



## Understanding and Identifying **TEEN DATING VIOLENCE** in Hispanic and Latine Communities

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Teenage dating violence constitutes a grave concern among Latine adolescents. Comprehensive research sheds light on the prevalence, risk determinants, and outcomes associated with this issue. An exploration of these findings is important to work with Hispanic and Latine teens in the realm of relationships.

### **Prevalence of Teenage Dating Violence**

Research indicates that dating violence is a prevalent issue among Hispanic and Latine adolescents, with unique risk factors contributing to its occurrence (Cuevas & Sabina, 2019; Vélez-Pastrana et al., 2018).

Rates of dating violence may be influenced by factors such as acculturation, gender, and immigrant status (Gonzalez-Guarda et al., 2013). Furthermore, LGBT Latine teens face higher rates of teen dating violence compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Fix, R.L.; Nava, N. and Rodríguez, 2022).

### **Risk Factors**

Acculturation plays a role in dating violence among Latine youth, with varying levels of adherence to cultural values impacting relationship dynamics in which teens who are less acculturated or more traditional may have less knowledge and more tolerant attitudes about dating violence than those who are more acculturated or more modern. Acculturation can also cause stress and conflict for teens and their families, which may increase the risk of dating violence among teens (Gonzalez-Guarda et al., 2013; Vélez-Pastrana et al., 2018).

Substance use is identified as a risk factor, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach addressing both dating violence and substance use (Gonzalez-Guarda & Cummings, 2019).

### **Consequences**

Dating violence can have long-lasting effects, potentially contributing to later intimate partner violence (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2007).

The intersection of victimization and aggression in dating relationships may exacerbate the impact on adolescents, emphasizing the need for targeted intervention strategies (Cuevas & Sabina, 2019).

## Protective Factors and Intervention

Culturally sensitive interventions, including those involving families and addressing acculturation challenges, show promise in mitigating dating violence (Cuevas & Sabina, 2019; Vélez-Pastrana et al., 2018).

Collaborative efforts that address substance abuse and dating violence simultaneously can be crucial in preventing and intervening in these interconnected issues (Gonzalez-Guarda & Cummings, 2019).

Teenage dating violence within the Hispanic and Latine community is a complex issue requiring culturally informed interventions. Research provides valuable insights into the unique dynamics and risk factors, emphasizing the importance of tailored prevention and support strategies.

## Interventions

Mental health professionals working with Latine adolescents facing teenage dating violence should follow these best practices:

**Understand Cultural Dynamics:** Familiarize yourself with the cultural nuances and values of Hispanic and Latine communities. Recognize the impact of traditional values, gender roles, and family dynamics on relationships.

**Use a Family-Inclusive Approach:** Recognize the importance of family in Latine communities. Encourage the involvement of supportive family members in therapy sessions to strengthen the support system.

**Cultural Contextualization:** Address dating violence within the broader context of cultural expectations and familial influences.

**Acknowledge Trauma Impact:** Understand the potential long-term effects of dating violence on mental health. Approach therapy with sensitivity to trauma, providing a safe space for individuals to share their experiences without judgment.

**Empowerment Strategies:** Implement empowerment-focused interventions to help rebuild self-esteem and resilience. Encourage the individual to participate in decision-making processes regarding their recovery and well-being.

**Provide Information:** Equip individuals with resources on healthy relationships, dating violence, and available support services. Offer educational materials that are culturally relevant and accessible to ensure better understanding.

**Community Connections:** Foster connections with local community organizations that specialize in supporting victims of dating violence within Hispanic and Latine communities. Collaborate with these organizations to provide a network of comprehensive care.

By combining cultural competence, family involvement, trauma-informed care, and educational support, therapists can create a therapeutic environment that addresses the specific needs of individuals from Hispanic and Latine communities who have experienced teenage dating violence.

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\*The Hispanic/Latino Behavioral Health Center of Excellence recognizes the complexities associated with gender and ethnic identification as well as the right of all individuals to self-identify. The Center uses the term Latine with the intention of both facilitating fluent reading and pronunciation and supporting an inclusive and respectful language. Latine is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino that uses the letter e at the end, an idea native to the Spanish language.

The Hispanic/Latino Behavioral Health Center of Excellence is led by the Institute of Research, Education, and Services in Addiction at the Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine and is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration under grant number H79FG001136.