What is ATSPA?

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is a non-profit trauma prevention education organization dedicated to reducing the suffering, disability and death caused by trauma throughout the Commonwealth.

The broken red tulip symbolizes the pain, suffering and lifestyle change caused by traumatic injury. It not only symbolizes the person/people directly devastated by trauma, but also their families, friends and others that care about them.

The goal of the ATSPA is to keep that tulip strong, straight and unaffected by trauma.

Quick Facts

94% Females between the ages of 16 to 19 that reported dating violence from their current or former partner.

81% Parents who believe dating violence is not an issue.

70% Females between 20 to 24 who reported dating violence from their current or former partner.

58% Parents that cannot identify all the warning signs of dating violence.

57% College students who say it is difficult to identify dating violence.

50% Youth who attempt suicide after being victims of dating violence or rape.

43% Dating college age women have reported dating violence.

33% Teens that told someone they were being abused.
What is Dating Violence?
It is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse committed by a person against a current or former dating partner.
Abuse includes insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse.

Signs of Dating Violence

Controlling Behavior:
- Pressures for “quick involvement,” which is pushing for an exclusive commitment early in a relationship
- Tries to isolate you from your friends and family
- Attempts to prevent you from doing activities you once enjoyed
- Wants to be with you all the time and is extremely jealous
- Tells you what to wear
- Calls or texts constantly

Verbal/Emotional Abuse:
- Easily insulted
- Criticizes family and friends
- Unpredictable mood swings
- Emotional threats (e.g. “You can’t live without me.”)
- Threats of violence (e.g. “I’ll break your neck.”)

Physical Abuse:
- Shoving, hitting, slapping, etc.
- Cruelty to animals or children
- Take note of past patterns of abuse

Sexual Abuse:
- Pushes the boundaries further than your comfort level
- Unwanted sexual advances

Educate yourself and be aware of the signs of abuse. Seek help immediately if you find yourself in a controlling situation. There is help for you. You deserve love and respect.

Signs of a Dating Violence Victim
- More likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drinking, drugs or sexual activity
- Isolation from family, friends or activities once enjoyed
- Changes in study patterns or in attendance at school
- Visible, physical signs such as bruises or excessive makeup
- Feeling guilty about individual interests and having one’s own friends
- Changing one’s behavior to avoid fighting with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Changes in appetite
- Constantly receiving texts or phone calls

Demi’s Story
Sixteen-year-old Demi Brae Cuccia was your typical teenager. She adored her family and friends, and was a popular cheerleader in her high school. Having never been in a serious relationship before, she was unaware that some of her boyfriend’s behaviors were not healthy. She thought he was just a little too jealous, a little too possessive and a little too controlling. He tried to convince her to quit the cheerleading squad, but this didn’t seem life-threatening.

Prior to her 16th birthday, Demi broke up with her boyfriend, not knowing that this is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship. He began excessively texting her comments including, “Everything is more important than the guy you loved” and “You can’t live without me.” She finally agreed to see him.

No one expected Demi’s ex-boyfriend to stab her 16 times that day. Demi didn’t think she was in any kind of danger. After Demi was stabbed, her ex-boyfriend slit his throat and lived. No one thought he was capable of this.

Demi’s father hopes that his daughter’s story will help others before they are in too deep.

Developing a Safety Plan
Breaking up with an abuser is one of the most dangerous times for victims of dating violence.

It is essential to tell people about your situation. Family members, friends, teachers, etc. can all be part of your safety plan. Never try to handle this situation alone.

Examples of a safety plan include:
- Choose safe routes to and from school and don’t allow yourself to be alone.
- Tell family and/or friends where you are going and when you expect to be home.
- Call 9-1-1 if you are frightened.
- Be aware of shelters in your area.