



Did you know that one in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped, or pushed by a partner? In addition to that, one in four teens say their boyfriend or girlfriend has tried to prevent them from spending time with friends or family. And teens in same-sex relationships experience dating violence at the same rate as teens in heterosexual relationships.

The effects can last a lifetime. Intimate partner violence among adolescents is associated with increased risk for substance use, unhealthy weight control behaviors, sexual risk behaviors, pregnancy, and suicide. **February 2-6 is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week.** If a teen you know is experiencing violence in her or his dating relationship, you can help.

Questions an Adult Can Ask:

- How are things going in your relationship?
- Do you feel safe with your partner?
- Do you feel like you can be yourself and make your own decisions in your relationship?
- Are you ever scared that your partner might hurt you?
- Has your partner ever called you names? Put you down? Embarrassed you in front of other people?
- Do you think your partner respects you? How do they demonstrate that respect?
- Do you have fun with your partner?

Keep in mind that teens may not open up unless they trust you. *Be consistent and open.* Let them tell their story; don't offer your own views or stories unless they ask, and even then it is usually better to steer the conversation back toward them.

Some Tips for Talking to Teens About Intimate Partner Violence:

- Listen. Listen. Listen.** Teens are socially trained to allow people of authority to interrupt them. The less we interject, the better.
- Tell them it isn't their fault.** Most abusers, teen and adult, will make the survivor feel like it is his or her fault that the violence is happening. Insist on the opposite. Abuse is a choice, and everyone deserves to feel safe in relationships.
- Don't give advice.** Empower the teen to make a healthy choice. Give options, not suggestions. For example, "Well, some teens feel better after they talk with an advocate. Other teens say talking with their friends and doing fun things together can help them get a better perspective on how they like to be treated. Some teens like to write about what's happening; that may help them come to a conclusion about what they do and don't like in their relationship, and whether or not they feel like the good outweighs the bad."
- Offer resources.** Give them crisis line numbers, websites, and book suggestions (listed below).

Crisis Line numbers:

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline:

1-866-331-9474

Volunteers of America, Home Free

503-802-0505

Portland Women's Crisis Line
503-235-5333

Websites:

www.loveisrespect.org has lots of information and a live teen PEER chat for teens to talk to other teens about relationships and abuse.

www.teenwire.com offers information about healthy/unhealthy relationships.

Books:

In Love and In Danger: A Teen's Guide to Breaking Free of Abusive Relationships by Barrie Levy

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen (fiction)

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (fiction)

Please feel free to forward this email!