



Teens and Dating Violence

Dating violence can be emotional, physical, or sexual. Teens are often confused and scared when abuse occurs. Sometimes teens may even think it is their fault. They may not know how to tell you about it.

Here are some thoughts to talk with your teen about:

- Why a person would be attracted to someone who makes them feel bad.
- Violence. It is not part of healthy, loving relationships.
- If your teen is in a relationship that in any way feels uncomfortable, awkward, or frightening, tell him or her to trust their feelings and get out of it.
- Remind your teen they always have the right to say no. No boyfriend or girlfriend has the right to tell them what they can or should do or wear, what kind of friends they should have, or pressure them into sexual activity when they're not ready.

Signs of an abusive relationship are when the partner:

- Is controlling or jealous for instance, they might call a lot.
- Has a short temper.
- Puts your teen down. Emotional abuse often occurs before the first slap, push, or grab.
- Isolates your teen from friends. You may notice that your teen only hangs out with the person he or she is dating.

If you are convinced your teen is being mistreated, it is okay to forbid them from seeing that person, and seek outside help. These issues are really hard for adults to deal with, imagine what it's like for your child. Being able to identify and be in healthy relationships is a very important skill. For more information call your health care provider, or visit Parenting.umn.edu.

Source: *Positive Parenting of Teens*, University of Minnesota Extension Service and University of Minnesota Department of Public Health

For more information on parenting call INFO-U at 612-624-2200 and request a catalog of available topics.

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