

Healthy Families, Safe Communities

Keystone First — Putting safety first

Teen dating violence

You can make a difference. Start the conversation with your adolescent and teen patients about recognizing abuse and how to build healthy relationships.

Teen dating violence (TDV) is defined by Break the Cycle as a pattern of abusive behaviors to exert power and control over a dating partner. Dating violence can escalate over time and become more dangerous to the target.

In a healthy relationship, each partner is respectful to the other, whether in person, on the phone or online.



Some alarming facts:

- Each year, approximately one in four adolescents reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
- Approximately one in five adolescents reports being a target of emotional abuse.
- Approximately one in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- Dating violence is reported by 54 percent of high school students.
- One in three teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been physically hurt by his or her partner through violent actions, which included hitting, punching, kicking, slapping and/or choking.
- Abuse now happens via technology — insulting a partner on social media, sending threatening text messages or monitoring where a partner is are all part of dating abuse.

For more information and resources for your office, visit:

loveisrespect

1-866-331-9474

www.loveisrespect.org

www.breakthecycle.org

www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/

[intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)

Start the conversation!

Discussing safety and asking targeted questions can identify TDV exposure:

- Discuss confidentiality and the limitation of confidentiality during routine medical exams to increase adolescents' confidence in your ability to help and protect their confidentiality.
- Ask the patient to tell you about experiences with physical violence and feelings of fear in past and current relationships.
- Acknowledge the pervasive nature of TDV.
- Offer prevention and intervention information, regardless of a positive or negative screen.
- Have TDV information posters, brochures and cards with information about TDV, risks, prevention and intervention programs placed throughout your office.
- Educate your staff about local and national organizations dedicated to providing supportive care for adolescents experiencing TDV.

Elizabeth Cutter-Wilson, M.S.W., L.G.S.W., and Tracy Richmond, M.D.,
"Understanding teen dating violence: practical screening and intervention
strategies for pediatric and adolescent healthcare providers."

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Safe dating for your teen — what you need to know

Dating should be a fun and exciting time for your teen. But sometimes it doesn't work out that way. Sometimes a person who may seem nice can turn out to be just the opposite. In a healthy relationship, each partner is respectful to the other, whether in person, on the phone or online. How can you know if your teen is in a troubled relationship?

Warning signs can help you find out before it's too late.

Some warning signs to look for are:

- Marks or bruises your child can't explain.
- Too many emails or texts from your child's partner.
- Does your child:
 - Seem depressed or anxious?
 - Dress differently now?
 - Spend less time with other friends or family?
 - Show little interest in activities that he or she used to do?
- Does your child's partner:
 - Act very jealous?
 - Abuse other people or animals?

It's never too early to talk to your child about healthy relationships and dating violence. Starting conversations is one of the most important steps you can take to help prevent dating violence — even if you don't think your child is dating.

In a healthy relationship,
each partner is respectful to
the other, whether in person,
on the phone or online.



What can you do if you think it's abuse?

As a parent or guardian, you will want to help your child in whatever way you can. It's important to not react too quickly. This could stop the conversation before it starts. Here are some tips to keep in mind when trying to help a child who you think is facing dating abuse:

Listen and give support — When talking to your teen, be supportive. Do not accuse. Let your child know that it's not his or her fault and no one "deserves" to be abused.

Accept what your child is telling you — Believe that your child is telling the truth. Your child may be afraid to share what's happening because he or she thinks no one will believe it. Offer your total support.

Show concern — Let your teen know that you worry for his or her safety. Let your teen know that what's happening isn't "normal." Everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship.

Talk about the behaviors, not the person — When talking about the abuse, talk about the behaviors you don't like, not the person. Remember that there may still be love in the relationship — respect your child's feelings.

Stay away from demands — It's important that your child is ready to walk away from the relationship on his or her own. If you demand that the teen leave, the teen is leaving because you said so. He or she didn't make the decision, and may want to go back.

Information source: loveisrespect.org, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle

The information in this notice is available in other languages and formats by calling Member Services at **1-800-521-6860** or **1-800-684-5505** (TTY).

Esta información también se ofrece en otros idiomas y formatos. Llame a Servicios para Miembros al **1-800-521-6860** o al **1-800-684-5505** (TTY).

Muốn đọc thông tin trong thông báo này dưới hình thức và ngôn ngữ khác, xin gọi Ban Dịch Vụ Hội Viên số **1-800-521-6860** hay số dành cho người khiếm thính giáic **1-800-684-5505** (TTY).

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Для получения сведений, содержащихся в данном уведомлении, на других языках звоните в Отдел обслуживания по телефону **1-800-521-6860** или **1-800-684-5505** (TTY).

此通知的资料包括其他语言及格式，如需要提供，请致电 **1-800-521-6860** 或 **1-800-684-5505** (TTY) 联系会员服务处。

Decide on next steps together — When you're talking to your teen about a plan of action, know that the decision has to come from the teen. Ask what next steps the teen would like to take.

Be ready — Learn more about dating abuse. Help your child see the unhealthy behaviors and patterns in any abusive relationship. Talk about what makes a relationship healthy.

Share these places to go for help with your teen

If your teen wants someone else to talk to, he or she can:

- Talk with a peer advocate through the loveisrespect phone line 24/7 at **1-866-331-9474**.
- Text the loveisrespect messaging service where teens can talk with peer advocates 24/7. Text "loveis" to **22522**.
- Find more information or chat via the website at **www.loveisrespect.org**.

Resources for parents and guardians:

- [loveisrespect](http://loveisrespect.org)
1-866-331-9474
www.loveisrespect.org
www.breakthecycle.org
www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html

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Dating should be a good thing right?

Of course! But have you, or a friend, ever dated someone and felt that something wasn't quite right? The person may seem nice most of the time, but then there are times that just don't feel right.

In a healthy relationship, each partner is respectful to the other, whether in person, on the phone, or online. It is never OK for someone else to make you feel bad, to manipulate you, or to do something that lowers your self-esteem.

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Could it be abuse? How do I know?

Abuse can happen in many ways and in any kind of dating relationship. It can happen in serious relationships or in casual hook-ups. So how do you know if it's abuse? You might see one or more of these signs:

- **Physical abuse** — contact with you that you don't want and didn't ask for, but is done to you on purpose.
- **Emotional abuse** — being talked to in a way that is meant to make you feel humiliated, scared, threatened, or insulted. The abuse may include constant texting, calling, or stalking.
- **Sexual abuse** — forcing or pressuring you to do something sexually that you don't want to do. The abuse could be rape, oral sex, or not allowing birth control or condoms to be used during sex. It is unwanted sexual contact.
- **Digital abuse** — using technology like texting or social media to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate you.
- **Financial abuse** — controlling what you can or cannot buy, or how you spend your money.

What do I do if I think I'm in an abusive relationship?

- **Remember** — the abuse is never your fault.
- Do not accept excuses from your partner about his or her actions.
- Talk to an adult, friend, family member, or your doctor — someone you trust.
- Make a safety plan to help you stay out of dangerous situations.

Need more help?

If you want to talk to someone, you can:

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- Talk with a peer advocate through the loveisrespect phone line 24/7 at **1-866-331-9474**.
- Find more information or chat via the website at **www.loveisrespect.org**.

You deserve a safe and healthy relationship!

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