

Mental Health Matters

February 2020



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. (Retrieved from <https://youth.gov/feature-article/teen-dating-violence-awareness-and-prevention-month>)

How do I participate in Teen Violence Awareness and Prevention Month?

During Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month (TDVAM), we aim to break the cycle of violence by providing support and services to victims, their families and their communities. The following activities represent just a few of the exciting ways that everyone can – and hopefully will – engage in this work (*Click each hyperlink for information on each activity or resource*) :

- [TeenDVmonth Toolkit](#)
- [Safety Planning Guide](#)
- [That’s Not Cool Ambassador Program](#)
- [Preventing and Responding to Teen Dating Violence](#)
- [Runaway & Homeless Youth and Relationship Violence Toolkit](#)

How do I get help?

If you know of a teen or parent that could benefit from speaking to a caring, well-trained peer advocate, please connect them with the National Dating Abuse Helpline, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, at 1-866-331-9474 (TTY: 1-866-331-8453), by texting "loveis" to 77054, or through live chat at loveisrespect.org (link is external) For more information, please visit the [Department of Justice, Office on Violence Women](#).

SELF-CARE in five minutes or less...

1. Turn off computer/cell phone for 5 minutes.
2. Meditate for 5 minutes
3. Text a distant friend or relative
4. Listen to calming music for 5 minutes
5. Write down what you accomplished today
6. Stretch!

Warning signs of Dating Abuse

Checking cell phones or Social Media without Permission

Extreme Jealousy and Insecurity

Explosive Temper

Isolation from Family or Friends

Making False Accusations

Possessiveness

Constant belittling or put-downs

Repeated pressure for sex or sexual favors

Physically Inflicting Pain or Hurt in Any way



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In case of an
Emergency:

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

Upcoming News and Events

- February 11th, HS3—RISE LGBTQ+ Youth Training
- February 22nd—Family Conference Health and Wellness, Isbell Middle School
- February 27th & March 5th, Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
- Self-injury Awareness Day 2020 is observed on Sunday, March 1, 2020
- March 19th & 26th—Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Promoting Healthy Teen Relationships

CHARACTERISTICS

Promote Respect—Are you accepted for who you are? No one should pressure you into doing things you are not comfortable with such as bullying, drinking, drugs, or unwanted physical contact

Promote Safety—Do you feel safe emotionally and physically? Emotional safety means you feel comfortable being you without fear of being put down. Physical safety means you are not being hurt or pressured into unwanted physical contact.

Promote Support— Do your friends care for you and want what is best for you? Your friends should understand if you can't hang out because you have to study for a big test or spend time with family.

Promote Individuality—Do you pretend to like something you don't or be someone you aren't? Be yourself; after all, being an individual is what makes you you!

Promote Fairness and Equality—Do you have an equal say in your relationships? From the activities you do together to the friends you hang out with, you should have equal say in the choices made in your relationships.

Promote Acceptance—In your relationships, do your friends or girlfriend/boyfriend accept you for who you really are? You shouldn't have to change who you are, or compromise your beliefs to make someone like you.

Promote Honesty and Trust—Are you always honest? Honesty builds trust. You can't have a healthy relationship without trust! If you have ever caught your friend or boyfriend or girlfriend in a huge lie, you know that it takes time to rebuild your trust.

Promote Communication—Do you talk face to face (not just text) about your feelings? Listen to one another and hear each other out. Text messages, Facebook or MySpace messages should be respectful; not mean, hurtful, or inappropriate.

Promote Laughter/Fun/Enjoyment—Do you have fun with your friends, boyfriend, or girlfriend? If there is a lot of drama or crying in a relationship, it's probably not healthy!

(Retrieved from: Center for Healthy Teen Relationships; A project of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence)

How can we stop Teen Dating Violence before it starts? (macro approach)

- Teach safe and healthy relationship skills (SEL, Healthy relationship programs)
- Engage Influential adults and peers (Men and boys as allies, Bystander empowerment)
- Disrupt developmental pathways toward partner violence (early childhood education, family engagement, parenting skill training, mental health support/treatment)
- Create protective environments (school climate and safety, organizational policies and community)
- Strengthen economic supports for families (household security, work and family supports)
- Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms (victim services, treatment and support for survivors, client centered approaches)

(Full article can be read at: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html>)