people between the ages of 14-20 have experienced dating violence
- 81% of parents do not believe (or do not know) that dating violence is an issue
- Only 3% of teens report the abuse to authority figures; only 6% tell family members; but 75% would disclose to a friend

Rihanna & Chris Brown



Boston Public Health Commission

- 46% of teens said that Rihanna was responsible
- 52% said that the media had treated Chris Brown unfairly
- 44% said that fighting is common in a relationship
- 71% said that arguing is a normal part of a relationship

What Teens Had to Say

Los Angeles Times – Comments Blog

Whitney

“I’m still going to support Chris Brown until the end. I don’t care if he did it or not. Obviously she provoked him.”

Shanice

“It don’t matter what Chris Brown did. Oh well, Rihanna must have did something serious. I doubt that he would hit that girl for no reason...she just pushed him to that level.”

Zoe

“Even if he did hit her she probably ended up making him by giving [him] no option just to shut her up he had to hit her.”

What *Else* Teens Had to Say

Denver Observer – Topix

Sdf

“Rihanna is a bitch and she would not if [sic] gotten beaten up if she didn’t deserved [sic] it soooooo Rihanna is dum [sic].”

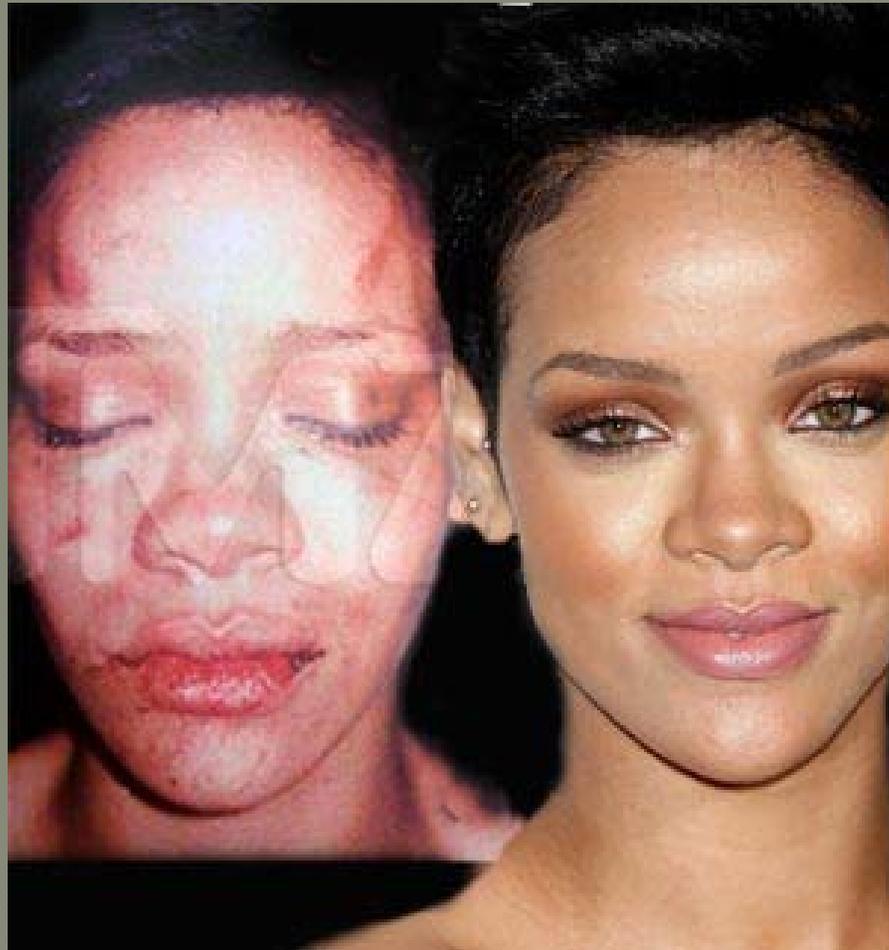
Yung

“She deserved that Period. Chris Brown isn’t that mean or wrong for doing that now let me know Rihanna side of the story everybody need to tell what she did Period and you can tell her that I said it Period.”

Krissa

“Rihanna is a woman bitch and she really deserved that because she shouldn’t have been mean to him and stuff.”

It's Her Fault?

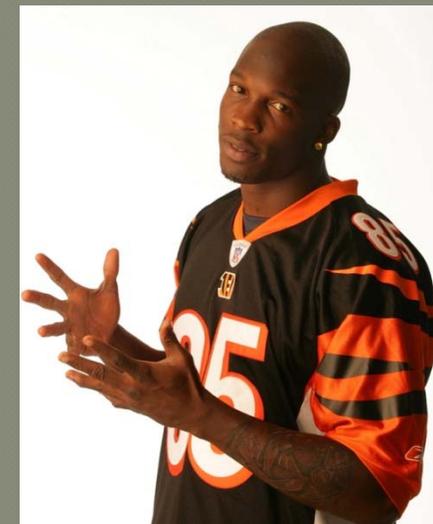
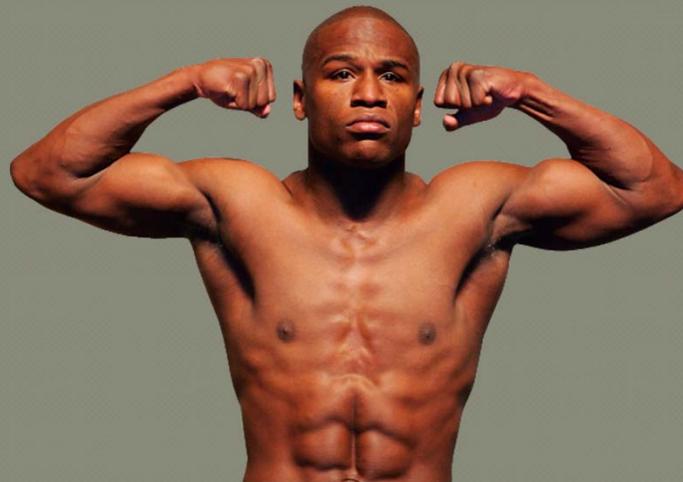
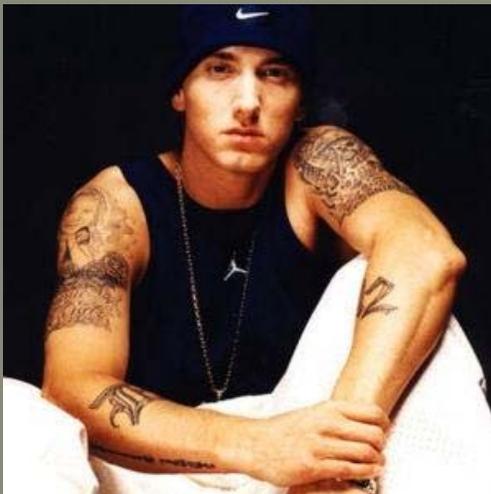


Learned Behavior

- Children's behavior is modeled after their parents
- Research shows that boys with abusive fathers are more likely to become abusers themselves
 - Antipathy Toward Women
 - Hypermasculine Exterior
 - Control, Ownership and Objectification
 - Positive Reinforcement
- Peer influences, interpersonal influences and social influences also shape children

(Adams, 2007)

The Celebrity Influence



MDAO/MPY 2014

Cultural Influences

Then



Now



Cultural Influences

- ◉ Advertising
- ◉ Pop Culture
- ◉ Mass Media
- ◉ Television
- ◉ Movies
- ◉ Internet
- ◉ YouTube
- ◉ Video Games
- ◉ Professional Sports

Gender Messaging

BOYS

- Tough
- Strong
- Powerful
- Emotionless
- In Control
- Sexual

GIRLS

- Vulnerable
- Feeble
- Dependent
- Emotional
- Deferential
- Chaste

Gender Labeling

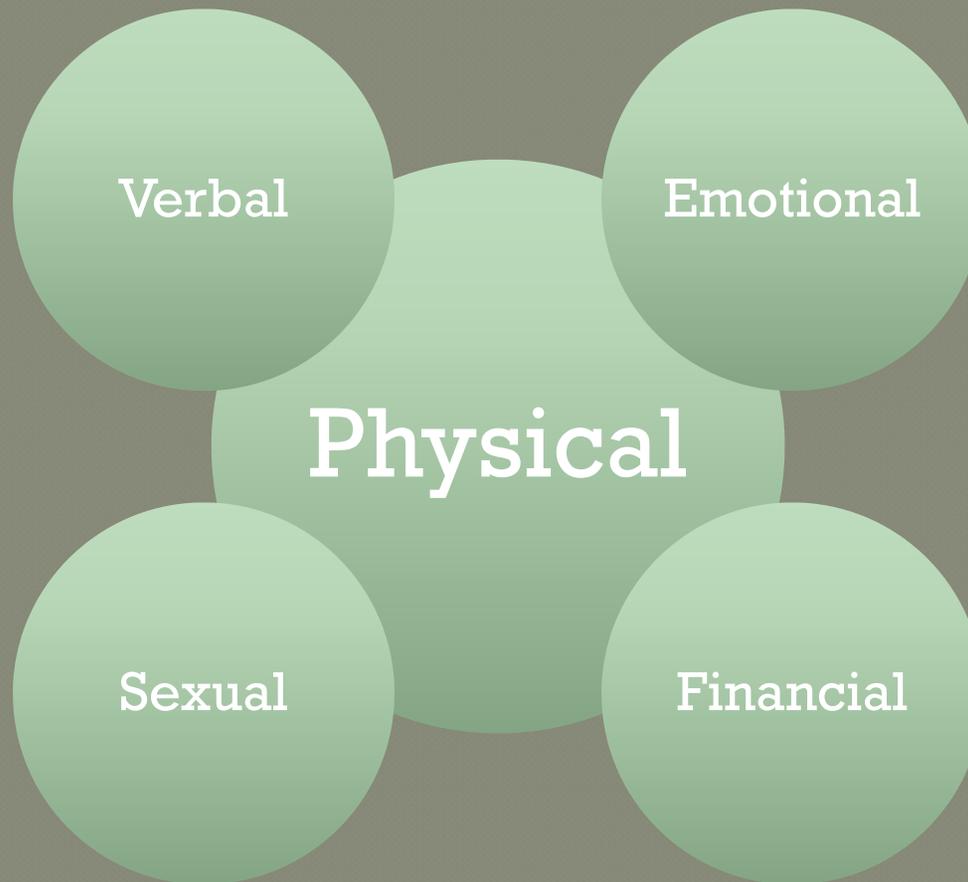
BOYS

- Vulnerable
- Feeble
- Dependent
- Emotional
- Deferential
- Chaste

GIRLS

- Tough
- Strong
- Powerful
- Emotionless
- In Control
- Sexual

Overlapping Abuses



Types of Abuse

- **PHYSICAL:** grabbing, restraining, cornering, slapping, punching, kicking, choking
- **VERBAL:** name calling, ridiculing, putdowns, threats
- **EMOTIONAL:** damaging self esteem, spreading rumors, guilt trips, manipulating, humiliating, minimizing, denying, blaming
- **SEXUAL:** pressuring, coercing, forcing, drugging, videotaping, photographing, sexting
- **FINANCIAL:** stealing, using partner as an “ATM,” interfering with partner’s job

What Parents Can Look For

- ◉ Jealousy
- ◉ Isolation
- ◉ Rule Setting
- ◉ Monitoring
- ◉ Excessive Phone Use

Common TDA Crimes

- **Assault:** An attempted battery or placing another person in fear
- **Assault and Battery:** An unconsented, unjustified touching that is potentially harmful or offensive
- **Assault and Battery w/ a Dangerous Weapon:** Battery with a weapon capable or causing injury or death

Common TDA Crimes

- **Threat to Commit a Crime:** Threat to commit bodily harm or damage to property
- **Annoying Phone Calls:** Three or more phone calls of an annoying nature
- **Criminal Harassment:** A willful, malicious pattern of conduct directed at someone with the purpose of causing emotional distress

Common TDA Crimes

- **Stalking:** A willful, malicious, knowing pattern of conduct directed at someone with the purpose of causing emotional distress; includes a threat of death or bodily injury
- **Kidnapping:** Forcibly or secretly confining or imprisoning another person
- **Assault and Battery w/ a Dangerous Weapon:** Battery with a weapon capable or causing injury or death

Common TDA Crimes

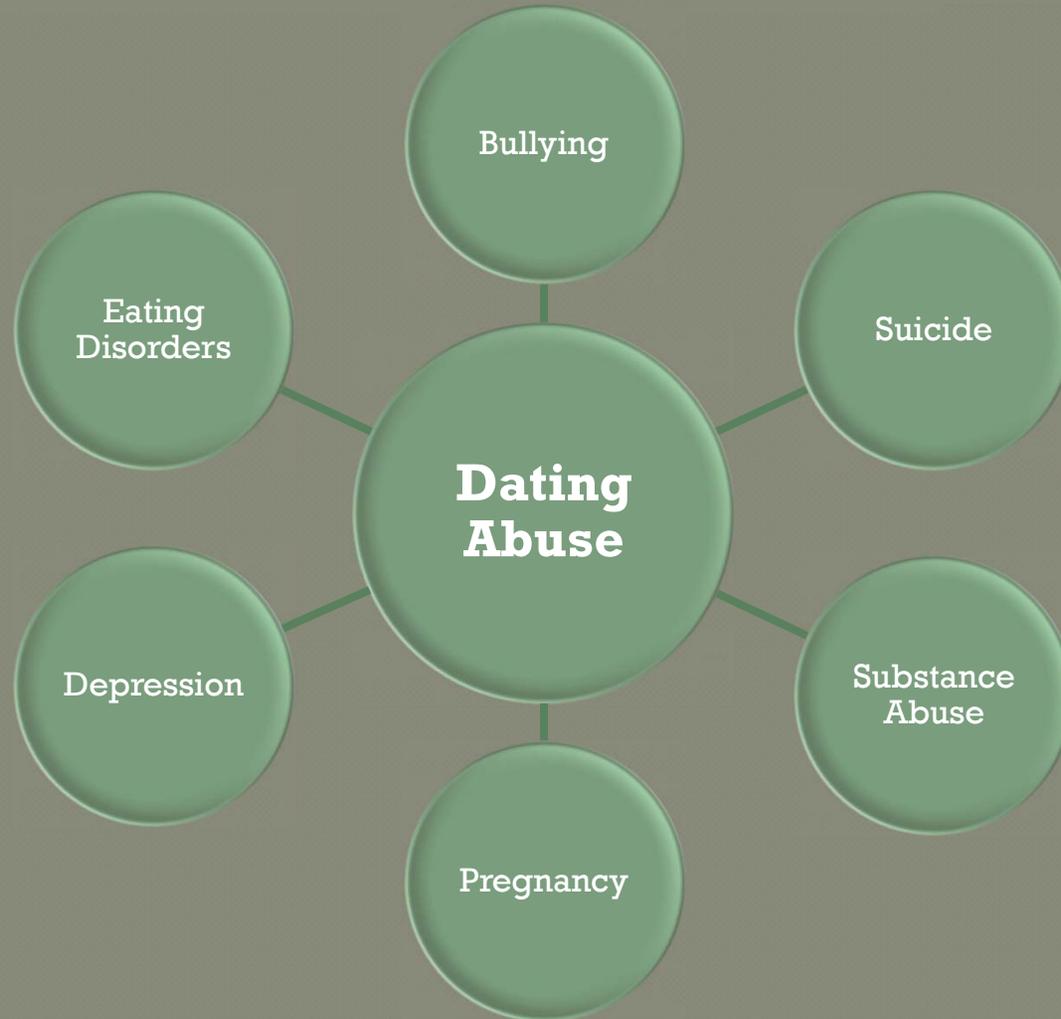
- **Indecent Assault and Battery:** An unconsented touching of an intimate area
- **Rape:** Natural or unnatural sexual intercourse (includes anal, oral, digital) with a person who is compelled to submit by force or threat of force or threat of bodily injury

NOTE: Definitions summarize each criminal statute and may not necessarily reflect the legal elements and other considerations needed to commence a criminal prosecution

Challenges to Reporting Abuse

- Interpreting jealousy and control
- Perception of intimacy
- Concern about the abuser
- Social status
- The “Snitch” factor
- Immunization

Related Issues



Impact on Victims

- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Difficulty in School
- Trouble Finding or Maintaining a Job
- Unhealthy Future Relationships

Consequences for Abusers

- ◉ Discipline at School
- ◉ Restraining Order
- ◉ Arrest Record
- ◉ Criminal Prosecution
- ◉ Ineligible for Financial Aid

Tips for Parents

- ◉ Talk with them before they start dating
- ◉ Engage them – i.e., appeal to their interests
- ◉ Be willing to share, too
- ◉ Watch how they communicate

Tips for Parents

- Talk about what to do when relationships end
- Survey their friends
- Set rules and limits on phone/computer use
- Understand technology
- Know the resources

Local Resources

RESPOND:

www.respondinc.org

24-hour Hotline 617.623.5900

REACH:

www.reachma.org/pavenet

24-hour Hotline 1.800.899.4000

Boston Public Health Commission (Start Strong Initiative)

www.bph.org

Emerge: Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence

www.emergedv.com

617.547.9879

National Resources

Love Is Respect:

www.loveisrespect.org

Love Is Not Abuse:

www.loveisnotabuse.com

Futures Without Violence:

www.futureswithoutviolence.org

National Resources

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline:

1.866.331.9474

Text “loveis” to 22522

Thank You

Office of Middlesex District Attorney Marian T. Ryan

www.middlesexda.com

781.897.8300

Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.

www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.com

781.897.6800