



# Dating Violence & Homeless Students

Homeless students are at alarmingly high risk for sexual violence. Among high schoolers, homeless students were much more likely than their housed classmates to have someone they were dating force them into unwanted sexual activity.



**21% of homeless students** reported being forced into sexual activity in the previous 12 months by someone they were dating compared with 5% of housed students.



Homeless students were **2x** as likely as their housed classmates to have been **emotionally abused** in the past 12 months by someone they were dating.



Homeless high school students in **Illinois** and **Maryland** were the most at risk. At least **1 in 4** reported being forced into unwanted sexual activity by someone they were dating.



Nearly **1 in 4 homeless** high school students (22%) reported being **physically abused** within the previous 12 months by someone they were dating.



The safety net for homeless students is tattered—particularly for teens trying to escape dating violence. Youth shelters are not always equipped to deal with dating violence issues, and adult domestic violence shelters tend to not be equipped or allowed to accept clients under age 18. Students might be living apart from their parents, which makes any parental consent required to receive services difficult. This is why schools must be prepared to serve these homeless students’ needs. Health resources in school-based centers and well-trained school homeless liaisons can help homeless teens access supports and referrals for services. By providing these resources, schools can help fill in the gaps of the safety net for homeless high school students.

**Note:** Data are pooled estimates from Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, and New York City. Emotional abuse data was only available for Connecticut and Delaware. For more information and data notes, visit <http://www.icphusa.org/homelessstudenthealth/>.