

TEEN
DATING
VIOLENCE
AWARENESS
MONTH



#teenDVmonth

It's Time To Talk Day - How To Guide



www.breakthecycle.org

P.O. Box 811334, Los Angeles, CA 90081

ABOUT

TEEN DV MONTH



For years, young people across the nation have organized to put a stop to dating abuse. Currently, one in three (1:3) young people experience some form of dating violence in their lives. With their adult allies, young people achieved a major victory in 2005 when the importance of addressing teen dating abuse was highlighted in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

The following year, Congress followed the lead of dozens of national, state and local organizations in sounding the call to end dating abuse. Both Chambers declared the first full week in February "National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week." Then in 2010, they began dedicating the entire month of February to teen dating violence awareness and prevention.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is a national effort to raise awareness about dating violence, promote programs that support young people, and encourage communities to prevent this form of abuse with the goal of decreasing the prevalence of dating violence among young people. Learn more at www.breakthecycle.org/teendvmonth

HISTORY OF ITTT

Hosted by Break the Cycle's Love Is Not Abuse (LINA) Coalition, It's Time To Talk Day is an annual awareness event aimed at generating conversations about healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence during February.

This year, Break the Cycle is encouraging everyone to take the conversation beyond a day and bridge the gap between adults and youth by having targeted conversations all month long. To achieve this, listening sessions designed to bring adults and young people together will be hosted by Break the Cycle, community partners, and LINA coalition members across the country throughout the month of February.

Are you ready to bridge the gap this February? We've created this guide to help!

ABOUT BREAK THE CYCLE

Break the Cycle is the leading national nonprofit organization providing comprehensive dating abuse programs exclusively to young people ages 12 to 24. From the classroom to the courtroom to the floor of Congress, we work every day to give young people, and those who care about them, the tools they need to live safer, healthier lives.

Mission: Break the Cycle inspires and supports young people to build healthy relationships and create a culture without abuse.

Values: Everyone has a right to a safe and healthy relationship, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity. We work every day to make that right a reality.

BRIDGING THE GAP: Youth & Adults Coming Together

Talking with young people about relationships can seem intimidating. Equally stressful is the idea of talking with adults about these topics when you are a young person! This year, we are using It's Time to Talk Week to share the message that talking about the realities of relationships with young people doesn't have to raise your blood pressure. In fact, it can be as easy as 1 - 2 - 3!

It's Time To Talk is all about "Bridging the Gap," and encouraging young people and adults to work together to support healthy relationships and end dating abuse. How are we doing this? We're asking communities to come together to answer questions and share ideas. Through open and honest conversations, adults and young people will reflect on relationships past and present to talk through their similarities and differences. As changemakers, we need to work together, and that means communicating, listening, learning together, and respecting each other's experiences.

GOALS:

You may be wondering, "What's the point?" By participating in It's Time to Talk you will be taking active steps towards:

- Creating a space where young people and adults feel comfortable to talk about the realities of relationships, past and present
- Shifting the approach from talking to young people to talking with young people
- Breaking down barriers to allow open, honest, and non-judgmental discussions about dating, healthy relationships, and abuse
- Promoting the importance of continued discussion and relationship building in your community

Creating safer communities starts with relationships; to start relationships, we've got to start talking!



OK, I'M IN.

What do I do next?

The first thing to do is take a breath and allow yourself to get excited! You're becoming a part of a movement to end abuse, and that makes you simply, awesome. To get started, envision what your ideal event would look like. Where will it happen? When? Who should be there? Now, work backwards. Staying organized can help to avoid stress during the event, and keep you focused on your goal - having good, quality conversations.

Before you move on, check out our Relationship Realities and #TweakURSpeak handouts on our website to prepare. Relationship Realities will help you understand the dynamics of modern relationships and #TweakURSpeak is a good activity for you and your team to understand the lingo used by young people today.

CHOOSE A THEME

Keeping with our simple 1-2-3 method, you can theme your event based on the day of the week. Creative themes can help to direct your day's conversations and dive deep into what participants talk about. Our suggested themes for It's Time to Talk Day are:

One Liners & Firsts

- Conversation starters when you like someone
- First dates
- First disagreement
- How to express setting boundaries

Share Your Seconds

- Communicating you want a second date
- Shifting from casual to committed relationships
- Lingering disagreements

The Third Wheel

- Supporting a friend
- Open relationships
- Balancing friends and relationships

Themes can be fun, but they should also be relatable. Talk to the young people in your community about what would appeal to them for It's Time to Talk Day themes. Need help developing conversation starters? We have a list of questions in our "Conversation Guide" you can use for your event. Plus, when you sign up for the Love Is Not Abuse email list, you receive a newsletter with a new conversation starter in it each month!

GET ORGANIZED

Consider having a planning document outlining logistics, set up, the event schedule, leadership roles, and who is doing what. Here are a few questions and suggestions to get you started:

What supports are needed?

Think about technology, supplies like sticky notes, pens, whiteboards, and enough staff or volunteers to ensure a great event!

Who should be on your “team”?

These are the do-ers. The creative ones. The ones that will be as committed as you are to hosting a great event. Bring them into the planning phase, and don't forget to include young people on your team!

What day and time are you hosting the event?

Remember to consider school schedules for young people, work schedules for adults, and transportation limitation.

Where will you host the session?

Is this an accessible space? Is it close to public transportation (if needed)? Is this a space that young people and people from your community will be comfortable in? Remember to make sure there are appropriate pathways and ramps for people with disabilities, and knowing if interpretation support will be needed.

How many people?

We recommend trying to keep the number under 30. Creating a registration system can help to track expected attendance numbers. Try something formal like an online system or as informal as a Facebook invite or sign up sheet!

How many people?

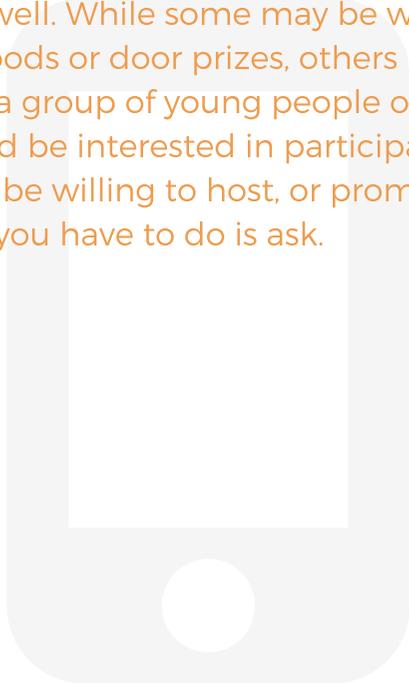
The best events will feel casual and comfortable, so make sure the space feels that way too. Think less classroom and more couch. Circles are a great way to break up power dynamics and connect!

Don't forget to leave some time to be flexible - sometimes snags can happen, but with the right attitude, last minute changes can result in exciting and unexpected outcomes.

GETTING PEOPLE IN THE DOOR

Part of having high-quality conversations between young people and adults means getting people to show up in the first place. Time is limited for everyone, so providing incentives can be key to a good turnout. Consider offering things like giveaways to local events, the movies, or swag like T-shirts. Free food is always a good motivator!

Local organizations can be one of your best assets as well. While some may be willing to donate goods or door prizes, others might have access to a group of young people or adults who would be interested in participating. They may even be willing to host, or promote the event. All you have to do is ask.



BUT HOW DO I REACH PEOPLE?

Building on our suggestions for getting people in the door, we suggest tapping into your community resources. Outreach can happen in a variety of ways, and we encourage you to get creative!

- Post flyers in a public place (restaurants, community centers, schools)
- Engage adult community leaders and young influencers
- Use online platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram
- Reach out to youth where they already are (youth groups or clubs, sports teams, religious youth groups)

If you're interested in hosting your It's Time to Talk Day for a specific group, like your child's sports team and coaches, at a place of faith in your community, or a local school, engage members of those communities to help you promote the event.

Reaching young people can sometimes seem like a challenge, which is why we encourage you to engage young people in the planning of the event. One of the best ways to reach young people is through social media. See the next page for a few examples of ways to promote online:



Don't forget to use our It's Time to Talk hashtags: #ITTD and #teenDVmonth. Break the Cycle and Love Is Not Abuse will be tracking these tags throughout the month!

Still not sure how to engage young people online? Ask a young person!



Feb. is #teenDVmonth! Come share your thoughts on one-liners and first dates on 2/1: [insert your event link]. #ITTD

What are your #RelationshipGoals? This #teenDVmonth we wanna hear your thoughts on how to date in a healthy way. Learn more: [insert your event link]. #ITTD



Did you know that Feb. is #teenDVmonth? Join this national week of conversation and help prevent teen dating abuse by participating in some real talk about what it means to have a healthy relationship. Learn more here about #ITTD: [insert your event link]

Did you know that 1 in 3 teens experiences dating abuse? Talking about it is the first step to ending it. Come share with adults what dating is really like today, and exchange ideas for ending the violence. Find out how to attend #ITTD here: [insert your event link]

HOSTING THE EVENT

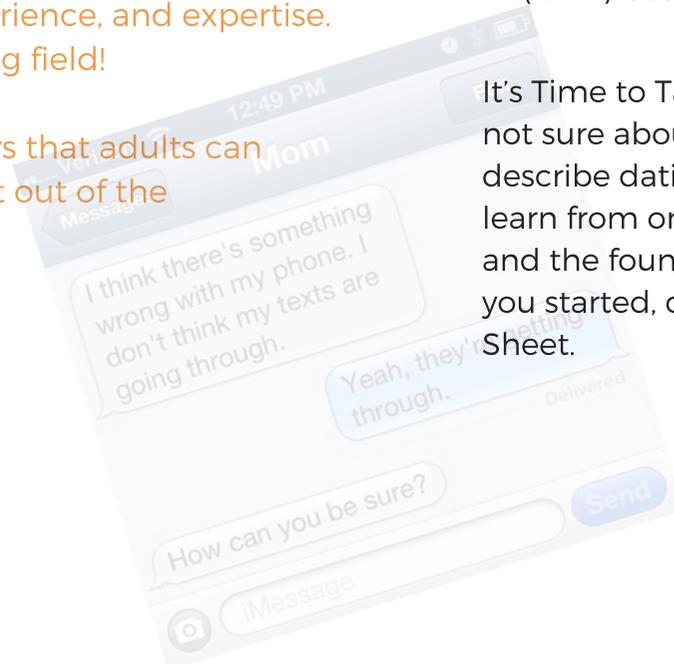
Is There Preparation to be Done In Advance?

We probably don't need to tell you this, but dating and language (can) look a lot different than it did ten, twenty, and even thirty years ago. The important thing to remember is that we've all been young, new to dating, and can relate to the idea of not being taken seriously by adults. To maximize your It's Time to Talk Week event, and the relationships that come out of your event, it's vital to acknowledge that every person - youth and adult - in the space brings with the knowledge, experience, and expertise. Start from an equal playing field!

What are some of the ways that adults can prepare to make the most out of the conversation?

- Ask yourself what assumptions you make about young people. Being aware of your preconceived notions is necessary in order to set them aside and have honest conversations.
- Try not to judge, blame, or make assumptions about their relationships.
- Be prepared to be open and honest. Young people can tell when we are guarding ourselves, but also make sure you don't overshare. Find the balance that works for you.
- Get acclimated with what young people are already saying. Explore the Love Is Not Abuse (LINA) Coalition page!

It's Time to Talk Day is a great time to learn. If you're not sure about the language young people use to describe dating, ask them! Plus, creating space to learn from one another is a great tool to build trust and the foundation for a future relationship. To get you started, check out our "Relationship Realities" Tip Sheet.



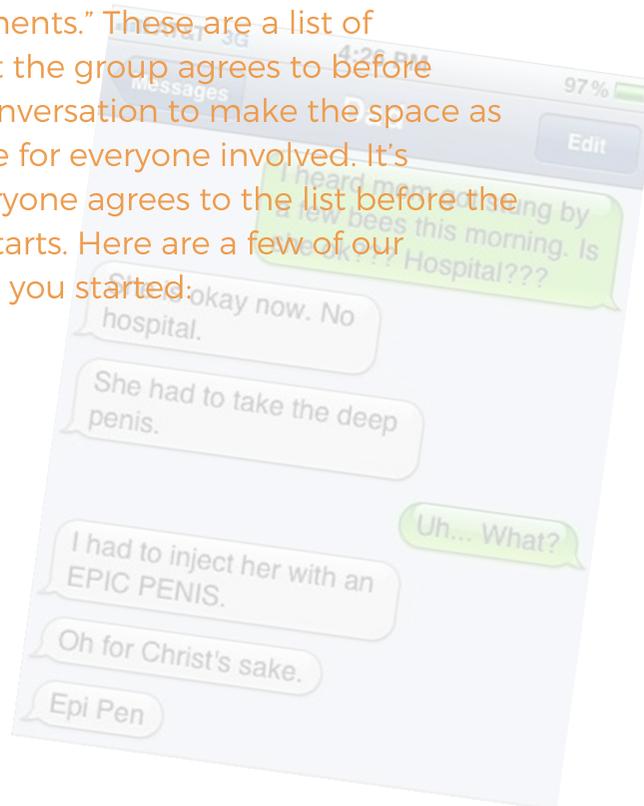
HOW SHOULD WE START?

Great question! Once everyone is there and settled, it's a good idea to get everyone on the same page. Reiterate why you're there, and the purpose of It's Time to Talk Day. Remind everyone that the event is a starting point - and that the conversations shouldn't end after the day is over.

Another good strategy is to set what we call "Group Agreements." These are a list of guidelines that the group agrees to before starting the conversation to make the space as safe as possible for everyone involved. It's important everyone agrees to the list before the conversation starts. Here are a few of our favorites to get you started:

- One Person One Mic (One person speaks at a time. Give everyone their time to contribute!)
- Respect Everyone's Story (No judgment or devaluing others' experiences. Everyone's truth is their own and deserves respect.)
- Respect Names and Gender Pronouns
- What's Said Here Stays Here
- Questions Are Ok!

One way to get the ball rolling with shared learning is to have the group get on the same page about language. Remember the #TweakURSpeak handout we mentioned earlier? You can use this to be an ice-breaker of sorts, having everyone fill out what they think the definition of the different words are. You'd be surprised how much language has changed! This activity can help get everyone on the same page about words like dating, talking to, main, and bae. When the group is finished, you can review the words together, having youth and adult participants help to define them for the rest of the group. This is a great way to set the tone that everyone brings knowledge to the conversation, and has something important to say.



WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TALK ABOUT?

While there is no limit to where these conversations might go, here are a few talking points to get things started that sync up with our simple 1-2-3 approach. Feel free to mix and match according to your group and which of our three themes you choose.

Working with your planning team to come up with your own questions based on the theme(s) you choose is a great way to ensure everyone's thoughts are represented.

One Liners and Firsts

Think about your first kiss, dates, and arguments. One liners (or pick up lines) are what you would say to the person to get a conversation started...

- How would you tell someone you're into them, like them, or want to go out?

- What was your first date like? What did you do?
- What's your idea of the perfect "going out" activity?
- How would you want the person you're spending time with to let you know if they were upset with you?
- What would you say to someone you were going out with if you wanted to express your boundaries? (example: sharing passwords, physical boundaries, etc.)

Share Your Seconds

Think about the next level of dates/relationships, and repeat experiences.

- How would you tell someone you want to go out again?
- When do you know that things are shifting from a one time thing to a more committed situation? What signs or status do you share in public?
- What do you do/say when you have the same disagreement more than once?

The Third Wheels

Think about being that friend that is hanging out with a couple, and seeing things that make you go hmm...

- How do you tell someone (friend/child) when you see a warning sign of abuse?
- What are your thoughts on open relationships or non committed situations? Do you hear about this type of relationship more than the traditional type?
- How do you balance time with friends and someone you're dating/going out with?
- What healthy relationship tips would you share with a friend?

Lastly, we'd like for everyone to ask the question below no matter what theme you select. (Don't forget to take notes and share your responses with us!)

What do you wish adults/young people would understand about relationships?

HOW DO I SET UP THE CONVERSATION?

Set-up for the discussion can vary. Consider having two co-facilitators (one youth and one adult) to ask the questions. Another option is to have participants choose from a pile of questions and ask them one at a time. Get creative and ask your planning team if they have any ideas.

It's okay to make things a little light hearted! - just make sure everyone feels their voice is heard and no matter where the conversation goes, both groups come together to bridge the gap around talking about healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.

Remember, just because one person initiates, doesn't mean everyone can't answer. Let the conversation flow naturally!



Do You Have Any Strategies to Make This a Success?

We sure do! Don't get discouraged if the conversation is slow to start; just starting the conversation is what matters! You will get more comfortable over time, so be patient with yourself. Remember, this is a jumping off point for future conversations in your community. You don't have to fit it all into one conversation.

What If We Don't Have Any Young People Show Up?

If the day or your event arrives and you only have adults in the room, that's ok! Creating space for discussions among other caring adults is an important piece of building a coalition to support young people in your community. You can still reflect on the themes for the week and make it a goal to take your responses and compare them to what young people in your community think. Don't forget you can also use the Love is Not Abuse Facebook page as your go-to for the youth voice.

Use this time to connect, grow, and strategize. Ask the group:

- What brought them there? Why are they passionate about supporting young people to build healthy relationships?

- What is it that they feel they need to learn more about?
- What hesitations do they have about talking with the young people in their lives?
- How can you all collaboratively connect with young people in the community?

This time can be a wonderful opportunity to assess the strengths and growth areas of the group, and create next steps for working together.

How Do I Handle Disclosures?

Talking with young people about relationships can sometimes result in the disclosure of abuse. It's important to know your reporting responsibilities in these cases, and to be aware of what resources are available in your area. The Loveisrespect hotline can direct you to the closest resources in your area, as can your local domestic violence or sexual violence coalition. These coalitions can also inform you about your reporting requirements, in preparation for your event. Consider having Loveisrespect palm cards onsite, for easy distribution and sharing.

Above all, remember to thank the young person for trusting you with this information, and affirm that you believe and support them. Not sure what to say? Check out some examples in our "What to Say to Someone Who Discloses" resource on our website.

Anything Else I Should Know?

Yes! We want to hear from you! Let us know when you are going to host your event and we will highlight your event/organization online.
www.breakthecycle.org/teendvmonth

We also want to hear about how amazing your event went. Gathering feedback is a great way to better inform future events - for you and for us!

We ask that anyone hosting an It's Time to Talk Day event share their hosting experience with us by sending a few key pieces of information after your event is complete. Email us and include the following or fill out our feedback form online.

- Name of Organization/Host
 - Date of Your ITTD Session
 - Theme(s) selected
 - Number of participants (Adults and Youth)
- Reflection:
- What did you enjoy the most about your event?
 - What would you improve or change?
 - What quote or short story can you share from your event?

Email: info@breakthecycle.org

What Makes Good Feedback?

- Inspiring quotes
- Lightbulb moments
- Pictures, video, or other media representation of your event (don't forget to get permission first!)

You can also share these successes online by tagging us on social media and using the event hashtags #ITTD and #teenDVmonth. We're on tons of platforms, so feel free to choose one (or more!) of these:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/breakthecycle

Twitter: [@breakthecycledv](https://twitter.com/breakthecycledv)

Instagram: [@breakthecycle](https://www.instagram.com/breakthecycle)

Snapchat: [breakthecycledv](https://www.snapchat.com/add/breakthecycledv)

#ITTD

#teenDVmonth

www.breakthecycle.org/teendvmonth

JOIN THE

LOVE IS NOT ABUSE

COALITION

Love Is Not Abuse (LINA) is a growing national grassroots coalition of adults who want to learn about and prevent dating abuse. The coalition strives to create and build content that is youth informed to share with communities across the country. LINA members are active advocates, parents, teachers, government officials, health care workers, or basically any caring adult working with youth. Stay in touch with us by joining the coalition breakthecycle.org/loveisnotabuse We'd love to hear about your ideas about working with young people to create healthy relationships.



Funny parental text messages courtesy of the HuffPost. It's Time To Talk Guide is a product of Break the Cycle. All Rights Reserved (c) 2016.