



**Warren C. Evans**  
**Sheriff**

# News Release

[www.waynecounty.com/sheriff](http://www.waynecounty.com/sheriff)

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## **Sheriff highlights problem of teen dating violence as Valentine's Day nears**

◆ *Evans urges parents to look for warning signs, announces assault prevention classes*

Valentine's Day is just around the corner and Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans is trying to raise public awareness to the issue of dating violence among teenagers. According to recent studies, 20 percent of teenage girls and young women have experienced some form of dating violence and even more endure emotional abuse.

"This is something that needs to be talked about as we approach Valentine's Day, when a lot of young ladies will be out on dates with boys and forced to face some uncomfortable and perhaps dangerous situations," Evans said. "These girls need to know in advance what to look out for, how to handle uncomfortable situations, and what to do if they become a victim."

According to the US Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women, dating violence can happen to anyone at any time; however, young victims face different obstacles than older, adult victims. Teen dating violence often increases the risks of substance abuse, sexual activity, pregnancy and suicide, especially for female victims. Despite public perceptions, harmful issues associated with teen dating do not have to include physical contact or assault, Evans said.

"Problems can start with controlling behavior, such as the young man trying to dictate who her other friends can be or other forms of emotional abuse. Those are the warning signs of possible physical assaults down the road," Evans said.

With that in mind, Evans is announcing that the Sheriff's Office Training Center is planning a series of **Sexual Harassment, Assault & Rape Prevention (SHARP) classes** available to the public. People taking the classes will learn how to identify early warning signs and be shown practical techniques to regain physical control at various stages of an assault or potential assault. Classes are open to teens and adults and will be scheduled on an on-demand basis. To get on the list, or to obtain more information, contact the Sheriff's Training Center at 734-287-2225.

“This is a subject matter that requires active parental involvement, whether it is a series of conversations inside their home, or taking our safety class together. Kids look to their parents for guidance and direction so they can feel safe and stay safe,” Evans said.

For more information, visit [www.waynecounty.com/sheriff](http://www.waynecounty.com/sheriff)

## **Early warning signs of teen dating violence**

Whether your teen has known her boyfriend or date for seven years or seven days, she should be conscious of the person's behavior at all times and not put her safety at risk.

- Acts jealous and possessive; won't let you have other friends.
- Refuses to accept breaking up.
- Belittles you and your opinions.
- Frightens or threatens you.
- Acts violent, getting into fights or angering quickly.
- Pushes, grabs, pinches or hits you.
- Pressures you for sex or gets serious about your relationship too fast.
- Uses alcohol or other drugs and pressures you to do the same.

## **Tips for Parents**

There are a number of things parents can do to help protect their children from dating violence:

- Be a role model for your children. Find healthy ways to deal with anger and conflict in your own relationships.
- Talk regularly with your children about how to have a healthy relationship, teaching them the importance of respect, independence and self-worth.
- Help your children to learn to control their anger and to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Before your children start dating, help them to set up guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Discuss with your children some of the warning signs of potential abusers.
- Let your children know that while dating can be romantic and exciting, bad things can happen. Help them to develop strategies to deal with difficult situations.
- Ask for teen dating violence prevention and intervention programs in your children's school.

## Tips for Teens

- Talk to someone she trusts and/or can help, like a parent, friend, counselor or clergyman.
- Tell a school counselor or security officer what's going on.
- Make daily notes about the disturbing behavior.
- Avoid being alone with your date at home, school, work or anywhere else.
- When you go out, tell someone where you are going, who they are with and when you'll be back.
- Plan and rehearse what you will do if her dating partner gets abusive.

## Tips for Friends of Victims:

- If you see signs of abuse, talk to your friend about it.
- Tell your friend that you're worried and want to help.
- An abusive partner often undermines the victim's self-confidence, so point out your friend's good qualities.
- Encourage your friend to talk to a trusted adult, offering to go along.
- If the situation's getting worse, talk to an adult yourself, and if you witness an assault, contact the police, school principal or other adult immediately.
- Don't endanger yourself by confronting the abusive partner.



<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/dateviolence.asp>



Michigan Teen Dating Violence Website  
[www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458\\_7691\\_7752-177118--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458_7691_7752-177118--,00.html)

Alternatives for Girls



<http://www.alternativesforgirls.org/>



Domestic Violence Unit

<http://www.waynecounty.com/prosecutor/domesticViolence.htm>

A graphic consisting of a purple outline of a house shape. Inside the house, there are two main text areas. On the left, it says "MICHIGAN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION &amp; TREATMENT BOARD" and "www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence". On the right, there is a purple rectangular box containing the text "DATING VIOLENCE", "IT IS A BIG DEAL.", and "Dating Violence Youth Education Packet". At the bottom left of the house shape, it says "State of Michigan Department of Human Services".



**DATING VIOLENCE CAN BE A  
LIFE OR DEATH MATTER TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

<http://www.waynecounty.com/sheriff/newsroom/2008/Teen-Dating-Violence-Guide.pdf>