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Title: Many youths unaware of 'dating violence'

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Many Singaporean youths don't know what is 'dating violence'.

This according to a survey of 250 tertiary students aged between 16 to 30.

The survey was conducted by the Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence and undergraduates from Nanyang Technological University.

The findings were released during the launch of inaugural Dating Violence Awareness Week today

Saifulbahri Ismail with the details :

Dating violence happens when a partner uses force to abuse the other partner sexually, physically or psychologically in a relationship.

The frequency and the severity of the abuse usually increases as the relationship develops.

But more than half of the respondents surveyed had not heard about dating violence.

And Parliamentary Secretary, National Development, Dr Maliki Osman, who's trained in social work and psychology, is not surprised.

He was the guest of honour at the launch of the Dating Violence Awareness Week.

"I think it's not surprising that a lot of young people are not aware of this whole concept of dating violence. I think in the first place they're probably also are not aware that when you date there are some so called protocol of sorts, basically respecting each other in a relationship, and understanding what relationships mean. I think a lot of young people probably do not understand where the boundaries are as far as what love means."

About one third of the respondents covered by the survey said they knew someone who may be a victim of dating violence.

Also, more than 80 per cent indicated they did not know of any counselling service that they could turn to for help if they were a victim.

Is this because of ignorance or should counselling services be made more prominent?

"A lot of people will seek help if we have personal problems, but they probably do not realise that (for) dating violence there is social workers trained in domestic violence for example who can help them. Secondly, is that often times the concept of help in family service centres tend to associate problems related to families, and therefore does the FSC help such a person? So, one may not know that even FSC

actually help people with problems of this nature."

To boost awareness about dating violence, the Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence together with students from NTU launched the Dating Violence Awareness Week.

The public educational campaign, targeting at young Singaporeans aged 17 to 25, also aims to inform them where and how to seek help.