



# #1 Thing

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE  
AWARENESS MONTH

TEEN ACTION GUIDE

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# WHAT IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH (TDVAM)?

TDVAM is a month-long campaign dedicated to raising awareness about teen dating abuse. Every February, people across the United States join together for a national effort to bring awareness to teen dating violence.

Teen dating violence is more common than people think. One in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults.\* Nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors.\*

By coming together each February, we can raise awareness and stop dating abuse before it starts. Only by continuing to talk about these difficult issues can we call attention to teen dating violence. This is only the first step towards preventing and ending the cycle of abuse.

\*Statistics provided by the Break the Cycle 2011 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll and [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org).

*One in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults.*

# WHAT DOES #1Thing MEAN?

This year, *loveisrespect's* 2020 TDVAM campaign theme is #1Thing. Pronounced “One Thing” or “Hashtag One Thing,” this campaign is focused on small (but meaningful), actionable steps that everyone can take. By learning just one thing about teen dating violence and sharing that with a friend, everyone, no matter how old they are, can make a difference.

Every single person has a part to play in ending dating abuse. Every step towards ending teen dating violence is an important one!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

February 9-15: Respect week

Monday, February 10: Respect Announcement

Tuesday, February 11: Wear Orange Day

Thursday, February 13: Facebook Live

Monday, February 24: Tweetstorm

Thursday, February 27: Facebook Live

# ABOUT LOVEISRESPECT (LIR)

LIR's mission is to engage, educate, and empower young people to end abusive relationships. Officially launched in February 2007 as a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, LIR was the first 24-hour resource for teens experiencing dating violence and abuse, or needing to learn more about healthy relationships.

LIR strives to be a safe, inclusive space for young people to access information and get help in an environment that is designed specifically for them. LIR also mobilizes parents, educators, peers, and survivors to proactively raise awareness on healthy dating behaviors and how to identify unhealthy and abusive patterns. Find us at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org).

# HOW COMMON IS TEEN DATING ABUSE?

Everyone has the right to a safe and healthy relationship. However, one in three teens experience some form of relationship abuse, and two thirds of them never tell anyone. Dating abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of their age, financial status, race, gender, sexual orientation, or background.

Every day, LIR receives hundreds of calls, online chats, and text messages from teens across the country who are experiencing abuse in their relationship or looking to learn more about prevention and healthy relationships. In a single year, nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner.

Abuse comes in many forms – it's not just physical.

# WHAT DOES DATING ABUSE LOOK LIKE?

## PHYSICAL

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Choking
- Kicking
- Shoving
- Biting
- Force-feeding
- Assaulting

## EMOTIONAL & VERBAL

- Putting you down
- Embarrassing you in public, threatening you in any way
- Telling you what to do, telling you what to wear
- Accusing you of cheating and being jealous of your friendships

## 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

## FINANCIAL

- Taking your paychecks
- Not paying bills
- Preventing you from working
- Controlling where and how you work
- Making you buy them things, but not letting you buy yourself anything

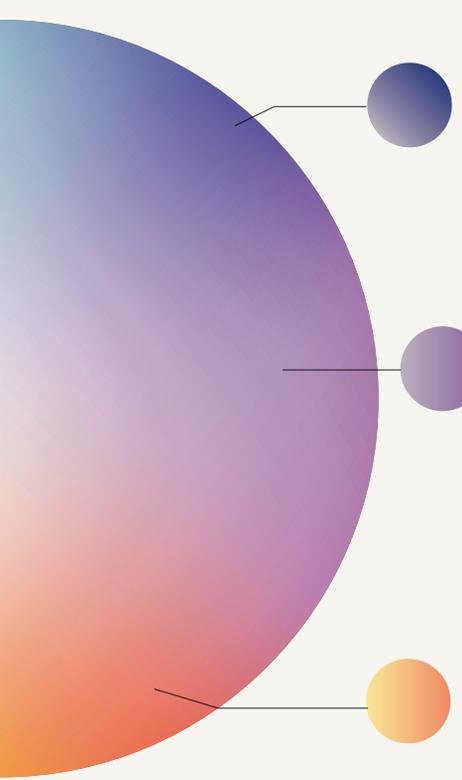
## SEXUAL

- Pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual without your consent like forcing you to have sex or perform sexual acts that you are not comfortable with
- Restricting access to birth control
- Forcing you to watch pornography or participate in pornographic videos; sexting

# WHAT MAKES A RELATIONSHIP UNHEALTHY - OR EVEN ABUSIVE?

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy somewhere in the middle.

## THE RELATIONSHIP SPECTRUM



**Healthy relationships are based on equality and respect.**

You make decisions together and can openly discuss whatever you're dealing with, like relationship problems and sexual choices. You enjoy spending time together but can be happy apart.

Respect • Healthy communication • Trust • Honesty • Equality

**Unhealthy relationships are based on attempts to control the other person.**

One person tries to make most of the decisions. He or she may pressure their partner about sex or refuse to see how their actions can hurt. In an unhealthy relationship, you feel like you should only spend time with your partner.

Breaks in communication • Pressure • Dishonesty • Struggles for control • Inconsiderate behavior

**Abusive relationships are based on an imbalance of power and control.**

One person is making all of the decisions about sexual choices, friend groups, boundaries, even what's true and what's not. You spend all of your time together and feel like you can't talk to other people, especially about what's really happening in your relationship.

Accusations • Blame shifting • Isolation Pressure • Manipulation

*All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive with unhealthy somewhere in the middle. Check out the [loveisrespect's Relationship Spectrum](#) to see where your relationship falls. Can you identify healthy, unhealthy or abusive behaviors in your relationship or maybe in a friend's relationship? Remember, you have a hand in ending dating abuse. The more you talk, the more you know!*

# WHAT MAKES A RELATIONSHIP HEALTHY?

While no two relationships look the same and different people may define relationships in different ways, there are a few key things that must be present in all relationships for it to be healthy.

For example, a healthy relationship requires honest communication, trust, safety, and respect. This applies to all relationships, regardless of each person's sexual orientation or identify.

Here are a few things that every healthy relationship needs to have:

# CONSENT

Consent is an important part of a healthy relationship. Without consent, how can people in an intimate relationship ensure everyone's needs are being met? When consent is present, so are open communication, trust, and healthy boundaries.

People typically talk about consent in the context of sexual or physical activity with a partner. In a healthy relationship, all partners can openly talk about anything. Whether it's holding hands, kissing, touching, or anything else, it's really important for everyone in the relationship to feel comfortable with what's happening.

## Indicators that a person is respecting your consent:

- They communicate every step of the way. For example, during a date, they ask if it's okay to hold your hand and don't just assume that you are comfortable with it.
- They respect that when you don't say "no," it doesn't mean "yes." Consent is a clear and enthusiastic "yes!" Remember: the absence of a "no" does not equal "yes."
- They understand that you have the right to change your mind regarding consent at any time, for any reason, even if you have said yes previously.
- They don't pressure or guilt you into doing things you may not want to.
- You never feel like you "owe" them anything.

# TRUST AND HONESTY

Trust is something that is built over time. Trusting your partner means that you feel safe with them physically, emotionally, sexually, and/or spiritually. Trust should include privacy, both yours and theirs.

**Not sure if trust is present in your relationship? Here are some questions to consider:**

- Do you and your partner believe each other at face value?
- Do you believe what you tell them in confidence or in privacy will stay with them?
- Do you and your partner respect each other's space and privacy boundaries?
- Are you able to share your feelings and opinions without fear of being put down or judged?
- Do you and your partner feel comfortable spending time apart without worrying the other person is being dishonest or cheating?
- Are there things you feel like you need to hide from your partner because of how they might react?

# BOUNDARIES

Whether you're casually dating or have been going out for a while, setting boundaries is an important part of any relationship. Boundaries are our opportunity to communicate to the world that we have self-respect and self-worth. To have the healthiest possible relationship, partners should know each other's wants, goals, fears, and limits.

Talking about boundaries is a great way to make sure that each person's needs are being met and you both feel safe in the relationship. Here are some things to think about when setting boundaries in your relationship:

# BOUNDARIES

## EMOTIONAL

- **The L Word:** Saying “I love you” can happen for different people at different times in a relationship. If your partner says it and you don’t feel that way yet or don’t want to say it, don’t feel bad – it’s okay to not be ready. Let your partner know how it made you feel when they said it, and they should respect your honesty.
- **Time Apart:** As great as it is to want to spend a lot of time with your partner, remember that it’s important to have some time away from each other too. Both you and your partner should be free to hang out with friends (of any gender) or family without having to get permission. Time apart, without feeling guilt or pressure from your partner, and being able to communicate that you’re doing things on your own with your partner is so important.
- **Open Communication:** Having space to freely communicate feelings is important. Your relationship should be a safe space for both you and your partner, without either of you feeling like you must change or fix your feelings. On the other hand, your partner should also respect when you don’t want to talk about something in the moment and not push you excessively to open up.

# BOUNDARIES

## PHYSICAL

- **Take Your Time:** Getting physical with your partner doesn't have to happen until you're ready. In a healthy relationship, both partners know how far the other person wants to go, and you should both feel safe to communicate with each other if something changes.

- **Sex Isn't Currency:** You don't owe your partner any favors. Just because your partner says "I love you" or buys you a present doesn't mean you owe them anything in return. It isn't okay for your partner to claim that you don't care about them because you won't go "all the way." Even if you've done it before, you are never required to do it just because your partner is pressuring you. Remember, no means no, and it's essential that your partner respect this completely.

## DIGITAL

It can be hard to know where the line is between healthy and unhealthy, especially with social media. What are the rules once you're online? Before you talk to your partner about your digital boundaries, here are some questions to consider:

- How do you feel about posting on social media about your partner?
- Is it okay for your partner to have access to your phone?
- Are you comfortable with your partner sharing your texts or pictures you sent them with their friends?
- If you give your partner your social media passwords, do you feel comfortable knowing that they may be looking at your social media when you aren't around?
- If your partner sexts you and demands that you sext back, do you feel like you can tell them you aren't comfortable doing that, and they won't get angry or threaten you?

# WHAT CAN I DO?

Everyone has the power to help end dating abuse. Here are some easy ways to start:

## TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS

Take a moment to tell one friend something that you've learned about healthy relationships! By starting the conversation, you're an important part of ending dating abuse. Whether you talk about what equality in a relationship looks like to you, or if you talk about a character on your favorite show that might be practicing unhealthy behavior, as long as you start the conversation, you're off to a great start.

### Here are some ways to kick off a conversation with your friends:

- Ask your friend about how safe they feel with their partner or what their partner does to help them feel safe.
- Be supportive and listen patiently to your friends if they're going through a hard time. You can also refer them to LIR – we're always here to help.
- Talk about boundaries in every relationship, not just in romantic ones.

# WHAT CAN I DO?

If you feel like your friend may be in an abusive relationship, here's some ways you may be able to help:

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

# SELF-CARE

Self-care is incredibly important for all our individual health, but not everyone knows what it is or how to start. Basically, self-care is taking the time to care for yourself in whichever ways work best for you. We know that to be in a healthy relationship, we each need time for ourselves and our own interests. But even when we're single, our work and school schedules can get in the way of us truly taking the best care of ourselves.

You can learn more about self-care by [taking our quiz](#) or using a [self-care check list](#), but here are a few examples of popular self-care activities:

- Journaling can be very therapeutic. You can go old school and grab a notebook, or you can look online for a password protected journal. No matter how you organize your thoughts, it's important to let yourself dream!
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of water. Especially when our minds or hearts are stressed, we rely on our bodies even more to help us trudge forward, so make sure you're fueling yourself with a balanced mix.
- Going for walks or other types of physical activity are a great form of self-care. You don't have to be an athlete – just moving around and sending some time to appreciate your body is therapeutic too and very important for your emotional wellness.
- Even things that seem simple – taking a bath, watching your favorite show, playing with a pet, practicing deep breathing – all count as self-care. Whatever you do to relax is a great way to practice self-care.



# SPREAD AWARENESS

Every day is an important day to spread awareness about teen dating violence, but during TDVAM, it's especially important to add your voice.

Check out our Respect Week guide at [www.loveisrespect.org/teendvmonth](http://www.loveisrespect.org/teendvmonth) for ideas on what you can do.

In the meantime, follow us on social media by clicking below and visit our website [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) for more information!



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