

HANDOUT...**Dating Violence Continuums**

These continuums describe a range of violence (including physical, sexual, and emotional) that occurs within many intimate relationships. Not every relationship in which dating violence exists will look like the range of examples listed in the continuums, but continuums can be a very useful tool for assessing the danger in those relationships where the violence is getting more extreme. Continuums also serve as a useful tool for helping all of us to understand the realities of violence in intimate relationships.

In order to use the continuums effectively, be aware of the following:

- The violence continuums describe the range of violence that often occurs. It is also likely that violence will escalate in frequency and intensity over time.
- Physical, sexual and emotional violence work hand in hand to keep the perpetrator in control.
- The acts of violence described are conscious acts of control, and while there will probably be many similarities in experiences, there may be as many differences.
- The progression of violence will only stop when the abusive person makes a conscious choice to stop the behavior. This may happen when the person who has been abused is no longer accessible (e.g. leaves the relationship or transfers to a different school).
- The behaviors on these continuums do not always occur in the order in which they are listed on the continuum. Nor does this order rank the severity of these behaviors. There is no right or wrong order.

Note: If the abusive person has chosen not to stop the abusive behavior, the violence may escalate when the abused person takes action to stop the violence, such as leaving the relationship or getting outside assistance, (such as from a friend or professional).