

TEEN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE: TEENS AND TECHNOLOGY SAFETY



INFORMATION FOR TEENS

Teen relationship violence involves a pattern of behaviors focused on establishing and maintaining power and control over one dating partner by the other. Power and control may involve controlling who the victim sees, where they go, and what activities they participate in. Abusive behaviors take many forms and usually include one or a combination of the following: physical abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual assault or pressure, stalking, technology abuse, and isolation. Remember that every abusive relationship is potentially dangerous and can become fatal.



WHAT TO DO IF...

YOU ARE BEING ABUSED:

- Remember the abuse is not your fault.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Recognize the potential for real danger.
- Think of ways you can be safe and develop a safety plan. What's a safety plan? A safety plan is a personalized plan for how to stay safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or after leaving the relationship.*

YOUR FRIEND IS IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP:

- Express your concerns in a non-judgmental way.
- Point out the abusive behavior that you've observed.
- Listen to your friend and be there for her or him.
- Reach out or suggest that they reach out to a trusted adult for help.

YOU ARE ABUSIVE:

- Recognize that you can be abusive even if you don't physically hurt someone.
- Understand that no one has the right to control or hurt another person.
- Accept responsibility for your abusive behaviors.
- Talk to someone you trust who can help you.

YOUR FRIEND IS BEING ABUSIVE:

- Point out and be specific about the behaviors you have witnessed.
- Take a stand against the abuse by letting your friend know that their abusive behavior is not acceptable.
- Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult about their behavior.
- Support their efforts to change.

*For safety planning resources, visit loveisrespect.org or call your local domestic violence program.

TECHNOLOGY SAFETY

PASSWORD SAFETY

- Don't share usernames and passwords with anyone except your parent or guardian.
- Don't use information in your password that could be easily guessed by others. For instance, don't use your birth date, pet's name, school information, etc.
- Use a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols in your password.
- Don't allow a computer or program to store your password.
- Always sign out and use your password to sign in.
- Place a password lock on your cell phone.

BE SMART WITH ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND GAMING

- If possible, set up an age appropriate account. Many social and gaming networks have accounts specifically for minors.
- Remember that family, teachers, coaches, employers, coworkers, and others may be able to view the information you share while online.
- Don't share your password, unless it's with a parent or guardian. If someone knows your screen name, email address, or username and your password they can sign in and impersonate you.
- Social applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat may share your location with others. If you chose not to use these features, make sure they are turned off and check regularly that they remain off.
- Don't post pictures of your friends without their permission and ask friends to get your permission before they post photos of you.



WATCH OUT FOR SPYWARE

Spyware is a computer software program or hardware device that enables an unauthorized person to secretly monitor and gather information about your computer or smartphone use. A current or past abusive girlfriend or boyfriend might install spyware on your phone without your knowledge.

Here are a few tips that may help to minimize your risks:

- ✓ Don't open emails or attachments from people you do not know or trust.
- ✓ Always be cautious when opening electronic greeting cards or links as they can be used to install spyware remotely.
- ✓ Install antivirus and anti-spyware software programs and keep them updated.
- ✓ Surveillance equipment can be disguised as many things, so be cautious when accepting gifts.
- ✓ Cover your webcam when you are not using it. They can be turned on remotely and images can be saved or broadcast over the internet.

LOCATION MATTERS: THE GPS

GPS is an electronic system using a network of satellites to indicate the position of a device. GPS is often built into cell phones and navigational systems in cars.

Here are a few tips to ensure you stay safe with GPS:

- ✓ If accepting a cellphone from a girlfriend or boyfriend, be sure to check it for GPS tracking software.
- ✓ Trust your instincts. If you think you are being followed or your girlfriend or boyfriend always seems to know where you are, they may be tracking you using GPS.
- ✓ GPS devices can be in just about anything—a piece of jewelry, a stuffed animal, or a computer memory stick.
- ✓ If you suspect you are being followed, speak with a trusted adult who can help you figure out how it may be happening.



SEXTING

Sexting refers to the act of sending or forwarding nude, sexually suggestive, or explicit pictures or text messages to someone else on your cell phone or online. The same goes for webcams and instant messaging. It is illegal to possess or distribute nude, sexually suggestive, or explicit pictures of a minor—even if those pictures are of you or your partner. Doing so may result in legal issues for both the sender and the receiver. Remember you never have to do anything you aren't comfortable with, no matter how much your partner pressures you.

Here are some thoughts and tips regarding sexting:

- ✓ **Don't allow another person to take or pressure you into taking a sexually explicit picture of you or anyone else.**
- ✓ **Once another person has access to your picture, you cannot control what that person does with it or who they share it with.**
- ✓ **Be respectful—don't pressure others to sext and don't feel like you have to engage in sexting.**
- ✓ **If you receive a picture that would be considered a sext, do not show or forward it to others. Delete it immediately.**

REVENGE PORNOGRAPHY

Revenge porn refers to the act of distributing intimate pictures through different means both digitally and print, without the person's consent as an attempt to shame or embarrass the person. Although revenge is not always the motivating factor, it is commonly used by a dating partner as retaliation for romantic relationships that are ending or have ended.

Sharing someone's nude pictures without consent is against the law. In Louisiana, anyone who shares a nude or partially-nude cellphone picture or video without permission can face up to two years in jail and a fine reaching \$10,000.⁵

¹Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus.

Available at http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008_focus_teen_dating_violence.pdf.

²Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice and Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the United States, 1993-2004. Dec. 2006.

^{3,4}Study on Teen Dating Abuse for Liz Claiborne Inc. Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2005.

⁵RS.14:283.2.

TEEN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE & TECHNOLOGY SAFETY

With texting and social networking being two of the most used methods of communication among teens, it's important to know what to look for when it comes to teen relationship violence and staying safe while using these digital forms of communication. So, what is teen relationship violence?

Teen relationship violence is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, financial, verbal, and emotional abuse. It can also be sexual pressure, social sabotage, and/or sexual harassment committed by a teen against a current or former dating partner or someone with whom they have some kind of intimate relationship. The goal of these behaviors is to achieve and maintain power and control over the victim.

Teen relationship violence can affect any teen, male or female, straight or gay, in a serious or casual, past or present relationship. Any teen can be a victim of relationship violence, but the risk for victimization is more significant for females. Relationship violence among teens is wide-spread and the consequences can be life-changing.

TEEN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE STATISTICS

- 1 in 3 adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.¹
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost triple the national average.²
- Less than 25% of teens say they have discussed dating violence with their parents.³

TEEN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE & TECHNOLOGY STATISTICS⁴

- 17% of teens say their partner has made them afraid not to respond to a cell phone call, email, IM or text message because of what he or she might do.
- Nearly 1 in 5 teens in a relationship (19%) say that their partner has used a cell phone or the internet to spread rumors about them.
- 72% of teens who reported they've been checked on 10 times per hour by email or text messaging report that they didn't tell their parents.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

SIGNS A TEEN IS BEING ABUSED

The teen victim may:

- ✓ Change their daily routine.
- ✓ Retreat from school or activities and experience isolation or withdraw from friends.
- ✓ Spend excessive amounts of time with the person they are dating.
- ✓ Constantly be on their cell phone.
- ✓ Receive excessive or unwanted texts, calls, or emails.
- ✓ Exhibit anxiety, withdrawal, depression, or engage in substance abuse.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ✓ Learn the signs of abuse and how technology can be used to stalk and abuse.
- ✓ Talk with your teen about the abuse and provide non-judgmental support.
- ✓ Consult with the National Dating Abuse Helpline at (866) 331-9474/ TTY: (866) 331-8453.
- ✓ Speak with your teen's school about policies and prevention programming.
- ✓ Provide resources for your teen and give them space to explore those resources.

SIGNS A TEEN IS BEING ABUSIVE

The teen abuser may:

- ✔ Exhibit dependence, obsession, or a controlling attitude toward their girlfriend or boyfriend.
- ✔ Be overly concerned with where their girlfriend or boyfriend goes, who they talk to, and what they do.
- ✔ Make excessive or unwanted texts, calls or emails to their girlfriend or boyfriend.
- ✔ Use technology to monitor their girlfriend's or boyfriend's activities.
- ✔ Exhibit strong jealousy or anger regarding their relationship.
- ✔ Rationalize their monitoring, controlling, manipulative, violent or abusive behavior.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ✔ Recognize and acknowledge your teen's controlling and abusive behavior.
- ✔ Talk with your teen about the abusive behavior, explain why the behavior is wrong and encourage them to take responsibility for their behavior.
- ✔ Consult with your local domestic violence program and ask for referrals for professional help.

RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR TEENS

NATIONAL DATING ABUSE HELPLINE

866.331.9474 or 866.331.8453 (TTY)

www.loveisrespect.org or text Love Is to 22522

(message and data rates apply on text help services)

RAPE, ABUSE, AND INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK

800.656.HOPE (4673) • www.rainn.org

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

CHOOSE RESPECT/CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

www.chooserespect.org/scripts/parents/parents.asp

FACEBOOK (SAFETY AND SECURITY INFORMATION)

www.facebook.com/safety/groups/parents

LOUISIANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1.888.411.1333

FREE • CONFIDENTIAL • 24 HOURS

*This is a free call to a domestic violence program
in your area of Louisiana.*

WWW.LCADV.ORG



This project was supported by Subgrant Number 3237 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.