



Millions of Teens Impacted by Teen Dating Violence Annually February is Tenth Annual National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Overview: While many associate love, romance and healthy relationships with the month of February, this month is also nationally recognized as the tenth annual Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), teen dating violence is common and impacts millions of American teens annually. Teen Dating Violence is defined as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological aggression and/or stalking occurring in an intimate partner relationship in which one or both partners are teenagers (ages 13-19 years old). This abuse and violence is used by one partner in the relationship to exert power and control over another.

Data from surveys conducted by the CDC indicate that:

- Nearly 1 in 11 female-identifying and 1 in 15 male-identifying high school students reported they experienced physical dating violence in the last year.
- About 1 in 9 female-identifying and 1 in 36 male-identifying high school students reported experiencing sexual dating violence in the last year.
- 26 percent of female-identifying individuals and 15 percent of male-identifying individuals who are survivors of sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking first experienced these or other forms of violence by that partner before age 18.

It is important to note that the burden of teen dating violence is not shared equally across all social groups. The LGBTQ community and some racial minority groups are disproportionately impacted by this issue. Consequences of teen dating violence are severe, as they can have both short and long-term effects on developing teens. Survivors of teen dating violence are more likely than their peers to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression, to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse and bullying and/or contemplate suicide.

“Patterns of violence and abuse in relationships start earlier than some might think,” Monarch Services Executive Director Laura Segura said. “It is critical for us to prevent these cycles of violence before they can begin.”

Monarch Services’ prevention team conducts outreach and education programs in local schools to teach children and teens about healthy relationships and warning signs of unhealthy relationships. This prevention work extends to teens who harm others in order to disrupt the intergenerational cycle of violence and prevent teens from causing future harm as adults. Our advocates are highly trained to identify signs of unhealthy relationships and provide support to survivors.

Actions you can take to prevent/address teen dating violence:

- Teach and promote safe and healthy relationship skills
- Challenge attitudes and gender norms that normalize violence
- Be a trusted adult in a teen’s life
- Listen to and validate survivors of trauma

About Monarch Services: *Monarch Services (formerly Women’s Crisis Support - Defensa de Mujeres) has a 42-year history in Santa Cruz County of providing advocacy and resources to those affected by violence. Services include counseling, court accompaniments, restraining order assistance, emergency shelter, 24-hour support hotline, outreach, education and support groups. Monarch Services is the only rape and human trafficking crisis center in Santa Cruz County, and includes an emergency 24-hour response team and shelter. All services are available in Spanish and English and are free or low cost.*