

TIPS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS DATING VIOLENCE

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Talk about healthy dating relationships and possible problems. It is never too early or too late to teach about respect. Respect for self and others is important in any relationship.

If you think your teenager already may be involved with an abusive partner:

- Give your teen a chance to talk. Listen quietly to the whole story.
- Tell your child that you are there to help, not to judge.
- If your teen does not want to talk with you, help find another trusted person for your child to talk with.
- Focus on your child's safety and self-esteem. Point out how unhappy your teenager seems to be while with this person and the possibility of danger or harm. Do not "put down" the abusive partner.
- Let your child know that abuse always gets worse. What may start as minor verbal or physical abuse is very likely to get worse if not stopped immediately.

If your teenager tries to break up with an abusive partner:

- Advise that the breakup be definite and final.
- Develop a safety plan with your teen ahead of time.
- Support your teenager's decision and be ready to help.
- Make sure your teen takes all necessary safety measures.
 - Avoid walking or riding alone, and always travel with another friend.
 - Consider changing class schedules.
 - Get help from the guidance counselor, school principal, or if necessary, the police.

What You Can Say

It is important for your teen to talk about dating violence, either with you or with another trusted adult. Many people who have been victims of dating violence have been able to change their lives after they began talking with others.

- "I care about what happens to you. I love you and I want to help."
- "If you feel afraid, it may be abuse. Sometimes people act in ways that are scary and make you feel threatened, even without using physical violence. Pay attention to what you are feeling."
- "No one has the right to hit you. No one has the right to control you or what you do."
- "The abuse is not your fault. You are not to blame, no matter how guilty ____ is trying to make you feel. This should not be happening to you."
- "It is ____ who has a problem, not you. It is not your responsibility to help ____ change."

(Reproduced from:www.healthychildren.org- Dating Violence Tips for Parents)

The Crime Victim Assistance Center provides information, access to resources, support, education, counseling, legal assistance, and other services to all victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault- including teen dating violence. If you suspect your child is in an abusive relationship. Additional resources can be found at: www.breakthecycle.org and nomore.org.

What Every Parent Should Know About:

Teen Dating Violence

FACTS ABOUT TEEN DATING VIOLENCE:

1 in 3 female high school and college students surveyed had experienced physical violence in a dating relationship

Abuse can include emotional, sexual, physical, and verbal activities from yelling and swearing to pushing

Both guys and girls can be victims of dating violence

Abusive relationships typically follow a cycle: Tension Building, Abuse, and then the Honeymoon/Reconciliation

AS MUCH AS 86% OF DATING VIOLENCE OCCURS IN THE SERIOUS PHASE OF THE DATING RELATIONSHIP.

WARNING SIGNS OF VICTIMIZATION

Becoming withdrawn from family, friends, groups, and previous activities,

Frequent crying or emotional outbursts

Making excuses for partner's behaviors and/or frequently needing to explain and apologize to partner for his/her own behavior

The need to maintain constant contact through phone, text, in person, or social media

Changing and/or becoming critical of own appearance, talents, and abilities because of partner's demands

Increasing secretive behavior from loved ones

Hidden or unexplained bruising or other physical injuries

UNDERSTANDING THE ABUSER:

Abusive partners may at times appear to be loving, gentle, charming, affectionate, hardworking, and good students.

Their behavior is learned and about control over a victim. It is not a bad temper, side effect of addiction, or reaction to stress.

It is not something a victim can control or fix in their partner- no matter how much he/she may love their abuser.

