

# Violence

continued from page 1

13) say they know the warning signs of a bad/hurtful relationship.

### Who Is At risk?

Both boys and girls can become victims, although the kinds of abuse they experience differs. Girls are more likely to threaten self-harm, pinch, kick or scratch while boys are more likely to be seriously injure their partners. Victims can belong to all races, income levels, religions and social classes.

What does make a difference are the kinds of supports available when it comes to leaving an abusive relationship.

“What matters is: Do girls have the resources to get out of a relationship?” Timmins says. “Poverty plays into that and so does drug and alcohol abuse. Family makes a difference. Do they have a mom or dad there to notice? Is there violence in the family that normalizes what’s going on? That’s not going to impact whether they get into a situation. But it will influence the resources they have.”

Both boys and girls can become victims, although the kinds of abuse they experience differs

“So if they don’t have black eyes or bruises they question their own feelings of lack of safety.”

But if you don’t feel safe, then you

- Extreme jealousy
- Dislike of family and friends
- Constant texting
- Wants your attention all the time
- Puts you down, humiliates or degrades you

Timmins said the most important warning signs are your own feelings about the relationship. Helathy love does not involve fear, pain and emotional turmoil.

“Young people often have a stereotype of what intimate partner violence looks like,” Timmins said.

should pay attention to that feeling, she said.

“Trust yourself. You have a right to be treated with respect. And you have a right to leave a relationship.”

### What’s Sex Got To Do With It?

Three quarters of teens report beginning girlfriend/boyfriend relationships before the age of 14, according to a 2008 study by the nonprofit Love is Respect. The risk of these relationships becoming abusive is greater for teens who become sexually involved. The Love is Respect study found that 69 percent of those teens who had sex by age 14, said they have gone through one or more types of abuse in a relationship.

It’s important to note that only 11 percent of girls and 14 percent of boys have had sex by age 15, according to research from The Guttmacher Institute. But by age 19, 70 percent of teens have had sexual relationships, and the average age of first sexual experience is 17. One in five high school girls say a partner abused them physically, emotionally or sexually.

Parents often do not know what’s happening in their teens’ relationships. Only 33 percent of teen victims say they told anyone about it.

### Make the Abuse Stop, But How?

Teens who feel they are in a relationship spiraling out of control should pay attention to their feelings.

For victims the priority is to tell someone and get help.

“You need to know that it’s not your fault

### How Can Teens Recognize an Abusive Relationship?

Domestic violence experts stress that abuse tends to follow a pattern, where one partner is trying to control the other. And the abuse tends to get worse over time. Any kind of slapping, hitting or physical violence clearly is abuse. So is any kind of forced sex. But physical abuse may not emerge until later in the relationship. Emotional abuse may be more difficult to recognize. It can range from telling you nobody else will love you, saying that you’re ugly all the way through threatening suicide if you leave the relationship.

“Abusers can be very charming and they don’t always leads with violence,” Timmins said. “So there can be a lot of romancing in the early stages.

“The common thing we see is an attempt to isolate the victim,” Timmins said. “Isolation and especially social isolation is very common in youth violence. The perpetrator tries to get in between their partner and their family and friends.”

Timmins said perpetrators often manipulate their partners in subtle ways.

### Warning signs may include:

Wanting to know where you are all the time.

# City Mourns



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Members of Yashawnee Vaughn’s family answered questions from reporters at City Hall on Wednesday morning.

Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman lead a moment of silence in the honor of 14-year-old Yashawnee Vaughn that morning during the City Council meeting. Police suspect she was killed on March 19. A search for her body has so far come up empty-handed.

He said the city had lost a “sweet, effervescent, lovely, outgoing, young woman ... who loved studying technology.”

This is the sixth time that Portland has lowered the flags in honor of a young person who has been lost at the hands of another person.

and that you don’t deserve to be hurt,” Timmins says.

“So find a way to tell someone what’s going on: a parent or if you can’t tell a parent then find a safe adult. I would recommend a school counselor, a clergy person or a teacher. Tell them and if that person doesn’t help find another safe person who will.”

Abusers too can seek help to change their behaviors, Timmins said.

“There is a lot of room for growth and change for young people. Batterers intervention programs are available. Healthy relationship education classes can really help young men who simply don’t have the tools and knowledge about healthy relationships.

### Friends and Safe Adults Can Help

Adults can help by believing the victims and helping them find resources. Safety is crucial because the most dangerous time for victims is when they are leaving the relationship.

“Stick with them and let them know you don’t have all the answers but you will help

them get to the right people,” says Timmins.

Teens can raise their concerns with their friends. “Tell them you’re concerned for them and this is why,” Timmins said. “Say you’ve learned something about domestic violence and you seen these red flags. If the survivor says no, leave the door open. You don’t have to talk someone out of their feelings or blame them.”

Teens feel like they are snitching when they go to an adult, but it’s very important to do that because domestic violence escalates. “If it’s not dealt with it can become very dangerous,” Timmins says. “It does happen – women die.”

### Find Help Here

Gateway Center for Domestic Violence  
503-988-6400

Bradley Angle 503-281-2442

VOA Home Free 503-771-5503

Or visit Multnomah County’s Resource Page

<http://web.multco.us/dv/resources-victims>

# Health

continued from page 1

is that “Even in a system with all the quality improvement strengths of the VA, important gaps remain,” he says. The reasons are unknown, he says, and more research is needed to understand the drivers of these differences in clinical outcomes.

Trivedi and his colleagues also examined whether racial disparities in care were driven primarily by a concentration of black enrollees in lower performing VA facilities or differential quality for white and black veterans receiving care in the same VA facility. With the exception of mammography screening, performance rates improved for white and black veterans on each quality indicator for processes and

outcomes of care, most particularly for eye exams for diabetes.

Although the VA is a universal health system that has spent a decade working on quality improvement, Trivedi says the study has broad implications. The findings underscore the urgency of “focused efforts” to improve intermediate clinical outcomes among black Americans in both the VA and other health care settings. “We not only have to measure whether

someone got a test but also whether anything happened as a result of that test,” he says. “In other words, whether the test showed that treatment was indicated; whether the treatment was received; and whether the treatment translated into improvements in measurements like blood pressure or cholesterol control.”

The study’s coauthors were Regina Grebla of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Steven Wright of the VA’s Office of

## Big differences persist between African American and White veterans in areas like blood pressure and cholesterol control, for unknown reasons

Quality and Performance, and Donna Washington of the Greater Los Angeles VA Medical Center and UCLA.

The findings come at the heels of a growing number of studies, most recently from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)’s 2010 National Healthcare Quality Report and National Healthcare Disparity Report. The AHRQ and other studies show that racial and ethnic disparities continue at persistently high levels.

Quality improvements in the VA health care system narrowed racial gaps in care, but not in outcomes