

# Mental Health Matters

February 2022



## Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

### What is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month?

**February** is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month (TDVAM). This is an issue that impacts everyone – not just teens – but their parents, teachers, friends and communities as well. Together, we can raise the nation’s awareness about teen dating violence and promote safe, healthy relationships.

What is the Impact of Teen Dating Violence?

Nationwide, youth age 12 to 19 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault. Studies show that approximately 10% of adolescents report being the victim of physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner during the previous year. Girls are particularly vulnerable to experiencing violence in their relationships and are more likely to suffer long-term behavioral and health consequences, including suicide attempts, eating disorders, and drug use.

Adolescents in abusive relationships often carry these unhealthy patterns of violence into future relationships. Indeed, children who are victimized or witness violence frequently bring this experience with them to the playground, the classroom, later into teen relationships and, ultimately, they can end up the victims and perpetrators of adult intimate partner violence.

Full article found at <https://youth.gov/feature-article/teen-dating-violence-awareness-and-prevention-month>

### Early Warning Signs of Dating Violence

For teens and those new to dating and relationships, it’s can be difficult to identify controlling behaviors from caring behaviors. Consider this list of warning signs to identify unhealthy or abusive behaviors.

It’s not OK for a partner to:

- **Demand details about how you spend your time.** While it’s normal for a partner to express interest in your day, it’s not okay for a partner to demand to know where you are and who is spending time with you every minute of the day—or to limit with whom you spend time.
- **Restrict contact with family or friends.** Sometimes abusive partners will force someone to cut ties with family or friends who don’t approve of the relationship. Remember that who you trust and spend time with is your choice.

Full article found at <https://www.rainn.org/news/early-warning-signs-dating-violence>

### 11 FACTS ABOUT TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

1. Roughly 1.5 million high school boys and girls in the U.S. admit to being intentionally hit or physically harmed in the last year by someone they are romantically involved with.<sup>[1]</sup>
2. Teens who suffer dating abuse are subject to long-term consequences like alcoholism, eating disorders, promiscuity, thoughts of suicide, and violent behavior.<sup>[2]</sup>
3. 1 in 3 young people will be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship. The tricky question: what does an unhealthy relationship even look like? We've created a guide to help you spot the signs. Pre-sign up for [1 in 3 of Us: Flash Tattoos](#), launching May 1!<sup>[3]</sup>
4. 33% of adolescents in America are victim to sexual, physical, verbal, or emotional dating abuse.<sup>[4]</sup>

Full article found at <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-teen-dating-violence>

## 10 Tips on Talking about Healthy Relationships with Teens



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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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1. Encourage open, honest, and thoughtful reflection. Talk openly with young teens about healthy relationships. Allow them to articulate his or her values and expectations for healthy relationships. Rather than dismissing ideas as “wrong”, encourage debate —this helps young people come to his or her own understanding.
2. Be sensitive and firm. Parenting a young teen is not easy—especially when it comes to helping him or her navigate their way through relationships. To be effective, you will need to find the balance between being sensitive and firm. Try to adapt to the changes faced by your child. Be willing to talk openly and respect differences of opinion. And, realize that the decisions you make will sometimes be unpopular with your young teen.
3. Understand teen development. Adolescence is all about experimentation. From mood swings to risk taking, “normal teenage behavior” can appear anything-but-normal. New research, however, reveals that brain development during these formative years play a significant role in young teen’s personality and actions. Knowing what’s “normal” is critical to helping you better understand and guide young people.
4. Understand the pressure and the risk teen’s face. Preteens and young teens face new and increasing pressures about sex, substance abuse and dating. Time and time again, young teens express their desire to have parents/role models take the time to listen to them and help them think through the situations they face – be that person!
5. Take a clear stand. Make sure young teens know how you feel about disrespect, use of abusive or inappropriate language, controlling behavior, or any forms of violence,
6. Make the most of “teachable moments”. Use TV episodes, movies, music lyrics, news, community events or the experiences of friends to discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships.
7. Discuss how to be an ‘upstander’. Teach teens how to stand-up for friends when he or she observes unhealthy treatment of his or her peers.
8. Accentuate the positive. Conversations about relationships do not need to focus solely on risky behavior or negative consequences. Conversations should also address factors that promote healthy adolescent development and relationships.
9. Be an active participant in your young teen’s life. Explore ways to know more about your young teen’s friends and interests. Find activities you can do together.
10. Be prepared to make mistakes. You will make mistakes. Accept that you will make mistakes, but continue to help teens make responsible choices while trying to maintain that delicate balance of being sensitive, but firm.

Full article found at [https://s3.amazonaws.com/fwvcorp/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/11/10131/10Tips\\_healthyrelationships2.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/fwvcorp/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/11/10131/10Tips_healthyrelationships2.pdf)