



The Hidden Problem and the Victims of Violence

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Editor's note: The names of the students in this story have been changed.

They started out as friends. Tracy belonged to a sorority; Bob lived in a high-rise residence hall. She spent more and more time on his dorm floor. They dated for almost 10 months. Bob asked her to marry him. And she said yes.

Tracy says she'd rather remember the quiet times, sitting on the couch, talking.

But talking is what got her into trouble. It started out with little arguments. They'd bicker; he'd cut her down and

make her feel bad. He hated seeing her succeed in anything. Her involvement in a handful of campus activities made him jealous, too. The violence started when she fought back.

Tracy is a victim of courtship abuse. Her boyfriend touched her in a way that no relationship makes allowances for: he hit her.

Date rape and violence just aren't talked about at UNL. Passersby in the Nebraska Union might hear students talking about sex lives and conquests and preferences. But they probably won't hear about the bad things that can happen in relationships.

Vern Williams, director of the UNL Counseling Center for the last 13 years, says he knows of few students who've sought counseling about date rape and acquaintance abuse. He senses that people just don't talk about it.

However, Williams says, perhaps the actions that men and women accepted in the past are recognized now as acts