

Teen Dating Violence: *Just for Parents*

As a parent who wants the very best for your kids, just thinking about the possibility that he/she could be in an abusive relationship can be very upsetting and frightening. However, as a parent, you play a powerful and critical role in providing life-saving support for your teen should you discover he/she is in an abusive relationship.

What to Look For: Early Warning Signs

- Dropping school activities.
- Falling grades.
- Dramatic changes in appearance (weight, dress, personal hygiene.)
- Developing nervous habits.
- Unexplained bruises or injuries.
- Sudden emotional changes (mood swings, depression, angry outbursts.)
- Physical signs of stress (headache, hives stomachache)
- Isolated from friends and family.
- Excessive time on phone.
- Making excuses for their boyfriend/girlfriend's behavior.

What You Can Do to Help Your Teen

- Share qualities of a healthy relationship.
- Identify red flags of an unhealthy relationship.
- Let your teen know you care about their safety and well-being.
- Listen carefully—be supportive and understanding, make no judgments.
- Let your teen know that abuse is not their fault.
- Remain calm when talking with your teen.
- Share helpful resources to establish a solid support network.
- Offer to arrange professional support, like counseling.

What You Can Say to Your Teen

- I'm here for you.
- You can always talk to me.
- How can I help you?
- You deserve respect.
- You are worthy of love.
- I believe you.
- I support your decisions.
- Thank you for trusting me.
- I love you.



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