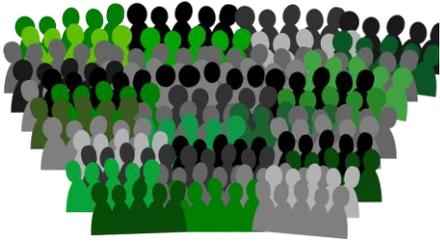


# Teen Dating Violence and Economic Abuse



An estimated 1.5 million high school students experience dating violence every year

(Center for Disease Control, 2006)

As 13 to 19 year-olds move toward adulthood and independence, they begin making decisions without parental or guardian involvement, have their first romantic relationships, hold their first job or internship, and start to handle their own money. This time of new responsibilities and experiences can be extremely challenging as teens begin to navigate the complexity of balancing their independence with forging close relationships. Experiencing abuse during these formative years can have lasting harm on future independence and well-being, particularly if such abuse is economic.

## WHAT IS ECONOMIC ABUSE?

Economic abuse is defined as “a deliberate pattern of control in which individuals interfere with their partner’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources.” (Postmus et al., 2018)



## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

While there are many clear examples of sabotage, control, and exploitation, recognizing economic abuse can be challenging within teen relationships as some behaviors, such as asking your partner to study less to spend more time together, for example, may not be seen as objectively harmful. However, the cumulative impact of seemingly harmless actions can have a profound impact on future wellbeing and potential for success.

Within teen relationships, economic abusive generally falls into three areas:

Academic, career, and employment sabotage

Financial control

Exploitation of resources

## ACADEMIC, CAREER, AND EMPLOYMENT SABOTAGE

- Interfering with a partner's ability to study
- Controlling or trying to influence a partner's schedule
- Pressuring or coercing a partner to skip class or drop out of school
- Pressuring or coercing a partner to change their post-secondary plans
- Pressuring or coercing a partner to abandon their career goals
- Interfering with or causing trouble at work or preventing them from having a job

## FINANCIAL CONTROL

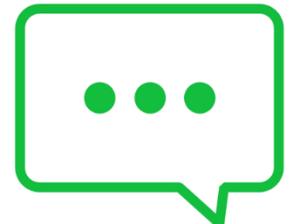
- Requiring permission from a partner to spend money
- Criticizing a partner for how they spend money
- Pressuring or coercing a partner to buy items and gifts

## EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES

- Using a partner's resources to pay for things themselves
- Using a partner for primary access to transportation, shelter, food, or other resources
- Demanding a partner share user names and passwords to access financial or other accounts

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Healthy relationship and financial literacy programming early on can address economic abuse to help teens better recognize and protect themselves from the threats economic sabotage, control, and exploitation has on their future safety and economic security. Some conversation starters:



1. Describe what economic abuse may look like and its long-term impacts.
2. Develop strategies to navigate points of conflict within relationships, exercise healthy boundaries, and balance personal aspirations and the relationship.
3. Model healthy compromise within relationships motivated by understanding, equity, and trust.

Early education and intervention can help protect teens from harmful behaviors that can threaten their future economic security and has the potential to entrap them in the cycle of abuse. Learn more at: [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org).

Center for Disease Control. (2006). Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students—United States, 2003. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Vol. 55(No. 19). <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5519.pdf>

Postmus, J. L., Hoge, G. L., Breckenridge, J., Sharp-Jeffs, N., & Chung, D. (2018). Economic Abuse as an Invisible Form of Domestic Violence: A Multi-country Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(2), 261–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018764160>

*Preventing Teen Dating Violence | Violence Prevention | Injury Center | CDC*. (2020, January 28). <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html>