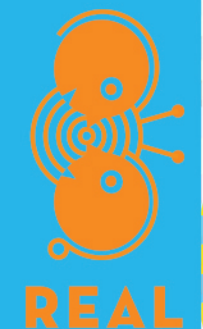




TEEN FORUMS



REAL

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



EXPECT & GIVE
EQUALITY!



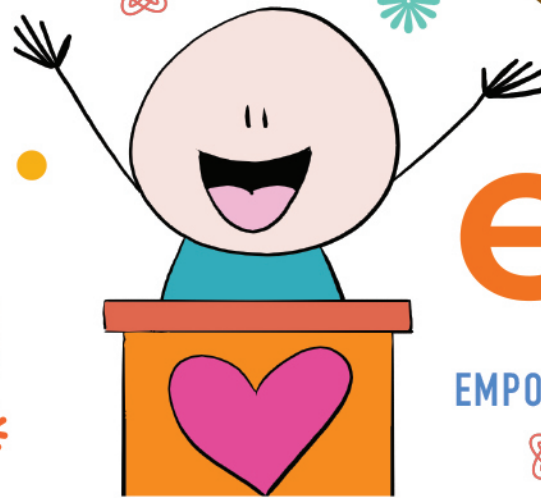
LOVE SHOULD
NEVER HURT!



BE REAL:

START THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR TEENS ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

PARENT & TEEN ADVOCATE DISCUSSION GUIDE



EMPOWERHOUSEVA.ORG

24 HOUR HOTLINE : 540-373-9373

empower HOUSE

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Healthy Relationships include:

- Healthy Communication
- Honesty and Accountability
- Boundaries
- Space and time apart
- Equality & Respect
- Room for each person to be their own person
- Trust

"Why talk to my teen(s)? They're not dating yet/are already in a relationship that seems healthy."

Only 1/3 of the teens who were involved in an abusive relationship confided in someone about the violence. (Hattersley Gray, Robin. "Dating Abuse Statistics." School Safety. Accessed April 22, 2014.)

- It is never too early to teach respect of self and others.
- As a parent/teen advocate, you play a critical role in helping your teen develop healthy relationships.
- You can provide life-saving support if the teen is in an abusive relationship.
- Dating violence can occur regardless of whether your teen is in a heterosexual or LGBTQ+ relationship; any gender can be abusive.
- Relationships can be difficult – helping a teen to learn about healthy communication and respect when handling conflicts can be life-long skills.
- Teens are constantly absorbing messages from the media, peers, and other influences. Adding your thoughts on healthy relationships can be pivotal in helping them to distinguish good information from more questionable sources.

33% OF ADOLESCENTS IN AMERICA ARE VICTIM TO SEXUAL, PHYSICAL, VERBAL, OR EMOTIONAL DATING ABUSE.

The NO MORE Project. "Dating Abuse Statistics." www.loveisrespect.org. Accessed April 22, 2014.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR OFTEN BEGINS BETWEEN 6TH & 12TH GRADE. 72% OF 13 & 14-YEAR-OLDS ARE "DATING."

Hattersley Gray, Robin. "Dating Abuse Statistics." School Safety. Accessed April 22, 2014

THE SEVERITY OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IS OFTEN GREATER IN CASES WHERE THE PATTERN OF ABUSE WAS ESTABLISHED IN ADOLESCENCE.

S.L. Feld & M.A. Strauss, *Criminology*, 27, 141-161, (1989).



Why teens are silent about experiencing abuse

- They are embarrassed/ashamed/afraid
- They are convinced the abuse is their fault
- They do not define their partner's behavior(s) as abuse
- They are afraid they will be forced to break up with their partner
- They are certain that being in a relationship is the most important thing in their life
- They confuse jealousy with love and consider abusive behaviors to be "normal"
- They have been threatened by their partner and are trying to protect themselves or loved ones
- They are unsure if anyone will believe them

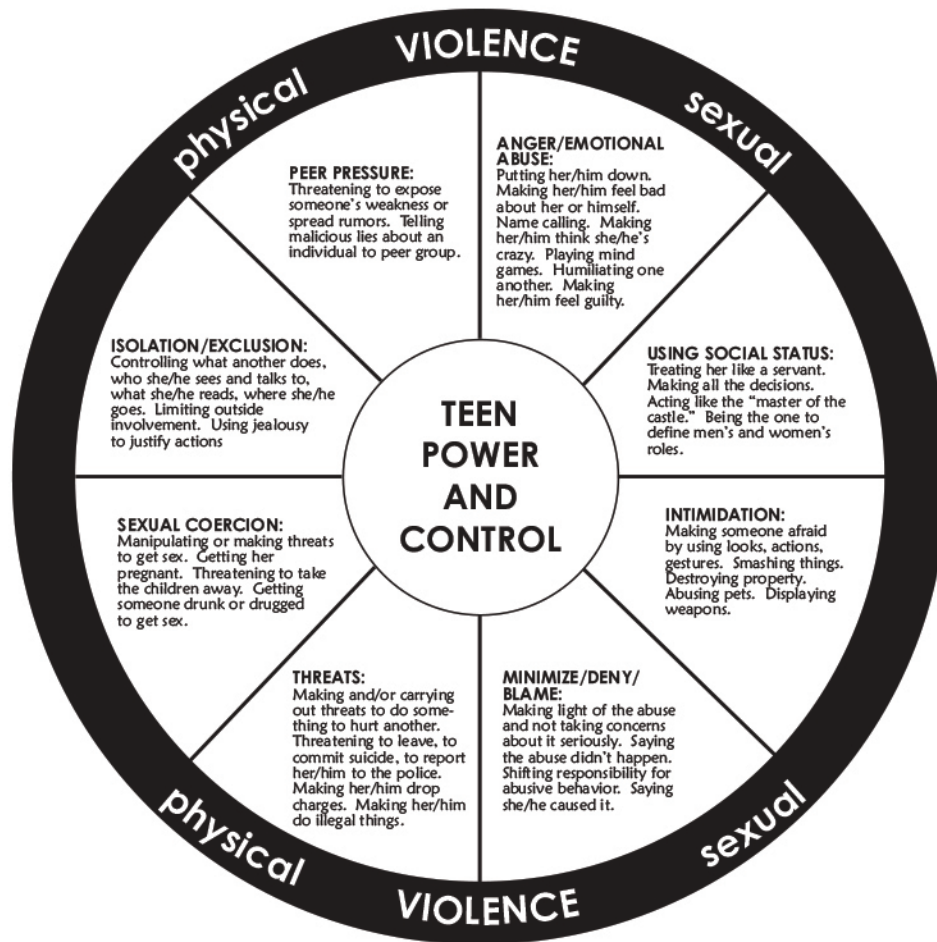
Warning signs that a teen could be experiencing abuse

- Avoiding or withdrawing from friends, family, school, interests, and commitments
- Apologizing and/or making excuses for their dating partner
- Constantly checking their phone, responding immediately when contacted by their partner; getting upset or anxious when unable to respond right away
- Unexplained bruises, marks, or scratches
- A change in behavior or demeanor after talking with their partner or hanging out with them

WARNING SIGNS OF AN ABUSER

- **Jealousy and possessiveness**
 - Monopolizing partner's time
 - Telling their partner what to wear/not to wear
 - Commenting "You're mine" or "I can't live without you"
 - Showing up when not expected
 - Checking up on partner
 - Accusations of cheating
 - Jealous of all relationships
- **Controlling and demanding behavior**
 - Demanding to have "access" to their partner at all times
 - Making threats to "out" their partner or disclose personal information if they do not behave in a certain way
 - Dictating what their partner can/can't do
- **Using guilt to get their way**
 - Threatening suicide to manipulate decisions
- **Explosive anger and using intimidation**
 - Making partner feel bad about hanging out with others
 - Threatening with body language or weapons
 - Destroying property
 - Punching walls
 - Driving dangerously
- **Isolating from friends and family**
- **Blaming all arguments and problems on partner**
- **Blaming abuse on partner's behavior or anyone or anything; no responsibility for their own actions**
- **Constantly checking up on partner through texting/calling**
- **Checking partner's phone or social media without permission**

TEEN POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



The Be Real Video was created for teens ages 13-15 to be implemented in classroom settings and to be used by friends of teens, parents, and all teen advocates as a tool to start the conversation about healthy relationships. This video was made possible by The Women and Girls Fund of the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region and in collaboration with Blue Seat Studios (creators of the funny, yet powerful, "Tea Consent" video).

With a focus on healthy and unhealthy relationships, we aim to combine light-hearted humor and animation to educate teens on the hidden tactics of emotional abuse through controlling behavior and digital manipulation.

Tips for parents and teen advocates

- You don't need a lot of time to talk, just make conversations consistent!
- Consider the location and who is around during these conversations to ensure privacy and the ability to give your full attention
- Listen and give support
- Accept what the teen is telling you
- Show concern, but don't give ultimatums
- Focus on the behaviors, not the person (i.e. instead of labeling a partner as abusive, talk with the teen about the concerning behaviors you may see)
- Decide on next steps together with a safety plan (See A Teen's Guide to Safety Planning)
- Use open-ended questions that give the teen space to communicate their own thoughts
- Give the teen space to talk (don't rush or try to "rescue" with suggestive answers or problem-solving), allow them time to reflect, and give them the ability to come to their own conclusions
- Remember that having these conversations and allowing the teen to think critically and make their own choices is a fundamental part of their development and journey in adolescence

Conversation Starters about the Be Real Video

Please see other downloadable resource sheets referenced below on our website at www.empowerhouseva.org (on the teen page) or at www.loveisrespect.org.

- **Everyone has the right to hang out with their friends and family:**
Is it ok for your partner to make you feel guilty for wanting to hang out with your friends?
Is "space" ok in a relationship? Why or why not?
If you're feeling jealous about your partner spending time with others, how might you start a healthy conversation with your partner about it?
How can you be supportive to your partner if they want to spend time alone or with other people? (See Setting Boundaries in a Relationship)
- **Everyone has the right to privacy.**
What does privacy look like in a relationship? With texting? With social media? (See Texting and Sexting: Is this abuse?)
Why is privacy important?
Is any stalking or tracking ok?
How are trust and privacy related in a relationship? (See Trust: Healthy Relationships)

- **Everyone has the right to make their own decisions and end a relationship.**

What are healthy and unhealthy ways to break up with someone?

Why is threatening self-harm such a serious thing to say to someone? What would you do if your partner threatened self harm?

What is scary about ending a relationship?

- **Everyone has the right to balance and equality in a relationship.**

What does balance look like in a relationship? (See Equality in Relationships)

When conflicts or disagreements arise, how do you get back to a state of balance safely? (See Conflict Resolution: Healthy Relationships)

What rights do each person have in a relationship? (See Know Your Relationship rights)

What are your responsibilities in a relationship?

How can you show support, trust, and respect to a dating partner?

- **Emotional abuse is common, but not normal.**

How do you define emotional abuse? (See What is Emotional/Verbal Abuse?)

What were some examples of emotional abuse that you saw from the video?

What's considered 'normal' in dating situations that isn't actually healthy?

- **All genders can be controlling and all genders can experience emotional abuse.**

What does this statement mean to you?

How does "the media" help or hurt this important fact?

Other Conversation Starters about Healthy Relationships

- What would you want in a partner?
- What does it mean to communicate openly with your partner?
- Does your partner give you space to spend time with your friends?
- Does your partner try to control you?
- Do you support, trust, and respect your partner?
- What are your friends' relationships like? Have you ever seen red flags in their relationships?
- Do you know what you would do if you witnessed abuse?
- How can you help a friend who may need help?

If your teen is being abused: know that the decision to end and to leave an abusive relationship needs to come from them to be most effective. Ask what they would like to see happen next and seek resources that may support their decision. Consider developing a safety plan that can help them avoid dangerous situations and know the best way to react when threats or risks may be present. Contact Empowerhouse's 24/7 hotline at 540-373-9373 and/or Love Is Respect's teen textline by texting "LoveIs" to 22522 for more information. (See A Teen's Guide to Safety Planning)

If your teen is the abuser: emphasize to them that violence is always a choice. There is no excuse for being abusive and there are consequences for such actions – from getting expelled from school to going to jail. Changing abusive behaviors is a challenging process that cannot be done alone. Encourage your teen to get help from a counselor and/or batterer intervention group. They have the power to change. Contact Empowerhouse's 24/7 hotline at 540-373-9373 for more information and support.

"You're Not Alone. There's Help."

EMPOWERHOUSE: 540-373-9373

P.O.Box 1007, Fredericksburg, VA

WWW.EMPOWERHOUSEVA.ORG

For presentations and/or teen advocacy : Empowerhouse Office 540.373.9372

For other support and/or other national resources: www.loveisrespect.org or text "LoveIs" to 22522

