

Healthy Relationships and Dating Abuse

What is Sheltering Wings? (5-8 mins)

Share about Sheltering Wings

This presentation is part of the Prevention and Education Program that Sheltering Wings offers to the community to educate and prevent Teen Dating Abuse through the fostering of healthy relationships. Statistics tell us that:

- 1 in 3 teenagers is a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner.
- One in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.

The purpose of this information and these activities is to get you thinking about your own relationships, whether you are in one now or will be in the future. Giving you information that will hopefully help you navigate the relationships you have over the next several years.

Trigger Warning: Dating violence can be a sensitive and triggering subject as you never know what someone else has experienced or been through. At any point if you need to take a break or talk to someone please see your teacher.

What is a Healthy Relationship? (10 mins)

Relationships can be defined in many different ways, the foundation of a healthy relationship is the same regardless of who that relationship is with, your best friend, your parents, teachers, siblings or boyfriend or girlfriend.

Ask the students to list the what characteristics or qualities they recognize as healthy. Write the answers they give you on the board.

- Honesty: says what they mean, does what they say they will
- Trust: doesn't feel the need to check your phone or ask for your password
- Loyalty: is committed to you
- Fun/Enjoyable: you enjoy being together and don't dread being with the person, has a good sense of humor
- Understanding: is willing to compromise
- Communication: talks about differences and disagreements before they escalate
- Equality: making decisions together, doing things you both enjoy

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

- Support: comes to your extracurricular events to cheer you on encourages you to spend time with your friends
- Respect: accepts and honors your boundaries
- Individuality: encourages and accepts when you want to hang out with your friends, gives you space
- Safety: their behavior is consistent
- Acceptance: embraces your differences and flaws, looks for the positive in situations

These are what create the foundation of all healthy relationships. This is the end goal but it will take a lot of hard work and time to achieve all of these and every relationship may not have all of these and that doesn't mean it isn't healthy it just means we have to work at building the foundation. Each one of these characteristics are connected to another way so if we focus on just a few the others will come more naturally.

Define Dating (3 mins)

Moving forward all the we will be talking about will be in reference to dating relationships simply because the topic of domestic violence and teen dating violence has to do with those types of relationships specifically. In order to do that we first have to define what dating is.

So, tell me how would you define dating?

Ask students to share why they think people date in high school. If they need suggestions some possible reasons people date in high school are to fit in, to have fun, to find someone to be more than friends with.

There are many forms of dating and you can think of it as a sort of spectrum of types of relationships one end has the type of relationships that starts on social media, snapchat or Instagram, lots of texting, face time every night and the other end has the type of relationship that includes spending time together, getting to know each other and each other's family and friends, supporting each other in the things they enjoy. And then there are all these other types in between those. While neither of these relationships is better than the other they just offer something different, one being more substantial and committed than the other.

People define relationships in different ways. However, you define the relationship the key is that you and your partner agree on what your relationship is.

Relationships are about choices

Choice 1-Who we are in the relationship with (10-15 mins)

The first choice we make is who we are in the relationship with. We all have an idea in our minds of what our perfect boyfriend or girlfriend might be. We are looking for someone who can fit into that idea that we have.

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

Engage students in the following questions: **If you could pick your perfect partner how would you describe them? What are some of the qualities that you would look for in an ideal partner?** There is no wrong answer to this question because everyone is looking for something different in a person.

Candy motivation is a big help here, for any student who give an answer they get a piece of candy.

Examples

- Romantic
- Good looking (the one everyone thinks but no one ever wants to say)
- Independent
- Smart
- Funny
- Confident
- Fun to be around
- Good listener
- Honest
- Unique
- Hardworking
- Supportive
- Athletic
- Popular
- Outgoing

Dating Bingo (student packet worksheet 1)

Explain how to play dating bingo and make students aware there will be a prize for the first two winners who bring you a completed bingo sheet.

Ask the two winners to share the five things they circled with the rest of the class.

The things that you chose to have in a partner are what makes your relationship unique to the two of you. You have what they are looking for and they have what you are looking for. You ultimately get to choose who you want to be in a relationship with, no one can choose that person for you. Lots of people might like to think they can, your best friend thinks they know who you would be perfect with, your parents would like to think they could pick the right person for you but they can't, only you can do that. So keep your standards set high don't settle for something less than what you want just so that you have someone that is how you end up in relationships that aren't good for you to be in.

Choice 2-How we are treated and how we treat them (7-10 mins)

The second choice we make is how we are treated so let's say hypothetically you have found this perfect person and they have all these great qualities how do you want them to treat you?

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

Engage students in the question: [How do you want them to be treated by your partner?](#)

- Respected
- Nurtured
- Committed to
- Trusted
- Treated equally
- Encouraged
- Loved
- Protected

How I want to be treated... (worksheet 2)

On this sheet you'll notice there is a person in the middle, that person represents you; on the two solid lines write the two most important ways you want to be treated. These are your "bottom line" the things you must have in a relationship and are not willing to compromise on. If you weren't being treated this way in a relationship you would end it, that is how important they are. Fill in the other lines with things that are still just as important to you.

Ask students to share the two things they wrote on the solid lines; you will hear many repeats draw their attention to that fact: the reason we hear so many repeats are because that is the way everyone wants and deserves to be treated.

Whatever you put on the solid lines let those two things be how you measure the success of your relationship. If you chose trust and respect and at some point, you don't feel like you have been trusted or respected it probably means it is time to move on from this relationship. You get to decide how you are treated in the relationship and when someone takes that choice away from that is when it becomes unhealthy to be in.

How do I want to treat my partner? (worksheet 3)

On this sheet I want you to list the ways you want to treat your partner. After you leave your partner how do you want them to feel about your time together. List those things on the lines in the center.

Ask student who are willing to share some of the things they wrote down.

Healthy Boundaries (15 min)

The third choice we get to make is what the relationship looks like. We do that by establishing boundaries. Engage students in the question: [How do you define boundaries?](#)

Possible answers: a line you don't cross, a limit, the difference between where you feel comfortable and where you don't.

There are 4 areas that we should work to establish boundaries in our relationships.

Engage the students in what they think boundaries in these areas look like

Emotional Boundaries - boundaries around the things that keep us in a good place emotionally, time with friends, time to yourself, anything that keeps you in a good place emotionally.

Physical Boundaries – when it comes to your personal body what are you willing and not willing to do. It can be something as simple as you are not comfortable with PDA.

Digital Boundaries – setting the expectation for how technology will be used in the relationship, we aren't going to share passwords, if I don't respond after the third message don't continue to text me just to get my attention.

Conflict Resolution Boundaries – how will we navigate disagreements and arguments? There is no such thing as a perfect relationship and there will be arguments and fights? Simple things like let me have some space if I need to think, we aren't going to call each other names or interrupt each other when the other is talking. If we can work through conflict in a healthy way the relationship grows from it. There are some effective ways to deal with conflict when it arises. Boundaries allow for compromise in a relationship. Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, we are human we make mistakes, we don't always see eye to eye on everything but it's important that you find a way to compromise if you disagree on something. Try to solve conflicts in a way that is healthy for the relationship. You have heard the saying that it's good to have a fight every now and then and it can be as long as it is done in a productive way. There are 4 basic communication skills that can help to resolve conflict effectively.

Is conflict good or bad? Thumbs up or thumbs down.

Conflict is completely neutral. You will experience conflict in all areas of your life. Conflict resolution is a skill that needs to be built up and developed.

An Easy way to remember is with the acronym SAFE

S is for Stay Calm If someone makes you upset and you immediately go to that person you are likely to respond out of the anger you are feeling and if you are yelling at them and they are yelling at you then no conflict is being resolved, more is being created.

Take some time to calm yourself down, you have to figure out for yourself what works for you, not everyone can take 5 deep breaths and be ok. You might need to talk to a friend, listen to music, be alone, take a walk or run, play basketball, take a nap, play a video game. Find something that works for you to keep your angry from getting out of control for someone to say I was so angry I couldn't control myself is a false statement. Everyone gets angry it is how we chose to respond to that anger that makes it perceived as a negative emotion.

A is for Ask questions find the right time to talk about it, ask open honest questions to better understand the situation, don't jump to conclusions, after listening you may find it was all a

misunderstanding. We all come into conflicts with people with assumptions and presuppositions.

F is for Find out feelings Find out how the other person feels and express your own feelings, use “I” statements. “I feel upset when you ignore me because I feel like you don’t care”. Don’t attack using “you” statement can make it sound like you are attacking someone.

- I statements are important for 2 reasons:
 - If I tell you “I felt like” or “I experienced”, you can’t tell me I’m wrong. Your partner cannot invalidate that feeling.
 - Also, if I begin saying “you did this”, etc., the other person is immediately defensive.
- Move away from a you vs. Me approach to YOU & ME vs. The problem

Exchange ideas for a solution talk about what will work for the two of you.

To close the discussion on boundaries, ask the students to take a minute to review worksheet called Setting Boundaries for Your Relationship and take a few minutes to ask yourself these questions about your own relationship and the boundaries set, how you answer these might help you decide if you need a boundary in this area. Direct them to some of the examples on the bottom of the page.

Quick facts on Teen Dating Violence (2 mins)

Direct students to the fact sheet in their packet for more facts

How does it start? (8 mins)

Not all unhealthy and abusive relationships come from some past experience or learned behavior. There are so many things that influence the health and success of our relationships.

Engage students in answering the question: [Where do you learn about or get your ideas about what your relationships should be like?](#)

Possible Answers: Parents, friends, family, internet, social media, movies, music

The world is constantly sending us messages of how our relationships could look and if you aren’t careful the information you get could lead down an unhealthy path. Some reasons dating abuse happens among teenagers might be:

- Things such as jealousy and possessiveness can very easily be interpreted as love, he loves me that’s why he doesn’t want me talking to anyone else, she loves me that’s why she wants me to spend all my time with her. Jealousy is never a sign of love but someone else’s insecurity in the relationship.
- The pressure to be in a relationship, no one wants to be the third wheel, the one left standing there alone, thinking here’s me alone again, single for life. So the natural tendency might be to settle for someone that you might not otherwise choose simply so that you aren’t alone.

- You are still learning to communicate. This is a process we are learning and perfecting all through our lifetime of relationships. It doesn't matter how long you've been with someone 6 months or 20 years you are constantly adjusting and learning the best ways to communicate. Think back to middle school relationships or even younger, if you liked someone you had your friends tell them or ask them out for you. As you get older you become more confident in your feelings and can communicate a little easier to the person you are interested in that you like them and you tell them yourself.
- Parents can sometimes influence the health of your relationships simply by making you feel like they don't matter by saying things like "you are too young to date", "you don't know what real love is", "this isn't who you are going to marry", "there are other fish in the sea", "you don't understand what it means to be committed to someone". I'm sure some of you have heard those things and it can make you feel like parents don't understand what you are going through in your relationships.
 - Adults tend to minimize the relationships that are valuable and valid to you right now!
- Those things might be because you don't typically confide in your parents or adults about your relationships. **86% of teenagers said they would rather talk to a friend than a trusted adult if they were in an abusive relationship.** Which is understandable as your friends are going through the same life experience that you are going through so their perspective is real and relevant to right now versus your parents who are offering advice based on their past experiences, which are valuable just in a different way.
- You are creating lifelong patterns for all your future relationships now and sometime parents forget that you have to have these life experiences in order to learn from them.

Much of how we see the world is through a relationship lenses and comes from those we interact and have those relationships with. The key is making sure that the foundation we are laying is one built on the healthy characteristics mentioned earlier.

Abusive Behaviors (25 mins)

How can we know when things are more than just unhealthy and it has now become abusive? There are many red flags of abuse and once you can recognize and name them for what they are it becomes easier to see and understand.

What is Dating Abuse?

Dating abuse includes any behavior by a dating partner that...

- is used to manipulate
- is used to gain control
- is used to gain power over someone

- makes a person feel bad about himself or herself or other people who are close to this person such as friends or family
- makes a person afraid of the person they are dating

Types of Abuse

There are 6 types of abuse that I will cover two that are not as relevant to the stage of like that you are currently at but are important to know and 4 that are more relevant to the where you are in your relationships right now and as I go through these you may have seen them happen before or can easily understand them as abuse.

The first two we will cover very briefly are financial abuse (describe) and spiritual (describe)

- Financial/Economic Abuse-most income or needs met through parents/guardians/adults

Physical Abuse This is the one everyone thinks of when they think of abuse because it is the one that leaves evidence of physical harm and causes pain.

- Hitting
- Throwing things
- Using a weapon
- Pinching
- Scratching
- Biting
- Shaking
- Choking
 - Mention the relation with this in sexual behaviors (the danger of teens not knowing their strength and damaging partners or killing them).
- Threatening
 - If your partner throws something and barely misses you, that's still physical violence. If your partner threatens to hit you or holds you in place screaming or threatening, that's still physical violence.
- Shoving
- Pushing
- Pulling hair
- Using weapons
- Using intimidation

(Slide 12)

Psychological/Emotional: These are the things that are a little harder to interpret as abuse because they don't leave marks and cause us pain on the inside

- Ignoring a date's feelings
- Acting in an intimidating way
- Name calling
- Isolating a date from others
 - Often the first move for abusers. The victim can't bounce ideas or behaviors of abuser off of friends and family.
- Displaying inappropriate anger
- Damaging personal property
- Criticizing their likes or interests
- Keeping a date from leaving
- Putting down family and friends
- Humiliating a date in public or private
- Telling lies
- Threatening to hurt oneself

A big one that happens in teen relationships is the threat of hurting oneself. Trying to break up or end an unhealthy relationship can be very hard to do, if someone tells you they don't know if they can go on without you or they may kill themselves if you leave. It is likely they are saying such things to keep you in the relationship and control whether you leave the relationship or not.

Engage the students with the question [add any to this list?](#)

Possible answers might be:

- Blackmail
- Spreading rumors
- Telling you who you can be friends with
- Where you are allowed to go
- Gaslighting-ask the students if they know what this is and if anyone can provide an example

(Slide 13)

Sexual Abuse: Not all sexual abuse is violent. With abuse and the things that lead up to abuse like jealousy and possessiveness, it's sometimes hard to see if those things are abuse or not, if your boyfriend or girlfriend gets jealousy occasionally is it a sign of abuse? Not likely. But with Sexual abuse any time someone forces you into any type of sexual activity without your consent it is sexual assault and that is a crime. Not all sexual assaults are violent.

- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Forcing a date to have sex
- Forcing a date to do other sexual acts he or she doesn't want to do

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

- Sexual contact with someone who is very drunk, drugged, unconscious or otherwise unable to give a clear and informed “yes” or “no.”
- Threatening someone into unwanted sexual activity
- Refusing to use condoms or restricting someone’s access to birth control

We are taught consent from the time that we are little kids, if you want something that someone else has you don’t just take it from them you ask for it.

No means no, I don’t know means no, saying nothing means no. The only thing that means yes is yes. Ask students what about a “Well... I guess” -No, “I mean, maybe?” -No. How about a “I would love to!” -Yes, There will be an empathic difference between the yes and no and if you can’t tell a difference assume the answer is no.

There is no such thing as implied consent, just because you have done something once. Three times, five times doesn’t mean you are willing to do it again. Consent should be asked for and given every single time. Consent does not ruin the “mood” it protects both people in the relationship.

Digital Abuse: I want to talk about this one for a few minutes because this is a huge issue with teens today because we live in a digital time. We are rarely found with our phones or connected to some form of social media. But those things are just another way for someone to become a victim of dating abuse.

- Tells you who you can or can’t be friends with or follow on social media
- Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening messages, DMs or other messages online.
- Makes you share your location
- Puts you down on social media
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and demands or pressures you send some in return.
 - **THIS IS CHILD SEXUAL ASSULT MATERIAL-you can be charged with a federal crime.**
- Steals or insists to be given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can’t be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through your phone frequently, checks up on your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.

Continuum of Behaviors (10 mins):

Explain what a continuum is and ask for 10 volunteers

Now that you know the types of abuse and have been given some examples we are going to make a **dating abuse continuum**. Students will need to put these in order of how they would start and end in an unhealthy and abusive relationship. Have volunteers stand at the front of the room each holding a paper and the seated students should arrange them in order.

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

1. Jealousy
2. Constant texting
3. Always demands partner's attention
4. Cutting off from family and friends
5. Name calling
6. Yelling
7. Throwing objects
8. Hitting
9. If I lose you...
10. Being put in the hospital

Once they are in the above order draw their attention to these 3 things through discussion

1. Does every relationship that has jealousy and constant texting end up at the other end of the continuum? No, these are behaviors that are unhealthy for a relationship but if we don't deal with the unhealthy stuff when it starts it will progressively get worse over time.
2. Name Calling and Yelling could really go anywhere on this continuum because if your partner is jealous of someone you are talking to or spending time with might they call you a name because if it.
3. The last two we can change to say things like "If I can't have you know one can" type of thinking and even more severe than physical harm that requires medical attention it can end in death. Just because you are young doesn't mean it can't happen.

Heather Norris Law-couple that had the goals from High School on. Went to college together, and in their freshman year her partner murdered her. Patterns of abuse were started in high school and the pieces were put together after the fact. People think this doesn't happen to teens and there are no real risks for teens. You may not feel at risk, but you need to know these signs to protect you from the dangers in relationships.

Power and Control Wheel

Describe the power and control wheel as they big picture or the whole dynamic of abusive relationships. Describe the tactics used to gain power over their partner.

Isolation and Exclusion: (Cat add text here)

Power and Control Tactics Scenarios: Read or group students together and give each group a scenario, instruct them to as a group read through the scenario and determine which tactic is being used to gain power and control in the situation. Remind them that we will come back together and a representative from their group will read their scenario and share the tactics they chose. You can refer them to the power and control wheel in their packet to reference.

Why People Stay

Before progressing to this slide engage them in asking why people stay.

You might be wondering to yourself, why anyone would stay in a relationship where abuse was taking place. Why wouldn't they just leave? There are lots of reasons people stay in relationships that are not healthy, some of them are very complex and some of them are very simple.

Why do you think someone would stay?

Go through these skipping over hope things will get better, save this one for last to lead in to slide 18

- Love him/her
- Guilt
- Companionship
- Don't view it as abuse
- *Hope things will get better*
- Loneliness
- Threats of suicide
- Fear of physical harm
- Social/Peer Pressure
- Low self-esteem

The Cycle of Abuse-explain the cycle of abuse and the connection to the hope that things will change and get better

Ending a Relationship

Ask students *Do you think it is easy to break up with someone?*

it's not easy to break up with someone in any relationship regardless if there is abuse or not. You throw abuse in and it's even harder to end it. When there is abuse in a relationship the choice to walk away gets a little harder especially if there might be a way to fix the relationship. We all have different points in a relationship when we would say "that's it I can't take anymore" think back to that continuum of behaviors from earlier. Some people will can put up with the jealousy and the constant need of our time and attention where as others feel like they shouldn't have to deal with that, or the name calling and constant yelling might be the point for someone else and someone might be willing to deal with all of that and when it becomes physical is when they decide they have to end it. And we have all seen people break up and get back together in hopes that things have changed or will be different this time.

We are going to do an activity to get you thinking about what you would tolerate in a relationship and when you might break up with someone.

Read Joe and Claire Scenario: This activity requires all students to stand at their seat. Direct to students to listen to the scenario and if at any point they hear something that would make them end the relationship they should sit down, if they stay in the relationship stay standing, if at some point they sit down but hear something that would make them take the person back they should stand back up (draw attention to the fact that people break up and get back together all the time) Only rule is to think about what they would do, don't just sit down because everyone else sat down.

Engage students in this discussion once done. After you know what is going on do any of you think you might take them back? If you stayed longer than most that is ok. We want to believe that the person we are with doesn't want to hurt us. It's important to remember that you cannot change a person, you can't fix them. You should never stay because you feel bad for someone or feel like you have to fix them or their situation. Can people change? Yes, but this change has to happen apart from the relationship and then maybe they can come back later as a couple but for Claire this has become part of a generation cycle for Claire as a learned behavior from her parents and until she chooses to learn new behaviors she will struggle in all her relationships

Helping a Friend

You now know all the red flags and warning signs of someone who could be experiencing this. Sometimes though people will never tell anyone 33% of teenagers will never tell anyone at all about the abuse they experience. If you see the signs just say what you see happening in your friend's life, you used to hang out with us all the time you don't anymore, why? You used to love to do _____, you quit, why? Let them tell you why they have given up things or pulled away from friends and then help them identify why that isn't healthy or ok.

Reaching out for help in an abusive relationship is very difficult for victims to do. There are many reasons why someone might not tell someone what is happening.

Engage student is the question, *If this was happening to you why wouldn't you tell your best friend?* Don't want to burden their friend

- Afraid of what will happen if people find out
- Thinks no one will believe them
- Embarrassed - especially if you are a guy and this is happening to you.

86% of teenagers will go to a friend over their parents, Why wouldn't you tell your parents?

- Parents try to fix things
- Make them end the relationship
- Afraid to disappoint or worry them

When asked what the most helpful thing is that someone could do to help is to offer non-judgmental support. Be there no matter what, don't try to tell them what to do. It statistically takes someone 7-10 times to end an abusive relationship and they need a friend their every time.

Friends wheel: - explain friends wheel

Don't Gossip: Talk in Private. Don't tell other people without your friend's permission.

Believe the story: Listen and believe your friend. Acknowledge feelings and let your friend know they are not alone.

Tell the person that he or she did not deserve the abuse, the abuse is not their fault. Encourage them

Let your friend make his or her own decisions: Respect their right to end the relationship when they are ready. It has to be their choice to end it. It may not be safe for them to end the relationship immediately; it might need to be done during a time when they might not see that person every day.

Make a safety plan: What have they done in the past to keep safe? Is it working? Code word and be present

Give help: Know the resources available for help.

Who can help you worksheet with resources and blank spaces to fill in who can they identify that might be able to help them at school and in the community.

- Sheltering Wings (317)745-1496
- Help Line 2-1-1
- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence 1(800)332-7385
- National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline 1(866)331-9474
loveisrespect.org
Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 for a peer advocate

Preventing Abuse

- Promote equality in dating relationships
- Speak up when you see abuse happening, don't be a bystander
- Challenge the concept that violence is acceptable conflict resolution
- Encourage constructive communication
- Be aware and offer resources available for victims of dating violence

(Slide 23 and 24)How to Be Involved

Blue: Discussion

Green: Activity

Review the last two slides on the ways they can be involved. All information is on the QR codes on the last sheet.