

## THE RELATIONSHIP SPECTRUM

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

### 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 (in older teens/young adults)

### UNHEALTHY

You may be in an 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 (in older teens/young adults)

### 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 abusive
- Controlling
- Isolating their partner from others

Source: [Loveisrespect.org](http://Loveisrespect.org)

### IMPORTANT POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO YOUR TEEN INCLUDE:

**Accept what they are telling you.** Listen and be supportive even when you don't understand or agree with their decisions. Being judgemental will make them feel worse and less likely to reach out to you for help when they need you.

**Don't prevent them from seeing their partner.** Controlling their actions will make them more likely to keep secrets from you. Avoid taking their decision-making away from them – as this is a tactic they may already be experiencing in their abusive relationship. Remember that forcing this may be something that their partner can easily use to manipulate and use as “proof” that other people are the problem.

**Don't give up.** Your instinct is probably to defend and protect your child, but abusive situations aren't always that simple. Even though helping them can be frustrating when you don't understand or agree with their decisions, they need to know that they can trust you and depend on you for support. Make decisions that let them know that you're there for them.

*Adapted from the National Domestic Violence Hotline*

## STAY CONNECTED

Your support system MATTERS. Nobody gets into a relationship thinking it might turn abusive. Who you surround yourself with, the friends you trust, your family, and your community will support you through the highs and lows of life - including relationships. Someone who seeks to isolate you from the people who care about you isn't someone who values you.

**So remember, stay connected, keep communicating, and remember your value as you start exploring romantic relationships.**



# TEEN DATING SAFETY

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## SETTING EXPECTATIONS + BOUNDARIES

*How do you deserve to be treated by someone you're dating?*

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*How do you plan on treating someone you're dating?*

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## AWARENESS

*Hurtful behavior isn't always physical. What are some ways that you've seen people be hurt by someone they love?*

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*Have you ever seen one of your friends be hurt by (or hurt) someone they're dating? How would you handle that if it happened to you?*

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## SUPPORT

*It's normal to feel uncomfortable talking about hurtful behavior, but it's important to recognize and leave an unsafe situation before it gets worse. Who will you talk to if someone hurts you in a relationship?*

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*I want you to know how much I care about your safety and happiness - let's make a plan so you can always come to me for support. What phrase or code can you say to me (phone, text, email, in-person) so I'll know that you're in an unsafe situation and need my help, or just need to talk?*

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