



## Information for Parents

Dating Abuse can affect *anyone*. It is important to talk to your teens about healthy relationships versus abusive ones so that they can be informed. Below is some information about Teen Dating Abuse, and how to support and assist your teen if they are involved in an abusive relationship.

### Is your teen a Victim?

Below are some warning signs to look for if you feel that your teen might be involved in a violent relationship.

- Do they fear their partner?
- Do they frequently have marks or bruises that they dismiss as accidents?
- Do they seem to be sad and depressed, and are withdrawing from family and friends?
- Have they changed their physical appearance?
- Have they given up things that used to be important to them?
- Does their partner want them to be available at all times?
- Do they make excuses and apologize for the way that their partner behaves?

### What can a parent do if they suspect abuse?

- Know about your teen's relationships.
- If you do suspect that your teen is involved in an abusive relationship, be supportive and not accusatory. Don't play the blame game. Be a good listener so that you can try to get some more information about what is going on in your teen's life.
- Resist the urge to give an ultimatum. Boundaries are good, but an ultimatum could push your teen closer to their abuser.
- Let your teen know that you are concerned for their safety, say things like: "You don't deserve to be treated like this." "You deserve to be in a relationship where you are treated with respect." and "This is not your fault."
- Accept the things that your teen tells you, showing skepticism could make your teen hesitate to tell you when things are wrong, and drive them closer to their abuser.
- Offer your unconditional support, and make sure that they know that you are there to listen to them and not to judge them.
- Help your teen to identify the unhealthy behaviors and patterns in their relationship. Be prepared with good information about Teen Dating Abuse, and the difference between an abusive relationship and a healthy one.
- If you feel like your teen is involved in an abusive relationship, get yourself informed. Find out about local Domestic Violence programs in your area where your teen could get support and counseling. Research Dating Abuse so that you are prepared with good, accurate information for when you talk with your teen.
- Above all be supportive and caring, and let your teen know that you are there for them no matter what happens.

**For more support and information contact Love is Respect, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org).**