

DIGITAL DATING ABUSE*

Digital abuse is real abuse!

Digital abuse is a growing form of teen dating violence. It's as serious as face-to-face abusive behavior. On the website thatsnotcool.com the authors say:

"Your mobile, IM, and online accounts are all a part of you. If someone you're dating is controlling, disrespecting or pressuring in those spaces, that's not cool!"

Forms of digital dating abuse include:

- Writing something online that isn't true
- Spreading false rumors
- Sharing information that a person didn't want shared
- Threatening physical harm
- Spying
- Pressuring someone to send naked photos
- Posting embarrassing photos or video
- Encouraging people to hurt themselves
- Writing something mean or to tease
- Impersonation

WARNING SIGNS

Constant Messaging Your boyfriend or girlfriend is messaging you so frequently that you feel buried; you keep getting messages after you've asked him or her to stop (*for example, after you've gone to bed for the night*).

Spying Your boyfriend or girlfriend sneaks peeks at your private text messages or call history; breaks into your inbox; or stalks you on Facebook.

Digital Disrespect Your boyfriend or girlfriend spreads negative or embarrassing rumors (*true, untrue or unknown*) about you directly or behind your back.

Violation of Trust Your boyfriend or girlfriend forwards private texts, emails or instant messages to someone else without your permission.

Cruel Expectations Your boyfriend or girlfriend makes unfair demands or pressures you to 1) give up your digital password, 2) shut down your profile, or 3) unfriend your 'ex' or others when you don't choose to.

DIGITAL DATING ABUSE* *Continued*

Cyber Harassment Your boyfriend or girlfriend uses technology to harass you and make your life miserable. *Examples: blackmail, hate-mongering (spreading racist or other prejudiced comments or making direct threats).*

Not sure if a situation is abusive or not? Ask yourself if your boyfriend or girlfriend:

- Is jealous or possessive
- Puts you down or criticizes you
- Threatens or scares you
- Controls where you go, what you wear, or what you do
- Hits, slaps, pushes or kicks you
- Tries to stop you from seeing or talking to friends and family
- Pressures you to do things you don't want to do
- Tries to force you to have sex

If you or someone you know is being abused, seek help. Talk to a friend, relative, teacher, counselor or health practitioner. Contact the National Dating Abuse Helpline at www.loveisrespect.org or (866) 331-9474, (866) 331-8453 TTY.

* Adapted from a handout developed by Annie Lisowski, Buffalo County 4-H Youth Development Educator, July 2010. buffalo.uwex.edu/files/2011/03/Digital-Abuse-quiz.pdf