



## February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is a nationally recognized campaign to raise awareness and education on teen dating abuse. **1 in 3 teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by an intimate partner, and nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors.** February was declared National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month by Congress in 2010, and continues to be a month-long campaign focused on advocacy and prevention. ([love is respect, 2021](#)).

### Warning signs of teen dating violence:

Every relationship is and looks different. It's sometimes hard to identify when behavior is becoming unhealthy or abusive. Here are some typical warning signs:

- Checking your phone, email, or social media accounts without your permission.
- Putting you down frequently, especially in front of others.
- Isolating you from friends or family (physically, financially, or emotionally).
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity.
- Explosive outbursts, temper, or mood swings.
- Any form of physical harm.
- Possessiveness or controlling behavior.
- Pressuring you or forcing you to have sex.
- ([love is respect, 2021](#))

### What you can do to help prevent teen dating violence:

**Preventing Teen Dating Violence Requires Change at All Levels**

Strategies may include:

- Individual**
  - Learn & model attitudes & behaviors valuing healthy, respectful, & non-violent relationships early
- Relationship**
  - Educate teens on effective communication
  - Train coaches to discuss positive gender norms in athletic activities
  - Implement school programs to prevent substance abuse & sexual risks
- Community**
  - Use evidence-based strategies to promote & enhance safe schools
  - Train influential adults working with youth to recognize risks & to stop dating violence
- Societal**
  - Promote policies & laws supporting respectful, non-violent relationships & healthy youth development

Learn more about teen dating violence prevention from CDC:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)

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### Tips on talking to your kids about healthy relationships:

- Start the conversation early. Starting the conversation before they begin dating gives your child the opportunity to learn about what a healthy romantic relationship looks like before they are in one. ([Futures Without Violence, n.d.](#))
- Encourage open discussion. If they are old enough to ask the question, they are probably old enough to know the answer. Talk openly with teens, and encourage personal reflection on their values and ideas on dating. Instead of dismissing any of their ideas, encourage debate to challenge their thoughts and helps them gain a better understanding. ([Futures Without Violence, 2015](#))
- Talk about self-respect. Everyone deserves respect within any form of relationship. Discussing what respect is and what you and your child's personal expectations are for respect within a relationship can help them better identify any inappropriate or disrespectful behaviors. ([Futures Without Violence, 2015](#)).
- Talk about personal boundaries. It's important for individuals to know what they're boundaries are for a relationship before they are in one. Giving your teen the opportunity to reflect and identify their own personal boundaries is important, as well as talking about how to communicate them to a partner. ([Futures Without Violence, 2015](#)).
- Lastly, you're going to make mistakes. We are all human, we make mistakes and sometimes say the wrong thing. It's difficult to talk about healthy relationships and dating violence, and it's okay for some awkward moments to happen. Be nice to yourself!

More tips on how to talk to your kids, [here](#).

**If you or someone you know may be experiencing dating violence, domestic or sexual violence, human trafficking, or stalking, know that you are not alone and help is available.**

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