

# Association between the myths of romantic love and the tolerance and perpetration of teen dating violence

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January 4, 2023

## Abstract

The myths of romantic love are so deeply rooted in our culture that they have shaped the way we conceive relationships. These myths have been linked to intimate partner violence, beginning in teen dating relationships. Since these myths are present throughout socialization, it is possible that their acceptance is associated with a higher perpetration of abuse, but also with its acceptance because of its normalization. This study explored the relationship of romantic love myths with the commission and tolerance of violent behavior in a sample of 70 participants between 13 and 17 years of age. The results showed a considerable acceptance of the myths of romantic love between adolescents, and a relationship between the myths and abusive behavior (both perpetrated and experienced), being psychological and relational abuse the most common. No gender differences were observed, which may support the hypothesis of bidirectionality, that is, boys and girls engage in abusive behavior in dating relationships. The implications of these results for prevention are discussed.

**Keywords:** dating violence, myths, romantic love, bidirectionality, adolescents

## Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most challenging issues in our society. Most studies in IPV have focused on marital relationships; however, over the last decades, a growing interest arose around teen dating violence (TDV) (Shorey et al., 2013). This type of violence presents certain peculiarities. First, in TDV it is uncommon for the couple to cohabitate, to have children, or to be financially independent of their partner, elements commonly used to manipulate the victim in IPV (Arenas-Arroyo et al., 2021; Postmus et al., 2020). Second, TDV has been described as bidirectional, that is, both members of the couple receive and perpetrate abusive behaviors (Spencer et al., 2020). Reciprocity in TDV requires special attention, as it may reflect the normalization of abuse within romantic relationships. Although TDV has been described as a predictor of marital violence, it is unclear what produces TDV (Borges et al., 2020), but the acceptance of the myths of romantic love may play a key role in its development.

TDV is estimated to affect around 20% of adolescents (Tomaszewska, 2021), but numbers could be higher due to a number of reasons. Since TDV has been equated to IPV, research has focused on women as victims. As a result, little is known about how TDV affects young boys. Although most research on TDV supports that women represent the largest proportion of victims, evidence suggests that men also experience abuse in teen dating relationships. Some studies in the Anglo-Western context have analyzed the role of men and women as victims and as perpetrators (Kaura & Allen, 2004). However, it has been less explored in other countries such as Spain. Second, psychological and relational violence are the most common types of abuse in TDV, but they are difficult for victims to recognize as abuse. Adolescents are aware of IPV and can recognize it, but only when it involves physical violence. Conversely, when composed of covert forms of abuse

(i.e., economic abuse, control, psychological), their ability diminishes (Lliebre, 2003). The lack of formal knowledge of violence in intimate relationships leads to distorted beliefs based on stereotypes (i.e., “*only women suffer abuse*,” “*sexual violence within a relationship does not exist*,” “*there is no violence without physical aggression*”). Therefore, not experiencing prototypical forms of violence could hinder self-labeling as a victim and thus reporting the abuse (Hamby & Gray-Little, 2000). Minimizing the severity of abuse within intimate relationships has been associated with a greater idealization of the myths of romantic love (“*Dating Violence: Idealization of Love and Romantic Myths in Spanish Adolescents*”, 2021).

Myths are a set of socially shared beliefs about the true nature of love, including the existence of a soulmate, the omnipotence of love, or the idea that love engenders pain, suffering, and sacrifice (Cubells-Serra et al., 2021). These myths are consistent with the media representation of romantic love, where tragedy, pain, and the abnegation for the loved one are idealized, promoting the romanticization of tempestuous relationships (Standley, 2022). For example, 40% of adolescents consider jealousy a proof of love, and 70% believe that love and maltreatment are compatible (Fundación Mujeres, 2011). The acceptance of the myths of romantic love may lead to a higher tolerance of covert abuse (e.g., controlling behavior, verbal abuse, isolation), as adolescents interpret them as demonstrations of love instead of violence. For instance, one in three adolescents consider it is inevitable to control their partner’s time under certain circumstances and to impede them from seeing their friends and family (Delegación del Gobierno para la Violencia de Género, 2015).

The idealization of romantic love has been associated with a greater difficulty in recognizing abusive experiences. Hamby and Gray-Little (2000) found that women victims of IPV recognized abuse in other relationships, but not on their own. Similarly, the National Survey on Violence Against Women (Ministry of Equality, 2021) distinguished between technical abuse (i.e., detected by objective indicators) and self-declared abuse (i.e., described by the victim). The results indicated that while 9.6% of women were classified as victims according to technical indicators, only 3.6% labeled themselves as victims. The relationship between the myths of romantic love and the commission of abusive behavior has been thoroughly explored. However, less is known about the relationship between the myths and greater acceptance of abusive behavior, as it may reflect the normalization of certain types of violence.

This paper aimed to explore the association between the acceptance of the myths and TDV (committed and experienced). It was hypothesized that because the origin of distorted beliefs about romantic relationships lies in socialization, the myths equally affect boys and girls, promoting toxic relational models where covert abuse is justified by the mythification of romantic love.

## Method

### Participants

The sample was composed of 70 participants (50% females), between 13 and 17 years old ( $M = 14.53$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). Participants were third (61.4%) and fourth (38.6%) year students of Secondary Compulsory Education (ESO) of high schools in Spain. Regarding race and ethnicity, 80% ( $n = 56$ ) of the sample was white, 14.3% ( $n = 10$ ) was from Latin America, and 5.7% ( $n = 4$ ) was Maghrebi. Participation was voluntary.

The aim of the study was described along with the information about the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. For underage participants, an informed consent form signed by their parents or legal guardians was required. Students who returned the signed consents were asked about their dating relationships, as to be eligible to participate in the study it was necessary to have had at least one relationship. Of the 100 students who returned their consents, 70 fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The average duration of the relationship was four months ( $SD = 1.9$ ).

## Procedure

This study was part of a dating violence pilot prevention program. Before training sessions, participants answered questions about myths of romantic love and their experiences with abusive behavior as victims and perpetrators. During the training sessions, situations described by the participants were carefully monitored to detect high-risk cases. Prior to the intervention, a transfer protocol was designed to be used in case of detecting cases that required further attention.

## Measures

Two *ad hoc* instruments were created because of the lack of scales focused on the aim of this study. The published questionnaires we consulted had focused on perpetration or victimization, but not both. Thus, the first instrument assessed abusive behavior (experienced and perpetrated) based on previously validated questionnaires (i.e., CUVINO, CTS). The resulting instrument was composed of twenty dichotomous items concerning the experience and perpetration of physical, psychological, and relational violence.

To examine the acceptance of the myths of romantic love in adolescents, a second scale was created. Previous questionnaires were aimed at assessing biased ideas from a cognitive-behavioral perspective that were incompatible with the aims of this study. The resulting scale was composed of 25 dichotomous items (true/false) about the most reported myths in the literature. Two independent researchers analyzed each item for classification within five categories: jealousy, emotional dependency, exclusivity, self-sacrifice (i.e., prioritizing the needs of the significant other and sacrifice of personal space), and sexist beliefs. The instruments used in this study can be requested from the authors.

## Data analysis

Data was analyzed using JASP (JASP Team, 2022). To examine the presence of the myths of romantic love within the sample, frequency analyzes were conducted. Gender differences were explored using  $\chi^2$  tests, and effect sizes were calculated using Cramer V. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test was used to examine if the variables were normally distributed. The relationship between the myths and abusive behavior was examined using risk ratios (RR) with a 95% confidence interval.

## Results

### *Victimization and perpetration of abusive behaviors*

Regarding perpetration, the most common experiences of abuse were getting annoyed at their significant other (SO) when they talked to someone of the opposite sex (straight couples) or the same sex (non-straight couples) (37.1%), emotional punishment (36.1%), demanding to know the location of the SO (33.8%), ignoring the feelings of their SO (24.2%) and criticizing the physical appearance of their SO (21%). Concerning victimization, the participants experienced the same abuse they committed. No gender differences were found in the type of abuse received or perpetrated. Table 1 summarizes the results.

	Victimization (%)			Perpetration (%)		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Ridiculing [my/my SO's] clothes, opinions, tastes, and beliefs	14	5.9	7.8	14.6	8.1	6.5
Ignoring [my/my SO's] feelings	33.3	11.8	21.6	24.1	8.1	16.1
Getting annoyed when [I/ my SO] talk to someone of the opposite/same sex	35.3	15.7	19.6	37.1	12.9	24.2
Demanding to know where [I/ my SO] is and with whom	36	22	14	33.8	17.7	16.1
Requiring [my/my SO's] passwords	12	6	6	8	4.8	3.2
Deciding for [me/my SO]	20	10	10	13	6.5	6.5
Accusing [me/my SO] of flirting when uploading pictures to the Internet	8.	2	6.1	11.3	3.2	8.1
Yelling at [me/my SO]	20.4	12.2	8.2	16.4	9.8	6.6
Pressuring [me/my SO] to do things they do not want to or things they are not comfortable with	21.6	11.8	9.8	16.1	4.8	11.3
Threatening [me/my SO]	18.4	12.2	6.1	19.7	6.6	13.1
Blaming [me/my SO]	20	12	8	16.4	9.8	6.6
Underestimating [my/my SO's] achievements	18.4	10.2	8.2	23	11.5	11.5
Isolating [me/my SO]	12	10	2	1.6	1.6	0
Criticizing [me/my SO]	24	12	12	21	12.9	16.1
Punishing [me/my SO]	34.7	16.3	18.4	36.1	14.8	21.3

Note. Participants were asked to report the abusive experiences perpetrated and experienced.  
Note. M = male; F = female

Table 1: *Reported Victimization and Perpetration of Abuse.*

## Acceptance of the myths of romantic love

The results revealed a general acceptance of the myths of romantic love (Table 2). Regarding emotional dependency, 50.7% reported feeling anxious when their SO did not immediately respond to their messages, 45.6% affirmed that they could not stand the idea that their partners did not love them as much as they did; 48.5% declared that they were determined to do anything for their SO to forgive them, this statement being more common between females ( $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 15.705, p = .000; V = .488$ ). Jealousy as a proof of love was a shared idea, with 18.6% of the sample referring to jealousy being normal in a relationship and necessary to prove love (32.9%). This was consistent with the fact that 31.4% of the participants reported that they could not bear to see their partners with other people, of which 6% reported that they could not deal with their partners loving other people (including their friends and relatives). These statements were more often shared by males ( $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 4.242, p = .039; V = .246$ ). Regarding exclusivity, 5.7% considered that when they were in a relationship, they did not need anyone else. Participants prioritized the needs and well-being of their SO above their own. Fifty-eight percent agreed with the idea that sometimes they had to do things that made them uncomfortable to make their SO happy. This was significantly more common between females ( $\chi^2(1, N = 67) = 7.85, p = .005; V = .342$ ). Regarding the sacrifice of personal space, 69.7% believed that since sincerity was essential, they had to share everything with their SO. Regarding sexist beliefs, 22.9% subscribed to the idea that women prefer dominant men, 30% indicated that “*when girls say no, they mean yes*,” and 4.3% considered that girls should not have the same sexual freedom as boys.

		Agree- ment (%)	Total	Girls	Boys
Jealousy as a proof of love	My SO is jealous because they love me		26.5	11.8	14.7
	Jealousy is normal. If your SO is not jealous, they do not care about you		19.1	10.3	8.8
	I cannot see my SO with someone else		31.4	21.4	10
	I have the right to know where my SO is and with whom		1.4	1.4	0
	Jealousy is necessary to prove love		32.9	18.6	14.3
	You cannot fully trust your partner		22.9	10.1	13
	It is difficult to control your emotions when you find your SO is leaving you		76.8	36.2	40.6
Sexist beliefs	Girls prefer dominant boys		23.9	14.9	9
	When girls say no, they mean yes		32.3	16.9	15.4
Exclusivity	Girls should not have the same sexual freedom as boys		4.4	2.9	1.5
	I cannot bear the thought of my SO loving other people		6	1.5	4.5
Dependency	When you are in a relationship, you need nobody else		5.8	4.3	1.4
	I usually leave important things to be with my SO		39.4	15.2	24.2
	I cannot stand the idea that my SO does not love me as much as I do		45.6	26.5	19.1
	When my SO does not immediately respond to my messages, I feel anxious		50.7	26.9	23.9
Prioritizing the needs of the SO	If my SO gets mad at me, I will do anything for them to forgive me		48.5	10.6	37.9
	Your SO should forgive any mistake you make		44.8	23.9	20.9
	I would do anything for my SO		32.8	11.9	20.9
	I would leave anything for love		11.9	4.5	7.5
	When you are in a relationship, you must renounce to things		36.4	10.6	25.8
	Sometimes you must do things that you do not like or that make you feel uncomfortable to make your SO happy		61.2	20.9	40.3
Personal sacrifice	My SO always has to agree with me		1.4	1.4	0
	Sincerity is essential, you must share everything with your SO		69.7	37.9	31.8
	My SO knows all my passwords		4.5	0	4.5
	It is normal for your SO to criticize your clothes and physical appearance.		9.1	0	9.1

Table 2: *Acceptance of the Myths of Romantic Love*

### ***Association between acceptance of the myths of romantic love and abusive behaviors***

A significant relationship was found between the myths of romantic love concerning to jealousy and behavior intended to undermine the partner's self-esteem, such as ridiculing their physical appearance, ideas, tastes,

and beliefs ( $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 5.588, p = .018; V = .344$ ), pressuring the SO to do things that made them uncomfortable ( $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 6.37, p = .012; V = .365$ ), underestimate the achievements of their SO ( $\chi^2(1, N = 64) = 4.541, p = .033; V = .364$ ), and isolating their SO ( $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 5.43, p = .020; V = .424$ ). Participants who feared an imbalance of affection had 8.15 times the risk for their SO to ridicule them and 3.64 times the risk of being underestimated. Participants who prioritized the needs and well-being of their SO over their own showed up to four times the risk of letting their SO decide for them, three times the risk of suffering controlling behavior, and six times the risk of having their SO criticize them (Table 3).

Myths	Abusive behavior	$\chi^2$	df	p	V	RR	CI
							Low.High.
I cannot bear the idea of seeing my SO with someone else	- My SO has ridiculed me	5588	1	.018	.344	5.46	1.18 25.24
	- My SO has pressured me	6375	1	.012	.365	3.82	130 11.23
	- My SO has demanded to know where I am	7.12	1	.007	.379	2.65	1.29 5.43
Girls prefer dominant boys	- My SO does not like me to talk to other people	13.06	1	.000	.510	3.65	1.84 7.24
Your SO should forgive your mistakes	- My SO has underestimated	3.5	1	.05	.267	3.5	0.8 15.16
It is hard to control your emotions when you find out that your SO is leaving you	- My SO has ignored my feelings	4382	1	0.03	.270	4.4	0.65 29.62
I cannot stand the idea that my SO doesn't love me as much as I do	- My SO has ridiculed me	5.95	1	0.15	.345	8.15	1027 64.63
	- My SO has pressured me	3.84	1	.05	.280	2.85	0.96 8.47
	- My SO has underestimated me	4541	1	.033	.314	3.64	1.04 12.77
	- My SO has punished me	4.55	1	.033	.308	2.34	1.06 5.17
I cannot bear the thought of my SO loving other people	- My SO has threatened me	3608	1	.05	.317	4.28	1.49 12.25
	- My SO has isolated me	5.43	1	.020	.424	7.6	2.23 26.27
When girls say no, they mean yes	- My SO does not like me to	8107	1	.004	.407	2.94	1.37 6.29
	- talk to other people	10.21	1	.001	.479	7.46	1.75 31.75
I would leave everything for love	- My SO has threatened me	3.88	1	.049	.298	3.07	1.16 8.09
I would do anything for my SO	- My SO has pressured me	8.74	1	.003	.423	2.95	1.4 6.21
	- My SO has demanded to know where I am						
If my SO got mad at me, I would do anything for them to forgive me	- My SO has made decisions for me	4.57	1	.033	.308	4	0.94 16.95
Sometimes you must do things you do not like or that make you uncomfortable to make your SO happy	- My SO has made decisions for me	4.54	1	.032	.263	4.78	0.65 34.64
	- My SO has criticized me	5.76	1	.016	.315	5.84	0.82 41.52

Table 3: *Relationship Between Myths and Victimization*

Accepting the myths of romantic love was associated with a higher risk of committing abusive behavior (Table 4). Further analysis showed that participants who feared an imbalance of affection showed 11.7 times the risk of pressuring their SO to do things that make them feel uncomfortable. Participants who believed that jealousy was necessary to express affection were 4.8 times more likely to accuse their SO of flirting when uploading pictures to the Internet. Finally, those who affirmed they would do anything for their SO showed 3.52 times the risk of controlling the location of their SO.

Myths	Abusive behavior	$\chi^2$	df	p	V	RR	CI	Low.High.
My SO is jealous because s/he loves me	I've pressured my SO	5378	1	.020	.314	3.79	1.22	11.78
I cannot bear the idea of seeing my SO with someone else	I've pressured my SO	3.93	1	.047	.260	3.15	0.99	9.92
	I have the right to know where my SO at every moment and who s/he is with	8.99	1	.003	.381	2.8	1.41	5.5
Jealousy is necessary to prove love	I've accused my SO of flirting	4.68	1	.031	.283	4.8	1.03	23.07
Girls prefer dominant and authoritarian boys who give protection	It annoys me when my SO talks to people	5.99	1	.014	.316	2.27	1.24	4.16
You cannot fully trust your partner	I have the right to know where my SO at every moment and who s/he is with	3.61	1	.05	.249	2.04	1.06	3.91
If your SO loves you, they should forgive any mistake you can commit	It annoys me when my SO talks to people	4.34	1	.037	.269	2.13	1	4.53
	I've underestimated my SO	5.14	1	.023	.295	3.44	1.05	11.27
When you are in a relationship, you do not need anybody else	I've criticized my SO	3.8	1	.05	.264	2.8	1.39	5.81
I cannot bear that my SO doesn't love me as much as I do	I've pressured my SO	11.5	1	.001	.421	11.76	1.58	87.13
	It annoys me when my SO talks to people	4.53	1	.033	.275	2.12	1.03	4.3
When girls say no, they mean yes	I've yelled at my SO	3.67	1	.05	.261	3	0.96	9.37
	I've threatened my SO	5.33	1	.019	.314	3.5	1.16	10.49
I would leave anything for love	I have the right to know where my SO at every moment and who s/he is with	130621		.0000	.471	3.62	1.71	7621
If my SO gets mad at me, I would do anything for him/her to forgive me	I have the right to know where my SO at every moment and who s/he is with	4.59	1	.032	.281	2.32	1023	5.26
Sometimes you have to do things you don't like or that make you feel uncomfortable to make your SO happy	I have the right to know where my SO at every moment and who s/he is with	5.53	1	.019	.306	3.17	1.04	9.66

Table 4: *Relationship between Myths and Perpetration of Abusive Behavior*



Those participants who believed the myths of romantic love were more likely to commit and experience abusive behavior. No significant gender differences were found.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the myths of romantic love and TDV (experienced and perpetrated). Our results indicate a notable acceptance of myths, and a relationship between accepting myths and the perpetration and experience of abuse in teen dating relationships. Romantic love myths are widely spread in our society, being regularly portrayed in media narratives (i.e., movies, music, literature). Consequently, individuals acquire and internalize myths during their socialization (Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2021). Although this process may seem innocent, the data suggests that accepting the myths of romantic love impacts behavior.

We found that the myths about jealousy (i.e., demanding to know where the SO was at every moment and with whom) were associated with control or actions aimed at reducing the social interactions of their partner (e.g., isolation, accusing their SO of flirting online). Another observed strategy was to diminish the self-esteem and autonomy of their SO by criticizing their physical appearance or deciding for them. Interestingly, adolescents rarely consider these behaviors as forms of violence. Approximately 19% of the sample agreed with the idea ‘not being jealous means that you do not care about your SO’ and 9% believed that it was normal for their partners to criticize them. Adolescents prioritize the needs of their SO above their own assuming that having a relationship involves renouncing things or doing things they do not want to or that makes them feel uncomfortable to please their SO. As previously described, this study was part of a prevention program. During the sessions, one of the most common responses related to this topic was unwanted sexual activities, including those described as unpleasant, humiliating, and even painful. This finding was consistent with previous studies reporting the pressure that adolescents experience regarding sexuality (Mustanski et al., 2014). For example, according to previous studies (Shrier et al., 1998), 30% of girls and around 10% of boys have been pressured by their SO to have sex. This is even more alarming for girls, particularly if we consider the sexist beliefs prevailing in our society (e.g., “*when girls say no, they mean yes*”). However, adolescents may not well perceive these behaviors as abuse because they are not stereotyped representations of IPV. These results are consistent with the findings of Lliebre (2003), who found that adolescents did not consider psychological or economic abuse as violence. In our study, covert abuse (psychological and relational) committed by the two members of the couple was the most common type of violence. This is relevant because it is also the most difficult to recognize because of its subtle nature (Paat et al., 2019) and its normalization. Assuming that this type of abuse is experienced and perpetrated equally in teen dating relationships is important for intervention. As previously stated, the traditional approach to TDV is to consider it as a form of IPV, therefore campaigns and resources are aimed at young girls to identify early signs of violence. However, a different approach would be needed if TDV is considered a form of abuse characterized by subtle relational and psychological abuse perpetrated by boys and girls due to the romanticization of suffering within relationships. Subtle or covert abuse hinders labeling and obstructs reporting of abuse. Therefore, despite the abundance of services to assist victims and campaigns aimed at early intervention (Casique, 2020); these may not be effective because of the inability of victims to recognize maltreatment until the advanced stages of the violence dynamic.

Our results also seem to support the hypothesis of bidirectionality. Adolescents referred to having perpetrated and experienced almost the same abusive behaviors, which suggests a dynamic of reciprocal abuse. Since our study focuses on psychological and relational abuse; thus, this affirmation could not be generalized to physical violence. The bidirectionality of abuse requires attention because it may reflect the normalization of violence within the couple. The representation of romantic love in the traditional narratives idealizes tragedy, suffering, and abnegation toward the SO. Consequently, it may promote the romanticization of relationships where pain is synonymous with love (de Munck; David B. Kronenfeld, 2016). Finally, representing love as a state in which people behave guided by a passion that disturbs their judgment has led to justifying certain crimes (i.e., sentence of domestic violence of the process 355/15.2. GAFLG.P1, 11 of October 2017, Oporto Justice Court). Seventy percent of the adolescents composing our sample shared

this idea, agreeing with the statement “it would be difficult to control my emotions if I discovered that my partner was leaving me.” These types of ideas are pervasive since they allow justifying violence perpetration following the idea—real or imagined— that the SO is thinking about breaking the relationship. In addition, previous studies have reported a relationship between accepting the myths and lower perceived severity of the abuse .

## ***Limitations***

This study has some limitations that should be considered. First, the sample is limited. Second, physical violence was not explored because 1) the interest of this study was to examine psychological and relational violence, and 2) the participants were reluctant to respond to certain items. Finally, because of the sensitivity of the topic, it is possible that some abusive behaviors remained undetected as participants may not have responded honestly because of the social implications and the stigma associated with IPV. In Spain, endeavors have been made to reduce IPV. Hence, adolescents are aware of its existence and consequences, but their knowledge is founded on the most salient examples (i.e., physical aggressions, femicide). As the social stigma associated with victim status has a great psychological impact, adolescents could avoid this label unless they experience extreme episodes of violence.

## ***Future directions***

Based on the preliminary results obtained in our study, future research should aim to explore the bidirectional hypothesis in larger samples. Although it was assumed that the sample was composed of individuals with different sexual orientations, most of the participants said they were in heterosexual relationships. It would be interesting for future studies to explore how the myths of romantic love affect LGB individuals. Although recent studies have found that college students reject the myths of romantic love, this is not the norm between younger students. Consequently, it would be interesting to examine the age differences in the understanding of romantic relationships and the acceptance of the myths.

## **Conclusion**

Our results suggest the need to focus attention on the early manifestations of abuse in dating relationships due to the magnitude of its impact and its long-term association with other forms of violence such as IPV. Despite efforts to reduce the prevalence of dating violence, this phenomenon does not stop, but rather increases each year in the age group of 15 to 29 years (Khaneja, 2022). A possible explanation is that the relational models fostered by the socialization process are not appropriate. Conversely, such models may promote gender stereotypes and unrealistic romantic expectations that favor the appearance -and the subsequent justification- of abusive behaviors. Because of this, an educational-based approach in which all citizens assume the role as socialization agents should be adopted. Without noticing, and due to the unconscious interiorization of social norms and stereotypes, we may be promoting and perpetuating myths and stereotypes in adolescents from an early age, normalizing distorted beliefs about romantic relationships. It is necessary to learn to recognize violence, and for this purpose, it is mandatory to develop holistic interventions in which schools and families work together and share the responsibility for educating youth about respectful relationships (Debnam & Temple, 2021; Temple et al., 2021).

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