

What is Peer Violence?





Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviours Between Young People

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Peer violence is a rising public health issue that can affect the mental and physical health of youth and teens, and their ability to develop positive connections. It is any act or pattern of controlling behaviour from one peer to another. Youth who are subject to peer violence have a greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) as adults.

Parents and caregivers can help by talking to youth about the warning signs of peer violence, and how to build healthy peer connections.



45% of teens aged 15 to 17 have experienced peer violence.







Peer violence in Canada is on the rise. After a period of decline, teen peer violence has gone up by 33% since 2015.

Types of Violence and Abuse

Cyber-Violence

When technology is used to cause fear, harm, or embarrassment. This includes spying on someone online or tracking their location without them knowing.

Criminal Harassment or Stalking

Repeated communication or contact that reduces a person's sense of safety. Examples: non-stop phone calls, texts or emails, or secretly tracking someone's location.

Financial Abuse

Behaviour that is used to gain power and control over a person's money.

Coercive Control

Controlling a person using fear and threats to make them act a certain way.

Emotional Abuse

Any act that harms the mental or emotional health of a person. Examples: manipulation, threats, or behaviour that aims to degrade, humiliate, or control a person's emotions.

Intimate Violence

Any form of unwanted sexual activity, behaviour, or threatening actions done to a person without consent.

Physical Violence

Any act of force or harm that causes pain or makes someone afraid.



Warning Signs and Risks of Peer Violence

- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide)
- Low self-esteem
- Substance misuse
- Poor school performance
- Increase social withdrawal or isolation
- Development of unusual, inappropriate, or uncharacteristic behaviours

- Physical injuries
- Transmitted Diseases
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Future risk of being a victim or perpetrator of dating violence
- Unexplained or significant change in weight (gain or loss)
- Noticeable shift/decline in interests and activities
- Changes in personal boundaries or boundary-setting behaviour

Understanding Power and Control

The Power and Control Wheel shows the effects of abusive peer connections and how violence happens.



It only takes one unhealthy behaviour for a peer connection to be considered abusive.

OUTER RING

The thick black line shows PHYSICAL or INTIMATE **VIOLENCE** which reinforces unhealthy behaviours, creating a cycle of control.

INNER RING

Ongoing and sometimes subtle **UNHEALTHY**

BEHAVIOURS used throughout a peer connection.

PHYSICAL OR INTIMATE VIOLENCE **USE COERCION**

Make threats or harm person

AND THREATS

- Threats to leave or take own life
 - Threats to report to law enforcement
 - Make person do illegal activities
- Prevent person from getting or keeping a job

USE

ECONOMIC

ABUSE

- Make person ask for money
- Give an allowance
- Take person's money

POWER AND CONTROL

INTIMIDATION

- Use looks, actions or gestures to make person afraid
- Smash things, destroy property

USE **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Criticize, call names, humiliate person
- · Make them feel guilty or bad about themselves
- Make person think they're mentally unstable and question their own feelings

USE PRIVILEGE

- Treat person like a servant
- Make all big decisions in relationship
 - Define all the roles. in relationship

USE ISOLATION

- Limit activity outside of relationship
- Control what person does, where they go, who they see/talk to
 - Control what person reads
 - Use jealousy to justify actions
- Make light of abuse

MINIMIZE,

DENY, AND

BLAME

- Don't take concerns seriously Say the abuse didn't happen
- Shift responsibility for Shift responsibility for abusive behaviour abusive behaviour

Warning Signs of Peer Violence

Pressuring into unwanted physical contact of any kind.

Threatening or causing physical harm including scratches or bruises.

Showing extreme jealousy, insecurity or controlling behaviour.

Showing explosive or unusual mood swings.

Insulting, humiliating or threatening peer in any way.

Isolating peer from friends and family.

Controlling how peer spends their time, what they can and can't do.

> Controlling peer's behaviour or how they dress.

Constantly monitoring peer's social media or tracking their location.

Invading privacy and personal boundaries, such as showing up without notice.

The Cycle of Abuse

The common pattern of abusive behaviours between peers.

Starting with the Honeymoon stage, this cycle makes it hard for someone to leave a bad peer relationship. It can take up to <u>eight</u> times for a survivor to permanently leave an abusive peer.



Created by the Windsor-Essex Youth Relationship Violence Prevention Community of Practice Last Revised October, 2025

What is a Healthy Connection?

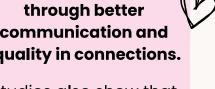
Healthy connections are defined by a sense of respect, trust, honesty, and open communication with peers, family members, partners, and caregivers. In healthy connections, people feel safe and supported.

How to Build Healthy Connections

The Equality Wheel shows positive acts that people can do to build an equal, healthy connection that is free of abuse or violence.

Peer violence and abuse can be prevented through better communication and equality in connections.

Studies also show that when peers communicate openly and respectfully, connections are more likely to thrive!



NON-VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

NEGOTIATION & FAIRNESS

- · Find agreed upon solutions to conflicts Use non-violent conflict resolution
 - Accept change Be willing to

FINANCIAL **PARTNERSHIP**

- compromise Make fair financial
- arrangements Make decisions together
- Respect each other's financial independence

NON-THREATENING **BEHAVIOUR**

Make each other feel safe and comfortable expressing yourself and your likes and dislikes

RESPECT

EQUALITY

Listen without judgment Accept and understand each other's feelings

 Value each other's thoughts

TRUST AND SUPPORT

WHEEL

Support each other's goals

 Respect each other's right to your own feelings, friendships, and actions

HONESTY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Speak openly and honestly
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Acknowledge past use of violent behaviour

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

- Share tasks fairly Be willing to support
- each other
- Make decisions together

NON-VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR



2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Facts & Supports





How to Support Victims/Survivors of Peer Violence

- Be supportive and listen without judgment.
- Make a safety plan for what to do after an incident.
- Accept what a youth is telling you about their peers.
- Educate yourself on peer violence and the warning signs of unhealthy connections.



Female identifying teens aged 15 to 17 are nine times more likely to experience violence with peers than boys of the same age.

LOCAL 24HR CRISIS LINES:

Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 519-253-9667

Hiatus House: <u>519-252-7781</u>

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER:

Call 911 or go to your closest hospital emergency department

Need Help OR a Referral?

Connect with a HWoW Gender-Based Violence Support Worker:

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

519-255-1127 EXT. 179 www.themcc.com

WEST

(519) 256-6621 www.westofwindsor.com

South Asian Centre of Windsor

519-252-7447 <u>www.themcc.com</u>

Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women (W5)

519-973-5588 www.wwwwiw.org

YMCA: Newcomer and Community Services Windsor

519-258-9622 <u>www.ymcaswo.ca</u>



Scan for Youth-Specific Resources

Q Other Supports in the Community

Victim Services of Windsor

Hiatus House & Essex County 519-252-7781 519-723-2711

www.vswec.ca

Nisa Homes 1-888-315-6472

www.nisafoundation.ca

Sexual Assault Crisis Centre

www.hiatushouse.com

519-253-3100 www.saccwindsor.net

New Beginnings Essex County

519-971-0973

www.newbeginningswindsor.com

Family Services Windsor-Essex

519-966-5010 www.fswe.ca

Windsor Essex Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

519-995-3974 www.wecyac.ca

Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre

519-253-3243 www.caifc.ca

Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre

519-916-1755 www.soahac.on.ca

Windsor Essex Community Health Centre – Teen Health

519-253-8481

wechc.org/location/teen-health

Sexual Assault \ Domestic Violence Treatment Centre

519-253-2234 www.wrh.on.ca/SADVTC

Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society

519-252-1171 www.wecas.on.ca

Amy Lo Faso, Principal of Safe Schools - WECDSB

519-253-2481 EXT. 1117 amy_lofaso@wecdsb.on.ca

Reseau-Femme Du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario

1-888-946-3029 www.rfsoo.ca

Le Centre Communautaire francophone de Windsor-Essex-Kent

519-948-5545 Info@ccfwek.org

Legal Assistance of Windsor Supporting Survivors of Gender Based and Sexual Violence Program

519-256-7831

www.legalassistanceofwindsor.com/gbvsa