

# **Building Healthy Relationships Across Virginia:**

## **A Facilitator's Guide for Teen Dating Violence Prevention**

### **Unit 2:**

### **Addressing Teen Dating Violence**



# Addressing Teen Dating Violence

## Introduction



The activities in this unit focus on the particular issues faced by teens in relationships – especially dating relationships – with their peers. Many teens do not identify abuse in their own relationships, although they may be much clearer about abuse in adult relationships. Teens also encounter different problems than adults do when attempting to address the issue. For example, teens must consider the impact on them if they tell their parents (i.e., restrictions on their freedom, being judged for staying in the relationship, etc.). Teens do not always have the same protections under the law that are provided to adults. Thus, resources addressing safety planning for teens in relationships are offered in this unit.

All of the activities included in this section are meant to promote awareness and improve recognition of teen dating violence, as well as foster a better understanding of the dynamics of abuse in teen dating relationships.



## **Unit 2:**

# **Addressing Teen Dating Violence**

## **Activities and Corresponding Handouts**

### **Survey of Room Icebreaker**

#### **Teen Dating Violence Continuum**

- Teen Dating Violence Continuum Handout
- Continuum Cards Handout

#### **Wheel of Misfortune**

- A Blank Teen Power and Control Wheel Handout
  - Teen Power and Control Wheel Handout
  - Teen Relationship Equality Wheel Handout
- Power and Control in Teen Dating Relationships Handout

#### **Why People Stay in Abusive Relationships**

- Sam & Diane Scenario

#### **Stay or Leave?**

- Maria's Story Handout
- Does Your Partner....Handout
- Types of Abuse in Dating Relationships Handout

# Activities and Corresponding Handouts-- Page 2

## How to Stop Teen Dating Violence--MTV

### Help Me!

- Help Me! Letters
- Safety Planning with Teens Handout

### After School Role Play

- After School Role Play Script
- Red Flags for Abusive Relationships Handout
- See It and Stop It Handout

# Survey of Audience Icebreaker

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** Middle or High School

**Level:** Introductory

**Objective:**

To introduce the topic of teen dating/sexual violence by surveying participants' knowledge of the issue in the lives of people they know and raise awareness about abusive behaviors common to teen dating relationships.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:**

None

**Instructions:**

1. Introduce the following warning signs or unhealthy behaviors to participants (written on the board / flip chart in survey format). Tell participants that you are going to read a series of brief statements that describe some teen dating behaviors. Each statement will correspond with list below.

**\*\*\*Example of survey format\*\*\***

- \_\_\_\_\_ too serious, too fast
- \_\_\_\_\_ isolation
- \_\_\_\_\_ unpredictable
- \_\_\_\_\_ extremely jealous and possessive
- \_\_\_\_\_ controls clothing
- \_\_\_\_\_ ridicules, humiliates, hurts feelings
- \_\_\_\_\_ threatened suicide
- \_\_\_\_\_ threatens them
- \_\_\_\_\_ physical abuse
- \_\_\_\_\_ extremely argumentative
- \_\_\_\_\_ a problem for teens

2. Request that participants put their heads down on desks so they are not watching each other. Emphasize that they should respond to the statements in the survey based on whether or not someone they know – or know of - has experienced the described behavior.



3. Read each statement and record on the board/flip chart the number of hands raised for each item.

**Raise your hand if you know someone who:**

- ...in the first week or two they were dating, their partner said, "I love you, I can't live without you, you're the best thing that ever happened to me; basically it gets too serious, too fast.
- ... has a friend who s/he can't hang out with anymore because their partner wants to take up all their time, preventing them from being with him/her or other friends.
- ...has a partner who is unpredictable and moody – nice one minute and mean the next, you never know what to expect.
- ... has a partner who is extremely jealous and possessive, calls them all the time wanting to know who they're with, where they are, and doesn't want them looking at or talking to other people.
- ...has a partner who tries to control his/her clothing, telling him/her what they can and cannot wear.
- ... has a partner who has threatened suicide, "I'll kill myself if you leave me."
- ... has a partner who threatens them in some way, is making threats toward them in general – "If you do this, this will happen..."
- ...is being physically hurt in their relationship.
- ... has a partner who is extremely argumentative, they're always arguing, it seems they're always "picking a fight".

**Raise your hand if you agree that the things I've just listed are a problem for teens today and that you are familiar with these issues in teen relationships.**

4. Point out which survey questions are highest and ask participants if they are surprised by the results. Why or why not?

5. Leave the results up as you continue with your presentation. Refer back to results when discussing relevant Teen Dating Violence issues, to reiterate how theoretical information (i.e. Power and Control Wheel) looks in "real" life.



# Teen Dating Violence Continuum

Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** High School

**Level:** Introductory

**Objectives:**

To identify types of abusive behavior. To encourage critical thinking about the range of behaviors that can be abusive

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:**

Teen Dating Violence Continuum Handout (Method #1 only)  
Continuum Cards (Method #2 only)

**Instructions:**

**Method #1:**

1. Give participants the Teen Dating Violence Continuum Handout, and ask them to write ten statements or behaviors that they consider to be abusive on lines A through J (allow 5 to 6 minutes).
2. After they have completed their statements, instruct the participants to decide, on a scale of 1 to 10, how severe each form of abuse is to them. Then instruct the participants to place the letter that corresponds to each written behavior on the continuum at the top of the page.
3. Discuss the variety of answers given and why participants placed them where they did on the continuum.

**Method #2:**

1. Tell participants that they each will receive a card with an example of an abusive behavior. Discuss how abuse can range from emotional to verbal to physical.
2. Instruct students that it will be their goal to arrange themselves from least abusive to most abusive, or least harmful or most harmful. Point to one side of the room that will represent the least abusive end, the other side will be most abusive, and in the middle can be stuff that is not the worst, but is still bad. Tell them again they will need to stand up and, holding their card in front of them, order themselves from least harmful to most harmful.
3. Hand out the cards to the participants (you could also have the cards already at



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their seats before they come in). Let them get up and shuffle around. Watch where they arrange themselves and ask questions to facilitate critical thinking. If they seem confused, you can say, "This card says 'threats' – now I might think threats are not as bad as 'hitting' but they are probably worse than 'name calling'".

4. When the participants are generally satisfied with the order, have each person read what their card says, from least to most abusive.

5. You can point out where in the continuum the police tend to get involved (when it gets physical: property destruction/physical abuse). You can point out "cuts off family and friends" – noting how that is a significant thing, how your friends and family are supposed to be the ones who look out for you, but isolation is an effective way for an abuser to maintain power and control. Recognize that all these things can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, etc.

6. If you want to take the discussion deeper, ask the participants to sit back down, collect cards, and then continue...). **NOTE to Facilitator: You can stop the exercise here, or continue.**

7. Ask the participants what it means to say something is less or more harmful. For example, in one class, a boy had the card 'controls the money' and he insisted on putting himself at the end of the most harmful line, saying if a girl controlled the money that would be the worst to him. Recognize that people experience abuse in different ways. Some people say "I got used to the hitting or slapping... but it was the constant criticism or silent treatment that hurt the most."

8. Ask the group, "If one of your guy friends came to you and said that his dating partner was always making fun of him and it bothered him. What would you say? (e.g., "whatever, get over it man, don't be a baby, etc.") And if a female friend told you her dating partner would blow up over little things or was always yelling – what would you say? (e.g., "that's not a big deal, whatever, at least he doesn't hit you, etc") Discuss importance of listening, believing, supporting – and the essential foundation of any healthy relationship: RESPECT.

9. Ask participants where they would draw the line for their own relationships. For example, you might be OK with some yelling, OK with some threats, but not OK with hitting, etc. Encourage everyone to think about what they would put up with, and think about what they would if a dating partner crossed that line. Discuss self-esteem and how everyone deserves a healthy, safe relationship. Discuss how healthy relationships are based on respect, communication, being able to be yourself, trust, etc. You can use the activities in the **Promoting Healthy Relationships Unit** to follow-up this activity.





# Where Do You Draw the Line?

List 10 behaviors that you consider to be abusive. Place each letter from the statements on the line below that reflects the severity of the abuse on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the most offensive.



0 (Least Offensive)                      5                      10 (Most Offensive)

Statements		
A.	F.	
B.	G.	
C.	H.	
D.	I.	
E.	J.	

# Jealousy

**Drastic mood  
swings**

# Explosive anger

# Mind games

# Murder

**Making fun  
of habits**

# Constant criticism



# Guilt trips

# **Insults about women in general**

**Always demands  
all of partner's  
attention**

**Limiting contact  
with other  
people**

**ignoring  
partner's  
feelings**

**Making all the  
decisions without  
asking partner**

# The silent treatment

**Name calling**



# **Humiliation in public**

# **Humiliation in private**

**Blaming partner  
for all faults/  
problems**

# Threats

**Cutting off  
family and  
friends**

**Controlling  
the money**

# Yelling

# Throwing things



# **Destruction of property**

# Pushing

**Slapping  
or hitting**

**Kicking or  
punching**

**Restraining  
you by force**

# Strangling

# Throwing objects

**Threatening you  
with weapons  
or force**



**“If I lose you,  
I will kill  
myself”**

**“If I can’t  
have you,  
no one can”**

# Wheel of Misfortune

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** Middle School to High School

**Level:** Introductory

**Objective:**

To help identify abusive behaviors in dating relationships and the dynamics that motivate them.

**Time:**

Method #1 = 30 minutes;

Method #2 = 30 minutes;

Together = 60 minutes

**Materials:**

(one set per group)

Wedges for completed Teen Power and Control Wheel (*see preparation instructions below*)

Blank Teen Power and Control Wheel Handout

Teen Power and Control Wheel Handout

Teen Relationship Equality Wheel Handout

Power and Control in Teen Relationships Handout

**Instructions:**

**Method #1:**

**Preparation Before Class:** Copy the blank Teen Power and Control Wheel Handout, and cut the wheel into its six labeled sections.

1. Break into 6 small groups. Pass out cut sections of the wheel, and ask each group to identify four examples for their sections of the wheel. They should write these characteristics/behaviors on their sections of the wheel.
2. While the groups are working, the facilitator should display a large Teen Power and Control Wheel. It can be drawn on a chalk board or flipchart, or laminated so that it can be re-used.
3. Have each group present their characteristics/behaviors and facilitate discussion about why they placed them where they did. After each wedge has been discussed, place it on the large displayed wheel.



**Method #2** (can be used separately, or after completion of, Method #1):

**Preparation Before Class:** Make separate cards for each scenario listed on the Power and Control in Teen Relationships Handout (can be found just after the 3 wheel diagrams following this set of facilitator's notes).

1. Distribute the 6 scenario cards to 6 small groups. There are also 2 bonus scenario cards if the participants are enjoying the activity and want to do a few more as a large group. (**NOTE: If you use 8th scenario (bonus), be sure to address Andrea's use of the word "gay" as an "insult." Refer to the "To Be A Man..." activity, in the Exploring Gender, Sexuality, & Power Unit of this guide as a way to process why Andrea is using homophobia to control Justin.**)

2. Ask a representative from each group to read their given card out loud, and then ask the group to decide which type(s) of power and control is/are being used.

**NOTE to Facilitator:** You will want to read and classify these scenarios yourself before using them to facilitate discussion.

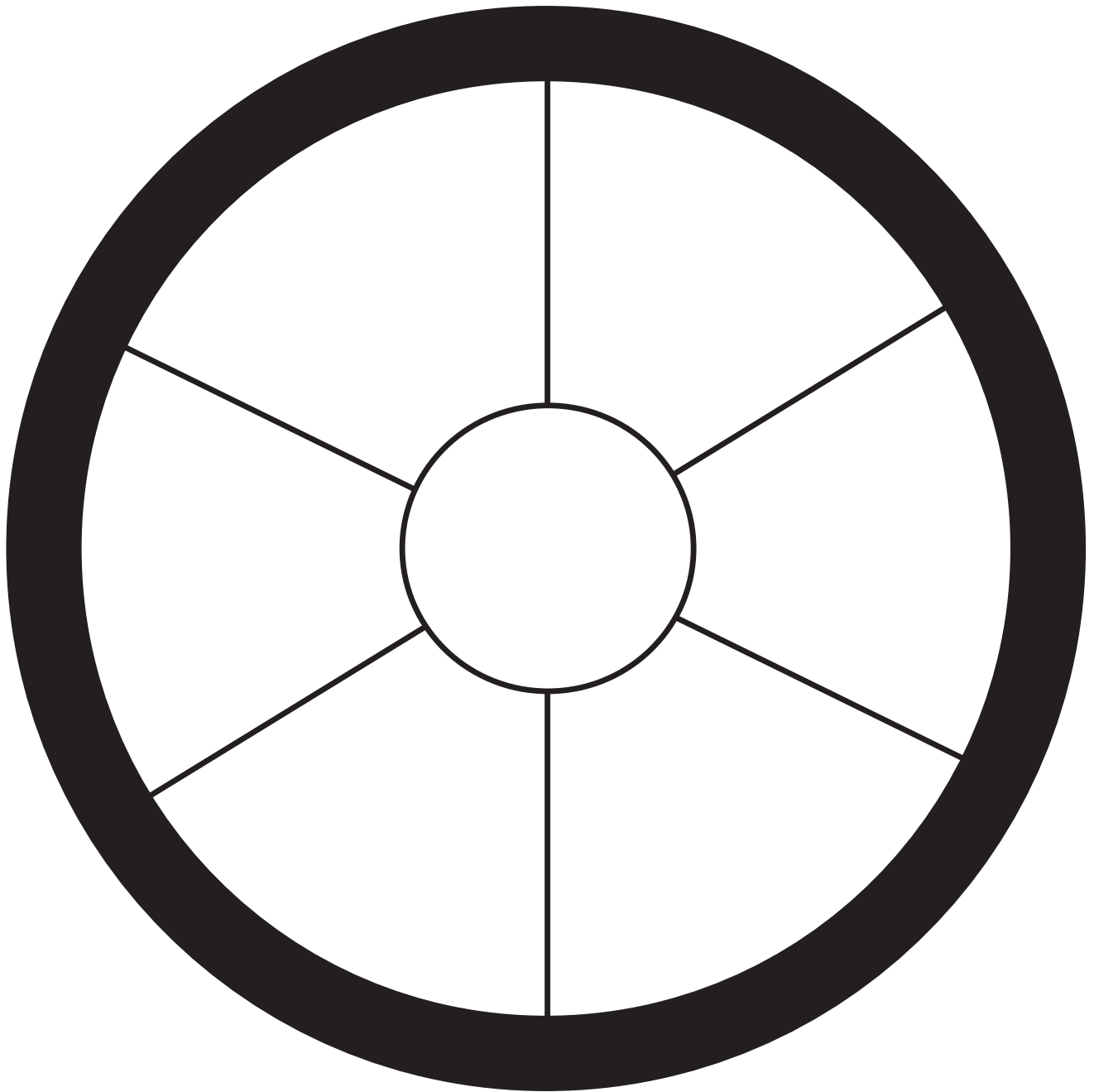
3. Ask for input from the entire group before making a final determination (you can use this facilitate discussion around differences of opinion). Remember, some scenarios might have more than one type of power and control being used (although each scenario is meant to really emphasize one particular type).

4. Review and discuss the Teen Relationship Equality Wheel as a large group. Then, assign one of the six scenarios to each of the small groups. Ask the groups to review their scenario card, identifying a few qualities from the Teen Relationship Equality Wheel that are lacking in the abusive character from their scenario. Ask them how, if a person had those qualities, the scenario would be different or more positive. Have each group report their answers to the full group.

*Wheel Diagrams (handouts) adapted by VSDVAA from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN.*



# Teen Power and Control Wheel (Blank)



# Teen Power and Control Wheel



# Teen Relationship Equality Wheel



# Power & Control in Teen Relationships

## Decide which type(s) of power and control are being used in each scenario.

1. Nakisha is new in town, and she is excited when Rafael, a cute guy she noticed, asks her out. After dating Rafael for a month, Nakisha starts to feel depressed. Every time they go out, Rafael pulls on her clothes and tries to make sexual advances. Even though she tells him she's not ready, he doesn't listen to her and says he thinks it's time they took their relationship to the "next level." Nakisha thinks the entire thing is her own fault.

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

2. Joe meets his girlfriend Carrie at her locker after class. As he approaches, Joe notices that she is surrounded by a group of her friends. Carrie sees him coming and nods at him but doesn't bother to say hi. Joe walks up to Carrie and puts his arms around her but she proceeds to ignore him further. Joe interrupts Carrie's conversation with her friends to ask "Are we still going to the movies tonight to celebrate our six month anniversary?" Carrie rolls her eyes, looks at Joe and then looks back at her friends and replies "Maybe, if you're lucky."

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

3. Michael is at his boyfriend Tom's house playing video games when he mentions he is going to the beach with his family the next weekend. Tom immediately jumps to his feet and shouts "No you're not, because you promised me that we would go to Six Flags that weekend! If you go to the beach, we're through Michael!" To make his point, Tom grabs a vase and smashes it on the floor. Shaken, Michael promises Tom that he won't go with his family.

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

4. While at the food court, Jamie passes a couple kissing at a nearby table. At second glance, Jamie is shocked to see that the guy is her boyfriend Darique. Jamie is angry. She storms out of the nearest exit, finds his car unlocked and takes out his baseball bat. She begins to smash in his windows and then she trashes the inside of his car. She immediately calls him and says, "You should come outside to your car and see what happens when you cheat on me!"

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**



## Power & Control in Teen Relationships--Page 2

5. John calls his girlfriend Asato to tell her that he can't go to the movies with her on Friday after all. A bunch of his guy friends are going to watch the Redskins versus Cowboys game, and he doesn't want to miss it. Asato replies, "Oh well maybe I can go hang out with some of my friends on Friday instead." Becoming enraged, John forbids her to hang out with her friends, where he says she "would probably go out and try to cheat." He tells her to "be a good girl and stay home instead."

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

6. Shawn is walking down the hall with a girl from his math class, talking about the grades they got on the last test, when he feels a tug on his arm. Looking up, he sees his girlfriend Julie looking at him angrily. "What are you doing?" she shouts. "I never want to see you walking with this girl again, or we're through."

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

(BONUS) 7. Yusuf and his girlfriend Aaliyah are at a party. Yusuf is playing pool with some of his friends when Aaliyah walks up to talk to him. She touches his shoulder, and he misses the shot. Yusuf turns around and yells at Aaliyah, calling her stupid in front of everyone at the party. Then he looks her up and down and says, "What are you wearing? You look terrible!" His friends laugh.

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

(BONUS) 8. Justin usually picks up his girlfriend, Andrea, from soccer practice, but he's often late. One day, his car breaks down so he is stuck at home and can't pick her up at all. Later that night, Andrea demands an explanation, and tells Justin that if it happens again she'll tell everyone he is gay and dump him.

**Isolation & Exclusion**

**Intimidation & Threats**

**Peer/Social Pressure**

**Degradation & Humiliation**

**Sexual Coercion**

**Deny, Blame, Minimize**

# Why Do People Stay in Abusive Relationships?

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** High School

**Level:** Introductory

**Objective:**

To promote empathy for survivors of dating abuse.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:**

“Sam & Diane” script

**Instructions:**

1. Ask the group to stand at their seats.
2. Read the “Sam & Diane” script aloud to the group, being sure to pause and give participants the option to sit at the predetermined points.  
(NOTE - ALTERNATE METHOD: Have 4 students volunteer to read one of the 4 main parts of the scenario.)
3. At the end of the reading, give participants the option of standing back up if they would stay.
4. Ask them to be seated, and lead them in a discussion with these points:
  - If you said you would leave, why would you leave?
  - If you said you would stay, why would you stay? (Make sure they give specific reasons.)
5. Discuss the escalation of abuse in teen relationships.  
(NOTE: If you have already covered the Teen Power and Control Wheel, you can have all participants call out the types of power and control, and list examples on flip chart or board.)
6. Discuss how the relationship described in the ‘Sam & Diane’ scenario compares to the Equality Wheel - is there respect or fairness, non-threatening behavior, equality, etc. in the relationship?”
7. Discuss how the “good times” compare to the abusive times? (Is it worth it to them to stay? Why?)”

*Used with permission from Project Hope, Lexington, VA. <http://organizations.rockbridge.net/projecthorizon/>*



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# “Sam & Diane”: Why People Stay

Sam and Diane have dated for more than a year. They know each other's friends and family. They have spent birthdays and holidays together and share many common interests. Diane's family and friends like Sam and vice versa, and everyone's excited that they have been together for so long and they frequently talk about Sam and Diane getting married one day.

Homecoming is less than a week away and Diane is very excited. Diane and her mom search for hours for “the perfect dress.” When Diane gets home, she invites Sam over so she can try on the dress for him. When she comes out in the dress Sam looks away and doesn't say anything to her. She asks him “Don't you like my dress?” He responds by telling her that the dress isn't what he had expected and is too revealing. He asks her, “Why do you want to hurt me by having other guys look at you?” Diane starts to cry and tells him she will take the dress back if he wants her to and says that he should come with her to help her pick out a new dress.

**\*\*\* (How many of you would leave the relationship? Sit down if you would.) \*\*\***

Sam and Diane went shopping together and found a dress that Sam approved of. They had a great time at homecoming. Six months later Sam starts his first after school job and is really stressed out because he is having a hard time balancing work, school, and spending time with Diane. Diane is tired of spending so much time alone. Diane and her best friends decide to go out after school to get something to eat. They think it will be cool to stop in and say hi to Sam, who works at Burger King. When Sam sees Diane walk in his face gets really red and he won't speak to her. After the girls order their food Sam comes out of the back and starts yelling at Diane for being out without him and trying to embarrass him by watching him work. He calls her names and knocks the tray out of her hands and storms off. Diane and her friends clean up the mess. Her friends tell her to leave Sam because he is a jerk to her.

**\*\*\* (How many of you would leave the relationship? Sit down if you would.) \*\*\***

Diane doesn't break up with Sam. She tells her friends that Sam loves her and he is just stressed out. She says that it was really her fault for going there without asking him if it would be ok. When Sam gets off work he comes to Diane's house with flowers and chocolate and apologizes for getting so mad at her. They really talk to each other for the first time in a few weeks. He says he is tired, he lost control of his anger and didn't mean to knock the tray from her hands. Diane feels his pain and remorse and that weekend Sam takes Diane out for a “real date” and they feel close again. She understands him and knows he is only working so that he can take her out and buy her nice things. After all she thinks people aren't perfect and it's important to be tolerant (everybody has a bad day).

## **“Sam & Diane”: Why People Stay--Page 2**

**\*\*\* (How many of those of you who have left, would like to give it another try? If yes, stand back up.) \*\*\***

That summer Diane's family wants to go camping. Diane really wants to go, but Sam is really upset with her because she will be gone for a week. Sam asks Diane to stay home, Diane talks to her parents and they won't let her, but invite Sam to go along with them. Sam likes Diane's brother and the whole family has a great time with Sam there. One day Sam takes Diane hiking and gives her a promise ring. He says he loves her and he knows that she's the one. Diane is thrilled and when she shows her family the ring they are happy for the two of them. On the last day there Diane gets up early and takes her little sister to the swimming pool without waking up Sam. She has a great time hanging out at the pool with her sister and some other people that were there. She looks up and sees Sam and waves to him. He walks over and pulls her out of the pool and says they need to talk. He takes her to a secluded area and starts yelling at her for leaving without telling him first. And also because he says he saw her flirting with the other guys there. He looks down and notices she isn't wearing the ring and accuses her of trying to hook up with other guys. She tells him she didn't wear the ring because she was afraid that when it got wet it would slide off her finger. Sam doesn't believe her and slaps her once and storms off.

**\*\*\* (How many of you would leave the relationship? Sit down if you would.) \*\*\***

Diane is really shocked and scared. What is she going to tell her little sister and her family? She knows that her face is red and is afraid there will be a bruise. She heads back to the campsite and runs into Sam who is coming to look for her. Sam is crying and tells Diane he is really sorry and it will never happen again. He tells her that he is afraid of himself because he can't control his anger. He tries to push his anger away but that just makes him angrier. He tells Diane that he can remember his father's outbursts, the terror on his mother's face, and his own fear. Sam knows he can control himself but sometimes Diane just pushes his buttons. Diane has never seen him cry before and knows that he is really serious and she feels bad that she made him be like his father. Diane forgives Sam and tells him that they will tell her parents that she slipped and fell.

**\*\*\* (How many of those of you who have left, would like to give it another try? If yes, stand back up.) \*\*\***

After the summer Diane and Sam start their senior year of high school together. They love each other so much and spend all their time together. When Diane gets her interim report her parents ground her because of her bad grades and tell her that she is spending too much time with Sam and they need to take a break. Diane is no longer able to date Sam until her grades improve. Sam comes over when her parents aren't there and she tells him he has to leave or else she will get in trouble. He accuses her

## **“Sam & Diane”: Why People Stay--Page 3**

of having another boyfriend inside the house and pushes her out of the way while he goes to search the rooms. He doesn't find anybody but says the other guy must have already left. Diane is really upset and yells at Sam saying “Maybe I should go out with another boy because you are always accusing me of it anyways.” Sam is furious and he pushes her on the sofa, pins her down and slaps her twice. Sam leaves the house. Diane is hysterically crying and is afraid, she feels so alone because her parents are angry with her, she never gets to see her friends anymore, and she is afraid that Sam will leave her too. He calls several hours later crying and begging for forgiveness. She isn't ready to forgive but tells him to come over anyway.

He returns, they reconcile, and neither of them tells anyone what happened. Both Diane and Sam feel embarrassed about what happened and they don't want their friends or families to know about it.

It has been 2 ½ years, one returned dress, one thrown food tray, two episodes of slapping, two pushes, many accusations, 8 months of increasing fear, many dances and happy times together, one vacation, shared memories, support of both families, love, and a promise ring that might lead to a future together.

**\*\*\* (How many of you would leave the relationship? Sit down if you would.) \*\*\***

# Stay or Leave?

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** High School

**Level:** Intermediate

**Objective:**

To reinforce/build on concepts taught regarding power and control issues in relationships. To illustrate the emotional complexities of abusive relationships.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Maria's / Jack's Story

Does Your Partner... Handout

Types of Dating Abuse Handout

**Instructions:**

(NOTE: You can swap Jack and Maria as characters depending on the gender make-up of your group and/or according to what points you want to make about the gender of an abuser. Be sure to change the gender, etc. within the text of the story and the discussion questions. The instructions and the story itself are written with Jack as the abuser and Maria as the abused, but they are interchangeable.)

**Preparation Before Session:** Create two signs: one that says: "I WANT TO STAY" & one that says, "I WANT TO LEAVE" and put them at opposite sides of the room.

**Method #1:**

1. Read the following directions: "I am going to read a story told by a girl named Maria about her boyfriend Jack. As I read this story I want each of you to pretend that you are Maria. People often go back and forth in their thinking about a relationship, trying to decide whether to stay or to leave. People also break up and then get back together. Your movements are going to represent Maria's thoughts. When I say something that makes you want to stay in the relationship, stand under the 'I WANT TO STAY' sign. When I say something that makes you want to leave, stand under the 'I WANT TO LEAVE sign'."
2. Read "Maria's Story" Be sure to pause after every paragraph and give participants time to move.
3. Tell participants to return to their seats.
4. Facilitate discussion by saying: "Abusive relationships are very complicated. Each of us made different decisions at different points in the story – we all have



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different priorities. For those who stood under I WANT TO STAY at the end of the story, why would you remain in a relationship with Jack?"

5. List students' responses on board. Also, think of other reasons Maria might stay a little while longer and add to the list.

6. Distribute Does Your Partner... Handout and Types of Dating Abuse Handout.

7. Discuss different types of dating violence, highlighting that physical abuse is just one type that is used to gain power and control over a partner.

### **Method #2 :**

(NOTE: This is a good technique to focus a rowdy class, as they tend to quiet down to listen as other students read the cards):

**Preparation BEFORE session:** Print narrative. Cut out each paragraph and paste it to a sturdy card (a cut up file folder or large index card). Number each paragraph/card 1-12. Also create two signs: one that says: "I WANT TO STAY" & one that says, "I WANT TO LEAVE" and put them at opposite sides of the room.

1. Ask five volunteers to stand in the front of class, and ask for volunteer readers.
2. Distribute one or more cards to each volunteer reader (facilitator may choose to keep card #12 to wrap up story).
3. Starting with card #1, have readers read each card, pausing so volunteers in front of class can move to "stay" or "leave" after each card is read.
4. Distribute "Does your Partner..." Handout and "Types of Dating Abuse" Handout.
5. Discuss different types of dating violence, highlighting that physical abuse is just one type that is used to gain power and control over a partner.

*Does Your Partner Handout adapted from Reaching & Teaching Teens, NDVSAC, 1996*  
*Types of Abuse in Dating Relationships Handout adapted from The Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Center, 2001*





# Maria's Story

I met Jack during my freshman year of high school. He is everybody's ideal boyfriend, and the only one that I ever think about. Everyone says I am so lucky to have such a great-looking boyfriend.

Another guy, Michael, started to like me, too. Jack confronted Michael and they had a fight after school. I guess Jack won, because Michael hasn't spoken to me ever since.

Jack makes me feel so beautiful. He is so strong and so popular and yet he always says that he needs me. I have fallen completely in love and I feel like the luckiest girl in the world.

He can be demanding sometimes, though. He doesn't want me to even look at other guys.

Jack is definitely the best-looking, hottest guy in the whole school. I don't really care if I ever look at anyone else, but he is always convinced that I'm checking out my other options. He can get pretty jealous.

Going out with him is wonderful, though. We feel like we are in our own little world. For my birthday we went to a movie with a bunch of my friends. I had a great time! But after my friends left it was even better. Jack and I took a walk in the park near my house. He gave me a mix CD of our favorite songs and told me that he loved me.

A couple days after my birthday, though, he got really mad because he was trying to call me and I was gone for a few hours. He said that he had really needed to talk to me, but couldn't get a hold of me. When I asked him what was wrong he just said that it didn't matter anymore. Now he wants to know where I'm going even if I'm just out with my parents or something. If I go somewhere without telling him, he accuses me of being somewhere I shouldn't be. Usually, he's convinced that I'm out flirting with another guy.

Sometimes when we have these jealous fights he throws things at me or slaps me. It never hurts, though.

I know that he is just mad because he loves me so much. My parents raised me not to hit people, so I just stand there. He has quite a temper.

Things are getting worse. Once he pinched me in the mall because he thought that I was looking at another guy.

I have pushed him away a couple of times, but then he only gets angrier. Every once in awhile, I get so frustrated with his mood swings that I try to break up with him. He always comes back crying, "I love you, I need you." He says he's sorry and that he



## Maria's Story--Page 2

knows he's a bad boyfriend sometimes, but that if I love him I'll help him work through these things. Whenever he cries, begs and pleads, I remember how great he can be.

The last time that I tried to break up, he explained the problem to me. His family is really abusive and he thinks that he learned his behavior from them. He says that he hates them and he wants to unlearn the behavior. Jack doesn't want to hurt me. He would be the perfect boyfriend if he learned to control his temper and stopped getting so jealous. I know that he loves me.

END STORY

# Does Your Partner...

Read the following questions. Think about how you are being treated and how you treat your partner. Remember, when one person scares, hurts, or continually makes fun of the other person, it is abuse.

## Does Your Partner...

- ☐ Embarrass or make fun of you in front of your friends, family, or teachers?
- ☐ Put down your accomplishments or goals?
- ☐ Make you feel like he/she is smarter and that you are unable to make decisions?
- ☐ Use intimidation or threats to get his/her way?
- ☐ Tell you that you are nothing without them?
- ☐ Treat you roughly—grab, push, pinch, shove, or hit you?
- ☐ Call you several times a night or show up to make sure you are where you said you would be?
- ☐ Use drugs or alcohol as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- ☐ Blame you for how they feel?
- ☐ Pressure you sexually for things you aren't ready for?
- ☐ Make you feel like there "is no way out" of the relationship?
- ☐ Prevent you from going or doing things you want; like hanging out with your friends or wanting to be by yourself?
- ☐ Try to keep you from leaving after a fight, or leave you somewhere after a fight to "teach you a lesson"?
- ☐ Make you feel like everything that doesn't go right is your fault?

## Do You...

- ☐ Sometimes feel scared of how you partner will act?
- ☐ Constantly make excuses to other people for your partner's behavior?
- ☐ Believe that you can help you partner change if only you changed something about yourself (how you dress, who you talk to, or how you show you care)?
- ☐ Try not to do anything that would cause conflict or make your partner angry?
- ☐ Feel like no matter what you do, your partner is never happy with you?
- ☐ Always do what your partner wants you to do instead of what you want?
- ☐ Stay with your partner only because you are afraid of what you partner would do if you broke up?

If any of these are happening in your relationship, talk to someone.  
Without some help, the abuse will continue to happen.

# Types of Abuse in Dating Relationships

**Physical:** Often we see bruises that the victim continues to explain as “clumsy accidents.” Physical abuse involves physical acts such as hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, pulling your hair or choking you, or threatening to harm you in any way. It could involve using a weapon or an object to threaten or hurt you, smashing things or driving a car dangerously to frighten you. As the physical abuse continues, we may see a progression from cuts, scrapes, and bruises to more serious injuries such as severe black eyes, broken bones, and the need for emergency medical treatment. While physical abuse may be the simplest to recognize, usually by the time we see these signs, the abuse has been occurring for some time. Hurting someone physically or threatening to hurt them is a criminal offense.

**Emotional:** Often, emotional abuse is the hardest for adolescents to recognize. It is done in such a way that the abused partner may not be aware that it is beginning to happen. This is when your boyfriend or girlfriend puts you down, ignores you or calls you names. It may be about what you are wearing, or how you’re acting. They may want you to stop spending time with your friends and question you on every detail of what you’ve done without them. They may use jealousy or anger to intimidate you or to control your behavior, or might deliberately humiliate you in front of others. They might try to manipulate you and make you feel wrong, inadequate or like you’re crazy. They might withhold kindness or affection as “punishment.” Another form of emotional abuse is if they threaten to hurt themselves or other people if you break up with them. Emotional abuse can be just as damaging as physical abuse.

**Verbal:** Verbal abuse consists of name-calling, put downs, humiliations and embarrassments often in front of friends or classmates. This includes ethnic, gender or sexual name-calling meant to demean, ridicule, or embarrass.

**Sexual:** This involves pressuring or forcing you to do sexual things that you don’t want to do. Even if you have not been physically forced to have sex, if someone has tried to manipulate or coerce you into having sex when you didn’t want to (like by saying ‘you’d do it if you really loved me’ or ‘you’re frigid’), this is still sexual abuse. It is sexual assault if you have been drinking or taking drugs or if you were asleep or unconscious and you were not aware of what was happening. Rape and other forms of sexual assault are criminal offenses.

**VSDVAA defines sexual abuse/violence as conduct of a sexual nature which is non-consensual, and is accomplished through threat, coercion, exploitation, deceit, force, physical or mental incapacitation, and/or power of authority.**

# How to Stop Teen Dating Violence--MTV

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** High School

**Level:** Introductory

**Objective:**

To reinforce/build on concepts taught regarding power and control issues in relationships. To educate participants about the emotional complexity and safety issues involved in abusive relationships.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Laptop/LCD projector

High speed internet access or downloaded clip: How to Stop Teen Dating Violence – Kendrick's Story Documentary Piece can be downloaded at: [www.mtv.com/overdrive/?name=news&id=1551410](http://www.mtv.com/overdrive/?name=news&id=1551410)

**Instructions:**

1. Play Kendrick's Story and accompanying information section for participants.
2. Lead a discussion with the group (or have the full group break into pairs) using the following questions:
  - What is your general reaction to this piece?
  - Is Kendrick's story familiar?
  - Does Kendrick's story surprise you?
  - How could an abusive partner use electronic devices to harass or monitor you?
  - If you ever found yourself in Kendrick's situation, who would you go to for help?



**Age:** Middle and High School

**Level:** Advanced

**Objective:**

To identify what to do to help someone in a battering situation.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

“Help Me!” Letters Script

Safety Planning with Teens Handout

**Instructions:**

1. Read a “Help Me!” letter below out loud to the participants. If you choose to use more than one of the letters in the same session, read one letter and then facilitate discussion about each one before moving on to the next letter.
2. Ask participants: “If you were an advice columnist, what would you say?” For letters #1 and #3, emphasize answers that validate the victim’s experience, and empower the victim to leave by seeking help from support networks and/or community resources. For letter #2, emphasize answers that validate the person’s experience but that do not excuse it; answers that empower the person to take responsibility for his/her actions.
3. For further discussion, ask participants:
  - “What would you say to a friend who was being abused by his/her boyfriend/girlfriend?”
  - “What would you say to the boyfriend/girlfriend?”
  - In Letter #1, ask the group how they might react differently if they knew that the boyfriend is 16 years old.
  - In Letter #2, ask the group how they might react differently if the person writing the letter is a girl. (And this is how she treats her boyfriend.)
4. Remind participants that in our work, we not only try to help individual people, we also try to change community attitudes about violence. Ask participants to name different “communities” that they are a part of: (i.e. school, teams, religious organizations, ethnic groups, juvenile justice, etc.)



5. Lead a discussion with participants by asking the following:
  - “What changes are needed in your (named) community to change attitudes about violence?”
6. Distribute the Safety Planning with Teens Handout and discuss what a safety plan is and is not (i.e. it is an interactive process between a survivor and someone else – preferably a dating violence advocate, where options are discussed and the survivor determines what actions will most maximize safety; it is not a check or “what to do” list that may or may not maximize the safety of a particular individual.)



# Letters

## LETTER #1: Help Me!

My boyfriend is always pushing me to have sex. I'm only 12 and I don't think I want to have sex yet. A lot of girls in my class have, at least they say they have, but I don't think I want to. Last night my boyfriend said if I keep leading him on he won't love me anymore. I know I'm being stupid, but I don't want to lose him. He gets pretty pushy when we're making out and sometimes he gets really angry when I say no. What can I do?

Signed,  
Pushed and Perplexed

## LETTER #2: Help Me!

I am in a relationship with a girl who is very nice. She's beautiful, funny, and really cares for me. The thing is, whenever we have a problem, like a disagreement, I don't know how to control myself. I've always had a temper, but with her, it's like I just blow up. I've never hit her and I don't think I will, but I have thrown things and hit the wall pretty hard. I even say things sometimes, kind of like threats, that if she doesn't listen or whatever I'll hurt her. I don't mean it, but I don't know how to get myself in control and I think she's going to break up with me. What can I do?

Signed,  
Bruising and Breaking

## LETTER #3: Help Me!

I love my boyfriend. He's popular, smart, and hot. Really hot. But when he gets mad, watch out. He always has to know where I'm at and what I'm doing and accuses me of things I didn't do, like flirting with another guy or whatever. My friends tell me I should leave him, and I think they're probably right, but he says he'd kill himself if I broke up with him. And he has had a hard life, I mean his dad is a drunk and his mom is never home, so I feel like I'm all he's got. One time when he was mad at me for something he took a lighter and burned my arm. Ever since then I've been pretty scared. I haven't told anyone because I know they'll just say I'm stupid for being with him. What can I do?

Signed,  
Scared and Secret

# Teen Safety Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following steps are my plan for increasing my safety and preparing to protect myself in case of further abuse. Although I can't control my abuser's violence, I do have a choice about how I respond and how I get to safety.**

To increase my safety, I can do (some or any of) the following:

1. When I have to talk to my abuser in person, I can:

2. When I talk to my abuser on the phone, I can:

3. I will make up a "code word" for my family, teachers, or friends, so they know when to call for help for me. My code word is:

4. When I feel a fight coming on, I will try to move to a place that is lowest risk for getting hurt, such as:

(at school)

(at home)

(in public).

5. I have the right to be safe when I am out with friends.

6. I can ask my parents or other family members to screen my calls and visitors.  
I have the right to not receive harassing phone calls.

7. I can keep change for phone calls with me at all times. I can call any of the following people for a ride if I need to:

8. If I have ended the relationship, I can tell the following people and ask them to call the police if they see my abuser bothering me.

Teacher:

Friend:

Relative:



## Teen Safety Plan--Page 2

**I will decide for myself if and when I will tell others that I have been abused, or that I am still at risk. Friends, family, co-workers, and school personnel can help protect me, if they know what is happening, and how they can help.**

1. I can tell my teacher, co-workers, boss, or a friend about my situation. I feel safe telling:

2. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my phone calls at home or work.

3. When leaving work or school, I can:

4. When walking, riding or driving home, if problems occur, I can:

5. If I use the school bus or public transportation, I can:

6. I can take a different route or change the time I leave when I walk if I think my abuser will follow me.

7. I can also:

### **For Myself**

1. If I feel down, I can talk to sources of support, like friends, neighbors, a teacher, youth minister, or crisis line. The people and numbers I can call include:

2. I can attend a support group for teens who have been abused. Support groups are held:

3. Other things I can do to make myself feel better:

Telephone Numbers I Need to Know:

- Police Department:
- Sheriffs Department:
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program:
- Clergy Person:
- Attorney:
- Probation Officer:
- Other:

**The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond and how to best get myself to safety.**

### **SAFETY DURING AN ARGUMENT**

1. If we have an argument on a date and I feel unsafe, I will:  
(Who could you call to get a safe ride home?)  
(What would you do if left in an isolated area?)
2. If we have an argument at school and I feel unsafe, I will:  
(Who could help you?)  
(Where could you be safe at school?)  
(What teacher/counselor do you trust?)
3. If we have an argument at a house and I feel unsafe, I will try to have us discuss it in:  
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to a door.)
4. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my family and friends so that they can call for help.

### **SAFETY IN MY HOME**

1. I will \_\_\_\_\_ if he comes over and I'm alone and feeling unsafe.  
(Who can you call to come over?)  
(Who can you call if you need help?)
2. I will \_\_\_\_\_ if we get in an argument and I feel unsafe. (What exits are there in your house?)  
(Where are all the phones that you can use to call the police?)
3. When he calls and I feel threatened I will:  
(Can you screen your calls with an answering machine?)  
(Change your phone number?)  
(Could you have the telephone company trace the calls for a stalking report?)
4. If I see him standing outside I will \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can be safe. (Who can help you?)  
(Can you take pictures or document how many times it happens, to file a stalking report?)

# After School Role Play

## Facilitator's Notes

**Age:** High School

**Level:** Advanced

**Objective:**

To apply the idea of being an active bystander to a situation and begin developing the skills involved in being an active bystander. To provide information to participants about how to give support to someone who is being abused, and to confront peers who are engaging in abusive behaviors.

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Materials:**

After School Role Play Script  
Red Flags for Abusive Relationships Handout  
See It and Stop It Handout

**Instructions:**

1. Co-facilitators will act out (or volunteers will read) the After School Role Play script.
2. Ask participants, "If you are in the school parking lot and you see this exchange, and the girl is one of your friends. What would you do at that moment?"  
OPTIONS:
  - Say nothing.
  - Get a closer look, but don't get involved.
  - Tell the boyfriend to quit disrespecting your friend.
  - Find some other friends to go with you and try to get your friend out of the situation.
  - Go find some adult to help.
3. Ask participants, "How does your reaction change if you are good friends with the boy in this situation?"
4. Ask participants, "How does your reaction change if you do not know the girl in this situation?"
5. Pass out the Red Flags for Abusive Relationships Handout go over the definition with students.
6. Ask the class to describe the "red flags" they see in After School Role Play Scenario.



7. Ask, "Is this dating violence? Why or why not?"
8. Lead a discussion with participants about what an active bystander is and is not. Distribute See It and Stop It Handout.
9. Close the discussion by making the following points:
  - It's easier to say, "be an active bystander", than it is to put it into practice.
  - It's messy, especially when we're friends with the perpetrator of violence. How do we treat the friend with respect, but not support the behavior? Sometimes being a good friend means confronting a friend when they're wrong.
10. Distribute Safety Planning with Teens Handout and discuss what a safety plan is and is not (i.e. it is an interactive process between a survivor and someone else – preferably a dating violence advocate, where options are discussed and the survivor determines what actions will most maximize safety; it is not a check or "what to do" list that may or may not maximize the safety of a particular individual.)

*Adapted from Helping Teens Stop Violence, Allan Creighton, Hunter House, 1992.*  
<http://www.hunterhouse.com/shopexd.asp?id=308&bc=noA>



# After School Role Play Script

**Scenario:** *It's Friday and the Boyfriend and Girlfriend have been planning to go out all week. The boyfriend asked to borrow his dad's nice car to take her out and they plan to go the movies and maybe a friend's birthday party later. The girlfriend got called into the principal's office to talk over her grades with the English Teacher. She's flunking English and they called her parents to inform them. Her dad came home from work and is waiting for her and ordered her to go straight home.*

Girl  
(Enters in a hurry, Boy sees her)

Boy  
Hey, hey, hey, where are you goin'?

Girl  
Oh, hi. I didn't see you (she kisses him). I'm sorry, but I can't go tonight. I just got out of Ms. Field's office. I've got to get home. I'm flunking English and my parents just found out. They're gonna kill me.

Boy  
What? Come on, you know we were gonna go for a ride tonight. You can put your parents off a little longer. Why don't you come over here and give me some love?

Girl  
I know, I want to. Believe me, I don't want to go home right now, but my dad's waiting for me and I—

Boy  
Aw come on. Are you just gonna leave me here when we had a date?

Girl  
I told you, I can't do anything about it. Maybe I'll be able to call you after I talk to my dad.

Boy  
Wait a minute, I don't understand this. I thought I was important to you. You know you can just blow off your dad, but you're just gonna leave me here? Who is it?

Girl  
What?

Boy  
Why don't you tell me where you're really going?

## After School Role Play Script--Page 2

Girl

What? What are you talking about? I'm —

Boy

(Interrupting) You know what I'm talking about. You're going to meet Mike aren't you?

Girl

What? Who? Mike, no.

Boy

Don't you play dumb with me! I can't believe this. I can't believe you're so stupid.

Look you're coming with me (grabs her arm).

Girl

Hey, what are you doing? Stop! (pulling away) You're acting crazy. Go ask Mike if you think we're going out. I love you.

Boy

I'm sick of this. You love me? Then how could you do this to me? You're coming with me. (Starts pulling her)

Girl

Let go of me!

Boy

(Pulls her into his car, slams the door shut)

# Red Flags for Abusive Relationships

The following is a list of warning signs for potentially abusive relationships. They are presented as guidelines and cues to pay attention to, not as judgments on the worth of the other person.

## Question relationships with partners who:

- Abuse alcohol or other drugs.
- Have a history of trouble with the law, get into fights, or break and destroy property.
- Don't work or go to school.
- Blame you for how they treat you, or for anything bad that happens.
- Abuse siblings, other family members, children or pets.
- Put down people, including your family and friends, or call them names.
- Are always angry at someone or something.
- Try to isolate you and control whom you see or where you go.
- Nag you or force you to be sexual when you don't want to be.
- Cheat on you or have lots of partners.
- Are physically rough with you (push, shove, pull, yank, squeeze, restrain).
- Take your money or take advantage of you in other ways.
- Accuse you of flirting or "coming on" to others or accuse you of cheating on them.
- Don't listen to you or show interest in your opinions or feelings. . things always have to be done their way.
- Ignore you, give you the silent treatment, or hang up on you.
- Lie to you, don't show up for dates, maybe even disappear for days.
- Make vulgar comments about others in your presence
- Blame all arguments and problems on you.
- Tell you how to dress or act.
- Threaten to kill themselves if you break up with them, or tell you that they cannot live without you.
- Experience extreme mood swings. . tell you you're the greatest one minute and rip you apart the next minute.
- Tell you to shut up or tell you you're dumb, stupid, fat, or call you some other name (directly or indirectly).
- Compare you to former partners.

## Some other cues that might indicate an abusive relationship include:

- You feel afraid to break up with them.
- You feel tied down, feel like you have to check-in.
- You feel afraid to make decisions or bring up certain subjects so that the other person won't get mad.
- You tell yourself that if you just try harder and love your partner enough that everything will be just fine.
- You find yourself crying a lot, being depressed or unhappy.
- You find yourself worrying and obsessing about how to please your partner and keep them happy.
- You find the physical or emotional abuse getting worse over time.

*Adapted from The Domestic Abuse Project. <http://www.domesticabuseproject.org> by The Red Flag Campaign. The Red Flag Campaign is a project of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance and was created thanks to the generous support of the Verizon Foundation.*

# See It, Stop It!

## Get Involved as an Individual

When witnessing an abusive situation, it's easy to think, "What can I do? I'm only one person," or "It's not my business," or simply pretend it's not happening. We feel it is your obligation to help a friend in an abusive relationship. The attitude of "there's nothing I can do" is one reason why relationship violence continues to grow.

These are places to start. They are some small, yet effective ways to help:

### 1. Call the behavior what it is.

Tell your friend that there's a difference between being abusive and having a bad day.

### 2. Don't put up with language that promotes abusive behavior and attitudes.

This is language like "wife beaters" or "bitch-slap." If you are not comfortable calling other people on it, lead by example and remove it from your own vocabulary.

### 3. Approach this as a shared issue.

Either a man or a woman can be the victim. Either can be the abuser. Both can serve as good role models for each other.

### 4. Analyze your own actions and beliefs.

Try to understand how your own attitudes and actions might allow violence.

### 5. Support others working to end violence.

Attends events and/or volunteer.

### 6. Be an example for those younger than you.

Show that you care about the issues, and they will care too. If they learn about the issues early, they will be better-prepared in the future.

### 7. Become an activist.

## Get Involved Among Friends

Be proud of your opinions! Speaking up against injustice and abuse among your friends is a great step you can take towards creating a society in which relationship violence is not tolerated.

Consider these actions:

### 1. Don't laugh at jokes about other people's partners.

Even if it's a friend making the jokes, it reinforces the abuser. Not going along with the joke sends a signal that putting down a partner is not okay.

### 2. Be there for your friends.

Let them know you are available, especially when they have problems.

### 3. Pay attention to your friends' relationships.

Making sure your friends are safe is not being nosy.



### **4. Know your resources.**

Identify a trusted adult you can turn to if anyone you know is in trouble.

### **5. Don't put up with abusive behavior or harassment.**

You can send a message by walking away or just telling your friend to stop it.

## **Get Involved As a Group**

An individual voice becomes even stronger when joined by others. Find out if there is a group in your school that focuses on teen dating violence, or if there is interest in starting one. (Be sure to first find out your school's policy on how to do it.) Once you have a group mobilized for action, the following steps will help to create a successful event or project.

### **Step one: Identify the problem**

The project needs to be tailored to your school or community. Brainstorm things you think contribute to the abusive behavior you've witnessed. Are people uninformed? Was there an incident at school that wasn't dealt with properly? Does your school need a better sexual harassment policy? You know the issues in your environment best, jot them down.

Remember, at this point you're only trying to make a list of what the problems might be. Work with other people and you'll be able to cover more ground and generate a bigger list.

### **Step two: Research, research and more research**

Research doesn't have to be overwhelming, or limited to the library or Web. Choose a few issues from your brainstorm list that you are interested in exploring. Talk to a teacher about both your concerns about teen dating violence. Conduct an informal survey of your classmates to get a better idea of their concerns. You might also read up on school policy. Is it up to date? Does it include everyone in the school? Research helps you refine your ideas and tailor your project to your area.

### **Step three: Focus your ideas**

Narrow down to a few issues where you'd like to concentrate. With these researched issues, brainstorm some possible solutions. This is a good exercise to do in a group.

### **Step four: Putting your ideas into action**

From the short-list, pick the solution that people are most excited about and seems the most doable. Depending on your idea, it may require different amounts of planning and support from teachers and classmates. Take the time to figure out a plan by working backwards from your goal.

### **Step five: Taking it one step further**

Depending on the success at your school, you might want to take your campaign one step further and contact the local media to get attention for your event, or convince local lawmakers to take on your cause.