

**PRESS RELEASE**



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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Melissa Merz**

**312-814-3118**

**877-844-5461 (TTY)**

**[mmerz@atg.state.il.us](mailto:mmerz@atg.state.il.us)**

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**IN OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE  
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK, MADIGAN RELEASES  
AWARENESS QUIZ**

***MADIGAN URGES TEENS, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS TO  
RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE***

Chicago – To increase public knowledge of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week, running this year from February 6 through 10, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today released a Teen Dating Violence Awareness quiz. Madigan urged teens, parents and educators to take the time to learn how to recognize the signs of dating violence and abuse so they can help prevent it or stop it from escalating.

Madigan said teens should realize that dating violence often involves more than just physical abuse. It can be yelling, threatening, incessant name calling, extreme jealousy, constant telephone calling or paging and even sexual abuse. Almost any tactic used by one person in a relationship to control his or her partner can constitute dating abuse or violence, she said.

“With all of the excitement of high school life, many teens may not recognize common signs of dating abuse or violence their friends may be displaying,” Madigan said. “But it is important to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship and provide help to the victim before the abuse escalates.”

Madigan’s office provides an online Teen Dating Violence Resource Kit with information for victims, friends, parents, educators and young men on how to identify and help a victim of teen dating violence. The kit offers advice for victims of abuse and recommendations for teachers and counselors.

Madigan said domestic violence affects women of all ages and can happen in all kinds of relationships. However, the number of young girls that are either in or know of abusive dating relationships is startling. According to the American Medical Association, one in five young women are physically or sexually abused by a dating partner, and a separate study revealed that roughly one in three young women know someone who was physically abused by the person they were dating.

Adolescent girls who experience dating violence face an increased risk of eating disorders, multiple sexual partners, pregnancy and suicide.

“Educating young people at an early age so they can recognize and avoid certain behaviors can help prevent incidents of abuse,” Madigan said.

Recognizing the signs of abuse is the first step. If a teen answers yes to any or all of the following questions about his or her friend, this may be a sign that the friend is in an abusive relationship:

- Has your friend given up her favorite activities or withdrawn from family and friends?
- Does your friend always worry about making her boyfriend angry and apologize for his behavior?
- Does your friend spend all of her time with her boyfriend or seem afraid to break up with him?
- Does your friend have unexplained injuries?

Madigan offered the following suggestions for teens who believe they may know someone who is a victim of abuse:

- Listen to the victim and believe her.
- Remind the victim that the violence is not her fault.
- Talk openly and without judgment.
- Offer to go with the victim for help.
- Validate the victim’s feelings and strengths.
- Talk with the victim in private, encourage the victim to find help but don’t tell others unless the victim asks you to.
- Gather information, such as the number for a local domestic violence agency or local court options, to help take effective action.

The Office of the Attorney General’s Web site provides the Teen Dating Violence Resource Kit, hotline numbers and local crisis center information at [www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov/communities/youthadvocacy/teendatekit.html](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov/communities/youthadvocacy/teendatekit.html).