



# *College Student Perceptions of Dating Relationships*

Old Dominion University  
Department of Counseling and Human Services  
HEART (Help End Abusive Relationships Today) Initiative  
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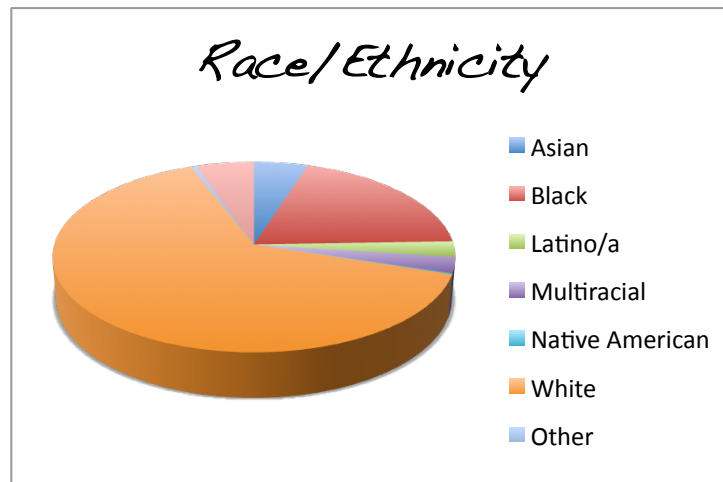
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## Overview

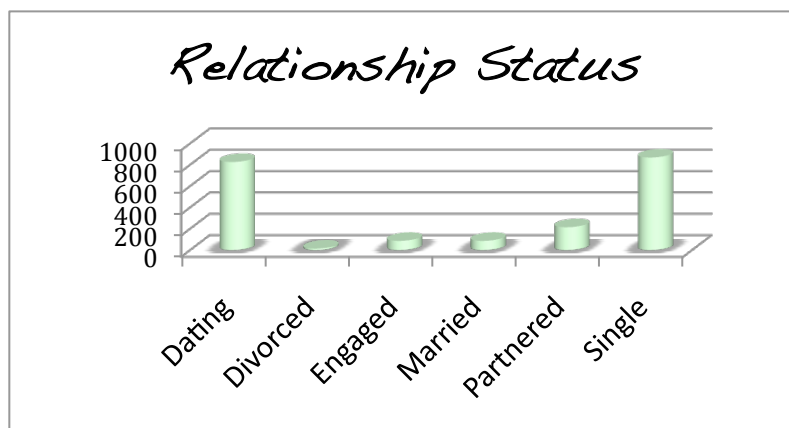
Old Dominion University students reported their perceptions and experience of violence and support within dating relationships. The survey findings are summarized in this report.

## Demographics

A survey on dating relationships was posted on student announcements and 1,070 students participated. Students ranged from 17-31 years in age. The majority (n=741, 69.3%) of students identified as female, with 30.6% male and .1% transgender. Students reported the following racial/ethnic background: 678 White (67.7%); 206 Black/African American (20.3%); 52 Asian American (5.1%); 28 for each Latino/a and multiracial (2.8% each); 2 Native American (2.8%); 5 who categorized themselves as "other" (.5%); and 56 who did not report race/ethnicity.

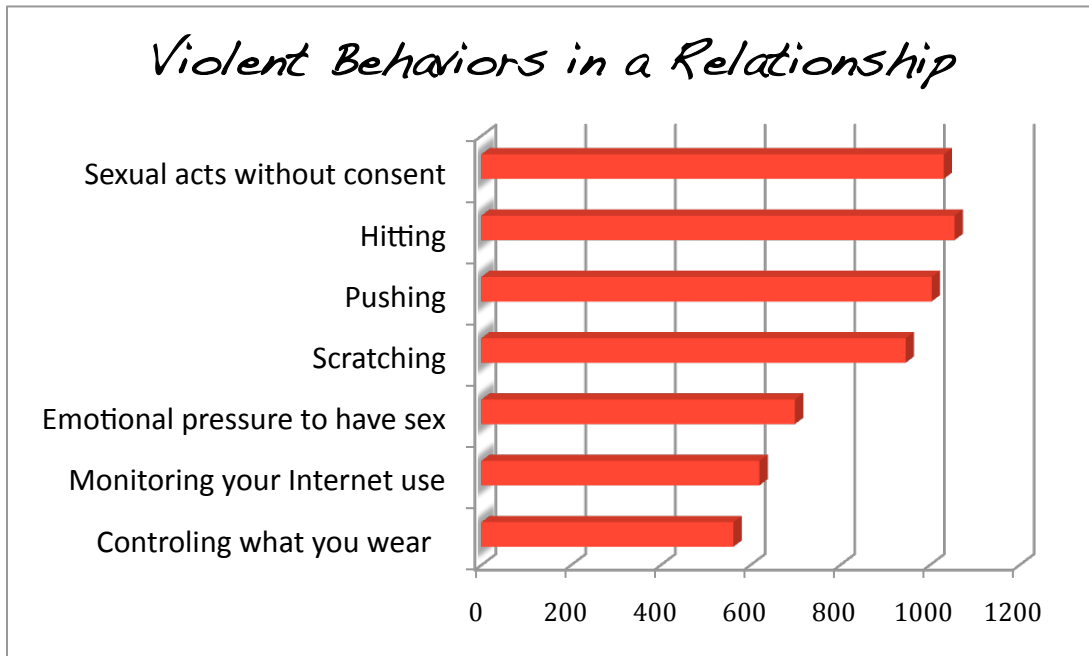


Most students started dating between 13-17 and were currently either single (n=435, 41.3%) or dating (n=414, 39.3%). 108 students reported being partnered (10.3%); 44 students reported being either married or engaged (each 4.2%), and 8 noted they were divorced (.8%).



## Perceptions of Violence

Students were asked to classify certain dating behaviors as either violent or not violent. The majority of students (53%) indicate controlling what you wear and trying to control what you put on the Internet (Facebook, twitter) is violent. 66% of students believe emotional pressure to advance sexually is violent. Over 85% of students believe the following actions are a form of violence: scratching, pushing, hitting, and any sexual activity without consent.



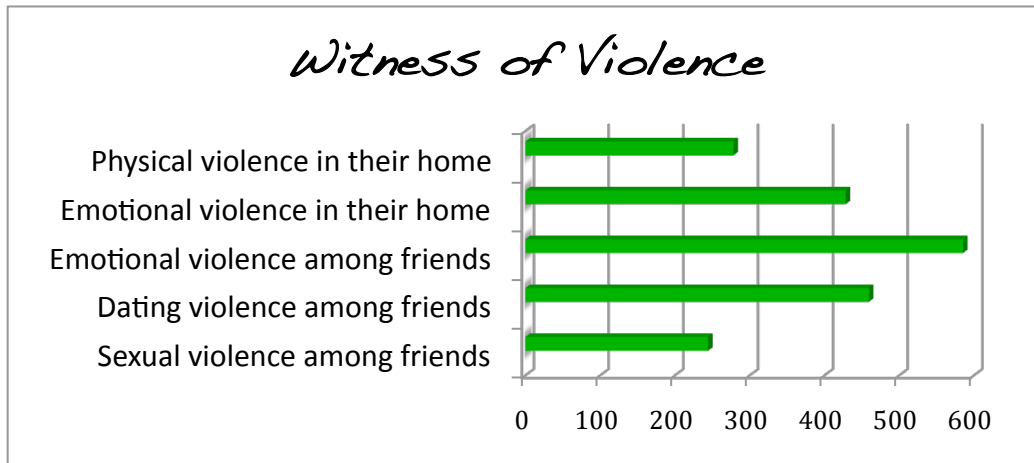
## Experience of Violence

Students reported their experience of violence in dating relationships. Almost a quarter of students (23%) indicate experiencing dating violence in past relationships. Students report a dating partner has tried to control personal web pages (Facebook) or text messages (26%); what they wear (32%); and who they talk to (40%). 145 students (17%) have been touched inappropriately and 195 (24%) have been pressured to have sex. Forty students (5%) have been sexual assaulted by a dating partner.



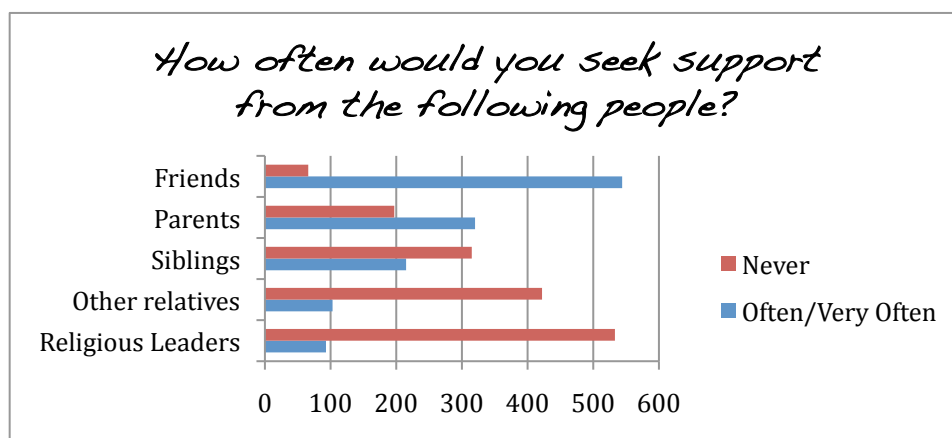
## Witness of Violence

Students indicated if they had experienced or witnessed various forms of violence. Many students experienced emotional (49%) and physical (27%) violence in the home. The majority of students (52%) have experienced their friends being violent toward a dating partner, with 27% reporting witnessing sexual violence among friends. Over 66% of students have witnessed emotional violence among friends and their dating partners.



## Support Systems

Students rated how often they would reach out to various individuals for support if they were in a harmful dating relationship. The majority of students (62%) would seek support from their friends. Many students (37%) would reach out to their parents or siblings (25%). However, several students (18%) said they would never seek support from their parents or siblings (29%). Students also reported reaching out to other relatives (12%) or religious leaders (11%).



## Further Information

For additional information about this report and other HEART initiatives, please contact Danica Hays (dhays@odu.edu) or Becky Michel (rmichel@odu.edu).