

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# **HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WHILE IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP?**

## **HAS YOUR PARTNER EVER:**

- Said things to insult you or put you down
- Made you describe where you were every minute of the day
- Constantly calls or sends you text messages to see where you are and who you are with
- Said you could not talk to someone of the opposite sex
- Did not let you do things with your friends or family
- Tried to control what you wear, what you do, and how you act
- Threatened to hurt you or start to hit you but stopped
- Wrongly accused you of flirting or having sex with someone else
- Told you that (s)he wants you all to his/herself and does not let you do anything on your own
- Hit, kicked, shoved, or thrown things at you
- Made you feel afraid to break-up because (s)he says (s)he can't live without you
- Asked you to stop doing activities you love
- Made you feel afraid to disagree or treated you as if you don't have any power in your relationship
- Pressured you to have sex or made you afraid to say "no" to sex

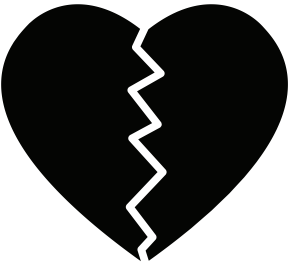
All of the above are warning signs that your partner is being abusive. If you, or anyone you know, have experienced any of these warning signs, you may be in an abusive relationship.

## WHAT IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE?

Teen dating violence is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in a dating relationship. Teen dating violence is a pattern of coercive behavior that one partner exerts over the other for the purpose of establishing and maintaining power and control over their partner.

Teen dating violence can also include harassment. Harassment is conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, is sexually intimidating, causes physical damage to the property of another person, subjects another person to physical confinement or restraint or maliciously and substantially harms another person's physical or emotional health or safety.

**Teen dating violence can sometimes result in death.**



Teen dating violence **IS NOT** an argument every once in a while or a reaction from your boyfriend or girlfriend who is in a bad mood after a bad day. Keep in mind that intense love and devotion can really be a sign of jealousy, possessiveness and control which are early red flags that you should recognize as relationship abuse.

## TYPES OF ABUSE THAT ARE DATING VIOLENCE

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse includes any physical act intended to control, harm, injure or inflict physical pain on another person. Physical abuse may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. Behaviors can range from spitting on or showing someone to committing murder. Some other examples of physical abuse include: pinching, pushing, restraining, grabbing, twisting fingers or arms, slapping, pulling hair, punching, kicking, burning or scalding, biting, scratching, beating with an object, poking or cutting with a sharp instrument, choking or attacking someone with a weapon.

## **EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE**

Emotional and verbal abuse is any kind of abuse that affects the mind rather than the body. It is the kind of abuse that wears away at the victim's self-confidence, sense of self-worth, and trust in their own preconceptions and self-concept. It can include anything from verbal insults and constant criticism, to more subtle tactics such as intimidation, manipulation, and refusal to ever be pleased. The abuse can be carried out overtly through berating and belittling or intimidation, or under the guise of "guidance," "teaching," or "advice." Regardless of the specific form that this abuse takes, the negative effects on the victim's sense of self are undeniable. Examples include: embarrassing the person in public or in front of family or friends, criticizing them, telling the person they are not good enough, calling a person degrading names (stupid, loser, slut, cow, pig), constantly correcting the person, refusing to be intimate with them as a punishment, talking a person down because of things they can't change (race, skin color, family, history), criminally harassing or stalking them, harming their personal possessions or pets, and/or terrorizing a person.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse and exploitation include all forms of sexual assault, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse incorporates elements of physical abuse and emotional abuse. Sexual abuse includes forced sex or other sexual acts even though you say no. Some examples include: all forms of sexual assault, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation (these are criminal offences in Texas), forcing a person to participate in any unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity, using ridicule or other tactics to try to defame, control or limit a person's sexuality or reproductive choices, threatening to tell others negative things about a person when they don't engage in requested sexual activity, committing rape, committing sodomy and/or forcing a person to engage in lewd exhibition.

## **THREATS, ISOLATION AND HARASSMENT**

Threats include threatening harm on you or others, threatening retaliation, or threatening to leave the relationship. Isolation can include not allowing you to be with friends, family, peers or engage in normal teenage activities. Harassment includes repeated phone calls, text messages, posts on My Space, Facebook or other social network sites, or excessive calling to your cell phone, job or your home. Threats and harassment are against the law and one may face criminal charges for engaging in these behaviors.

## **WARNING SIGNS THAT WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BEING ABUSED**

- Falling or failing grades
- Increased instances of indecision and refusing to give your own opinion
- Changes in mood or personality
- Use of drugs/alcohol, not just experimentation
- Emotional outbursts, not just mood swings
- Depression
- Isolation, insisting on more privacy
- Signs of physical injury such as cuts and bruises
- Excuses being made for an abuser's behavior

### **THE FACTS**

- 33% of all teens have been affected by teen dating violence
- 44% of all students have been in an abusive relationship by the time they graduate from college
- 30% of all murdered teenage girls were murdered by a current or former partner
- More than 85% of victims in abusive relationships are females and most abusers are male
- Dating violence also occurs in same-sex relationships
- One in three teens experience some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse
- 40% of teenage girls, ages 14 to 17, know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by their partner
- Females between the ages of 16 to 24 years old experience the highest rate of dating violence
- Nearly 80% of girls who have been physically abused in their intimate relationships continue to date their abuser
- 1 in 4 teenage girls who have been in relationships reveal they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse



## **Do your part by pledging to NEVER commit, condone, or remain silent about teen dating violence!**

### **HELP A FRIEND IN NEED**

As hard as it can be, never turn your back on a friend who may need your help.

### **THINGS THAT CAN BE FRUSTRATING...**

- A friend who is in a bad relationship may not realize they need help
- A friend may think that the relationship is the way it is because their partner loves them
- A friend might tell you that the controlling behavior is a way their partner shows they care for them
- A friend might not think they can leave the relationship and feels like the relationship is not as bad as it is
- A friend starts hanging out with you less and spends more time with their boyfriend or girlfriend

### **THINGS YOU SHOULD DO FOR A FRIEND**

- Listen to what your friend has to say
- Make sure your friend knows that you are there to talk and that you are worried about them
- Talk in private and keep your friend's confidences
- Tell your friend specific things you have seen and how it made you feel worried about their safety
- Offer to get information or help for your friend
- Don't be judgmental
- Don't make your friend feel ashamed or give them an ultimatum that you won't be their friend if they continue the relationship

## **GUYS AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE**

Unfortunately when it comes to teen dating violence, 85% of victims are female and most abusers are male. We all know the saying, “Boys don’t hit girls.” Well despite this, many guys find themselves doing just that.

Evaluate your behavior and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have a problem controlling my anger?
- Have I ever hit, shoved, or hurt my girlfriend?
- Have I ever lost friends because of the way I treat my girlfriend?
- Do I try to control my girlfriend’s whereabouts, who she talks to, who her friends are or what she is wearing?
- Do I insult my girlfriend or make her feel bad about herself?
- Do I blame my abusive behavior on my girlfriend, family problems, or alcohol/drugs?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be exhibiting abusive behavior. Although this can be difficult to accept, you should contact someone you trust to help you change your abusive ways before it gets worse.

## **GUYS, YOU CAN HELP STOP TEEN DATING VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS**

- Always treat your girlfriend with respect
- Always have open, truthful communication with your girlfriend by respecting her opinion, listening, making compromises and sometimes even admitting being wrong
- Understand that being violent, dominating and controlling is not the way to get someone to love you and does not make you a “real man”
- Never hurt your girlfriend physically, verbally, or emotionally
- Always accept responsibility for your actions
- Respect your girlfriend’s decisions concerning sex or affection
- Speak up when you see your male friends acting abusive

## **GUYS, YOU CAN BE VICTIMS TOO**

Although it may be hard for guys to accept and admit it, there are times when the guy is not the abuser but instead he is being abused. Sometimes a guy is abused by his girlfriend or by his boyfriend if he is in a same-sex relationship. This can be an extremely tough situation for any guy, but you should consider looking at the warning signs section of this handbook to identify whether you are in a teen dating violence situation and need help before things get worse.

### **TEENS LIVING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Living in a house where domestic violence exists could cause many problems for a teenager who is not emotionally equipped to handle it. You are not alone and you shouldn't keep the harsh reality of what you are experiencing at home a secret.

If you are witnessing abuse at home, you may be:

- Experiencing feelings of fear, anger, depression, grief, shame, despair, distrust, and a sense of powerlessness
- Feeling lonely and isolated from your peers
- Having academic and behavioral problems at school
- Exhibiting stress related medical and mental health problems
- Engaging in destructive behavior
- Turning to alcohol and/or drugs to hide from your reality

### **GET HELP: DON'T GO THROUGH THIS ALONE**

- Talk about the violence to an adult you trust
- Create a safety plan to protect yourself and/or your siblings
- Know that others have had similar experiences
- Know and understand that the violence is not your fault
- Don't be afraid to get the police involved

# **SAFETY TIPS AND PLANNING: TEEN DATING SAFETY PLAN FOR TEENS IN AN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIP**

## **GENERAL SAFETY**

1. Stay in touch with your friends and family and make it a point to spend time with people other than your partner.
2. Stay involved in activities that you enjoy. Don't stop doing things that you enjoy or that make you feel good about yourself.
3. Make new friends. Increase your support network.
4. Look into resources at your school or in the community. Consider joining a support group or calling a crisis line.
5. Stay in public places, familiar neighborhoods and surroundings.

## **SAFETY AT SCHOOL**

1. Try not to be alone. Let your friends know what is happening and have them walk you to classes and spend time with you during lunch.
2. Tell teachers, counselors, coaches, or security guards about what is happening to help keep you safe.
3. Change your routine. Don't always take the same route to school or arrive at the same time. Always ride to school with someone. If you take the bus, try to have someone with you.
4. Consider rearranging your class schedule if you are allowed to by your school counselor or other school official.
5. Always keep extra change or a phone card with you so you can make phone calls.
6. Consider applying for a protective order from a court.

## **SAFETY AT HOME**

1. Try not to be alone. If you are alone at home, make sure the doors are locked and the windows are secure.
2. Consider telling your parents or other family members about what is happening. They can help protect you by screening your telephone calls or visitors.
3. Make a list of important phone numbers. This list should include 911 and phone numbers of supportive friends who you can call when you are upset. Put the numbers of crisis lines on the list.

## **SAFETY WITH YOUR PARTNER**

1. Try not to be alone with your partner, or to be alone in an isolated or deserted location. Go out to public places.
2. Try to double date or to go out with a group of people.
3. Let other people know what your plans are and where you will be.
4. Try not to be dependent on your partner for a ride.
5. Always keep emergency money with you in case you need to make a phone call or for bus or cab fare.
6. Trust your Instincts! If you feel you are uncomfortable or you feel you are in danger, call the police. Get help immediately. Do not minimize your fears.

## **SAFETY WHEN BREAKING UP WITH YOUR PARTNER**

1. Break up with your partner in a public place.
2. Tell other people that you plan to break up with your partner. Let them know where you will be.
3. Arrange to call a friend or a counselor after you talk with your partner so that you can discuss what happened.

## **TEEN DATING VIOLENCE IS A CRIME**

Dating violence is against the law. It is a crime just like rape, robbery, and murder. Some possible criminal charges that could be filed for acts of dating violence are assault, harassment, terroristic threat, or murder. The age of the person committing the crime does not matter. In Texas, a teenager can be tried as an adult.

### **LEGAL PROTECTION FOR VICTIMS OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE**

In addition to pressing criminal charges against an abuser, if you are a victim of dating violence, you can apply for a legal order of protection from a court. A protective order protects victims of dating violence by ordering your abuser not to commit further acts of violence against you; not to harass, threaten, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass you; not to communicate with you in a threatening or harassing manner; and to stay away from your residence, work, or school.

An application for a protective order is free. If you are 18 years old or older, you can seek a protective order for yourself. If you are under 18, you can have any adult apply for one on your behalf. To apply for a protective order for dating violence, your abuser must be someone you are dating, or someone you used to date; and he or she must have physically harmed you, or attempted or threatened to physically harm you. The application for a protective order must be filed in the county in which you or your abuser lives. The court will grant a protective order once you prove that dating violence has occurred and that it is likely to occur again.



If you need a protective order, contact your local County/District Attorney's office, a private attorney, or a legal aid service program.

## **WHEN YOU SUSPECT ABUSE**

We all have the responsibility to protect children from abuse. If you suspect the abuse of a minor, it is your duty to report it immediately.

Anyone having cause to believe that a minor's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse **MUST** report the case immediately to a state or local law enforcement agency or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). DFPS has a toll-free, 24-hour Family Violence Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.

## **YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATION**

Current law requires that professionals such as teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, social workers, clergymen, and psychologists must make a verbal report within 48 hours. Failure to report suspected abuse of a minor is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$2,000 (Texas Family Code, Chapter 261).

Reporting suspected abuse to your principal, school counselor or superintendent will **NOT** satisfy your obligation under this law. Local school district policy cannot conflict with or supersede the state law requiring you to report abuse to a law enforcement agency or DFPS.

## **YOUR LEGAL PROTECTION**

Your report of abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in "good faith" and "without malice."

In "good faith" means that the person making the report took reasonable steps to learn facts that were readily available and at hand. "Without malice" means that the person did not intend to injure or violate the rights of another person. Provided these two conditions are met, you will also be immune from liability if you are asked to participate in any judicial proceedings that might result from your report.

## **IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE**

DON'T try to investigate.

DON'T confront the abuser.

DO report your reasonable suspicions.

It is not up to you to determine whether your suspicions are true. A trained investigator will evaluate the student's situation. Even if your report does not bring decisive action, it may help establish a pattern that will eventually be clear enough to help the student.

## **PARENTS AND TDV**

Parents, you play a vital role in your teenager's life. This is the time when your teen is most likely exerting or attempting to exert their independence. Your teen may not be communicating and sharing with you as often as he or she once did. But, it is important that you attempt to provide guidance and insight, especially in the area of dating. While you may not be able to pick the person your teen dates, you can provide some guidance on behavior that your teen should not exhibit when in a dating relationship and should find unacceptable if your teen is ever exposed to it. It is important that your teen knows that any form of violence or abuse in a relationship is unacceptable.

Whether or not your teen communicates what is going on in their dating life, here are a few things to look out for:

- Bruises, scratches or other injuries
- Change in appearance or dress
- Falling grades
- Dropping out of activities
- Avoiding friends
- Sudden change in mood or personality
- Inability to make decisions
- Giving up things he or she cares about

While teens may gain new friends, change their style, or have changes in their mood, these may also be signs of deeper issues that you need to look into or discuss with them.



Because your teen may be embarrassed by the violent or abusive situation they find themselves in, they may not immediately come to you when they are faced with that situation. You, as their parent, need to be aware and on the lookout for changes in your teen's behavior that may be indicators that something is going on with them.

## **IF YOUR TEEN IS AN ABUSER**

Parents, if you believe your teen is an abuser, it is imperative that you recognize, acknowledge, and confront your teen with his or her controlling and abusive behavior in a way that will break the cycle of violence. It is your responsibility to teach your child what is and is not acceptable in his or her dating relationship. Some warning signs that your son or daughter may be abusing his or her partner are as follows:

- Your teen is jealous, possessive, or controlling
- Your teen has an explosive temper
- He or she consistently ridicules, criticizes or insults his/her partner
- Your teen blames others when he/she gets angry
- Your teen exhibits abusive behaviors towards you, family, or friends
- He or she wants to get serious with their partner quickly
- Your teen makes his or her partner's decisions and checks up on and/or follows him or her
- Your teen blames his or her partner for his or her violent behavior
- Your teen apologizes for violent behavior

If your son or daughter is abusing their partner, some things you may consider doing to remedy the situation and to prevent it from happening in the future are: talking to the parents of your teen's partner, obtain help for your teen from community programs and mental health professionals, and support your teen's efforts to stop the pattern of abuse. It is important to know however, that if the situation is justified, you may have to make the difficult decision to report your teen's violence to the proper authorities.

## **BE A PROACTIVE PARENT**

As the parent of a teen, there are many ways to be actively involved in your teen's life and to hopefully prevent dating violence. One is to always maintain open lines of communication with your teen. Another such way is to establish clear dating boundaries for your teen. These rules will need to be appropriate for your child's age

and maturity level, and they may change depending on a particular dating situation. The following are just a few suggested rules/guidelines that may help your teen learn to make good choices and to build healthy relationships:

- Insist that your teen's date come into the house so that you can meet him or her
- Know the details about each date, including who will be present, where they will be going, what they will be doing, and when they will be home
- Make sure your teen knows that alcohol or drug use is not allowed by anyone on any date
- Tell your teen if he or she ever wants to leave a date, you are always willing and available to pick him or her up at any time and/or location
- Always make yourself available if your teen wants to talk after a date

## WHO TO TURN TO FOR HELP

- Talk with your friends or family members about what you are going through so that they can support you.
- If you are able to, talk to your parents or another adult that you trust.
- If you believe you are being harassed, bullied or otherwise victimized by another student, report the incident to the campus principal, counselor, teacher, or other campus professional. Your report will be kept confidential.
- Call your local or national domestic violence agencies for help.

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224(TTY)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
24-hour Family Violence Hotline 1-800-252-5400

Love is Respect Helpline  
1-866-331-9474 or 1-866-331-8453

Texas Advocacy Project  
Family Violence Legal Line  
1-800-374-HOPE (4673)

Love is Respect Peer-to-Peer Chat at  
[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

[www.tyla.org/family\\_law.html](http://www.tyla.org/family_law.html)

[www.texasadvocacyproject.org](http://www.texasadvocacyproject.org)

[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

[www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)

[www.chooserespect.org](http://www.chooserespect.org)

[www.thesafespace.org](http://www.thesafespace.org)

[www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)

[www.taasa.org/star](http://www.taasa.org/star)

[www.abanet.org/publiced/teendating.shtml](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/teendating.shtml)

\*The information and facts provided in this brochure were obtained from the following sources:

1. Liz Claiborne, Conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, Feb. 2005.
2. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, July 2008.
3. Teen Dating Violence Memorandum, Sally Borden & Karen Shue.
4. Tough Talk: What boys need to know about relationship abuse, Liz Claiborne.
5. Dr. David Freidenberg and Dr. Deanna Chew-Freidenberg at [www.drdaveanddee.com](http://www.drdaveanddee.com).
6. The Government of the Northwest Territories at [www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca).
7. Eastside Domestic Violence Program at [www.edvp.org](http://www.edvp.org).
8. National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence at [www.edvp.org](http://www.edvp.org).



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For additional family law resources, visit [www.tyla.org](http://www.tyla.org).

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