

## St. Mary's County Commission for Women

### Interpersonal Relationships in Youth Survey 2020 Results

National statistics report that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 4 boys will be involved in an abusive relationship. In late October to early November, the Commission for Women conducted a survey to determine if dating violence is an issue for youth in St. Mary's County.

- Of the 166 county residents who responded, 143 or 86.1% were between the ages of 13 and 18.
- 139 (83.7%) were female; 24 (14.5%) were male
- 81 (48.8%) have been pressured by a partner to send sexual and/or photos
- 39 (23.5%) have been with a partner who broke or threw things when angry
- 64 (38.6%) have been threatened by a partner
- 38 (22.9%) have been physically hurt by a partner
- 100 (60.2%) know someone who has been threatened by a partner
- 100 (60.2%) know someone who has been physically hurt by a partner

These numbers mirror national statistics and show that there is, indeed, a problem here in St. Mary's County. If these numbers represented a communicable disease, it would be deemed an epidemic. We need a concerted effort to help our youth develop healthy relationships.

**"These things happen way too often for high school women and it affects us drastically.  
We need to make getting help a good thing in our community."**

A comment from one respondent

For the past 10 years, the Commission for Women has been partnering with the public schools to educate today's youth on the signs of healthy relationships vs. unhealthy relationships. We believe that the issue of dating violence is widespread and needs to be addressed aggressively. We know our efforts in the past have had a positive impact with some students and for that we are grateful. However, we feel that one program a year for some students is not enough. A concerted effort needs to be made community wide to get the message out. It needs to reach everyone and it needs to be reinforced periodically to be effective. Learning what a healthy relationship consists of when young carries over into adulthood and will help young adults develop strong relationships in the future.

November, 2020