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In case of an Emergency:

- **911 For Immediate Support**
- **Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)**

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#ENDTHESTIGMA

## **How to Talk to Your Teen About Dating Violence**

Teenage years are a time when fundamental understandings of life really begin to develop. It is in our teenage years that we begin to formalize how we approach, evaluate, and handle difficulties that life may throw at us. Teens also value a growing sense of independence and may shun advice or guidance from older people who have been in their shoes. This may be especially true for parents of teenagers. However, it is incredibly important to stay active in a teenager's life, monitor relationships for signs of danger, and understand how to approach sensitive issues.

Kids between the ages of 13 and 18 establish habits that will affect relationships for years to come. Unfortunately, teen dating violence is a serious issue that affects thousands of teens across the country. If you have a teenager who is in a relationship and suspect it is violent, unhealthy, or dangerous – take the time to talk to your child about teenage dating violence. Here are some suggestions to help you talk to your child about teen dating violence.

### **Establish Open Lines of Communication and Set Positive Examples**

Teenagers take cues from their surroundings and the media they follow. If they see violent relationships in the home, on television, or in a movie they may normalize any violent or damaging behavior within their own intimate relationships. You can help teens recognize unhealthy, violent, or negative dating relationship behaviors by setting positive relationship examples. If you and your teen are watching a movie about domestic violence, use the opportunity to talk about what you see on screen. Even if it doesn't seem like your teen is listening, they are. They are hearing you on some level. Simply encouraging positive relationship habits – and pointing out negative behaviors – can help your teen shape positive habits and recognize unhealthy ones.

### **Talk to Daughters and Sons**

Many parents may only look for signs indicating that their daughters are in abusive teenage relationships. However, it is equally as important to look for signs in both sons and daughters. Either can be the victim or perpetrator in violent teenage relationships. Staying attuned to behavioral changes in both sons and daughters is important. If you're teen is engaging in violence, then make sure you discuss the criminal consequences with them.

### **Talk to Your Teen Privately**

If you suspect your teen is in an unhealthy or violent relationship, set aside a time to speak privately. Teens are very sensitive to the perceptions of others and may be embarrassed about their situation. Finding a private space where your teen is most comfortable can help to set the scene for a meaningful and exploratory conversation.

### **Acknowledge That Relationships are Difficult**

As a parent, you have had at least one – if not more – relationship from which you can draw experience, knowledge, and wisdom. Relationships are hard work and require a lot of effort to be successful. Your teen, whether they have been dating for a few years or just testing the waters, are relatively new to relationships and have a lot to learn. Try to relate to the difficulties your teen may be experiencing in his or her relationship by confirming that you understand how much energy – both emotionally and mentally – a healthy relationship requires.

Full article found at <https://www.teendvmonth.org/talk-teen-dating-violence/>