

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

SAFE DATES

KEEPING YOUR TEEN SAFE

Dating abuse is a serious issue that can touch the life of any teen. Adolescents of all races and income levels are at risk for being involved in an abusive relationship. Dating abuse can take place in person or electronically. Both males and females can be the abusers and victims of dating abuse.

FACTS ABOUT TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year. 1
- 1 in every 5 students between the ages of 11-14, say themselves or their friends have/are victims of dating violence. 2
- 50% of 14-24 year-olds have experienced digital/online dating abuse. 3

1. Do something. "11 Facts about Teen Violence." www.DoSomething.org.

2. Futures without Violence. "The Facts on Teens and Dating Violence." www.futureswithoutviolence.org.

DayOne. "What is Dating Abuse?" www.dayoneny.org/statistics.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT DATING ABUSE?

Here are some things you can do that may help prevent your teen from getting into an abusive relationship:

- Model healthy relationships at home.
- Talk with your teen, as early as possible, about healthy relationships and positive ways to resolve conflict.
- Discuss healthy boundaries.
- Emphasize that abuse is not love.
- Discuss warning signs/red flags of unhealthy and abusive relationships.
- Reinforce the importance of getting help if they are ever concerned about a dating partner or friend.
- Build your teen's self-esteem.
- Build support and trust.
- Keep communication open and with no judgement.
- Teach your teen how and why to not be a bystander.

WHAT IS DATING ABUSE?

Dating abuse includes any behaviors that are used to control and/or manipulate a dating partner. These behaviors may include the following:

- Physically abusive behaviors such as hitting, shaking, throwing objects, forcing unwanted sexual actions, strangulation and/or using a weapon.
- Emotionally abusive behaviors such as ignoring a dating partners feelings, insulting a dates beliefs or values, isolating a partner from others, displaying inappropriate anger, damaging personal property, humiliating a dating partner and/or threatening to hurt oneself or others.

Parents and guardians can be a very important resource in preventing dating abuse and in helping teens remove themselves from abusive relationships.

WHAT ARE SOME WARNING SIGNS OF DATING ABUSE?

Your teen may be in an abusive relationship if they:

- Have a dating partner who intensely jealous and possessive.
- Have unexplained marks on their body (bruises, scratches, burns.)
- Are always agreeing to their partner's wishes.
- Are increasingly becoming isolated from family and friends.
- Are lying about their relationship, location, what they are doing, etc.
- Get visibly upset after phone calls or dates with their partner.
- Are afraid to make their dating partner angry.
- Partner/teen is constantly blowing up the other's phone/checking it constantly.
- Have excessive guilt or shame for small mishaps or for no apparent reason.
- Are not doing as well in school, sports, or extra-curricular activities.
- Are being withdrawn and/or more quiet than usual.

SEEK HELP

Seek and ask for help if you have suspicions or worries about your teen's relationship. You can reach out to:

- Your teen's school principal/teacher.
- Your teen's friends.
- Local law enforcement.
- Professionals like mental health professionals or domestic violence shelters.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you know or suspect that your teen may be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship, the most important thing to do is to do something.

- Take the situation seriously.
- The consequences of teen dating abuse can be extremely dangerous and just as serious as adult domestic violence.
- Tell your teen you believe and support them.
- Help your teen develop a safety plan to keep them safe from partner's abuse.
- Practice setting boundaries, limits and getting involved.
- Take legal action against the perpetrator.
- In the end, the decision to end an abusive relationship is up to your teen. If they have difficulty leaving, you can do all the things listed above, but it is even more important to express love, concern, support and confidence and try not to control your teen's emotions and/or decisions.

RESOURCES

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

1-800-799-7233

Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN):

1-800-934-9840

The Center for Child and Family Advocacy:

419-592-0540

Crisis Text Line:

Text "4Hope" to 741-741

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

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