



## Teen Dating Abuse

*"The act of love is to say, 'I want you to be who you are.' The act of abuse is to say, 'I want you to be who I want you to be.' It is that simple." –James D. Gill*

Dating abuse does not discriminate. It can take many forms and can affect *anyone*. It is not limited to physical abuse; it can also include verbal, emotional and sexual abuse.

*Healthy relationships* are based on mutual respect, equality, communication and trust. *Abusive relationships* are based on control, jealousy, intimidation, and blame.

### What Is Abuse?

- *Jealousy*  
Doesn't want you to have friends, gets upset when you spend time with other people, constantly accuses you of cheating.
- *Control*  
Doesn't let you make your own decisions, tells you what clothes to wear and what you are allowed to do, always wants to know where you are and who you talk to, goes through your personal belongings and your cell phone without your permission.
- *Threats & Intimidation*  
Threatens to hurt you or people you love, threatens to leave you in strange places, threatens to commit suicide if you leave, destroys your belongings, threatens to tell your secrets.
- *Ignores "No"*  
Pressures you to do things that you do not want to do, forces or guilt-trips you into sex when you are not willing.
- *Blame*  
Blames you for anything that goes on in the relationship, says if you hadn't provoked them then they wouldn't have hurt you, makes you feel like everything is your fault and you can do nothing right.
- *Verbal & Emotional Abuse*  
Calls you names, puts you down, spreads rumors about you to isolate you from your friends, tells you that they are the only one that cares about you or will ever love you.

### How can I help a friend who is being abused?

- Listen to your friend and be supportive.
- Don't judge your friend for being in the situation or blame her for what happened.
- Tell her you believe her and that it wasn't her fault.
- Let her know that you are worried about her safety.
- Encourage her to talk to a trusted adult; offer to go with her when she talks to them.

**To learn more about abusive relationships and to find help for yourself or a friend, please contact Love is Respect, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org).**