

Dating violence against teens aged 15 to 17 in Canada, 2009 to 2022



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Dating violence against teens aged 15 to 17 in Canada, 2009 to 2022: Highlights

- According to self-reported data from the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces, more than four in ten (45%) teens experienced dating violence since they turned 15. Self-reported dating violence includes criminal acts such as physical and sexual violence, as well as acts that may not be considered criminal (e.g., emotional abuse) but which can nonetheless have devastating consequences for victims.
- Experiences of emotional abuse were the most prevalent among teens aged 15 to 17 (45%). Among teens who experienced dating violence, all had experienced emotional abuse, either on its own or in conjunction with other forms of violence.
- One in ten (10%) teens said that they had experienced physical violence by a dating partner since they turned 15.
- Among teen girls, 7% had experienced sexual abuse by a dating partner, including being forced to perform sex acts that they did not want to perform (7%) and having been forced (or having a partner attempt to force them) into having sex (5%).
- Between 2009 and 2022, there were 41,057 persons aged 15 to 17 years who were a victim of police-reported teen dating violence in Canada, defined as any form of violent crime committed against a teen (aged 15 to 17) where the accused person was a current or former non-spousal intimate partner.
- Between 2009 and 2022, there was an average rate of 239 victims of teen dating violence per 100,000 population. Following a period of decline from 2009 to 2014 (-22%), rates of teen dating violence have increased 33% since 2015, with similar increases for girl and boy victims.
- In 2022, the rate of police-reported dating violence was about nine times higher for teenage girls (500 victims per 100,000 population) than boys (57).
- Among the provinces, the highest rate of police-reported teen dating violence in 2022 was recorded by police in Saskatchewan (627 victims per 100,000 population), followed by Manitoba (574) and New Brunswick (424).
- In 2022, the overall rate of police-reported teen dating violence against victims aged 15 to 17 was twice as high in rural compared to urban areas (478 versus 241 per 100,000 population), driven largely by violence recorded by police in the rural North (1,154 per 100,000 population).
- Victims aged 15 to 17 had higher rates (60 victims per 100,000 population) of sexual violence in dating relationships than other forms of violence (e.g., physical assault or criminal harassment); higher than the rate among victims aged 18 to 24 (43), and those aged 25 and older (9). Sexual teen dating violence disproportionately impacts girls (116 versus 5 for boys), as is the case more generally with all forms of sexual violence.
- According to police-reported data, in 2022, four in ten (39%) incidents of teen dating violence involving victims aged 15 to 17 were not cleared—meaning the incident was still under investigation, or there was insufficient evidence to proceed, or the complainant did not want to proceed (accused had not been identified). Of incidents that were cleared, most (83%) were cleared by the laying or recommendation of a charge; however, charges were more common when the victim was a girl than a boy.

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Teen dating violence is a pressing problem in Canada but national data on its scope and associated characteristics are scarce. It is commonly defined as physical, sexual or psychological violence, including stalking, experienced in dating or sexual relationships during adolescent periods (see Text box 1 for definitions used in this article) (Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Niolon et al., 2015; Tomaszewska & Schuster, 2021; Vagi et al., 2015; Zweig et al., 2014). These behaviours may occur in person between dating partners or electronically and online, often referred to as cyber dating abuse or technology-facilitated violence (Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Tomaszewska & Schuster, 2021). As is the case with intimate partner violence (IPV) in general, teen dating violence could be one singular event of abuse and or, as is most often the case, could involve repeated forms of abuse over time (Cotter, 2021).

Data from the 2017/2018 Health-Behavior in School-Aged Children study have shown that more than one in three Canadian teens in grades 9 and 10, who had dated, reported being victims or perpetrators of dating violence in the year prior (Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Government of Canada, 2022). Similarly, research studies in the United States have found that between 9% to 35% of surveyed youth have experienced dating violence (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Children's Safety Network, 2012; Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Vagi et al., 2015). These proportions vary according to whether teens are asked about their current dating relationship or all past relationships, the type of violence being measured, and whether they experienced dating violence in their lifetime or within the past year.

Unlike IPV more generally, which disproportionately affects women and girls, some research has shown that similar proportions of teenage boys and girls reported experiencing (non-sexual) dating violence (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Eisner, 2021; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Jouriles et al., 2017; Wincentak et al., 2017). While similarities exist in the overall proportion of boys and girls who self-report experiencing teen dating violence, the frequency and severity of violence is often greater for girls (Eisner, 2021; Hamby & Turner, 2013; Jouriles et al., 2017; Niolon et al., 2015).

Notwithstanding some similarities between boys and girls, teen dating violence continues to disproportionately affect teens who identify as sexual or gender minorities compared to their heterosexual and cis-gender counterparts (Basile et al., 2020; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Whitton et al., 2019). The increased risk of violence among gender and sexual minorities has been explained through structural factors (e.g., prejudice, discrimination, harassment, diminished community and family supports) which increase their risk of adverse social and health outcomes, including IPV (Whitton et al., 2019).

Adolescence is a key period of identity development where youth acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to develop healthy relationships, all while experiencing substantial physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes (Kowalova & Cason, 2017). As such the negative effects associated with experiencing teen dating violence can be far reaching and long-lasting. For example, in terms of lifelong consequences, some research indicates that teens who experience dating violence are more likely to experience violence in relationships as adults; have higher rates of depression, suicide attempts and mental health issues; and, abuse drugs and alcohol in adulthood (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Children's Safety Network, 2012; Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Hébert et al., 2017; Parker & Bradshaw, 2015; Vagi et al., 2015). The high proportion of teens who experience various forms of dating violence, coupled with the known adverse outcomes, highlights the necessity of conducting an analysis of its overall prevalence and characteristics in Canada.

Using self-reported and police-reported data, this *Juristat* article focuses on the experiences of dating violence against teens aged 15 to 17 in Canada. Section 1 explores self-reported data from the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) to examine the frequency and severity of dating violence against teens in Canada, potential correlated factors, as well as its impacts and consequences. In Section 2, data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey are used to show year-over-year trends in police-reported teen dating violence, including a brief discussion of spousal violence against teenage victims. Next, information is presented on geographic variations, incident characteristics and whether the case was cleared (i.e., solved) by police. A combination of data sources is essential to fully capture the realities of teen dating violence in Canada, considering issues of underreporting as well as the occurrence of abusive behaviours that may not meet the criminal threshold.¹

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Text box 1**Definitions and data sources**

According to Canadian census data, only 1% of all youth aged 15 to 19 were legally married or in a common-law relationship in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023). As such, of the teens aged 15 to 17 who experience violence within an intimate partner relationship, the vast majority would be in a dating relationship, thereby supporting an analytical focus on violence within teen dating relationships. The data presented in this *Juristat* article can thus be used to inform, develop and enhance prevention tools specific to the teenage dating population.

For the purposes of this article, two distinct albeit similar definitions of teen dating violence are used. The definitions relate to two data sources, self-reported data drawn from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) and police administrative data drawn from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. The former capture a wide range of violence (i.e., physical and sexual assault, emotional and psychological abuse) regardless of whether they were reported to the police and met the criminal threshold. In contrast, the latter only include violent incidents that were reported to police and deemed criminal in nature. It is important to note that perpetrators of dating violence and abuse against a teenage victim might not be a teen themselves and may fall outside the 15-to-17 age range.

Data drawn from the SSPPS are presented to highlight criminal and non-criminal forms of teen dating violence. Self-reported teen dating violence is defined as physical and sexual assault, and emotional and psychological abuse, against a teen (aged 15 to 17) which was perpetrated by a current or former dating partner (see Text box 2 for the various types of violence measured by the survey).^{2,3}

Data drawn from the UCR Survey detail violent incidents within intimate relationships that were reported to police and met the criminal threshold. Police-reported teen dating violence is defined as any form of violent crime committed against a teen (aged 15 to 17) where the accused person was a current or former intimate partner (i.e., boyfriend or girlfriend, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend, another type of intimate partner such as a one-night stand). Spousal relationships—that is, legal marriages and common-law relationships—are excluded from most of the police-reported analysis presented in this article.

Section 1: Self-reported dating violence among teens aged 15 to 17

Many forms of violence, including violence within dating relationships and other intimate partnerships, often go unreported to the police. Data from Canadian studies show that violence within intimate partnerships is often underreported to police, for reasons including victims considering it to be a private and personal matter and not seeing what happened as serious enough to report (Conroy, 2021a; Conroy, 2019; Cotter, 2021).

Moreover, there are many behaviours that are abusive and can be harmful to victims but do not meet the criminal threshold; examples include various forms of emotional and psychological abuse. As such, analyzing self-reported data is essential to providing a complete picture of the overall prevalence and nature of dating violence in general and among teens specifically. In this section, data from the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) are used to examine the prevalence of teen dating violence and young people's attitudes towards it. The SSPPS collected information on Canadians' experiences of violence within intimate relationships—including physical, sexual and emotional violence—both for lifetime prevalence (since the age of 15) and in the 12 months that preceded the survey (see Text box 2).

Text box 2**Measuring intimate partner violence with the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces**

The 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) collected information on Canadians' experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) since the age of 15 and in the 12 months that preceded the survey. The survey asked about people's experiences of a range of behaviours committed by intimate partners, including physical and sexual violence and emotional and psychological abuse. Intimate partners include current and former legally married spouses, common-law partners, dating partners, and other intimate partners.

Physical assault includes physical violence or the threat of physical violence. In all, nine types of abuse are included in this category: being shaken, pushed or thrown; being hit, kicked or bitten; being threatened with harm or having someone close to you be threatened with harm; being choked; having a weapon used against you or being threatened with a weapon; being threatened to be hit with a fist or an object; having things thrown at you; being slapped; and being beaten.

Sexual assault includes sexual violence or threats of sexual violence. It included two types of abuse: being made to perform sex acts that the victim did not want to perform, and forcing or attempting to force the victim to have sex.

Emotional and psychological abuse encompasses behaviours that target a person's emotional, mental, or financial well-being, or impede their personal freedom or sense of safety. This category includes 15 specific types of abuse, including (but not limited to) jealousy, name-calling and other put-downs, stalking or harassing behaviours, manipulation, confinement, or property damage (see Text box 3). It also includes being blamed for causing the abusive or violent behaviour, which was measured among those respondents who experienced certain forms of IPV. Notably, many behaviours included in this category of abuse are not considered to be criminal.

The analysis presented in this article takes an inclusive approach to the broad range of behaviours that comprise IPV. For the purposes of this analysis, those with at least one response of 'yes' to any item on the survey measuring IPV are included as having experienced intimate partner violence, regardless of the type or the frequency. For more information on the measures of IPV in the SSPPS and other sources of data on IPV in Canada, see Cotter 2021.

Over four in ten teens aged 15 to 17 experienced dating violence

According to the SSPPS, more than four in ten (45%) teens aged 15 to 17 who had reported being in a relationship⁴ at some point since the age of 15 stated that they had experienced some form of abuse or violence at the hands of a dating partner (Table 1). This included equal proportions of teen girls (46%) and teen boys (46%) in this age group.⁵ This represented almost 142,000 young people across Canada.

In the context of these self-reported data, dating violence includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse committed by a current or former boyfriend, girlfriend or dating partner (see Text box 1).⁶ Emotional abuse was the most prevalent, affecting 45% of teens aged 15 to 17. In fact, all teens who had experienced any kind of dating violence had experienced emotional abuse, either on its own or in conjunction with physical or sexual violence. Emotional abuse is often seen as a precursor to other forms of violence, is related to concepts of coercive control⁷ in intimate partner relationships (Dawson et al., 2021; Gill & Aspinall, 2020; Kelly & Johnson, 2008; Stark, 2007), and includes many different behaviours (see Text box 3).

Text box 3 Coercive control within teen dating relationships

Coercive control is a term used to encapsulate a range of abusive and violent behaviours intended to deprive the victim of their autonomy in the relationship through fear of potential consequences and does not require that physical force ever be used (Dawson et al., 2019; Stark, 2007). It is highly gendered, perpetrated primarily by men and boys against women and girls and can materialize in the form of actual or threatened physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse (Dawson et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2019). While some types of abuse considered to be elements of coercive control have been criminalized in Canada, others have not. Some common examples of coercive control include (Silverstone, 2021):

- Social isolation, from friends or family
- Deprivation of basic needs
- Monitoring everyday activities either in-person or electronically
- Repeatedly insulting, humiliating or putting a person down to foster feelings of worthlessness
- Threatening to harm them, their loved ones or pets
- Damaging personal property

Results from the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) found emotional abuse to be the most prevalent form of dating violence experienced by teens. This type of abuse can include many different behaviours; for example, a partner acting jealous and limiting contact with other young men or women (experienced by 36% of teens), telling the victim that they were crazy, stupid or not good enough (22%), and demanding to know where the victim was or who they were with at all times (20%) (Text box 3 table). Where comparisons between boys and girls were possible, no significant differences were found with respect to the prevalence of emotionally abusive behaviours.

Text box 3 table**Types of emotional abuse experienced within dating relationships since age 15 among teens aged 15 to 17, by gender, Canada, 2018**

Type of emotional abuse	Girls aged 15 to 17			Boys aged 15 to 17			Total		
	percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Jealous, does not want you to talk to other men or women	34	20.9	49.7	38	25.6	52.6	36	27.2	46.7
Demands to know where you are or who you are with	23	12.1	39.4	18	9.5	31.2	20	13.0	29.8
Puts you down or calls you names	29	16.0	46.6	F	F	F	17	10.1	27.1
Told you that you are crazy, stupid or not good enough	29	16.8	45.3	17	9.2	30.4	22	14.5	32.5
Tried to convince your friends or family that you are crazy	16	6.5	33.9	F	F	F	10	5.2	19.8
Followed you or hung out outside your home or work	8	3.4	17.0	F	F	F	5	2.6	10.2
Kept you from seeing family or friends	6	3.0	11.8	7	2.8	16.5	7	3.6	11.9
Harassed you by phone, text, email or social media	16	6.6	33.8	6	2.2	14.9	10	5.3	19.1

F too unreliable to be published

Note: Differences were not found to be statistically significant. While data includes violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law partner, dating partner, or someone with whom the victim was in another type of intimate relationship, the majority (99%) of teens aged 15 to 17 had never been in a marriage or common-law relationship. Percent calculation excludes respondents who reported that they have never been in an intimate partner relationship. The terms "girls" and "boys" include trans and cisgender persons. Percent calculations are based on unrounded estimates and include missing responses. "Total" includes trans and cisgender persons, as well as those identifying with no gender or with multiple genders.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces.

Physical violence by a dating partner experienced by one in ten teens since age 15

One in ten (10%) teens aged 15 to 17 experienced physical violence by a dating partner. This included 14% of boys and 5% of girls, though this difference was not statistically significant. As mentioned, previous research based on self-reported data has also shown that similar proportions of girls and boys experience physical teen dating violence (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Eisner, 2021; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Jouriles et al., 2017; Wincentak et al., 2017). However, police-reported data show higher rates of physical assault offences for girls (93 victims per 100,000 girls aged 15 to 17) than for boys (15).

While SSPPS data cannot provide rates of reporting of physical and/or sexual dating violence to police by teens,⁸ this comparison to police-reported data suggest that physical violence against girls may be more likely to come to the attention of police.

Among teens, 6% indicated that they had been slapped, 4% had been hit with a fist or object or kicked or bitten, 4% had been threatened to be hit with a fist or weapon, and 4% had been shaken, grabbed, pushed or thrown by a dating partner.⁹

One in fourteen teen girls experienced sexual violence by a dating partner since age 15

When it came to sexual violence by a dating partner, 4% of teens indicated that they had experienced it since they turned 15, including one in 14 (7%) girls aged 15 to 17. Girls in this age group experienced a partner forcing them to perform sex acts that they did not want to perform (7%) and a partner forcing, or attempting to force, them into having sex (5%). Data on teen boys' experiences of sexual violence could not be presented, due to limited sample size.

Among teen girls, sexual violence by a dating partner was slightly more common than physical violence (7% versus 5%). This was consistent with police-reported data, where the rate of sexual offences by dating partners in the previous year (116 victims per 100,000 girls aged 15 to 17) was higher than the rate of physical assaults (93).

It should be noted that while the current study found no statistically significant differences between teen girls and teen boys when it came to both the overall prevalence of dating violence and of the various types of dating violence measured by the SSPPS, this finding should be interpreted with a measure of caution. The small number of respondents on which these findings are based may preclude findings of statistical significance, when experiences of girls and boys are compared. Other studies have consistently shown that even when overall prevalence is the same, girls and women are more often subjected to more frequent and severe forms of dating violence and violence within other intimate relationships (Eisner, 2021; Niolon et al., 2015).

Rates of teen intimate partner violence similar to those aged 18 to 24, different from older people

To contrast the experiences of teens aged 15 to 17 with those in other age groups, rates of violence between partners¹⁰ experienced in the 12 months prior to the collection of the SSPPS were compared. With few exceptions, the prevalence of violence among those aged 15 to 17 closely resembled that of those aged 18 to 24, and differed from those aged 25 and older (Table 2).

When it came to overall prevalence, nearly three in ten (29%) teens aged 15 to 17 indicated that they had been subjected to violence by an intimate partner in the previous year. This included 32% of teen girls and 27% of teen boys in this age group (a difference that was not statistically significant). The prevalence of violence in the previous year among teens aged 15 to 17 was very similar to that among those aged 18 to 24 (27%).

However, rates of violence within intimate relationships were considerably lower among those aged 25 and older (9%) and declined steadily with age. The sharpest drop was at age 25, where rates moved from close to three in ten (e.g., 29% and 27% among the 15 to 17 and 18 to 24 groups) to the 14% recorded among those aged 25 to 29 and 30 to 34. Relationship violence continued to decrease in the older age groups, reaching 5% or lower of those aged 70 and older. This is consistent with previous research from Canada and elsewhere, which has repeatedly shown that younger people are at particular risk of violence from an intimate partner and other forms of violence (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Cotter & Savage, 2019; Perreault, 2015; Savage, 2021). This was also largely consistent with police-reported data in Section 2, which show that the lowest rates of dating violence were for those aged 25 and older.

Prevalence of emotional, sexual abuse by a partner similar among those aged 15 to 17 and 18 to 24

Emotional abuse—which is often a precursor to more severe forms of violence—was the most common form of violence within intimate relationships experienced by all age groups in the preceding year. Its prevalence was similar among teens aged 15 to 17 (29%) and those aged 18 to 24 (26%; a difference not found to be statistically significant). This stood in contrast to the experiences of those aged 25 and older, among whom a substantially smaller proportion (10%) indicated that they had experienced emotional abuse by an intimate partner in the preceding 12 months.

As with violence within intimate relationships overall, the rate of sexual violence committed by a partner in the previous year was similar among those aged 15 to 17 (3%) and those aged 18 to 24 (4%).¹¹ Teens aged 15 to 17 had a slightly higher prevalence of sexual violence in an intimate relationship than did those aged 25 and older (1%).

Unlike emotional and sexual abuse by an intimate partner, the prevalence of physical abuse among those aged 15 to 17 (3%) was close to that of those aged 25 and older (2%), and significantly lower compared to those aged 18 to 24 (8%). Notably, this was a similar pattern to that seen with police-reported data, where the highest rates were also recorded among victims aged 18 to 24.

Almost one in five teens experience unwanted behaviour online

Online spaces are also places where individuals can experience violence, which is a particular concern for teens (see Text box 6). While not specifically a measure of dating violence, the SSPPS asked about experiences of unwanted behaviour while online. These behaviours include being targeted by aggressive or harassing messages, having someone post or threaten to post intimate images of them, being pressured to share intimate images, and receiving sexually explicit content without consent.

According to the 2018 SSPPS, almost one in five (19%) teens aged 15 to 17 experienced some form of unwanted behaviour while online in the 12 months preceding the survey (data not shown).¹² The proportion was higher among girls (24%) than boys (15%), driven by a higher proportion of girls who were sent unwanted sexually suggestive or explicit images or messages (19% versus 8% of boys). Notably, the proportion among teens was lower than that reported by those aged 18 to 24 (29%), but higher than among those 25 and older (14%).

More specifically, among teens, the most common unwanted behaviours experienced online were being sent unwanted sexually suggestive or explicit images or messages (13%) or threatening or aggressive emails or messages (10%). The other behaviours measured by the survey were less common. These patterns align with what was observed among internet users of all ages more generally (Cotter & Savage, 2019).

While these behaviours are not specific to dating violence, 4% of teens who experienced some form of unwanted online behaviour indicated that a current or former dating partner was responsible. Most commonly, teens did not know who the person(s) responsible were (34%) or identified a stranger (30%).¹³

As with men in general, boys aged 15 to 17 more likely to perceive violence as sometimes excusable

The 2018 SSPPS asked respondents several questions regarding their attitudes towards gender and violence in relationships. Regardless of whether or not they had experienced violence in an intimate relationship, all respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statements, “violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control”; “it is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair”; and “people have the right to check who their partner has been calling or texting at all times.”

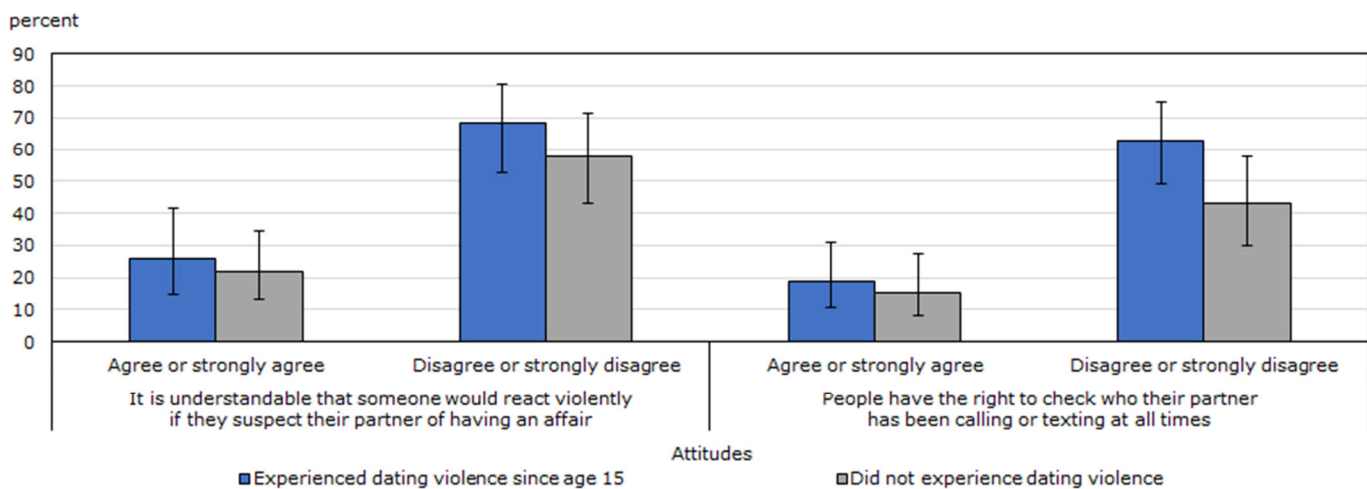
When it came to violence being understandable in certain situations, these attitudes found more support among boys than among girls in the 15 to 17 years age group (including those that had, and had not, experienced dating violence). Over a quarter of boys (26%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “it is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair”, compared to 17% of girls (Table 3). Similarly, 12% of boys aged 15 to 17 agreed or strongly agreed that “violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control”, compared to 7% of girls.

Boys’ and girls’ attitudes towards violence in relationships were generally similar to those held by older people, with a few exceptions. In most cases, men’s attitudes were favorable towards violence more often than women’s. The exception was when men aged 18 to 24 were asked about violence being excusable if someone loses control, where the proportion that agreed or strongly agreed (6%) was very close to that seen among similarly aged women (7%). Additionally, boys aged 15 to 17 were considerably less likely to disagree or strongly disagree that violence is understandable in cases of infidelity (53%), compared to men aged 25 and older (63%).

Meanwhile, when it came to people having the right to check their partner’s calls and messages, the attitudes of teen girls were closer to those held by teen boys than with some other questions. Unlike other questions related to abusive conduct in relationships, when it came to the right to check a partner’s phone, the proportion of girls aged 15 to 17 who agreed or strongly agreed was almost identical to that among boys (22% and 21%, respectively). Additionally, significantly fewer teen girls disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (47%), compared with women aged 18 to 24 (60%) and 25 and older (58%).

Notably, respondents who experienced dating violence were more likely to support statements that violent or controlling behaviour can sometimes be condoned. For example, 26% of teens aged 15 to 17 who had ever experienced dating violence agreed or strongly agreed that it is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspected infidelity—a slightly, but significantly, larger proportion than among teens who had not experienced dating violence (22%; Chart 1). Similarly, more teens who had experienced dating violence agreed or strongly agreed that a person has the right to check their partner’s phone (19%), compared to teens that had not experienced such violence (15%).

Chart 1
Attitudes towards violence and control in intimate relationships among teens aged 15 to 17, by previous experiences with dating violence, Canada, 2018



Note: Differences were not found to be statistically significant. While data include emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law partner, dating partner, or someone with whom the victim was in another type of intimate relationship since the age of 15, the majority (99%) of teens aged 15 to 17 had never been in a marriage or common-law relationship. Response categories of “neither agree nor disagree” are included in the calculations but not shown. Therefore, percentages will not equal 100. Percent calculations are based on unrounded estimates and include missing responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces.

Text box 4**Experiences and consequences of dating violence among people aged 15 to 18 years**

Rules for the analysis of data from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) set minimums for the number of respondents required in a given group: if there are too few respondents in a group, certain data and analyses about them cannot be published. When it comes to teens aged 15 to 17 years, the number of survey respondents who experienced dating violence is too small to allow for much of the detailed analysis and disaggregation that is usually included in Statistics Canada publications. Expanding the age range to include people aged 18 increases the number of respondents enough to allow for more extensive analysis.

Expectedly, an analysis of various sociodemographic characteristics—including those often associated with a heightened risk of experiencing violence—shows that the population aged 15 to 17 is similar to that aged 15 to 18 in many ways. For instance, equal proportions indicated that they were members of the LGBTQ2S population (7% of both age groups) or First Nations, Métis or Inuit (Indigenous) (4%), and similar proportions stated that they had experienced physical or sexual abuse as children (15% of 15 to 17-year-olds and 16% of 15 to 18-year-olds).

Further to these similarities, the addition of the 18-year-olds does not raise the overall prevalence of dating violence experienced in the previous year in a statistically significant way (29% among those aged 15 to 17 and 31% among those aged 15 to 18 years). This similarity was noted among girls and young women and among boys and young men, when the two age groups were compared.

Expanding the analysis to include those aged 18 allows for some additional insights into dating violence among young people. Among those who had experienced violence by an intimate partner in the previous year, the large majority (73%) said they had experienced more than one incident of abuse during that time, whether that involved more than once instance of the same form of abuse or one or multiple instances of various types. At the same time, 75% of 15 to 18-year-olds who had experienced dating violence experienced multiple different types of abuse, including 12% who experienced ten or more types (see Table 1 for a list of types of dating violence included in this study). Additionally, 90% of young people aged 15 to 18 who had experienced dating violence in the previous year said that one partner had been responsible for the abuse.

Canadian studies have shown that intimate partner violence is rarely reported to the police (Conroy, 2021a; Conroy, 2019; Cotter, 2021), and the same can be said when it comes to dating violence among those aged 15 to 18 years. Among those who had experienced abuse by a dating partner in the previous year, 98% stated that police had not been made aware of what happened. Most (92%) also stated that they had not accessed any support services for help dealing with the abuse, often because they felt the incident was too minor or that they did not need assistance (78% of those who did not access services). Instead of formal support, 74% of those aged 15 to 18 who had experienced dating violence in the past year said that they spoke to someone else in their life about it, often a family member (37%). These patterns are consistent with what is generally observed in the broader population.

Most (83%) young people aged 15 to 18 who experienced dating violence said that the experience had some impact on their emotional or psychological well-being. Many (62%) felt upset, confused or frustrated, as well as hurt or disappointed (55%), angry (50%), and annoyed (45%).

Section 2: Police-reported dating violence against teens aged 15 to 17

Police-reported teen dating violence is defined as any form of violent crime experienced by a person aged 15 to 17 by their non-spousal intimate partner.¹⁴ Teen dating violence is a form of intimate partner violence, but most of this section excludes spousal violence perpetrated against a teenage victim due to the rarity of such relationships in Canada. It is important to note that persons accused of dating violence against a teenage victim might not be a teen themselves and may instead fall outside the 15-to-17-year range. While the previous section focused on criminal and non-criminal forms of teen dating violence, this section is limited to criminal incidents that came to the attention of authorities.

Text box 5**Criminal violations related to police-reported teen dating violence**

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey collects detailed information on criminal incidents that have come to the attention of Canadian police services, where there is no evidence that the incident did not occur. While the violations below are not exhaustive, they comprise the vast majority (93%) of police-reported violent crime among dating partners where the victim is between the ages of 15 to 17.

Assault (physical): refers to three levels of physical assaults which include the following categories:

- **Common assault:** this includes the *Criminal Code* category assault (level 1). This is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats.
- **Major assault level 2:** this includes more serious forms of assault, i.e., assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and involves carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon against someone or causing someone bodily harm.
- **Major assault level 3:** this includes aggravated assault and involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of someone.
- **Other assaults:** includes pointing a firearm, unlawfully causing bodily harm, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, using firearm or imitation firearm in commission of offence, discharge firearm with intent, assault against a police officer, assault against peace officer with a weapon or causing bodily harm, aggravated assault against peace officer, trap likely to or causing bodily harm, and other assaults.

Sexual assault: encompasses a wide range of criminal acts in the *Criminal Code*. Such conduct ranges from unwanted sexual touching to sexual violence resulting in serious physical injury or disfigurement to the victim. It also includes special categories of offences designed to protect children from sexual abuse:

- **Sexual assault level 1:** involves minor physical injuries or no injuries to the victim.
- **Sexual assault level 2:** includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats or causing bodily harm.
- **Aggravated sexual assault level 3:** this results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.
- **Sexual interference:** is the direct or indirect touching (for a sexual purpose) of a person under the age of 16 years using a part of the body or an object.
- **Invitation to sexual touching:** is the inviting, counselling, or inciting of a person under the age of 16 years to touch (for a sexual purpose) the body of any person directly or indirectly with a part of the body or with an object.
- **Sexual exploitation:** occurs when a person in a position of trust or authority towards a young person or a person with whom the young person is in a relationship of dependency, commits sexual interference or invitation to sexual touching. In this section “young person” refers to a person between 16 and 18 years of age.

Criminal harassment: is defined as repeatedly following another person from place to place or repeatedly attempting to contact the person against their wishes causing that person to reasonably fear for their personal safety or the safety of anyone known to them.

Uttering threats: is defined as knowingly uttering, conveying or causing any person to receive a threat to cause death or bodily harm; to burn, destroy or damage real or personal property; or to kill, poison or injure an animal that is the property of any person.

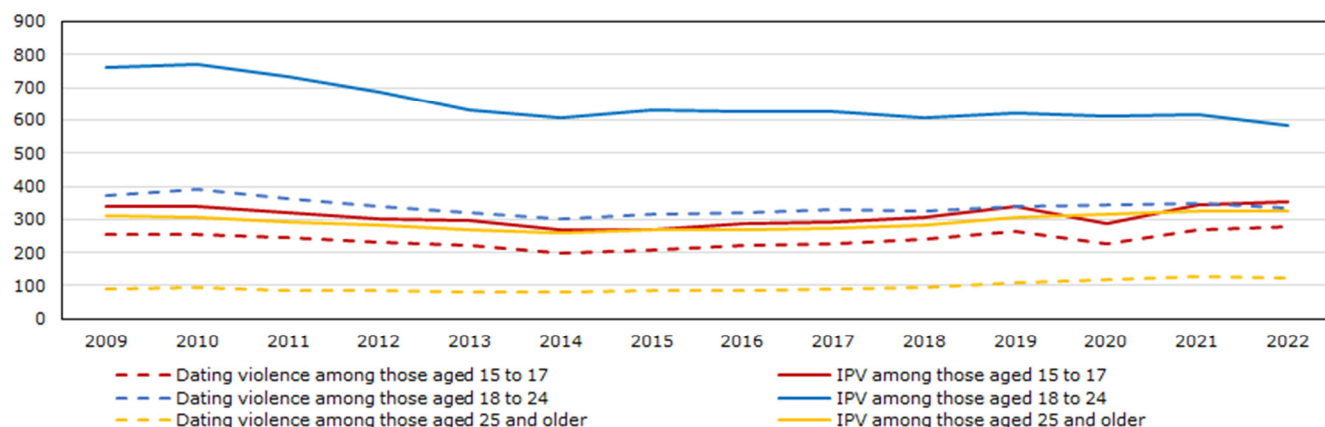
Dating violence most common form of intimate partner violence among teens aged 15 to 17

Between 2009 and 2022, there were 41,057 persons aged 15 to 17 years who were a victim of police-reported teen dating violence in Canada, representing an average rate of 239 victims per 100,000 population.

During the same time, there were an additional 12,433 teens aged 15 to 17 who were victims of police-reported spousal violence, including violence occurring within legal marriages and common-law relationships. When dating and spousal violence are combined to represent all police-reported experiences of IPV among teenage victims, the large majority (77%) experienced IPV by a dating partner (either current or former) or another non-spousal intimate partner. While the rates are lower for teen dating violence compared to teen IPV more generally, the fact that dating violence forms more than three-quarters of all IPV victimizations produces similar year-over-year trends (Chart 2), and supports an analytical focus on teen dating violence exclusively.

Chart 2
Police-reported violent crime among dating and intimate partners, by age group and year, Canada, 2009 to 2022

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Based on the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database, which, as of 2009, includes data for 99% of the population in Canada. As a result, numbers may not match those presented elsewhere in the report.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database.

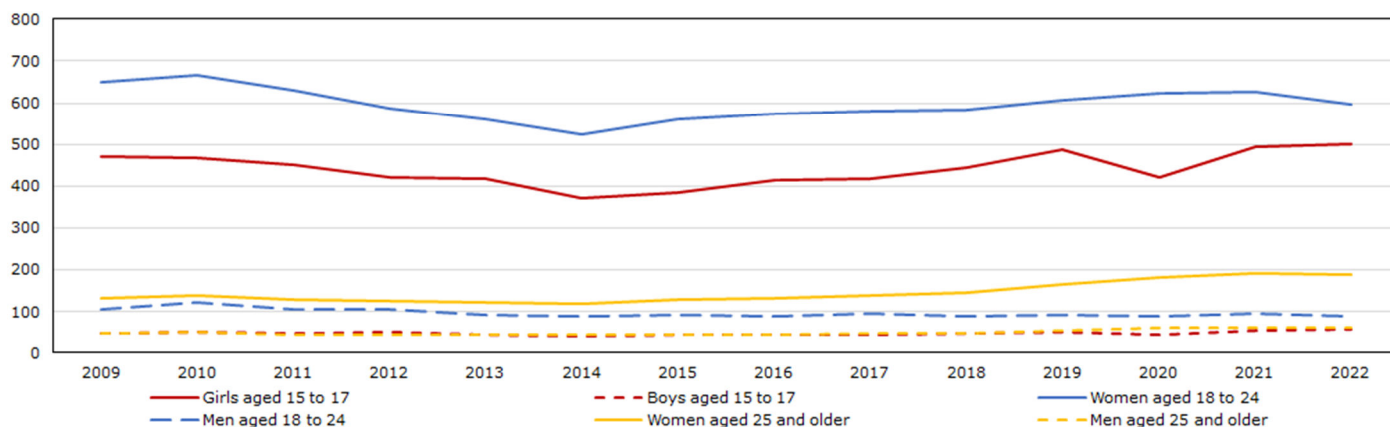
Increase in dating violence against teens aged 15 to 17 since 2015

Following a period of decline from 2009 to 2014 (-22%), rates of teen dating violence have increased 33% since 2015, with similar increases for girl victims (+30%) and boys (+35%) (Chart 3). While year-over-year trends in teen dating violence align with police-reported violent crime trends overall for that age group, teen dating violence had less of a decline between 2009 and 2014 and more of an increase since 2015 compared to rates of violent crime among teen victims overall (where the rate changes were -31% and +29%, respectively).

For police-reported teen dating violence, since 2015, 2020 was the only year with a documented decline (-14%) from the year prior. In fact, teens aged 15 to 17 were the only age group overall that saw a decline in rates of dating violence from 2019 to 2020; instead, rates increased for 18- to 24-year-olds (+2%) and those aged 25 or older (+11%). The COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding lockdowns can help explain the disproportionate decline among the younger demographic. For teens, much of their time is spent at school and in extracurricular activities, and COVID brought increased parental supervision and time spent at home, reducing situations where violence from dating partners could occur (Krause et al., 2022). That said, the occurrence of police-reported teen dating violence involving online offences peaked in 2020 (see Text box 6), potentially signaling a shift in the types of behaviours reported during the pandemic.

Chart 3
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and year, Canada, 2009 to 2022

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims where gender or age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Based on the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database, which, as of 2009, includes data for 99% of the population in Canada. As a result, numbers may not match those presented elsewhere in the report.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database.

Like patterns in IPV victimization in Canada more generally (Conroy, 2022; Conroy, 2021b; Cotter, 2021), across all years and age groups, rates of police-reported dating violence against women and girls were higher than rates against men and boys. Indeed, in 2022, the rate of dating violence was about nine times higher for teenage girls (500 victims per 100,000 population) than boys (57), a greater difference than what was documented among 18- to 24-year-olds (seven times higher; 597 versus 89) and those aged 25 and older (3 times higher; 187 versus 59).

While other research has shown similar proportions of girls and boys experience physical teen dating violence (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Eisner, 2021; Exner-Cortens et al., 2021; Jouriles et al., 2017; Wincentak et al., 2017), it was based on self-reported data, and it may be that violence against girls is more likely to come to the attention of police. It is also possible that reporting patterns are affected by women and girls being more likely to seek help (either formally or informally) than men and boys (Bundock et al., 2018; Lachman et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2012). The likelihood of help-seeking among men and boys may be further reduced when the perpetrator was a woman or girl due in part to societal perceptions of what it means to be masculine (Arnocky & Vaillancourt, 2014; Huntley et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2012), which can help explain why a higher proportion of police-reported teen dating violence involves girl victims.

Teenage girls most commonly experience dating violence by a man or boy between the ages of 15 and 24

Focusing only on incidents of police-reported teen dating violence involving a single victim and single accused,¹⁵ in 2022, 91% (N=1,610) of victims were girls aged 15 to 17 and the remaining 8% (N=144) were boys. Nearly all (95%) girl victims experienced violence by a dating partner who was a man or boy and 5% (N=77) by a woman or girl. Focusing on men and boys accused of dating violence against a teenage girl, close to half (45%) were also aged 15 to 17 years and a similar proportion (44%) were slightly older than their victim (i.e., aged 18 to 24 years). The remaining accused were men aged 25 or older (8%), or boys aged 12 to 14 (3%).

Among teenage boys who were victims of police-reported dating violence, nearly eight in ten (79%) experienced violence by a woman or girl, close to two-thirds of whom were the same age (64%). The next largest proportion (19%) of accused were younger girls (i.e., aged 12 to 14), followed by women aged 18 to 24 (13%) and a fraction of accused were women aged 25 years and older (4%).

Rate of police-reported teen dating violence highest in the territories and the Prairie provinces

Research to date has shown the highest rates of violent crime overall, including violence against youth and intimate partners, exist in two of the territories (Conroy, 2021b; Conroy, 2018; Moreau, 2022). In 2022, police-reported teen dating violence was no exception: the highest rates were found in Nunavut (2,142 victims per 100,000 population; N=46) and the Northwest Territories (1,646 victims per 100,000 population; N=29) (Table 4). The rate of teen dating violence in Yukon (385 victims per 100,000 population; N=5), however, was lower than four provinces.

Among the provinces, the highest rate of teen dating violence in 2022 was recorded by police in Saskatchewan (627 victims per 100,000 population; N=273), followed by Manitoba (574 victims per 100,000 population; N=288) and New Brunswick (424 victims per 100,000 population; N=105). These rates were driven largely by violence against teenage girls, where the same pattern was found (1,119, 1,070 and 757 victims per 100,000 population, respectively). When it came to rates of dating violence against teenage boys, the highest provincial rate was again in Saskatchewan (137 victims per 100,000 population; N=30). Differing from overall patterns, the next highest rate was in Newfoundland and Labrador (110 victims per 100,000 population; N=9), followed closely by Nova Scotia (106 per 100,000 population; N=16).

Rates of teen dating violence higher in rural areas than in urban areas

Canadian data have consistently shown higher violent crime rates in rural compared to urban areas (Conroy, 2021b; Perreault, 2023; Perreault, 2019; Sutton, 2023), and current data support prior trends. In 2022, the overall rate of police-reported dating violence against victims aged 15 to 17 was twice as high in rural compared to urban areas (478 versus 241 per 100,000 population).¹⁶ The high rate of rural violence, however, was due in large part to violence recorded by police in the rural North (Table 4).¹⁷ Specifically, in 2022, the rate of teen dating violence was 1,154 victims per 100,000 population in the rural North, nearly four times higher than the rate in the rural South (317) and about five times higher than in urban areas (241).

Among the provinces, the largest differences were noted in Saskatchewan, where the rate of teen dating violence in the rural North (3,870 victims per 100,000 population; N=86) was ten times higher than in the rural South (403 victims per 100,000 population; N=59) and eight times higher than in urban areas (480 victims per 100,000 population; N=128). Similarly, in Manitoba, the rate was about seven times higher in the rural North (2,017 victims per 100,000 population; N=85) compared to the rural South (290 victims per 100,000 population; N=39) and four times higher than what was documented in urban areas (505 victims per 100,000 population; N=164).

While the numbers are small in rural areas, the lived realities of teens who experience dating violence in these areas may include difficulties in avoiding their abusers in small communities, decreased anonymity, less social support or IPV services and more barriers to help-seeking (Edwards et al., 2014; Moffitt et al., 2020)

Highest rates of police-reported teen dating violence in Lethbridge, Kingston, Greater Sudbury and Peterborough

It follows that the rate of teen dating violence was lower in census metropolitan areas (CMAs)¹⁸ compared to non-CMAs (206 versus 463) (Table 5). That said, some CMA rates exceeded the average of non-CMAs. For example, the highest rates of teen dating violence were found in Lethbridge (537 victims per 100,000 population; N=25), followed by Kingston (509 victims per 100,000 population; N=26), Greater Sudbury (474 victims per 100,000 population; N=25) and Peterborough (465 victims per 100,000 population; N=18), all of which exceeded the average rate in non-CMAs (463). Each of the above CMAs, however, have relatively small populations allowing for low counts to have a greater influence on rates than what would be the case in larger CMAs. To contrast, the lowest rates of teen dating violence were documented in Calgary (N=76; a rate of 137), Toronto (N=267; a rate of 144), Barrie (N=15; a rate of 158) and Windsor (N=18; a rate of 159).

Rates of sexual violence in dating relationships highest among teens relative to older age groups

Research to date has found that young people are at greatest risk of experiencing sexual violence (Cotter & Savage, 2019), with relatively high rates among the adolescent population, that is, those between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2018). Police-reported data in 2022 also recorded a similar pattern for sexual violence offences against teenage victims aged 15 to 17 in dating relationships.¹⁹ Specifically, teen victims had higher rates (60 per 100,000 population) of sexual violence in dating relationships than other forms of violence (e.g., physical assault or criminal harassment).

The rate of sexual violence offences among victims aged 15 to 17 was also higher than the rate among victims aged 18 to 24 (43), and those aged 25 and older (9) (Table 6). These reporting patterns may reflect demographic differences, be indicative of increased public awareness on sexual violence, mirror more comprehensive consent education in Canadian schools or a combination of the above. Like sexual violence more generally, the rate of sexual teen dating violence was driven predominately by violence against girls (116 victims per 100,000 population) and, more specifically, by the sexual assault of girls (90).

Sexual assault (level 1, 2, or 3) accounted for 76% of police-reported sexual offences against teens in a dating relationship. Aside from sexual assaults, of the other 24% of police-reported sexual offences against teens aged 15 to 17 years, close to half (46%) were for sexual interference and another 38% were for the non-consensual distribution of intimate images (see Text box 6 for additional information).²⁰

Following sexual offences, the next highest rate of teen dating violence was for physical assault offences (54 victims per 100,000 population), primarily for common assault (level 1) (38). Physical assault offences against teenage victims were reported at a rate four times lower than those occurring between dating partners where the victim was aged 18 to 24 (224) and about 1.5 times lower when the victim was aged 25 and older (88).

Text box 6

Police-reported technology-facilitated dating violence among teens

Canadians in general, and youth in particular, live in an increasingly digital world where the vast majority remain connected throughout the day, using the Internet for a variety of reasons: accessing information, teleworking, online learning, socializing and for entertainment purposes (Hango, 2023; Schimmele et al., 2021). Indeed, recent Canadian data show 99.6% of teens aged 15 to 19 years old have used the Internet in the past three months, 92% use social media regularly (Schimmele et al., 2021),²¹ and 93% of teens aged 14 to 17 reported having their own smartphone (Media Smarts, 2022). With the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, experiencing violence that transcends physical space has become possible and somewhat common among youth in Canada (see Hango, 2023). Of the 3,453 victims of police-reported teen dating violence, 6% were victimized online. Proportionately more teenage boys than girls reported experiencing teen dating violence online (8% versus 6%).

Since 2018, the proportion of police-reported teen dating violence that occurred online increased by 11% (from 5.6% in 2018 to 6.2% in 2022), peaking in 2020 (7.7%), before declining. The COVID-19 pandemic required an immediate transition from in-person interactions to online ones, likely fueling the 2020 peak in police-reported technology-facilitated dating violence, proportions which later declined to levels comparable to what was observed pre-pandemic. Focusing on the subset of those who experienced dating violence online in 2022, more than four in ten teens (44%) experienced sexual violations—over half (53%) of which were for the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.²² Like larger patterns in sexual offences, the vast majority (91%) of victims of all sexual violations were girls.

The next largest proportions of online violence in teen dating relationships were related to uttering threats (15%), indecent or harassing communications (14%), criminal harassment (13%) and extortion (8%). Apart from criminal harassment, these offences were experienced by a higher proportion of teenage boys compared to girls. Specifically, nearly one in four (23%) boys who were victims of cybercrime within the context of a dating relationship reported indecent or harassing communications, 17% experienced extortion and another 17% experienced uttering threats.²³

For 18- to 24-year-olds, comparatively fewer online violations that happened in the context of a dating relationship were sexual (24%), but of those that were, most related to the non-consensual distribution of intimate images (75%). Instead, the largest proportion of cyber violations were for indecent or harassing communications (25%) followed closely by criminal harassment (22%). Smaller proportions were related to uttering threats (12%) and extortion (9%).

Among victims aged 25 and older, a smaller proportion (12%) of cyber violations were sexual, and again, the large majority were for the non-consensual distribution of intimate images (83%). Unlike the other age groups, the most common cyber violation was criminal harassment (33%), followed by indecent or harassing communications (31%), uttering threats (15%) and extortion (4%).

Most victims of teen dating violence had physical force used against them

According to police-reported data, in 2022, nearly two-thirds (63%) of teen victims of dating violence had physical force used against them and about one in ten (11%) were involved in incidents where a weapon was present (Table 7). Notably, a larger proportion of teen dating violence against boy victims had a weapon present compared to teen violence against girls (15% versus 11%). This pattern was also found among the older age groups and supports prior Canadian data revealing that weapons were more often present in dating violence incidents involving a man or boy as the victim (Hotton, 2010).

One in ten victims of teen dating violence victimized on school property

While the largest proportion (69%) of victims of teen dating violence experienced violence on private property,²⁴ nearly one in ten (9%) were victimized on school property²⁵ (Table 7). That said, a larger proportion of boys were victimized at an outdoor location²⁶ (18% versus 14%) or on school property (14% versus 9%) than girls. In contrast, a larger proportion of teenage girls than boys experienced dating violence at a private location (70% versus 58%). Teenage girls aged 15 to 17 thus appear to be more vulnerable to experiencing dating violence in private locations relative to their male counterparts.

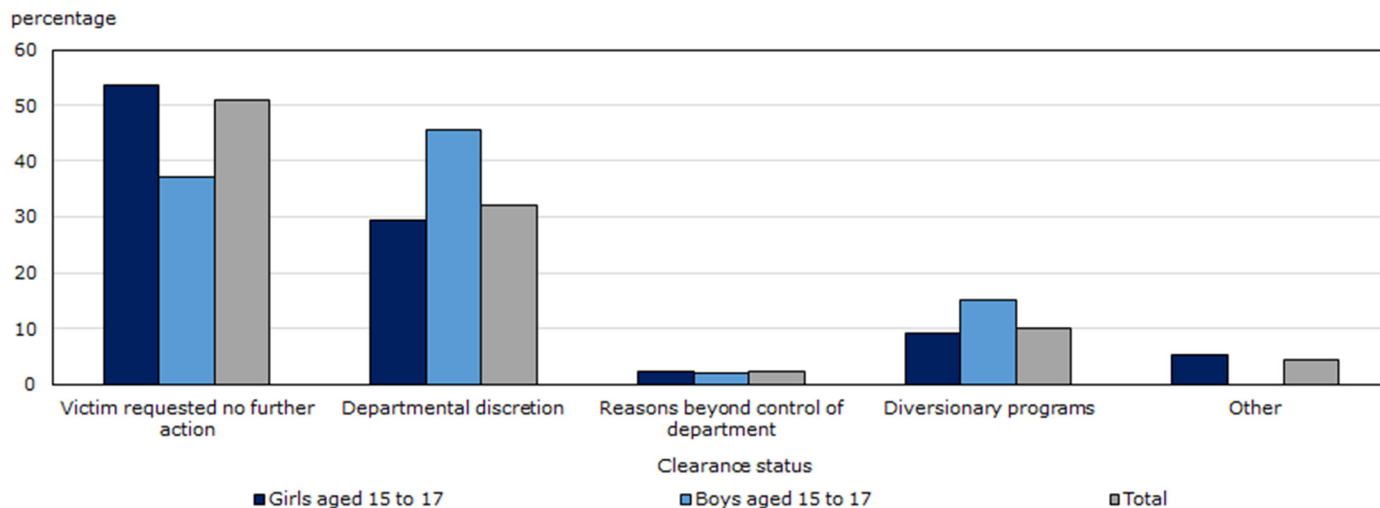
Regardless of the gender of the victim, two-thirds (66%) of teen dating violence occur in the afternoon or evening, higher than what was found for 18- to 24-year-olds (58%) or those aged 25 and older (59%). This difference in patterns across age groups is due largely to more teen dating violence occurring in the afternoon (33%), a proportion larger than what was documented for the older groups (27% each).

Compared to teenage girls, fewer incidents of dating violence against teenage boys were cleared by charge

According to police-reported data, in 2022, four in ten (39%) incidents of teen dating violence involving victims aged 15 to 17 were not cleared—meaning the incident was still under investigation, or there was insufficient evidence to proceed, or the complainant did not want to proceed (accused had not been identified). This proportion was somewhat higher than what was documented among older groups, where just over one quarter (26%) of incidents of dating violence involving victims aged 18 to 24 and those involving victims aged 25 and older (27%) were not cleared.

There were 1,763 police-reported incidents of dating violence among teens, aged 15 to 17, in which there was a single victim and single accused person.²⁷ Of these, the vast majority (83%) were cleared by the laying or recommendation of a charge.²⁸ This proportion was driven largely by female victims: 84% of dating violence incidents involving a teenage girl victim were cleared by charge compared with 68% of boy victims. The remaining 13% of incidents of teen dating violence were cleared otherwise; that is, about half (51%) were cleared because the victim requested no further action (where an accused person was identified), one-third (32%) resulting from departmental discretion, and 10% because the accused was sent to a diversionary program²⁹ (Chart 4).

Chart 4
Proportion of police-reported incidents of teen dating violence that were cleared otherwise by victim gender and clearance type, Canada, 2022



Note: For the purposes of analysis, includes incidents with a single victim and a single accused. Excludes victims and accused where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Excludes victim data reported by the Canadian Forces Military Police.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Again, these findings are driven largely by female victims of teen dating violence. The reasons for why cases of teen dating violence were cleared otherwise differed considerably when the incident involved a victim who was a teenage boy: the most common reason was due to departmental discretion (46%), followed by the victim requesting no further action be taken (37%), or the accused being placed in a diversionary program (15%).

Summary

Multiple data sources—including self-reported survey data and police-reported administrative data—were analyzed in this *Juristat* article to examine the prevalence, characteristics, risk factors and consequences associated with teen dating violence in Canada. Because many forms of violence, including dating violence, often go unreported to police—and not all abusive behaviours meet the criminal threshold—the complementary use of self-report data allows for the most complete picture of teen dating violence in Canada.

According to data from the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS), 45% of teens aged 15 to 17 stated they had experienced some form of abuse at the hands of a dating partner since the age of 15. Emotional abuse was the most common, experienced by 45% of teens. One in ten (10%) of teens experienced physical violence in a dating relationship, and 4% experienced sexual violence.

Between 2009 and 2022, more than 40,000 teens aged 15 to 17 were victims of police-reported dating violence in Canada, representing an average rate of 239 victims per 100,000 population. Following a period of decline from 2009 to 2014 (-22%), since 2015, rates of teen dating violence have increased 33%, with similar increases for girl and boy victims. Despite similar year-over-year increases across genders, in 2022, the rate of dating violence was about nine times higher for teenage girls than boys.

In 2022, the highest rates of police-reported teen dating violence were for sexual offences; a finding that differed from age groups 18 and older where the highest rates were instead for physical assault offences. Similarly, victims of teen dating violence were more susceptible to experiencing violence in afternoon hours and on school property than what was found among the comparison groups. A smaller proportion of incidents of dating violence against teenage victims were cleared by charge, which may be explained by the large proportion of accused who were youth themselves. Adverse experiences in adolescence are linked to poor mental health, lower educational attainment, and increased substance use possibly leading to further victimization in later adulthood; as such, measures to prevent and address teen dating violence are key to ensuring the safety, health and well-being of young people in Canada.

Survey description

Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces

In 2018, Statistics Canada conducted the first cycle of the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS). The purpose of the survey is to collect information on Canadians' experiences in public, at work, online, and in their intimate partner relationships.

The target population for the SSPPS is the Canadian population aged 15 and older, living in the provinces and territories. Canadians residing in institutions are not included. This means that the survey results may not reflect the experiences of intimate partner violence among those living in shelters, institutions, or other collective dwellings. Once a household was contacted, an individual 15 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey.

In the provinces, data collection took place from April to December 2018 inclusively. Responses were obtained by self-administered online questionnaire or by interviewer-administered telephone questionnaire. Respondents were able to respond in the official language of their choice. The sample size for the 10 provinces was 43,296 respondents. The response rate in the provinces was 43.1%.

In the territories, data collection took place from July to December 2018 inclusively. Responses were obtained by self-administered online questionnaire or by interviewer-administered in-person questionnaire. Respondents were able to respond in the official language of their choice. The sample size for the 3 territories was 2,597 respondents. The response rate in the territories was 73.2%.

Non-respondents included people who refused to participate, could not be reached, or could not speak English or French. Respondents in the sample were weighted so that their responses represent the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 and older.

Data limitations

As with any household survey, there are some data limitations. The results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling errors. Somewhat different results might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed.

For the quality of estimates, the lower and upper bounds of the confidence intervals are presented. Confidence intervals should be interpreted as follows: If the survey were repeated many times, then 95% of the time (or 19 times out of 20), the confidence interval would cover the true population value.

Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey collects detailed information on criminal incidents that have come to the attention of police services in Canada. Information includes characteristics of victims, accused persons and incidents. In 2022, data from police services covered 99% of the population of Canada.

One incident can involve multiple offences. In order to ensure comparability, counts are presented based on the most serious offence related to the incident as determined by a standard classification rule used by all police services.

Victim age is calculated based on the end date of an incident, as reported by the police. Some victims experience violence over a period of time, sometimes years, all of which may be considered by the police to be part of one continuous incident. Information about the number and dates of individual incidents for these victims of continuous violence is not available. Excludes victims where age was greater than 110 due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age group.

The option for police to code victims as "gender diverse" in the UCR Survey was implemented in 2018. In the context of the UCR, "gender diverse" refers to a person who publicly expresses as neither exclusively male nor exclusively female. Given that small counts of victims identified as being gender diverse may exist, the UCR data available to the public has been recoded with these victims distributed in the "male" or "female" categories based on the regional distribution of victims' gender. This recoding ensures the protection of confidentiality and privacy of victims.

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Notes

1. The Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces captures information on violent crimes that meet the criminal threshold (e.g., physical and sexual assault), it also collects information on the many forms of emotional abuse (e.g., name calling, manipulation, jealousy, control tactics) that do not meet the criminal threshold.

2. While the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces collected data on violence and abuse within all intimate relationships, of teen respondents aged 15 to 17 who indicated that they have, or have had, an intimate partner, 99% were single, never married (i.e., their intimate partner was a dating partner). Data specific to those in this age group who indicated that they had been in a legal or common-law marriage are too small to be published. For this reason, "teen dating violence" will be used to ensure terminology is consistent throughout the article.

3. The 2019 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) also collected information on violence and abuse in the context of dating relationships, however due to a comparatively smaller sample size, most data specific to teens was limited and could not be published. For that reason, the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces is the primary source used for this analysis.

4. Prevalence rates are calculated on the basis of those respondents who indicated they are currently in an intimate partner relationship or had been at some point in their lives. One-quarter (25%) of respondents aged 15 to 17 indicated that they have, or have had, an intimate partner. All subsequent discussion of teen dating violence will refer to the respondents who had reported being in a current relationship or had been at some point in their lives.

5. In this section, the terms "girls," "women," "boys" and "men" include people assigned those categories at birth as well as transgender girls, women, boys and men. Due to small sample size, the experiences of transgender people and of non-binary people cannot be explored independently, and their responses are included in totals for the population. All differences are statistically significant unless otherwise noted.

6. The Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces does not collect information on the gender of former partners who committed abuse. As sample size requires data on abuse by former partners to be combined with data on abuse by current partners, information on the gender of abusive partners (either current or former) is not presented.

7. Coercive control involves the use of physical or non-physical violent tactics intended to exercise control over, while simultaneously limiting the agency of, one person (typically an intimate partner) by another (Dawson et al., 2021; Gill & Aspinall, 2020; Kelly & Johnson, 2008; Stark, 2007). It is a pattern of behaviour where the cumulative effects of intimidation and intimate partner abuse means that physical force is not regularly needed for control, but can instead be achieved through fear alone (Dawson et al., 2021; Stark, 2007). See Text box 3 for a full discussion of coercive control within teen intimate relationships.
8. Data on reporting on any dating violence that had occurred (since the respondent turned age 15) to police was not collected by the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces. While the survey did collect reporting to police of dating violence experienced in the previous year, sample size does not permit analysis of reporting to police of physical and/or sexual dating violence specifically.
9. Comparisons between boys and girls for each type of physical violence are not possible due to limited sample size.
10. Violence between intimate partners includes violence between current and former dating partners, legally married or common-law spouses, and other intimate partners. While analysis of the experiences of teens aged 15 to 17 is focused on violence between dating partners, the analysis of individuals in older age groups includes other relationship types. See Text box 1.
11. Due to sample size, comparisons of sexual dating violence experienced in the past year by girls aged 15 to 17 to boys aged 15 to 17 are not available.
12. Percent calculation excludes those who stated they did not use the internet in the 12 months preceding the survey.
13. Respondents who did not know the number of perpetrators are included in the category “don’t know” for the purposes of analyzing relationship to accused.
14. Non-spousal intimate partners include current and former romantic relationships outside of legal marriages or common-law relationships (i.e., boyfriend or girlfriend). This definition also includes extra-marital affairs, sexual relationships, relationships where there was a mutual sexual attraction and one-night stands.
15. Limiting the analysis to incidents involving a single victim and single accused ensures that each victim file is linked with the correct accused file and that each accused is counted only once. Accused persons include those aged 12 and older. Percent calculations include a relatively small number of victims whose gender was coded as unknown.
16. Data not shown. An urban area is defined as a census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA). A CMA consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. Rural areas are all areas outside of CMAs and CAs.
17. Rural North includes all rural police services in the territories or in the provincial North. Provincial North encompasses the northern regions of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Rural South refers to rural police services in the southern regions of these provinces as well as Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.
18. A census metropolitan area (CMA) of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data.
19. Sexual offences include sexual assault (level 1, 2 and 3) as well as: sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, bestiality (commit, compel or incite), voyeurism, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, making sexually explicit material available to a child, parent or guardian procuring sexual activity, householder permitting sexual activity, luring a child by means of a computer, agreement or arrangement (sexual offences against a child), corrupting the morals of a child, anal intercourse and other sexual violations.
20. The remaining 16% of sexual offences committed against teen victims aged 15 to 17 were for voyeurism (5%), luring a child via a computer (5%), sexual exploitation (3%), invitation to sexual touching (1%), making sexually explicit material available to children (1%) and a historical sexual offence (<1%).
21. A “digital divide” exists affecting Canadians living in rural and Northern areas. For example, in 2017, only 63% of Northern residents had access to long term evolution (LTE) networks which could result in an underrepresentation of Indigenous teens in technology-facilitated violence (Hango, 2023).

22. Other types of online sexual violations include sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual exploitation, making sexually explicit material available to children, luring a child via computer and voyeurism.

23. Like patterns noted for all incidents of police-reported teen dating violence involving a single victim and single accused, when the offence occurred online, most accused persons were men or boys (84%) and were also teens themselves (i.e., between the ages of 12 and 17) (56%).

24. Private property locations include houses, dwelling units and private property structures.

25. Includes violence committed during and outside of regularly scheduled school hours.

26. Outdoor locations include transit buses, bus shelters, subways, subway stations, other forms of public transportation and connected facilities. Also includes parking lots, streets, roads, highways and other open areas (e.g., playgrounds, parks, fields).

27. An analysis of the characteristics of accused persons is limited to incidents involving a single victim and single accused to ensure that each victim file is linked with the correct accused file and that each accused is counted only once. Accused persons include those aged 12 and older. This process resulted in the exclusion of 49% of victims of police-reported teen dating violence.

28. In comparison, 92% of incidents of dating violence involving a victim aged 18 to 24 were cleared by the laying or recommendation of a charge. Likewise, 91% of incidents of dating violence among those aged 25 and older were cleared by charge.

29. The remaining 7% of persons accused of teen dating violence who were cleared otherwise was due to another reason not listed above (5%), or reasons beyond the control of the department (2%).

Detailed Data Tables

Table 1
Types of dating violence experienced since age 15 by teens aged 15 to 17, by gender, Canada, 2018

Type of dating violence	Girls aged 15 to 17			Boys aged 15 to 17			Total ¹		
	percent ²	95% confidence interval		percent ²	95% confidence interval		percent ²	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Emotional, financial and psychological abuse									
Jealous, does not want you to talk to other men or women	34	20.9	49.7	38	25.6	52.6	36	27.2	46.7
Harms or threatens to harm pets	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Demands to know where you are or who you are with	23	12.1	39.4	18	9.5	31.2	20	13.0	29.8
Puts you down or calls you names	29	16.0	46.6	F	F	F	17	10.1	27.1
Forces you to give them money or possessions	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Told you that you are crazy, stupid or not good enough ³	29	16.8	45.3	17	9.2	30.4	22	14.5	32.5
Tried to convince your friends or family that you are crazy ³	16	6.5	33.9	F	F	F	10	5.2	19.8
Followed you or hung out outside your home or work ³	8	3.4	17.0	F	F	F	5	2.6	10.2
Kept you from seeing family or friends ³	6	3.0	11.8	7	2.8	16.5	7	3.6	11.9
Harassed you by phone, text, email or social media ³	16	6.6	33.8	6	2.2	14.9	10	5.3	19.1
Restricted access to a job, money or finances ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Confined you or locked you in a room ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Damaged or destroyed possessions or property	F	F	F	F	F	F	3	1.2	5.7
Made negative comments about your sexual past or performance	11	5.7	21.3	F	F	F	9	5.1	13.9
Revealed or threatened to reveal your sexual orientation to someone you don't want to know about it ⁴	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Blamed you for their abusive or violent behaviour ^{3 5}	45	19.4	73.4	F	F	F	36	20.0	56.0
Total	46	30.8	61.4	46	32.6	60.1	45	35.3	55.4
Physical abuse									
Shook, pushed, grabbed or threw you ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	4	1.8	9.3
Hit you with a fist or object, kicked or bit you ³	F	F	F	5	2.0	12.0	4	1.9	8.5
Threatened to harm or kill you or someone close to you ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Choked you ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Used or threatened to use a knife, gun or other weapon to harm you ³	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Threatened to hit you with a fist or a weapon	F	F	F	F	F	F	4	1.8	9.5
Thrown things that could have hurt you	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Slapped you	F	F	F	8	3.7	17.4	6	3.0	11.6
Beat you	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Total	5	2.1	11.1	14	7.0	24.4	10	5.6	16.4

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1
Types of dating violence experienced since age 15 by teens aged 15 to 17, by gender, Canada, 2018

Type of dating violence	Girls aged 15 to 17			Boys aged 15 to 17			Total ¹		
	percent ²	95% confidence interval		percent ²	95% confidence interval		percent ²	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Sexual abuse									
Forced or tried to force you to have sex ³	5	2.3	11.2	F	F	F	3	1.5	6.0
Made you perform sex acts that you did not want to perform ³	7	3.3	14.5	F	F	F	3	1.7	6.3
Total	7	3.6	14.7	F	F	F	4	2.1	7.2
Total intimate partner violence	46	30.8	61.4	46	32.6	60.1	45	35.3	55.4

F too unreliable to be published

1. Includes trans and cisgender persons, as well as those identifying with no gender or with multiple genders.
2. Percent calculation excludes respondents who reported that they have never been in an intimate partner relationship.
3. This is an item taken from the Composite Abuse Scale - revised short form (CASr-SF).
4. This item was only asked of respondents who did not identify as heterosexual.
5. This item was only asked of respondents who indicated yes to at least one item from the CASr-SF. The percent calculation therefore does not include all respondents.

Note: Differences were not found to be statistically significant. While data include violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law partner, dating partner, or someone with whom the victim was in another type of intimate relationship, the majority (99%) of teens aged 15 to 17 had never been in a marriage or common-law relationship. The terms "girls" and "boys" include trans and cisgender persons. Percent calculations are based on unrounded estimates and include missing responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces.

Table 2
Experiences of violence in an intimate relationship in the past 12 months, by age group, type of violence and gender, Canada, 2018

Gender and type of violence	Teens aged 15 to 17 [†]			Young adults aged 18 to 24			Adults aged 25 and older		
	percent ¹	95% confidence interval		percent ¹	95% confidence interval		percent ¹	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Girls and women									
Sexual abuse	F	F	F	5	2.9	8.4	1	0.6	1.0
Physical abuse	F	F	F	7	4.2	10.1	2	1.7	2.4
Emotional abuse	32	19.2	48.6	27	22.0	33.1	10*	9.6	11.0
Total	32	19.2	48.6	29	23.4	34.8	10*	9.6	11.1
Boys and men									
Sexual abuse	F	F	F	3	1.1	6.3	0 ^{s**}	0.1	0.4
Physical abuse	F	F	F	9	5.5	12.8	2	1.9	2.7
Emotional abuse	27	15.3	42.0	26	20.5	31.3	10	9.1	10.5
Total	27	15.3	42.0	26	21.0	31.8	10*	9.3	10.7
Total²									
Sexual abuse	2.9	1.3	6.2	4	2.5	6.1	1*	0.4	0.7
Physical abuse	3.1	1.5	6.4	8*	5.6	10.2	2	1.9	2.5
Emotional abuse	29	19.8	39.1	26	22.5	30.2	10*	9.5	10.5
Total	29	19.8	39.1	27	23.5	31.4	10*	9.7	10.7

0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category only

** significantly different from estimates for girls or women only

† reference category

1. Excludes respondents who reported that they have never been in an intimate partner relationship and those who stated that they had not had contact with any current or former intimate partner in the past 12 months.

2. Includes trans and cisgender persons, as well as those identifying with no gender or with multiple genders.

Note: Includes violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law partner, dating partner, or someone with whom the victim was in another type of intimate relationship. The terms "girls", "boys", "women" and "men" include trans and cisgender persons. Percent calculations are based on unrounded estimates and include missing responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces.

Table 3
Attitudes towards violence and control in intimate relationships, by age group and gender, Canada, 2018

Attitudes and age group	Girls and women			Boys and men			Total ¹		
	percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Age 15 to 17[†]									
Violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control									
Agree or strongly agree	7	3.9	12.5	12	7.2	18.4	9	6.4	13.6
Disagree or strongly disagree	89	82.7	92.9	79**	72.1	85.0	83	79.0	87.2
It is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair									
Agree or strongly agree	17	11.8	23.7	26**	19.8	33.4	22	17.4	26.5
Disagree or strongly disagree	67	59.5	73.9	53**	45.7	60.6	60	54.4	64.6
People have the right to check who their partner has been calling or texting at all times									
Agree or strongly agree	22	16.1	29.0	21	15.7	28.5	22	17.3	26.5
Disagree or strongly disagree	47	39.2	55.3	46	38.4	53.5	46	40.7	52.0
Age 18 to 24									
Violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control									
Agree or strongly agree	7	4.0	10.7	6*	4.0	8.0	6	4.4	8.2
Disagree or strongly disagree	89	84.8	92.4	84	80.2	87.9	87	84.0	89.3
It is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair									
Agree or strongly agree	15	11.6	19.4	21**	17.1	24.6	18	15.4	20.7
Disagree or strongly disagree	67	62.0	72.0	56**	51.8	61.0	62	58.1	65.0
People have the right to check who their partner has been calling or texting at all times									
Agree or strongly agree	15	11.5	18.4	14*	10.6	17.1	14*	11.8	16.5
Disagree or strongly disagree	60*	54.9	64.9	61*	55.9	65.7	61*	57.1	64.2

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 3
Attitudes towards violence and control in intimate relationships, by age group and gender, Canada, 2018

Attitudes and age group	Girls and women			Boys and men			Total ¹		
	percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval		percent	95% confidence interval	
		from	to		from	to		from	to
Age 25 and older									
Violence between partners can be excused if people get so angry they lose control									
Agree or strongly agree	6	5.9	6.9	9**	8.7	9.9	8	7.5	8.2
Disagree or strongly disagree	88	87.4	88.7	83**	82.0	83.8	86	85.0	86.1
It is understandable that someone would react violently if they suspect their partner of having an affair									
Agree or strongly agree	16	15.6	17.1	20**	19.4	21.1	18	17.7	18.8
Disagree or strongly disagree	71	69.9	71.9	63***	61.9	64.0	67*	66.3	67.7
People have the right to check who their partner has been calling or texting at all times									
Agree or strongly agree	19	17.8	19.4	18	16.7	18.4	18	17.5	18.6
Disagree or strongly disagree	58*	57.4	59.5	61***	59.8	61.9	60*	58.9	60.4

* significantly different from reference category only

** significantly different from estimates for girls or women only

*** significantly different from reference category and from estimates for girls or women

† reference category

1. Includes trans and cisgender persons, as well as those identifying with no gender or with multiple genders.

Note: Responses of "neither agree nor disagree" are included in the calculations but not shown. Therefore, percentages will not add to 100%. The terms "girls", "boys", "women" and "men" include trans and cisgender persons. Percent calculations are based on unrounded estimates and include missing responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces.

Table 4
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and province or territory by urban or rural location, Canada, 2022

Province or territory and urban or rural area ²	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
					rate				
Newfoundland and Labrador	694	110	401	1,003	201	583	331	101	220
Urban area	659	63	365	583	168	367	243	86	168
Rural South	331	206	266	696	162	421	287	75	184
Rural North	2,970	0	1,466	6,683	721	3,520	1,782	491	1,132
Prince Edward Island	397	70	231	406	104	249	186	55	123
Urban area	455	0	222	512	121	306	174	66	123
Rural South	296	198	247	188	68	124	211	37	125
Nova Scotia	482	106	292	749	109	414	229	70	153
Urban area	393	91	243	687	93	376	206	65	139
Rural South	654	135	386	899	149	507	276	80	181
New Brunswick	757	95	424	887	178	518	304	104	206
Urban area	684	84	381	761	163	450	261	89	177
Rural South	905	118	510	1,153	211	663	385	130	258
Quebec	436	54	242	306	54	176	82	32	58
Urban area	417	52	231	321	54	184	87	34	61
Rural South	533	57	289	200	51	121	54	24	39
Rural North	731	181	454	251	117	182	143	40	90
Ontario	404	40	220	497	66	273	155	48	103
Urban area	365	37	199	472	62	259	147	44	97
Rural South	514	34	276	429	63	241	147	53	101
Rural North	1,782	181	960	2,174	271	1,182	568	223	396
Manitoba	1,070	79	574	1,612	203	874	527	139	337
Urban area	946	73	505	1,119	115	590	367	85	230
Rural South	502	75	290	1,195	153	654	406	121	263
Rural North	3,828	143	2,017	8,196	1,340	4,657	3,510	994	2,249
Saskatchewan	1,119	137	627	1,800	264	1,001	489	136	314
Urban area	866	104	480	1,147	162	634	285	79	184
Rural South	658	122	403	1,779	300	1,007	510	154	331
Rural North	7,281	616	3,870	11,723	1,593	6,515	5,455	1,307	3,363
Alberta	478	52	264	688	107	391	262	83	174
Urban area	415	50	232	547	82	310	205	64	136
Rural South	539	79	303	1,048	188	614	419	125	271
Rural North	1,105	35	568	1,977	289	1,095	897	306	600
British Columbia	476	68	271	465	78	267	166	53	111
Urban area	457	69	262	441	74	253	159	48	105
Rural South	564	66	317	588	94	331	156	70	112
Rural North	890	47	459	1,319	191	720	531	174	346

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 4
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and province or territory by urban or rural location, Canada, 2022

Province or territory and urban or rural area ²	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
					rate				
Yukon	801	0	385	2,834	407	1,571	1,073	362	718
Urban area	774	0	369	2,069	343	1,174	1,019	285	653
Rural North	935	0	463	7,234	758	3,808	1,341	708	1,026
Northwest Territories	3,171	114	1,646	7,861	1,066	4,523	3,285	867	2,035
Urban area	2,113	247	1,203	3,372	294	1,846	2,334	615	1,457
Rural North	4,158	0	2,041	12,102	1,822	7,096	4,226	1,105	2,594
Nunavut	4,103	273	2,142	8,067	930	4,466	3,618	947	2,240
Canada	505	57	279	605	90	339	189	60	126
Urban areas ³	436	51	241	498	73	278	158	49	105
Rural South ⁴	558	78	317	721	123	411	216	71	144
Rural North	2,196	140	1,154	3,881	535	2,139	1,228	374	796

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Includes a relatively small number of victims whose gender was coded as unknown.

2. An urban area is defined as a census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA). A CMA consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. Rural areas are all areas outside of CMAs and CAs.

3. Nunavut is excluded from the national total of urban areas due to its entire population residing in the rural North.

4. All territories are excluded from the rural South total.

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Excludes victim data reported by the Canadian Forces Military Police. Rural police services are those that serve areas where the majority of the population lives outside of a CMA or CA. Urban police services are those where the majority of the population lives within a CMA or CA. Rural North includes all rural police services in the Territories or in the Provincial North. Provincial North encompasses the northern regions of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Rural South refers to rural police services in the southern regions of these provinces as well as Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 5
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and census metropolitan area, Canada, 2022

	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
Census metropolitan area (CMA)²	rate								
St. John's	489	58	284	544	127	327	227	83	158
Halifax	347	30	191	636	72	340	168	46	109
Moncton	821	36	422	875	197	511	323	108	218
Saint John	401	43	219	446	120	277	172	61	119
Saguenay	301	122	209	98	0	46	36	14	25
Québec	428	85	255	357	101	227	88	34	61
Sherbrooke	759	61	403	322	21	167	84	34	60
Trois-Rivières	425	87	248	221	0	105	39	11	26
Montréal	346	41	191	328	50	185	94	37	66
Gatineau ³	433	17	220	480	59	265	121	44	84
Ottawa ⁴	314	26	169	345	45	192	126	27	78
Kingston	869	155	509	657	69	354	139	41	92
Belleville ⁵	617	0	299	971	60	508	239	69	156
Peterborough	839	102	465	752	17	382	163	31	102
Toronto ⁶	264	28	144	390	49	213	123	41	83
Hamilton ⁷	542	10	270	855	82	453	243	66	156
St. Catharines–Niagara	330	51	188	420	41	221	137	33	87
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	490	56	272	701	103	378	218	67	143
Brantford	550	0	266	781	115	431	221	72	149
Guelph	788	122	442	652	84	366	148	62	106
London	572	74	321	495	59	269	186	46	118
Windsor	306	17	159	640	88	333	213	65	141
Barrie	249	64	158	528	38	273	159	41	101
Greater Sudbury	815	149	474	671	36	334	177	56	118
Thunder Bay	721	0	356	1,071	408	721	354	137	248
Winnipeg	813	58	431	951	74	485	315	60	190
Regina	668	88	375	981	162	545	208	60	135
Saskatoon	570	51	308	808	107	445	192	53	123
Lethbridge ⁵	933	167	537	1,309	248	768	414	102	260
Calgary	253	18	137	424	70	245	141	49	96
Edmonton	402	47	222	465	59	255	186	53	120

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 5
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and census metropolitan area, Canada, 2022

	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
Census metropolitan area (CMA)²	rate								
Kelowna	505	62	289	497	77	279	204	59	133
Abbotsford–Mission	352	27	188	373	52	205	153	44	98
Vancouver	325	62	192	309	55	179	117	33	77
Victoria	489	18	259	510	38	272	150	53	104
CMA total⁸	374	42	206	446	62	247	137	42	91
Non-CMA total	837	96	463	1,100	176	623	334	107	222
Canada	505	57	279	605	90	339	189	60	126

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Includes a relatively small number of victims whose gender was coded as unknown.

2. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries. The Oshawa CMA is excluded from this table due to the incongruity between the police service jurisdictional boundaries and the CMA boundaries.

3. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa–Gatineau census metropolitan area.

4. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau census metropolitan area.

5. Following the 2016 Census of Population, Belleville and Lethbridge were reclassified as census metropolitan areas.

6. Excludes the portions of the Halton Regional Police Service and the Durham Regional Police Service that police the census metropolitan area of Toronto.

7. Excludes the portion of the Halton Regional Police Service that polices the census metropolitan area of Hamilton.

8. Includes Halton Regional Police Service and Durham Regional Police Service, which are responsible for policing more than one census metropolitan area (CMA). This total also includes the portion of the Durham Regional Police Service that polices the Oshawa CMA. This also includes the CMA of Saint John, excluding the Saint John Police Service due to data quality concerns. Because of these inclusions, the CMA total will not equal the total of the individual CMAs.

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category.

Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Excludes victim data reported by the Canadian Forces Military Police.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 6
Police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and type of violation, Canada, 2022

Type of violation	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
Homicide, other violations causing death and attempted murder ²	0 ^s	0 ^s	0 ^s	1	0 ^s	0 ^s	0 ^s	0 ^s	0 ^s
Sexual offences	116	5	60	85	4	43	16	1	9
Sexual assault ³	90	3	46	69	2	34	13	1	7
Other ⁴	26	2	14	16	2	9	3	1	2
Physical assault offences	93	15	54	387	70	224	127	47	88
Level 1 (common assault)	65	11	38	276	52	160	93	33	64
Level 2 (with a weapon or causing bodily harm)	26	3	14	105	17	59	32	13	23
Level 3 (aggravated assault)	1	0 ^s	1	4	2	3	2	1	1
Other assaults ⁵	1	0 ^s	0 ^s	3	0 ^s	2	1	0 ^s	0 ^s
Other offences involving violence or the threat of violence	40	8	24	132	15	71	46	11	29
Robbery ⁶	1	0 ^s	1	4	0 ^s	2	1	0 ^s	1
Extortion	2	1	2	5	2	3	1	0 ^s	1
Criminal harassment	10	2	6	37	4	20	16	3	10
Indecent or harassing communications	5	1	3	17	4	10	7	2	5
Uttering threats	14	3	9	41	5	22	15	4	10
Other ⁷	7	0 ^s	4	28	1	14	5	0 ^s	3
Total	249	28	137	605	90	339	189	60	126

0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

1. Includes a relatively small number of victims whose gender was coded as unknown.

2. Includes first degree murder, second degree murder, manslaughter, infanticide, criminal negligence causing death, other related violations causing death and attempted murder.

3. Includes sexual assault level 1, sexual assault level 2 (with a weapon or causing bodily harm) and sexual assault level 3 (aggravated sexual assault).

4. Includes sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, bestiality (commit, compel or incite), voyeurism, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, making sexually explicit material available to a child, parent or guardian procuring sexual activity, householder permitting sexual activity, luring a child by means of a computer, agreement or arrangement (sexual offences against a child). Also includes corrupting the morals of a child, anal intercourse and other sexual violations.

5. Includes unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharging a firearm with intent, using a firearm or imitation firearm in the commission of an offence, pointing a firearm, assault against a peace-public officer, assault against a peace-public officer with a weapon or causing bodily harm, aggravated assault against a peace-public officer, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, trap likely to or causing bodily harm and other assaults.

6. Includes robbery and robbery to steal a firearm.

7. Includes all other violent violations not otherwise listed.

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based on July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Centre for Demography. Excludes victims where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category.

Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Excludes victim data reported by the Canadian Forces Military Police.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 7
Victims of police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and incident characteristic, Canada, 2022

Incident characteristic	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
	percentage								
Incident location									
Private property ²	70	58	69	76	72	75	78	75	77
Outdoor location ³	14	18	14	14	16	15	13	15	13
Commercial location ⁴	4	5	4	7	8	7	7	8	7
School ⁵	9	14	9	1	1	1	0 ^s	0 ^s	0 ^s
Other ⁶	3	5	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
Unknown location	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Incident time									
Night ⁷	17	11	16	24	28	25	21	22	21
Morning ⁸	18	20	18	18	16	18	20	19	19
Afternoon ⁹	33	37	33	27	25	27	27	27	27
Evening ¹⁰	32	32	32	31	31	31	32	33	33
Unknown	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Weapon present									
No weapon ¹¹	19	27	19	12	12	12	14	11	13
Threats ¹²	6	8	7	7	5	7	8	7	8
Physical force	64	50	63	68	63	67	65	58	63
Weapon present	11	15	11	13	21	14	13	25	16
Firearm	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Knife or other piercing instrument ¹³	3	6	3	4	8	4	3	8	4
Club or other blunt instrument	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	4	2
Other weapon ¹⁴	6	8	6	7	9	7	7	12	8
Unknown	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 7
Victims of police-reported violent crime among dating partners by age group, gender and incident characteristic, Canada, 2022

Incident characteristic	15 to 17			18 to 24			25 and older		
	Girls	Boys	Total ¹	Young women	Young men	Total ¹	Women	Men	Total ¹
	percentage								
Level of injury									
No physical injury ¹⁵	65	71	66	52	49	51	53	50	52
Physical injury	35	29	34	48	51	49	47	50	48
Minor physical injury ¹⁶	34	27	33	46	48	47	45	48	46
Major physical injury ¹⁷	1	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	2
Unknown	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

... not applicable

0= value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

1. Includes a relatively small number of victims whose gender was coded as unknown.

2. Includes houses, dwelling units and private property structures.

3. Includes transit buses, bus shelters, subways, subway stations, other forms of public transportation and connected facilities. Also includes parking lots, streets, roads, highways and other open areas (e.g., playgrounds, parks, fields).

4. Includes commercial residences (e.g., hotel rooms, short-term rentals) and other corporate locations where the principal purpose is to conduct legitimate business for profit.

5. Includes schools—junior kindergarten through grade 13 or CÉGEP—and universities and colleges during supervised and unsupervised activities.

6. Includes religious institutions, hospitals, group housing (e.g., homeless shelters, nursing homes, retirement homes, halfway houses) and other non-commercial locations (e.g., government buildings, community centres).

7. Includes 12:00 AM to 5:59 AM.

8. Includes 6:00 AM to 11:59 AM.

9. Includes 12:00 PM to 5:59 PM.

10. Includes 6:00 PM to 11:59 PM.

11. Includes no threat, physical force or weapon.

12. Includes threats that are construed to imply that death or injury is possible.

13. Includes other piercing or cutting instruments, such as hatchets, razor blades and arrows.

14. Includes other types of weapons such as explosives, rope, fire, motor vehicles, poison and weapons not otherwise classified.

15. Includes incidents that did not involve the use of a weapon or physical force as well as those in which a weapon or physical force was used but no visible physical injury was noted by police.

16. Refers to injuries that required no professional medical treatment or only some first aid (e.g., bandage, ice).

17. Refers to injuries that required professional medical attention at the scene or transportation to a medical facility, or injuries that resulted in death.

Note: Excludes victims where age was coded as unknown and those where age was greater than 110 are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but was miscoded as 0. Excludes victim data reported by the Canadian Forces Military Police. For incident location, time, presence of weapon and injury sustained, percent calculations exclude unknown values.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.