

## **Text Bullying - Textual Harassment - A Real Problem for Child and Teen Victims**

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Texting is becoming an increasingly used tool in dating violence. Text messages are used to harass, track and intimidate current or ex- boyfriend and girlfriends. The use of text messages as a weapon in dating violence is a double-edge sword; the messages are concrete proof in court that dating violence has occurred but can also be kept private for a lot longer. Back in the day, the typical home had only one phone in the entire house. Today, is it not uncommon for each family member to have his or her own cell phone, thus, making easier for children and teenagers to hide the threatening and harassing texts. Other acts of abuse include location tracking by a partner, significant other, or boyfriend / girlfriend. These are multiple texts sent throughout the day demanding to know your whereabouts, who you are with, etc. For example, there was a case where a woman in her 20s was so closely tracked by her boyfriend that he demanded her to take photographs with her phone to prove her whereabouts, the photos were accompanied with a time and date stamp.

Another reason why there is so much under-reporting of textual harassment, other than the private nature of cell phones, is that many teens do not view excessive text messaging as abusive. However, if you are getting 50 text messages per day that are all unwanted, there is a problem, suggests an executive director of Break the Cycle, an organization that works to end dating violence. If you would like to read more on this topic see [Text messaging becomes a useful tool in dating violence.](#)

State legislatures are in the process of pushing legislation to encourage, rather than require, schools to teach and inform its students on the topic of textual harassment. Abusive texts can come in the form of text messaging, e-mails and messages sent over social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. If you are getting unwanted text messages you should inform someone close to you about the abuse. Making the matter somewhat public can aid in stopping the abuse.