

## IS IT LOVE?

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Television, movies and songs frequently portray love as a perfect fairytale. Unfortunately, reality is not always so rosy. For many college students, their first adult relationship is also their first exposure to violence, control and stalking. Statistics show that nearly one third of all college students will experience dating violence. This may include hitting, kicking, throwing things, biting, hair-pulling and sexual assault. Psychological and emotional abuse and stalking are even more common problems, and just as harmful. If you are a victim or know someone in an abusive relationship, help is always available.

### WHO CAN YOU TALK TO?

**VMI POLICE DEPARTMENT** MAY BE CONTACTED, EVEN IF THE ASSAULT DID NOT OCCUR ON VMI PROPERTY. DETECTIVE HUNT IS SPECIALLY TRAINED IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND CAN RESPOND ANY TIME, TO TAKE A REPORT, ANSWER QUESTIONS OR SERVE AS A LIAISON TO OTHER AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. VMI POLICE CAN BE REACHED AT 540-463-9177 OR BY CALLING 911.

**PROJECT HORIZON** IS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE CENTER WITH ADVOCATES AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY. THEIR HOTLINE IS 540-463-2594.

**CADET COUNSELING** MAY BE CONTACTED IN PERSON OR AT 540-464- 7667.

**ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** MAY BE REACHED BY CALLING 540-463-7328.

**LEXINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT** MAY BE REACHED BY CALLING 540-462-3705.

Virginia Military Institute  
Police Department

# DATING VIOLENCE

IF IT  
HAPPENS TO  
YOU...





## WHAT YOU MAY BE THINKING...

### **UNHEALTHY OR ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS**

ANY PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, EVEN  
SLAPPING PUSHING, PINCHING, OR  
FORCEFUL GRABBING

EXTREME JEALOUSY

VERBAL ABUSE, SUCH AS INSULTS,  
THREATS OR NAME-CALLING



SEXUAL COERCION OR FORCE, OR  
REFUSAL TO USE BIRTH CONTROL

ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL OR LIMIT FRIENDSHIPS  
WITH OTHERS

SPYING OR STALKING BEHAVIORS

CONSTANT CALLING OR TEXTING

ATTEMPTS TO LIMIT HOBBIES OR  
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### **YOUR OPTIONS**

SEEK ADVICE OR ACCESS TO RESOURCES FROM  
CADET COUNSELING, PROJECT  
HORIZON OR VMI POLICE.

FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE VMI TITLE IX  
COORDINATOR.

FILE A POLICE REPORT.

SEEK A PROTECTIVE ORDER.

FILE CRIMINAL CHARGES.

*(S)he only does those things because (s)he  
loves me so much.*

Love is never about power, control, pain or humiliation. If someone truly loves you, they want you to be happy. If someone does things to harm you, physically or emotionally, they do not love you.

*(S)he needs me. If I end the  
relationship, (s)he will harm him or  
herself.*

Threats of self harm are often a means for abusers to essentially hold their partner hostage in an unhealthy relationship. If you have legitimate fears that your partner may harm themselves, notify an authority figure immediately. They need professional counseling that you are not qualified to provide to them.

*(S)he is a wonderful most of the time.*

*(S)he only gets like that when...*

When she is drinking. When he is stressed. The circumstances may vary, but this is an excuse that abused individuals often make for their partners. The truth is that there is no excuse for abusive behavior.

*(S)he is very popular. If I tell anyone  
or end the relationship, I will be disliked.*

This may initially sound like a poor reason to stay in an abusive relationship, but it is a real and valid concern for many victims. It is important to determine who your true friends are and seek support from them, as well as seeking outside resources, such as advocacy or support groups.

*Cadets don't turn in other cadets.*

Corp loyalty is a tenet of VMI life, but can also be a stumbling block to victims of abuse. While the vast majority of cadets are exceptional men and women, there are bound to be occasional exceptions. Cadets who experience abuse from other cadets may be put in a very difficult position. It is important to remember that there are many resources in place to help you.

*I am embarrassed to admit that that this  
happened to me.*

Many victims of abusive relationships feel this way. It is important to remember that you have done nothing wrong. It is your partner who should feel guilty or embarrassed for his or her behavior.

*I'm not sure what is happen-  
ing really counts as abuse.*

If you have to ask that question, it probably does. The media has done a great job in recent years increasing awareness of relationship violence, but a focus on the most extreme cases causes many true victims to feel that

their situation isn't "bad enough" to constitute abuse. If your partner harms you, attempts to control your actions, isolates you from friends, family or activities you enjoy or tries to make you feel bad about yourself, your relationship is unhealthy.

