

A young couple is shown in profile, facing each other and nearly kissing. The woman on the left has long dark braids and is wearing a white t-shirt with a colorful beaded necklace. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and a black baseball cap with a blue brim. They are set against a soft, hazy background of a sunset or sunrise sky in shades of blue and orange.

love **is**  
respect.

# Love Like That

love is respect | Action Guide

2024

TDVAM

# Deserving Love Like That

**love is respect**, a project of the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** (The Hotline), began in 2007 as a response to the experiences of young people across the US with dating abuse and harassment. 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men who experienced rape, physical violence, and stalking by an intimate partner first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.

**Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM)** is designed to amplify your voice and experiences in relationships— we want to uplift what's healthy and what is unhealthy or even abusive. This is so important that in 2010, Congress declared **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month** every February.

Teens, young adults, and their loved ones unite to spotlight the real harm young people experience online, on campus, and at home. Together, prevention and education can keep us safe and create the healthy and fun relationships we all deserve. **love is respect** brings awareness to teen dating violence, and unites teens, young adults, and those who support them in a national effort to promote healthy relationships and prevent future abuse.

## This guide includes:

- Messages from **love is respect**'s Youth Council Members
- Defining love for yourself
- Benefits of a healthy relationships
- Unhealthy love examples
- Conflict resolution
- Resources







## A Message From Our Director

Hello, amazing individuals.

I stand in solidarity with you, for you, and because of you! You face many experiences as a teen or young adult, but not all are positive. I want to support you in having healthy and respectful relationships - because you deserve it!

This year's theme, "**Love Like That**" (#LoveLikeThat), chosen by our love is respect's **National Youth Council**, is meant to uplift positive, healthy relationships by defining what "that" looks like. I realize "**Love Like That**" looks different for each person, community, and individual relationship- but one thing unites us: everyone deserves to be loved, respected, and valued.

Join me in celebrating a month of defining "**That Love**" which uplifts and empowers your most authentic self. Come vibe with me and thousands of young people across this country!

In solidarity,  
Angela (she/her/they)

## Love Like Our Youth Council



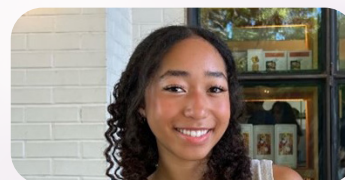
**Katja McClendon,**  
Youth Council Member

*I look inward when thinking of what kind of love I want. I evaluate my wants and needs, and I evaluate the way I strive to love others. I want every interaction and relationship I encounter to be L-O-V-E. Love is like courage. Love like selfless. Love like strong. Love is like boundaries. Love is like safety. Love is like consent. Love is like peace. Love like THAT.*



**Kate Nechanicky,**  
Youth Council Member

*"Love Like That" to me means unconditional love. Love people in your way by being genuine and compassionate and embracing others with an open heart. This theme is so empowering to me personally because I can choose love that works for me. Thank you love is respect for the reminder!*



**Tiffany Colston,**  
Youth Council Member

*love is respect is about teaching young people what healthy relationships should look like and empowering the community with the resources and knowledge to know how to give and expect to receive a "love like that."*



**Rayaann Cunningham,**  
Youth Council Member

*I appreciate a love that isn't transactional. I appreciate a love that is ever-growing and a love that thrives off our previous love.*



# Loving Yourself Like That

As teens and young adults, you express love in relationships in many ways— through your [love language](#), sharing your thoughts and feelings, and setting [personal boundaries](#). Learning how others want to receive love can be exciting but can also create [uncomfortable moments](#). However you choose to express love, remember it is also an opportunity to show love to yourself.

[Practicing self-care](#) is one way to pay attention to your internal needs and experiences and allows your authentic self to be present and empowered. Through self-care, you learn what you feel and want in your relationships. From that space, we can show healthy expressions of love, and if your relationship isn't at the love stage—that's okay. Healthy expressions of like, crush, affection, or interest are also part of "that."

**Remember, self-care is incredibly important for your health. Visit [our website](#) for a checklist and tips on practicing self-care and identifying healthy forms of love in your relationship.**





# Loving Yourself Like That

## Here are some ways you can practice self-love:

- Have a spa day (at home or out)
- Wear the clothing you like, and it makes you feel good
- Meditation
- Do something new
- Journal your thoughts and feelings
- Listen to music or a podcast that energizes you
- Eat your favorite foods
- Ask for help if needed

## And here are healthy ways you can express love in your relationship:

- Schedule a date and plan for all the details that show you care
- Allow your partner or friends to do things for you
- Check-in and ask how the other person is feeling
- Honor their time with other friends, family, or their need to be alone
- Watch their favorite shows or make their favorite foods



## Benefits of a Healthy Relationship

While no two relationships look the same, and people may define relationships differently, key elements like respect, equality, trust, honesty, communication and consent must be present in all relationships to be considered healthy.

For example, a healthy relationship requires honest communication, safety, and respect. This applies to [all relationships](#), regardless of sexual orientation or identity. The next sections highlight a few healthy relationship elements.

## Consent

[Consent](#) is an integral part of a healthy relationship. When consent is present, so is open communication, [trust](#), and [healthy boundaries](#). People typically talk about consent in the context of sexual or physical activity with a partner. However, consent also applies to digital, emotional, and mental boundaries in a healthy relationship.

### Here are some indicators that your partner respects your consent:

- They communicate every step of the way. For example, they ask if it is okay to hold your hand and not just assume you are comfortable.
- They respect that when you don't say "no," it does not mean "yes." Consent is a clear and enthusiastic "yes!" Remember: the absence of a "no" does not equal "yes."
- They understand you have the right to change your mind regarding consent at any time,





# Trust and Honesty

Trust is built over time. Trusting your partner means feeling safe with them physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually. Do you need to know if trust is present in your relationship?

## Here are some questions to consider:

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



# Conflict

# Resolution

Conflict is a normal part of any relationship. A healthy relationship does not mean you never disagree. Conflicts or disagreements should never be or feel like personal attacks; they should never reach the point where one person intentionally hurts the other. Understanding how to resolve conflict respectfully to ensure your relationship stays healthy is essential. Sometimes you and your partner may need to work together to find a middle ground or explore how you can deal with your differences.

## Don't Fall for Love Like This

A love that emphasizes what a “**love like that**” means to you is where it’s at. Sometimes, outside influences can challenge what you know and believe about yourself, including your body. These influences include societal messages that cause doubt or shame in ourselves for who we are. Don’t ever accept a “**love**” that makes you feel less than, because that isn’t love.

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy relationships somewhere in the middle. Take our interactive [Relationship Spectrum](#) quiz by rating different scenarios as healthy, unhealthy, or abusive, and find out where your relationship falls. If you recognize any of the warning signs, it may be an indication that your relationship is unhealthy or abusive.





# Relationship Spectrum

## Healthy

**A healthy relationship means both you and your partner are:**

- Communicating
- Respectful
- Trusting
- Honest
- Equal
- Enjoying personal time away from each other
- Making mutual choices
- Economic/financial partners

## Unhealthy

**You may be in a unhealthy relationship if your partner is:**

- Not Communicating
- Disrespectful
- Not trusting
- Dishonest
- Trying to take control
- Only spending time together
- Pressured into activities
- Unequal economically

## Abusive

**Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner is:**

- Communicating in a hurtful or threatening way
- Mistreating
- Accusing the other of cheating when it's untrue
- Denying their actions are abuse
- Controlling
- Isolating their partner from others

**What you do with your body should always be your choice. If your partner does not support you or the choices you make for your body, it may be worth considering whether your relationship is healthy. Remember, any actions that help you feel more comfortable and affirm your identity and individuality are your choices. On the next page are some toxic behaviors to be aware of.**



# Body Shaming

Has your partner ever commented about how you look or what you wear that made you feel bad about yourself? Body shaming affects your self-esteem and confidence and depletes your autonomy. Body shaming is a form of bullying and could lead to other [types of abuse](#).

**This type of toxic behavior doesn't just happen in relationships but also occurs on dating apps and social media. Body shaming could be any unsolicited diet or exercise advice or could sound like:**

- "You would be more attractive if you lost or gained some weight."
- "You're so pretty for a trans girl."
- "I thought you would have more muscles as a trans man."
- "You'll never find love with a body like yours."
- "You're so brave for wearing that outfit!"
- "Real women have curves."

Check out this article from Your Life, Your Voice for more information about [body image](#).





# Revenge Porn

Did you know that [50% of people](#) have never heard of “**revenge porn?**” This type of abuse intersects with [sexual abuse](#), as it involves the digital distribution of nude or sexually explicit photos or videos of a person without their consent, and it is one of the more insidious forms of [digital abuse](#). Often, revenge porn is used by a current or former partner as retaliation or blackmail.

Revenge porn can happen to anyone. However, **studies show online harassment appears to be frequently experienced by young people** whose lives are intertwined with the internet and digital technology. [Young people](#) under 30 are more likely to witness online harassment and Roughly 70% of young adults have experienced online harassment or abuse.

**Although the exchange of pictures and videos may have been consensual when shared, it is important to understand and be aware that revenge porn can be used as a power and control tactic, such as:**

- [Deepfakes](#) are often created when reference photos and videos are “swapped” with images of a person via artificial intelligence (AI) programs to create the illusion that the person is saying or participating in actions they never have
- [Hidden camera](#) photos
- Upskirt photos (not created by the victim)
- Posting sexual pictures or videos online without the person’s permission
- Photoshopping a person’s image onto sexually explicit pictures or videos
- Stealing intimate pictures or videos from someone’s device or computer
- [Capping](#) or secretly filming the sexual activity of someone without their permission

Remember, no matter the situation, breaking the trust of a partner and manipulating or shaming them in this way is abusive behavior. If your partner is [pressuring you](#) to send explicit pictures or videos, or if they are threatening to distribute materials you have shared, you can contact [love is respect](#) any time. Our advocates are available 24/7 to provide [safety planning tips](#) and support.



# Resources

- **(ADWAS):** provides services to deaf, deafblind, and deaf-disabled survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault: [adwas.org](https://adwas.org)
- **Brown Boi Project:** a community of people working across race and gender to eradicate sexism, homophobia, and transphobia and create a healthy framework of masculinity and change: [brownboiproject.org](https://brownboiproject.org)
- **HEART:** ensures that Muslims have the resources, language, and choice to nurture sexual health and confront sexual violence: [hearttogrow.org](https://hearttogrow.org)
- **LGBT National Help Center:** serving the LGBTQ+ community by providing free, confidential peer support and local resources. Call 1-800-246-7743 or chat at [lgbthotline.org](https://lgbthotline.org)
- **National Runaway Safeline:** 24/7 free support for homeless and at-risk youth. Call 1-800-RUNAWAY or visit their website: [1800runaway.org/youth-teens](https://1800runaway.org/youth-teens)
- **Scarleteen:** inclusive, comprehensive, supportive reproductive and relationships info for teens: [scarleteen.com](https://scarleteen.com)
- **StrongHearts:** 24/7 free, confidential, and culturally relevant support for Native American and Alaska Native teens and young adults experiencing dating abuse and sexual violence. Call 844-7NATIVE (762-8483) or chat live at [strongheartshelpline.org](https://strongheartshelpline.org)
- **The Trevor Project:** provides 24/7 confidential crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ teens and young adults under 25. Call 1-866-488-7386, text START to 678678, or chat live at [thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)
- **Your Life Your Voice:** supporting parents, families, and children in need. 24/7 hotline, text, or email. [yourlifeyourvoice.org](https://yourlifeyourvoice.org)
- **Knowyourix:** Know Your IX works to educate students across the country about their civil right to education, free from sexual violence and harassment. [knowyourix.org/](https://knowyourix.org/)
- **Cyber Civil Rights Initiative:** Emotional support, technical advice, and information to victims of online abuse and nonconsensual pornography (NCP) 24/7 via phone, email, and chat. Call 844-878-CCRI. [cybercivilrights.org](https://cybercivilrights.org)





# love is respect is here for you

love is respect is a safe, inclusive space where teens and young adults can access information and get support in an environment designed specifically for them.



1.866.331.9474



[loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org)



LOVEIS to 22522



A project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, love is respect offers 24/7 information, support, and advocacy to young people between the ages of 13 and 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships.



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