

ANTELOPE VALLEY

EDITION

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Teens need dating help

Social worker warns of abuse

BY ABIGAIL DE ROSAS
Special to the Daily News

LANCASTER — Clinical social worker Kenn Hicks says parents need to get involved with their children's dating life and tell them what is acceptable dating behavior and what isn't acceptable — particularly regarding violence and abuse.



HICKS

Abusive relationships can start at a young age: One in 11 high school students claim physical abuse by a girlfriend or boyfriend and half of families have been involved with

DATING: ABUSE ON RISE

Parents need to get more involved

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

domestic violence, according to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center.

"Parents should realize that they are their children's role models. Whatever they do their child will model that later," said Hicks, who has spent more than 25 years specializing in individual and family therapy.

Hicks lectures about domes-

tic violence and teen violence awareness around the Antelope Valley, and has spoken at places like Antelope Valley High School and High Desert Hospital.

"I have kids and I have a concern about how serious domestic violence is in general. Now teen dating violence is getting very serious," Hicks said. "It starts even in middle school and it gets even worse in high

school and even more serious in college."

To increase awareness about what constitutes physical and emotional abuse he has created a teen and young adult dating contract as well as an adult dating contract.

The contract makes both boy and girl — who sign with their parents — aware of the different forms of abuse. This contract can even aid in obtaining a restraining order if a relationship goes bad, Hicks said.

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