

What is Digital Dating Violence?

Digital dating violence is a pattern of behaviors that control, pressure, or threaten a dating partner using a cell phone or the Internet¹. Common examples of digital dating violence are texting and misusing social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behaviour is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.

In a healthy relationship, all communication is respectful whether in person, online or by phone. It is never ok for someone to do or say anything that makes you feel bad, lowers your self-esteem or manipulates you. You may be experiencing digital dating violence if your partner:

- Tells you who you can or can't be friends with on Facebook and other sites.
- Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, DMs or other messages online.
- Uses sites like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok and others to keep constant tabs on you.
- Puts you down in their status updates.
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and demands you send some in return.
- Pressures you to send explicit photo or video.
- Steals or insists to be given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through your phone frequently, checks up on your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.

You never deserve to be mistreated, online or off. If you're experiencing digital dating violence, we encourage you to chat with a trusted adult.

Remember:

- Your partner should respect your relationship boundaries.
- It is ok to turn off your phone. You have the right to be alone and spend time with friends and family without your partner getting angry.
- You do not have to send any pictures/videos or statements that you are uncomfortable sending, especially nude or partially nude photos, known as "sexting".
- You lose control of any electronic message once your partner receives it. They may forward it, so don't send anything you fear could be seen by others.
- You do not have to share your passwords with anyone.

¹ Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2020). Digital dating abuse: A brief guide for educators and parents. Retrieved on September 22, 2020 from www.cyberbullying.org.

- Know your privacy and security settings. Social networks such as Facebook allow the user to control how their information is shared and who has access to it. These are often customizable and are found in the privacy section of the site. Remember, registering for some applications (apps) require you to change your privacy settings.
- Be mindful when using check-ins that reveal your location. Letting an abusive partner know where you are could be dangerous. Also, always ask your friends if it's ok for you to check them in. You never know if they are trying to keep their location secret.

You don't have to give up your devices or online presence if digital dating violence is happening to you. It's possible to use technology safely.

If you or someone you know thinks they are experiencing digital dating violence, chat with a trusted adult or seek help from one of the organizations listed below. Often digital dating violence may be part of a continuum of gender-based violence that can be both online and in person.

You are not alone and there are confidential safe support services available.

- [PEACE Program for Children and Youth](#) is counselling program for children and youth experiencing violence.
- [Kid Help Phone](#) crisis line is available 24/7 by call or text.
- [KUU-US Crisis Line Society](#) is a crisis phone line for Indigenous Youth.
- [VictimLink BC](#) is a referral and information service for victims of crime.
- [Society for Children and Youth BC's Child and Youth Legal Centre](#) provides legal support for children and youth.

Spark Teen Digital Dating Violence Project



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