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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATORS TOOLKIT

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Every day millions of lives in the U.S. are devastated by violence. On average, 24 people a minute are victims of physical violence, rape or stalking by an intimate partner. That adds up to more than 12 million women and men a year. The reality is that this doesn't only affect adults. There are millions of young people in this country, many of whom may be students of yours, whose lives are affected—sometimes shaped—by violence.

The Facts

One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds other types of youth violence.

Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.

Dating abuse affects around **1.5 million teens** annually.

As an educator, you are in a position to influence, motivate and lead children and youth. As a mentor and role model to your students, you play a critical role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors. You have the ability to help them get an understanding of healthy relationships and learn to recognize the signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship. By leveraging classroom discussion, special projects and modeling the appropriate behaviors through your own words and actions, you can have a tremendous impact on how your students grow to understand and appreciate safe, healthy and respectful relationships.

With that in mind, we created this toolkit. It serves as a compliment to the Healthy Relationships curriculum created by EverFi, Inc. However, the contents and ideas in this toolkit may be used separate and apart from that curriculum.

It is our hope that you will feel free to use this guide because we believe that the way to prevent and end domestic violence and dating abuse is through education.



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About loveisrespect

loveisrespect's mission is to engage, educate and empower young people to end abusive relationships. It is a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle.

Connect with us!

There is NO EXCUSE for abuse, and no one deserves to be abused. For support, information and resources talk to a loveisrespect peer advocate, 24/7/365:



Call 1-866-331-9474



Chat at loveisrespect.org



Text loveis to 22522

Follow loveisrespect on social media for information and updates to share with your friends and family.



Facebook /loveisrespectpage



Twitter @loveisrespect



Instagram @loveisrespectofficial

DEFINING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Communication is a key part of building a healthy relationship. The first step is making sure both partners in a relationship want and expect the same things—being on the same page is very important. The following tips can help your students create and maintain a healthy relationship:

Speak Up. In a healthy relationship, if something is bothering them, it's best to talk about it instead of holding it in.

Respect Each Other. Each partner's wishes and feelings have value. Let each other know they are making an effort to keep their ideas in mind. Mutual respect is essential in maintaining healthy relationships.

Compromise. Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, but it's important that they find a way to compromise if they disagree on something. They should try to solve conflicts in a fair and rational way.

Be Supportive. Offer reassurance and encouragement to each other in a relationship. Also, partners should let each other know when they need their support. Healthy relationships are about building each other up, not putting each other down.

Respect Each Other's Privacy. Just because someone is in a relationship doesn't mean they have to share everything and constantly be together.

Setting Healthy Boundaries

Healthy relationships require space. Creating healthy boundaries is a good way to keep relationships healthy and secure.

By setting boundaries together, partners can have a deeper understanding of the type of relationship they each want. Boundaries are not meant to make anyone feel trapped or like they are “walking on eggshells.”

Creating boundaries is not a sign of secrecy or distrust—it's an expression of what makes someone feel comfortable and what they would like or not like to happen within the relationship.

Healthy boundaries shouldn't restrict someone's ability to:

- Go out with their friends without their partner.
- Participate in activities and hobbies they like.
- Not have to share passwords to their email, social media accounts or phone.
- Respect each other's individual likes and needs.

DEFINING UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & DATING ABUSE

Relationships that are not healthy are based on power and control, not equality and respect. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, your students may not think the unhealthy behaviors are a big deal. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative, abusive behaviors, are—at their root—exertions of power and control. Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

Dating abuse is a **pattern of destructive behaviors used to exert power and control** over a dating partner. While we define dating violence as a pattern, that doesn't mean the first instance of abuse is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time.

Dating violence can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background.

Drugs and alcohol can affect a person's judgment and behavior, but they **do not excuse abuse or violence**.



Dating violence can be:

Physical: hitting, slapping, choking, kicking

Emotional/Verbal: putting you down; embarrassing you in public (online or off); threatening you in any way; telling you what to do or what to wear

Sexual: pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual, including sexting; restricting access to birth control

Financial: taking your paychecks; preventing you from working

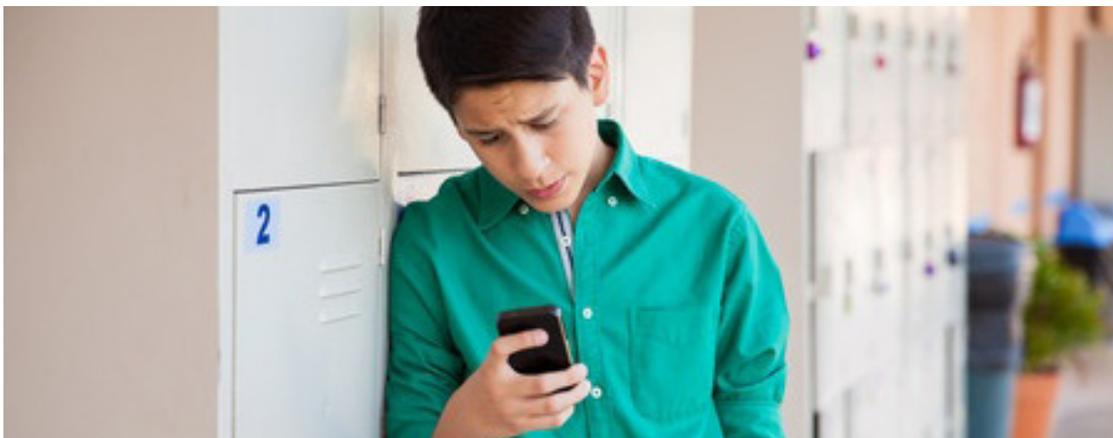
Digital: sending threats via text, social media or email; stalking or humiliating you on social media; logging into your social media or email accounts without permission; forcing you to share passwords

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Warning Signs of Abuse

Because relationships exist on a spectrum, it can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. The following are warning signs of a relationship going in the wrong direction:

- Constantly putting someone down
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Explosive temper
- Isolating someone from their family or friends, dictating who they can see or hang out with
- Mood swings (nice one minute and angry the next)
- Checking someone's cell phone, social media or email without permission
- Physically hurting someone in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling someone what to do or what to wear



Not sure if one of your students is in trouble?

You might not see dramatic warning signs like black eyes and broken bones, so it can be difficult to know for sure if they are experiencing abuse in their relationship. But if you know the signs to look for, you might be able to recognize an abusive relationship before it escalates. To start, listen to your instincts—you probably wouldn't be worried without good reason. Also, look for these red flags:

- Problems with school attendance, particularly if it is a new problem
- Lack of interest in former extracurricular activities
- Sudden request for a change in schedule
- Unexplained changes in behavior, grades or quality of schoolwork
- Noticeable change in weight, demeanor or physical appearance
- Isolation from former friends
- Little social contact with anyone but their dating partner
- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Making excuses or apologizing for their dating partner's inappropriate behavior
- New disciplinary problems at school, such as bullying other students or acting out
- Name-calling or belittling from a dating partner

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENT

You can play an important role in helping students recognize abuse and get the help they need. Consider **these tips** as you try to make a positive change in your students' lives:

Be clear: Tell your students that abuse is unacceptable and that this is an issue you take very seriously.

Encourage discussion: Ask students what they think about abuse. Encourage them to think critically about the impact of violence—in their own relationships and society at large.

Listen: Listen to what students tell you and what you see and hear. Let them know you care, that you are there for them and that you are paying attention.

Be prepared: Be aware of mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher and notify your school counselor when you suspect abuse.

Spread the word: Enlist your colleagues and administrators in raising awareness of teen dating violence.



If you are certain that your student is involved in an abusive relationship, here's what you can do:

Tell your student that you're concerned for their safety. Point out that what's happening isn't "normal." Everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship. After consulting with the student's parents, offer to connect them with a professional, like a counselor or attorney, who they can talk to confidentially.

Be supportive and understanding. Stress that you're on their side. Provide information and non-judgmental support. Let your student know that it's not their fault and no one "deserves" to be abused. Make it clear that you don't blame them and you respect their choices.

Believe them and take them seriously. Your student may be reluctant to share their experiences in fear of no one believing what they say. As you validate their feelings and show your support, they can become more comfortable and trust you with more information. Be careful not to minimize their situation due to age, inexperience or the length of their relationship.

Help develop a safety plan. One of the most dangerous times in an abusive relationship is when the victim decides to leave. Be especially supportive during this time and try to connect the student to support groups or professionals that can help keep them safe.

Remember that ultimately your student must be the one who decides to leave the relationship. There are many complex reasons why victims stay in unhealthy relationships. Your support can make a critical difference in helping your student find their own way to end their unhealthy relationship.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS CURRICULUM DISCUSSION GUIDES

These lesson guides are designed to help you introduce issues related to teen dating violence and healthy relationships in the classroom along with suggested scenarios, questions and a guided discussion for each. They do not need to be delivered in order, and the scenarios can be interchangeable among the topics, including how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships, how to communicate effectively and how to deal with conflict resolution among partners.



COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Introduction

Open, honest communication should be part of every healthy relationship. It's okay to get angry in a relationship—everyone does at some point! What's important is to resolve conflict in a healthy way.

It is important to open up the channels of communication between partners. Communicating isn't always easy. Some of the tips that we will discuss this lesson may feel unnatural or awkward at first, but they will help students communicate better and build healthy relationships. As you are discussing this lesson, you should highlight that if someone listening is in an unhealthy or an abusive relationship, they must be careful. Remind them that they know their relationship best and if any of these tips would put them in danger, don't try them.

Overview

Students learn how to properly communicate with others through various channels in order to build and sustain healthy relationships

Educators have an opportunity to guide students into understanding what is a healthy versus unhealthy relationship and how to communicate their needs effectively

Scenario

After a disagreement, Sam, the person that you are dating, uses the silent treatment and won't talk to you for days. During that time, you have a sporting event that's important to you. Usually, Sam is there to cheer you on, but this time decides not to. You become extremely frustrated, and that night, you send them a text with insulting words demanding a call immediately, even though you have both already gone to bed. Sam responds by saying that it would be best to talk at school in the in the morning.

Questions

1. Is the silent treatment an effective way to resolve a conflict? If yes, for how long? If no, why not?
2. Is it okay to communicate by text to try to resolve a conflict? Why or why not?
3. Does anger due to a disagreement excuse using insulting words or behavior? Why or why not?
4. Do you think it is appropriate to demand an immediate response during a fight? Why or why not?
5. Was the text suggesting talking in the morning dismissive or a good idea? Why or why not?
6. Is this behavior healthy, unhealthy or abusive?
7. What are healthy and unhealthy ways to communicate during a disagreement?

Key Themes

For healthier communication, try to:

Find the Right Time. If something is bothering you and you would like to have a conversation about it, it can be helpful to find the right time to talk. Try to find a time when both you and your partner are calm and not distracted, stressed or in a rush. You might even consider scheduling a time to talk if one or both of you is really busy!

Talk Face to Face. Avoid talking about serious matters or issues in writing. Text messages, letters and emails can be misinterpreted. Talk in person or on the phone so there aren't any unnecessary miscommunications.

Do Not Attack. Even when we mean well, we can sometimes come across as harsh because of our word choice. Using "you" can sound like you're attacking, which will make your partner defensive and less receptive to your message. Instead, try using "I" or "we." For example, say "I feel like we haven't been as close lately" instead of "You have been distant with me."

Be Honest. Agree to be honest. Sometimes the truth hurts, but it's the key to a healthy relationship. Admit that you aren't always perfect and apologize when you make a mistake instead of making excuses. You will feel better and it will help strengthen your relationship.

Check Your Body Language. Make eye contact when speaking face-to-face. Sit up and face your partner. Let your partner know you're listening. Show them you really care. Don't take a phone call, text or play a video game when you're talking. Listen and respond.

Use the 48 Hour Rule. If your partner does something that makes you angry, you need to tell them about it. But you don't have to do so right away. If you're still hurt 48 hours later, say something. If not, consider forgetting about it. But remember your partner can't read your mind. If you don't speak up when you're upset, there is no way for them to apologize or change. Once you do mention your hurt feelings and your partner sincerely apologizes, let it go. Don't bring up past issues if they're not relevant.

How to Communicate if You Are Angry

If you get angry with your partner, here are a few steps to take:

Stop. If you get really angry about something, stop, take a step back and breathe. Give yourself time to calm down by watching TV, talking to a friend, playing a video game, taking a walk, listening to some music or whatever helps you relax. Taking a break can keep the situation from getting worse.

Think. After you're no longer upset, think about the situation and why you got so angry. Was it how your partner spoke or something they did? Figure out the real problem then think about how to explain your feelings.

Talk. Finally, talk to your partner and when you do, follow the tips under Key Themes.

Listen. After you tell your partner how you feel, remember to stop talking and listen to what they have to say. You both deserve the opportunity to express how you feel in a safe and healthy environment.



RESOLVING CONFLICT

Introduction

There is conflict in all relationships. And by “conflict,” we specifically mean verbal disagreements and arguments. People disagree and that isn’t necessarily a bad thing. In fact, everyone has the right to a different opinion from their partner. In a healthy relationship, communication is key. When partners communicate effectively, they understand each other better and that makes their relationship stronger. When they can resolve conflicts successfully, they are developing a healthy, mature relationship. But, while conflict is normal, it can also be a sign that parts of the relationship aren’t working.

Overview

Students will learn techniques to avoid and manage conflicts with dating partners

Educators will have an opportunity to guide students in addressing conflict resolution in both healthy and unhealthy relationships

Scenario

Alex, the person that you are dating, says that you don’t really like them because you want to go to the mall with your friend instead of you two spending time alone together. While at the mall, you run into a group of friends from school and post a picture on social media. After seeing your post, Alex becomes very upset with you. They usually get really angry with you when you post pictures with other people. The next time that you are together, Alex accuses you of cheating with someone from the picture on your social media post and tells you to choose between them and your friends, by saying: “If we are going to remain in a relationship, you can no longer hang-out with your friends.” Alex also demands that you spend more time alone together.



Questions

1. Are the accusations in this scenario reasonable? Why or why not?
2. Are there healthy boundaries in this relationship? Why or why not?
3. What are the real issues in this relationship?
4. What are possible compromises for this situation?
5. Is this behavior healthy, unhealthy or abusive?
6. How do you manage and resolve this conflict?

Key Themes

Conflict Resolution in Healthy Relationships

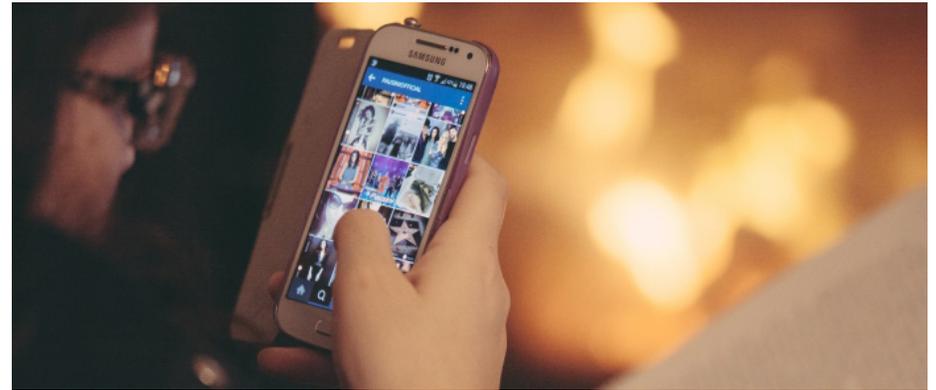
If your conflict is based on which movie to see, what friends to hang out with or who should do the dishes, then use the tips below to help resolve these arguments in a healthy way:

Set Boundaries. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect—even during an argument. If your partner curses at you, calls you names or ridicules you, tell them to stop. If they don't, walk away and tell them that you don't want to continue arguing right now.

Find the Real Issue. Typically, arguments happen when one partner's wants are not being met. Try to get to the heart of the matter. If your partner seems needy, maybe they are just feeling insecure and need your encouragement. Learn to talk about the real issue so you can avoid constant fighting.

Agree to Disagree. If you and your partner can't resolve an issue, sometimes it's best to drop it. You can't agree on everything. Focus on what matters. If the issue is too important for you to drop and you can't agree to disagree, then maybe you're not really compatible.

Compromise When Possible. Easy to say but hard to do, compromising is a major part of conflict resolution and any successful relationship. So your partner wants Chinese food and you want Indian? Compromise and get Chinese



tonight, but Indian next time you eat out. Find a middle ground that can allow both of you to feel satisfied with the outcome.

Consider Everything. Is this issue really important? Does it change how the two of you feel about each other? Are you compromising your beliefs or morals? If yes, it's important that you really stress your position. If not, maybe this is a time for compromise. Also, consider your partner's arguments. Why are they upset? What does the issue look like from their point of view? It is unusual for your partner to get this upset? Does your partner usually compromise? Are you being inconsiderate?

Still arguing? If you try these tips but still argue constantly, consider whether the relationship is right for both of you. You both deserve a healthy relationship without constant conflict.

Conflict Resolution in Unhealthy Relationships

While conflict is normal, arguments shouldn't turn into personal attacks and neither partner should try to lower the other's self-esteem. If you can't express yourself without fear of retaliation, you may be experiencing abuse. Remember, one of the main signs of an abusive relationship is a partner who tries to control or manipulate you.

STEPPING IN

Introduction

Watching a friend go through an abusive relationship can be very scary, and it can seem difficult to figure out how to help them. The decision to leave can only be made by the person experiencing the abuse, but there are a lot of things that someone can do to help a friend stay safe.

If a friend is undergoing the serious and painful effects of dating abuse, they may have a very different point of view than you. They may have heard the abuse was their fault and feel responsible. If they do choose to leave, they may feel sad and lonely when it's over, even though the relationship was abusive. They may get back together with their ex many times, even though you want them to stay apart. It may be difficult for them to even bring up a conversation about the abuse they're experiencing.

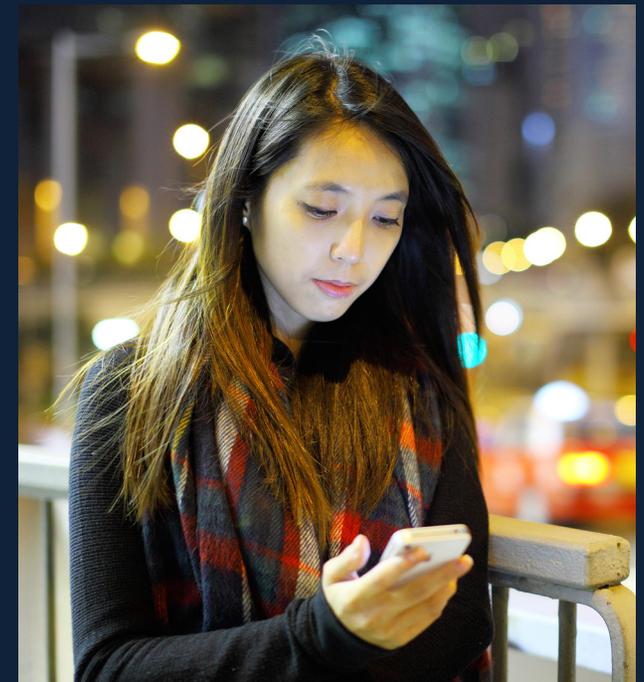
Overview

Students will learn how to cultivate healthy relationships and how to recognize and intervene in unhealthy relationships.

Educators will have an opportunity to raise awareness about dating violence and help prevent it by guiding students to understand the facts and how to intervene.

Scenario

You are at the movies with your friend, Taylor. On your way to the movies, you heard Taylor tell the person that they are dating, Jesse, where they were going and that they would see each other later. The entire time you are at the movies, your friend receives repeated text messages from this person. As you are leaving, Taylor admits to you that Jesse was furious that they went to the movies. Later that night, you see that Jesse posted an insulting comment and photo about your friend on Instagram while you two were at the movies. You also know that this person checks Taylor's phone every day at school to see who they have been texting.



Questions

1. Is it okay that the person that your friend is dating did not stop texting them? Why or why not?
2. How do you feel about this person's reaction to your friend going to the movies with you?
3. What do you think about this person's motives for posting the negative comment about your friend on Instagram?
4. Is it okay for this person to check your friend's text messages every day? Why or why not?
5. Is this behavior healthy, unhealthy or abusive?
6. As a friend, how can you support them?

Key Themes

Because relationships exist on a spectrum, it can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. Some of the warning signs of abuse to see if a relationship is going in the wrong direction are as follow:

- Checking someone's cell phone or email without permission
- Constantly putting someone down
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Explosive temper
- Isolating someone from family or friends
- Making false accusations
- Mood swings
- Physically hurting someone in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling someone what to do



FOR STUDENTS: How You Can Help a Friend

Don't be afraid to reach out to a friend who you think needs help. Tell them you're concerned for their safety and want to help.

Be supportive and listen patiently. Acknowledge their feelings and be respectful of their decisions.

Help your friend recognize that the abuse is not "normal" and is NOT their fault. Everyone deserves a healthy, nonviolent relationship.

Focus on your friend, not the abusive partner. Even if your friend stays with their partner, it's important they still feel comfortable talking to you about it.

Connect your friend to resources in their community that can give them information and guidance. Remember, loveisrespect.org can help.

Help them develop a safety plan if you believe that they are in an abusive relationship.

If they break up with the abusive partner, continue to be supportive after the relationship is over.

Don't contact their abuser or publicly post negative things about them online. It'll only worsen the situation for your friend.

Even when you feel like there's nothing you can do, don't forget that by being supportive and caring, you're already doing a lot.

ACTIVITIES

Here's a list of activities that you can encourage your students to implement applying the concepts discussed in this guide.

Teen Safety Cards: Print and cut the palm cards on the next page.

Encourage students to take as many of the cards as necessary to give to family and friends. It may be helpful to keep a supply of these cards in the counseling office and nurse's office for students to pick up at their convenience.

Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve: Have students wear an orange paper heart on their sleeve to bring attention to the prevalence of teen dating abuse. Students can also post these hearts all over their school. A printout is available in this toolkit.

Road to Healthy Relationships Hallway: This can be done using a green carpet, yellow brick road or other type of pathway. Include road signs available in this toolkit to symbolize necessary characteristics of a healthy relationship. The end of the road could lead to a banner with the [loveisrespect](http://loveisrespect.org) website and phone number. An alternative is to decorate a hallway to show the road to an abusive relationship, including warning signs and detour signs.

Orange-Out or Purple-Out: Have all students and faculty wear the same color to signify unity and solidarity in the fight against abusive relationships. The official color for domestic violence is purple and the official color for dating abuse is orange. Pick the color your school feels would work best.

Relationship Bill of Rights: Print the relationship bill of rights from this toolkit and encourage all students to sign it. Signings can be done at lunches and could work in conjunction with an information booth. We encourage you to personalize the bill of rights and when students sign the bill, they can add their own personal "right" to the list.



Teen Safety Cards - Front



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If something doesn't feel right, our peer advocates are here to talk 24/7.



chat at loveisrespect.org



text loveis to 22522



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Teen Safety Cards - Back

love is...

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accepting, supportive,
setting boundaries

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Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve

You deserve a healthy relationship.



love is respect [Vorg](http://loveisrespect.org)

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SPEED LIMIT

Set your relationship
“speed limit” by creating
healthy boundaries with
your partner!





YIELD

Resolve conflicts
in a healthy way.
Talk it out and
compromise!





Relationships can be tough to navigate.

Need help? Call 1-866-331-9474,
chat at loveisrespect.org
or text loveis to 22522!





Healthy Relationship Xing

Healthy relationships
include trust, respect
and boundaries.



Road to Healthy Relationships



MARY KAY

About Mary Kay Inc.

Irresistible products. Positive community impact. Rewarding opportunity. For more than 50 years, Mary Kay has offered it all. With 3.5 million Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants and \$4 billion in global annual wholesale sales, Mary Kay is a top beauty brand and direct seller in more than 35 markets around the world. Discover what there is to love about Mary Kay by connecting with a Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultant at marykay.com.

EVERFI

About EverFi, Inc.

EverFi, Inc. is the education technology innovator that empowers learners with the skills that prepare them to be successful in life. With backing from some of technology's most innovative leaders including Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, and Twitter founder Evan Williams, EverFi has built the most comprehensive critical skills platform focused on Financial Education, Digital Citizenship, STEM Career Readiness, Entrepreneurship, and Health and Wellness. The EverFi Education Network is powered by over 1,200 partner organizations across all 50 states and Canada and has certified over 12 million students. Learn more at www.everfi.com.