

Resources to help you

In an **emergency**, for
counseling, or just to talk

Your call will be completely anonymous, and these numbers can be called from pay phones for free.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Volunteers of America Home Free: 503-771-5503*

Portland Women's Crisis Line: 1-888-235-5333*

YouthLine: 1-877-553-TEEN*

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE*

Gay and Lesbian National Hotline: 1-888-843-4562

Alcohol and Drug Helpline: 1-800-923-HELP*

Multnomah County Mental Health Line: 503-988-4888*

Child Abuse Reporting Hotline: 503-731-3100*

*available 24 hours a day

HOME Free

We Can Help. Home Free is here for you and your teen, with services to help you every step of the way.

Emergency Services: We offer emergency housing, support group services, help in meeting basic needs, and we can connect you to other resources.

Children's Services: We offer children's playgroups, one-on-one advocacy and support for mothers, and a support group specifically for children ages 4-11.

Teen Services: We provide both one-on-one and group support for teens who have experienced domestic violence in their families or in their relationships.

Transitional Services: We help domestic violence survivors obtain and remain in their own safe, permanent housing, with long-term support for up to two years to help families leave the violence behind and build stable, independent lives.

Restraining Order Advocacy: We provide you with assistance in completing restraining order applications and may accompany you to your hearing at the Multnomah County Courthouse.

Women's Support Groups: Our support groups offer a space for you to find emotional support and information, develop new skills, connect with other survivors, and begin to heal in a safe, supportive environment.

503-771-5503 | www.voar.org

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Connecting with your Teen

A Parent's Guide to Teen
Survivors of Domestic Violence

503-988-6446 | www.voar.org

Information provided by Volunteers of America Oregon—Home Free

The years from age 12 to 18 are a time of **growth, change, and exploration**. Dramatic mood changes, a need for peer acceptance, and challenges to parent authority can all make for difficult times for parents and teens alike. But when a teen has experienced domestic violence in his or her home, these years can be even more difficult, and parents need to know how to help teens cope.

What's different about parenting teens who have experienced domestic violence

- They may feel responsible for younger siblings
- They may feel embarrassed by family
- They may try to intervene in violent incidents
- They may fantasize about leaving or may actually leave the home
- They may blame you for not protecting them or their siblings
- They may adopt unhealthy coping strategies
- They may experience difficulty in their own relationships or avoid intimacy
- They may believe stereotypes of males as perpetrators and females as victims

What's still the same

Teens still need a parent! Though they may not show it, they still need your support and love.

Coping skills: What's healthy and what isn't?

Teens who have experienced domestic violence at home do what they must to deal with the stress, but some coping methods are healthier than others.

Healthy Coping Skills:

- Talking with friends or siblings for support
- Writing poetry, stories, or in a journal
- Drawing, being creative or musical
- Getting involved in school, sports, or exercise
- Talking to a counselor

Unhealthy Coping Skills:

- Never wanting to talk; is withdrawn
- Yelling at, blaming, or saying they hate you
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Staying away from home or running away
- Trying to take care of you
- Expressing anger by fighting or breaking things
- Making inappropriate friends
- Sleeping way too much or way too little (recommended: 9-9.5 hours per night)



Remember, there is **hope**. Often, encouraging healthy coping skills is as simple as showing an interest in what your teen does on a daily basis. Try to remember that what you perceive as acting out may instead be his or her way of coping with the experience in the only way he or she knows how.

When to seek help

Staying safe and taking care of yourself helps you to care for your children. Remember, your own safety is important too. Seek help if your teen exhibits behaviors that make you fear for your safety:

- If your teen (12 years and older) hits you or makes threats to harm you
- If you worry for your safety or the safety of others in the company of your child
- If you fear your teen may seriously injure him or herself

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. Remember, acting out violently is never acceptable behavior. If calling the police doesn't feel like an option, **Home Free's advocates are here to support you and connect you and your teen to support groups and/or counseling.**

Ways to connect with your teen

- Let them know you're listening
- Show an interest in what interests them (a TV show, movies, video games, etc.)
- Schedule some one-on-one time for just you and your teen – and keep it
- Check out available resources (such as library books about domestic violence) that might help them understand their experiences and get them talking

Remember, it isn't about "fixing" a problem but about empowering your teen to make positive decisions for him or herself.

