

**LOVE  
IS NOT  
ABUSE**

**A TEEN DATING ABUSE PREVENTION CURRICULUM  
HIGH SCHOOL EDITION**

**LOVE  
IS NOT  
ABUSE**

SINCE 1991

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **INTRODUCTION: THE LOVE IS NOT ABUSE CURRICULUM**

Why Love Is Not Abuse Is Important .....	Page 4
Curriculum Overview .....	Page 6
Curriculum Development .....	Page 7
Practical Matters .....	Page 8
Collaboration .....	Page 8
Crisis And Disclosure Plans .....	Page 8
Confidentiality And Mandated Reporting .....	Page 9
Contacting Us .....	Page 9
Teaching Tips .....	Page 10
Using Other Literature .....	Page 12
Creating A School-Wide Program .....	Page 13
Book List .....	Page 14
Websites .....	Page 16

## **LESSON 1: DATING ABUSE 101 .....**

Teacher Background Information .....	Page 21
Activities .....	Page 26
Take-Home Assignments .....	Page 30
Handouts .....	Page 31
Teacher's Copy: I Thought Things Would Change .....	Page 31
I Thought Things Would Change .....	Page 33
What Is Teen Dating Abuse? .....	Page 34
Roles In Dating Abuse .....	Page 37
Helping A Friend Who Is Being Abused .....	Page 38
Are You In A Healthy Relationship? .....	Page 39
A Letter To Parents On Teen Dating Abuse .....	Page 40
Optional: Dylan And Alejandro .....	Page 42

## **LESSON 2: POWER AND CONTROL .....**

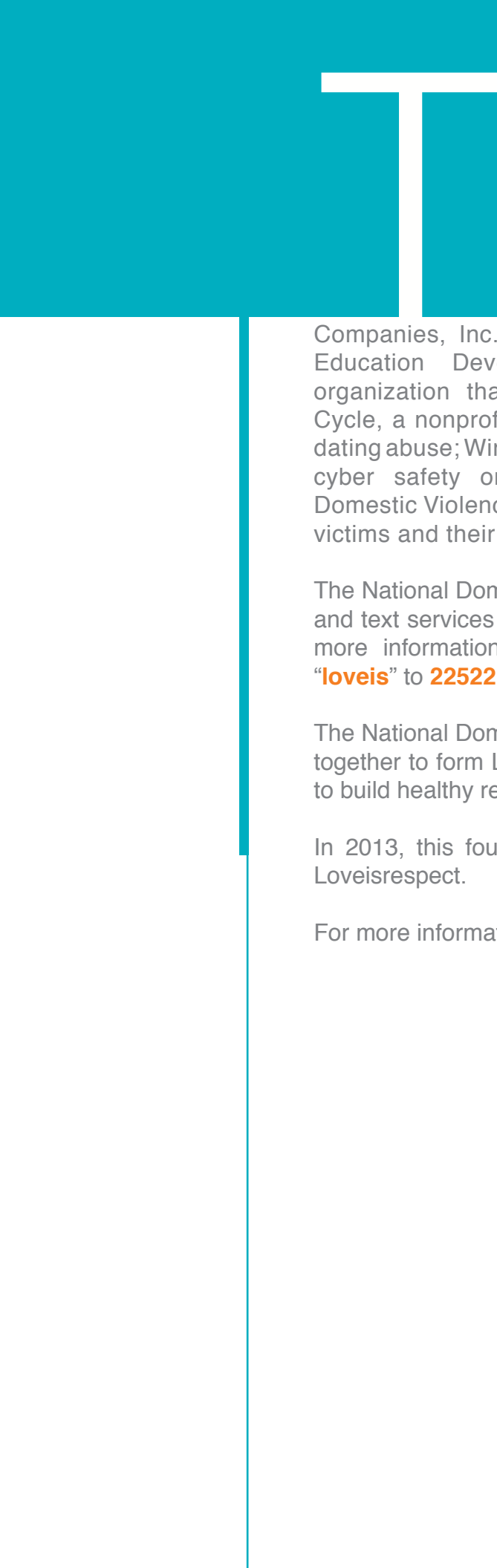
Teacher Background Information .....	Page 45
Activities .....	Page 50
Take-Home Assignments .....	Page 53
Handouts .....	Page 54
Teen Power And Control Wheel .....	Page 54
But I Love Him .....	Page 55
Teacher's Copy: Looking At Connor And Ann .....	Page 58
Looking At Connor And Ann .....	Page 59
Safety Plans And Action Steps .....	Page 60
The Cycle Of My Life .....	Page 61

## **LESSON 3: DIGITAL DATING ABUSE .....**

Teacher Background Information .....	Page 64
Activities .....	Page 71
Take-Home Assignments .....	Page 74
Handouts .....	Page 75
Malik's Story .....	Page 75
Teacher's Copy: Looking At Maya And Malik .....	Page 78
Looking At Maya And Malik .....	Page 81
The 20 Questions .....	Page 82
Reporting Digital Abuse .....	Page 83
Reaching Out To A Friend Who Is Being Abusive .....	Page 86
Tech Tips For Parents .....	Page 88

## **POSTERS/PALM CARDS .....**

Page 90



This curriculum was created by Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc. (formerly Liz Claiborne Inc.) in conjunction with Education Development Center, Inc., a national nonprofit organization that focuses on education and health; Break the Cycle, a nonprofit organization that works to prevent domestic and dating abuse; WiredSafety.org, the world's largest and oldest nonprofit cyber safety organization; and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their advocates.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides 24-hour phone, chat and text services specifically designed for teens and young adults. For more information, call **1-866-331-9474** (**1-866-331-8453 TTY**), text "**loveis**" to **22522** or click the live chat icon at **[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)**.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle came together to form Loveisrespect, the ultimate resource for young people to build healthy relationships.

In 2013, this fourth revision of the LINA curriculum was created by Loveisrespect.

For more information, visit **[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)**.

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**INTRODUCTION:  
THE LOVE IS NOT ABUSE  
CURRICULUM**

## WHY LOVE IS NOT ABUSE IS IMPORTANT



Because many teenagers lack a comprehensive understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships, may have few or no models of healthy relationships and deal with frequent peer pressure, they are especially susceptible to dating abuse. Nearly one in three teens in a dating relationship reports sexual abuse, physical abuse or threats of physical abuse.<sup>1</sup> Nearly one in four has experienced digital abuse (through technology), and almost half of teens in relationships report being controlled, threatened and pressured to do things they did not want to do.<sup>2</sup>

Dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, digitally, and verbally and/or emotionally abusive behavior in a dating relationship. It is intended to be isolating and controlling. In a digital environment, it can even be anonymous with the person showing abusive behaviors hiding behind fake or impersonated accounts and screen names. It can involve monitoring of communications and using technology to stay in constant contact. The effect is that no place feels private; no place feels safe.

Teenagers may witness abuse in several facets of society: at home, at school, on the street, on the news and through entertainment. When abuse becomes the norm, it can creep into dating relationships. Without healthy alternatives, it can be difficult for teens to understand how to deal with relationship problems without resorting to patterns of abuse.

Likewise, media plays a big role in shaping our ideas about gender and relationships, as it's often easy to consume without analyzing the messages being sent. It can be tough for teens to show respect and understanding to a partner who does not conform to the ideal they have learned. They may be in environments where certain abusive behaviors are expected and promoted. Movies, music, television, online media and popular fiction all contribute to relationship expectations, which makes skills such as critical thinking and analysis an important part of any dating abuse response.

People who abuse use emotional manipulation and/or physical domination to gain control and power over their partners. Many people ask why victims don't leave. People who abuse work hard to hold onto victims, threatening them and their loved ones and frightening them about what may happen if they try to leave.

<sup>1</sup>Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc./Futures Without Violence Survey, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc./Futures Without Violence Survey, 2009.

## WHY

But we need to reframe the question. Instead of putting the burden on the victim, who, by definition, is not at fault, we should hold the perpetrator accountable. We must start asking why people abuse, why people stay in abusive relationships and why various forms of intimate partner abuse are pervasive. We must be able to identify aspects of culture that contribute to dating abuse.

Teen dating abuse is part of a wider problem of intimate partner abuse and gender-based violence. While most people think of dating abuse as a problem between two people, it is actually a public health issue, a community problem. Like other forms of violence, dating abuse affects more than the victim/survivor and person showing abusive behaviors. It affects friends, family members and future generations. It affects the atmosphere at school and other institutional or public areas. Bystanders, whether they assist in the plans of abusive people, allow dating abuse to happen unchecked or attempt to prevent it, are certainly affected.

### **TEEN DATING ABUSE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE.**

It affects young people of all cultures, races/ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, income levels, academic levels and ages. We may think of victims as female, but many victims are male. Because dating abuse has traditionally been considered “a women’s issue,” many young men feel as if they have no proactive way to help stop it, let alone ask for the help they might need as a victim or person showing abusive behaviors.

The bottom line is this: Everyone has a role to play in preventing dating abuse and helping teens have healthier relationships.

Love Is Not Abuse uses literature to address the dynamics of dating abuse but also to offer better alternatives to relationship conflicts and encourage students to find models of healthy relationships. This curriculum addresses victim safety and support, but it equally tackles people who are abusive by helping students recognize abusive tendencies in themselves and teaching bystanders how to reach out to friends who abuse and change atmospheres that promote violence.

We’re all in this together. **So let’s get started.**

# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



Love Is Not Abuse includes easy-to-follow lesson plans, detailed background information for educators, discussion materials for small and large groups, high-quality materials and resources for further information. It focuses on five critical goals:

1. Increasing students' understanding of teen dating abuse.
2. Enabling students to reach out to provide support and help to a friend in an abusive relationship.
3. Increasing help-seeking behavior among students involved in abusive relationships.
4. Promoting healthier approaches to relationships.
5. Enhancing critical thinking skills that can be applied to texts and real life.

Developed for English language arts classes, Love Is Not Abuse uses literature to discuss teen dating abuse and healthy relationships. The texts featured in this curriculum represent a variety of genres, including fiction, poetry and nonfiction essays.

Love Is Not Abuse blends literature and critical thinking with health education. It draws on the motivating power of texts to build reading, writing and analysis skills, all while helping students develop tools for preventing and responding to dating abuse. Love Is Not Abuse is designed to inspire individual and systemic change toward healthier relationships using both real and fictional stories.

The curriculum is broken down into three lessons of 45 minutes each with handouts, assignments and online resources:

**LESSON 1: DATING ABUSE 101**

**LESSON 2: POWER AND CONTROL**

**LESSON 3: DIGITAL DATING ABUSE**



## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In the fall of 2005, a draft of Love Is Not Abuse was tested in high schools across the United States, representing a range of urban, suburban and rural communities. Pilot teachers used the curriculum across a variety of subject areas, including health education, English language arts, family and consumer science and life management skills classes. The experiences and recommendations of the pilot classrooms were reflected in the curriculum released broadly in spring 2006.

Second and third editions of the curriculum incorporated information on technology and digital abuse and provided additional resources for teens, teachers and parents to get help. This fourth edition contains a more culturally diverse approach, fresh stories, additional background information and updated details on digital dating abuse.

## PRACTICAL MATTERS

### COLLABORATION

We encourage you to collaborate with reading specialists, family and consumer sciences teachers, peer-counseling facilitators, guidance counselors, health care professionals, victim advocates, social workers and other relevant professionals. The issues in this curriculum span a number of disciplines, and team-teaching can be an effective way of approaching topics in a holistic manner and ensuring that students have access to appropriate professionals.

Many schools draw on staff from community-based domestic violence programs to facilitate lessons on teen dating abuse. These experts can participate in implementing Love Is Not Abuse in two ways: as facilitators of the curriculum in the classroom or as a support to the classroom teacher by being available to share information and serve students as necessary.

While it is useful to have experts on hand, students may be less likely to respond to law enforcement officers and legal professionals in the room. They may be a good resource for facilitators as they can often provide information on local data, trends, laws and procedures. However, restricting classroom space to students, teachers, counselors, health care professionals and staff from community-based domestic violence programs will create a classroom environment that is more conducive to open discussion and feels like a safe space.

### CRISIS AND DISCLOSURE PLANS

It is important for school staff to be prepared for some students to disclose dating abuse experiences or to have a difficult time with some of the class discussions if they have experienced abuse. A young person who has experienced violence or abuse may experience “triggering” or be reminded of their experience in a way that is scary or brings up strong negative feelings. Trigger warnings are recommended in order to give students an opportunity to step out if they feel uncomfortable. In the case of either a disclosure or crisis, it is important to be prepared in order to provide the appropriate support for students. Before implementing Love Is Not Abuse, inform your school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and administrators.

It may be helpful to distribute the “Teacher Background Information” from each lesson to all faculty and staff and provide information to parents and caregivers before beginning the program. Lesson One “Teacher Background Information” includes suggestions for developing a plan for students seeking help or in crisis.

## PRACTICAL MATTERS

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND MANDATED REPORTING

Because Love Is Not Abuse deals with sensitive issues, it is critical that you create a safe environment by establishing guidelines for class discussion before beginning the lessons. Lesson 1 contains recommended guidelines for class discussions.

Consult state laws and school policies for guidance on confidentiality protections and mandated reporting requirements. Before raising issues that may prompt students to confide in others, check to see if there are school policies on safety, harassment, cyberbullying or Title IX as well as on handling sensitive discussions and reports of abuse or threats. To that end, students should be advised about the required disclosures and processes before they confide sensitive information to school professionals.

## CONTACTING US

If you need additional resources, want to start a program at your school or have questions about how to handle a situation with a student, please contact *Break the Cycle* by:

Calling **310-286-3383**

Visiting **[www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)**

## TEACHING TIPS

- A.** It's important that you review each lesson at least one week in advance so that you are familiar with what's at stake and have time to do any additional research, collaborate with professionals and create a safe space and crisis plan. Going in cold or reviewing the night before may lead to an inability to fully respond to difficult issues or crises that may arise.
- B.** It's likely that there will be students who are perpetrators or victims/survivors (or both) of dating abuse. This curriculum may be especially challenging for them as well as for students who have experienced child abuse, child sexual abuse or who are bystanders to physical or sexual violence in their homes. Therefore, creating a safe environment in the classroom and a plan for dealing with crises and follow-up needs is absolutely critical.
- C.** If you have not already established guidelines for sensitive class discussions, please do so before beginning the first lesson and go over the guidelines at the start of each lesson. Here are some recommended guidelines:
- Everyone is allowed to express their opinion without interruption.
  - Respect each point of view even if it is different from yours.
  - No question or questioner is stupid or wrong, and no put-downs are allowed.
  - What students say in the classroom is confidential and should never be shared with others.
- D.** Many students who have never been abusive or abused are at least bystanders to abusive relationships. Bystanders play a critical role in preventing and reducing teen dating abuse. Friends may be used by a person showing abusive behaviors to further harm or gain access to a victim, often without the friend's full knowledge of the situation. As lessons continue, students may begin to realize they are bystanders and have questions about what to do. Each lesson deals with bystander intervention appropriate to that lesson's topic, but it will be helpful for you to be aware of school policies and community resources.
- E.** Each lesson starts with a trigger warning. This is a way of letting students with particular sensitivities to the topic at hand, particularly those who have experienced abuse, know what is coming. Once they are aware, they can decide for themselves if they can participate in the lesson or if they should go to the safe place designated for that purpose.

## TEACHING TIPS

- F.** This curriculum frequently uses the term “victim” to refer to individuals who are experiencing dating abuse. Some survivors and experts object to this term because it can be disempowering and stigmatizing, but others object to always using “survivor” since not everyone is a survivor yet and it undermines the fact of their current victimization. Since alternatives such as “target” have similar stigmas and the term “victim” reminds us that only people who abuse are responsible for abuse, we have chosen to use “victim,” “victim/survivor” and “survivor” where appropriate.
- G.** Dating abuse curricula often focus on how to avoid becoming a victim as though it’s that (usually female) person’s responsibility to prevent abuse from happening to them. This is somewhat like teaching girls not to get raped instead of helping students change elements of culture that allow rape to happen. Yes, it’s important to help potential victims understand how to recognize warning signs, which this curriculum does, but it is even more critical to ensure that everyone understands warning signs in themselves and others and how bystanders can make a difference for people who abuse, victims and themselves. This curriculum does not engage in victim-blaming, and we recommend that you watch for student comments that lay blame on victims/survivors.
- H.** If students become very engaged in discussing the issues raised in this curriculum, you may want to extend the unit from three class periods to five or six. If students have more to talk about, it’s important that they be encouraged to do so.
- I.** Love Is Not Abuse encourages students to write in journals as part of some of the classroom activities and homework assignments. Be sure to tell students ahead of time whether you plan to collect and read their journals.

## USING OTHER LITERATURE

Analyzing literature and enhancing reading skills are an important part of *Love Is Not Abuse*. You may want to continue your class's discussion on healthy relationships through the resources listed in the bibliography or through some of the literature you will be assigning over the course of the school year.

You may also want to be able to talk to students about characters from whatever novel or series is popular with them at the moment. We have created a basic template for analyzing romantic relationships in any piece of literature. Taking these steps to discuss popular fictional characters will help students be smarter readers—and consumers of other popular media—outside of the classroom.

- Don't automatically assume that the male character is abusive and the female character is the victim. You may find abuse where you did not expect it.
- Consider the time period. Some of the characteristics of abusive relationships mentioned in this curriculum were normal in earlier periods, but there is still room to discuss what modern people would perceive to be problems in the relationship. Additionally, examining the time period creates a good opportunity to talk about the limitations of strict gender roles and the importance of gender equality.
- A fictional relationship need not be abusive to start a good discussion. Healthy relationships are just as important to talk about because teens need to know what healthy looks like.
- Use the list of warning signs to look for such signs in the relationship you have chosen.
- Use the examples of different forms of abuse (physical, emotional/verbal, sexual) to look for such behavior in the relationship.
- See if you can fit any of the characters' actions into the power and control wheel.
- Use the characteristics of a healthy relationship and check off any that apply to the couple.
- Remember the teaching tips and guidelines you learned from *Love Is Not Abuse* as you lead your discussion.
- You can adapt the assignments in this curriculum to fit virtually any story that contains an abusive relationship.

## CREATING A SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM

As part of a comprehensive approach to health and safety, Love Is Not Abuse can be a spring board for starting a school-wide teen dating abuse prevention program. Consider these recommendations:

- Work with a team of administrators, counselors, teachers, students and outside experts to review and revise school policies related to dating abuse and keeping students safe. Policies should address the safety and well-being of victims/survivors, consequences for students who abuse, procedures for restraining orders or orders of protection and procedures for students to access support or report abuse. Consider instituting a policy specifically addressing digital dating abuse. For information about creating polices on dating abuse, visit [breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org).
- Raise awareness about teen dating abuse. Educate faculty, staff, parents and caregivers about the issue and how to respond to students seeking help. Encourage other teachers to address dating abuse in the classroom. You might also consider leading a presentation during a meeting of your school's parent-teacher association, holding assemblies about the issue, organizing a student art exhibit or writing contest on teen dating abuse or including articles in newsletters and emails to parents and caregivers. Be sure to point parents, caregivers and other adults to [breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org) for further information.
- Make it clear that your campus is a safe place and students are encouraged to talk about dating abuse at school. Hang posters and flyers around campus to educate students about the issue and publicize local resources. Invite staff from community organizations to speak to students, staff and/or parents and caregivers.
- Start a peer education group. Teens experiencing dating abuse are more likely to tell their friends than anyone else. Peer educators can be trained to teach other students about the issue and to co-facilitate (with an adult) groups that focus on healthy relationships. Peer education groups can be a great source of support and a powerful influence. Keep in mind, however, that it is not the peer educator's role to counsel and "rescue" victims from abuse. Instead, they can encourage victims to talk to people who can provide help and guidance.
- Make students, parents and care-givers aware of Loveisrespect's trained peer advocates. Communication with them is anonymous, confidential and available **24/7**. They can easily contact peer advocates by:
  - o Calling **1-866-331-9474**
  - o Texting "**loveis**" to **22522**
  - o Clicking on the live chat icon at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

## BOOK LIST

This list can help you identify fiction and nonfiction books that are appropriate for your students if further discussion on teen dating abuse is needed. Refer to the tips in the introduction on using other literature to spark discussion.

### FICTION

**Brown, Jennifer (2011).** *Bitter End*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Alex falls for Cole, the charming new boy at school who has it all. To her joy, Cole likes Alex back and she feels like she has found her soul mate. In the beginning of their romance, Cole appears to be understandably jealous of her close friendships with other boys, but as time unfolds, he starts to exhibit his increasingly abusive traits at Alex's expense. Alex must choose between staying with the boy who supposedly loves her and doing what she knows is best for her.

**Dessen, Sarah (2004).** *Dreamland*. New York: Penguin.

With her family, Caitlin feels like her older sister's sideshow. With Rogerson, Caitlin feels like whatever she wants; he lets her become the individual she was born to be. When Caitlin runs away with Rogerson, she quickly joins a world of drugs and violence, and Rogerson, so gentle and dreamy at first, becomes physically abusive. Through Caitlin's struggle to find herself amid abusive "love," Dessen explores the obstacles that keep people in unhealthy relationships.

**Grace, Amanda (2011).** *But I Love Him*. Woodbury, MN: Flux.

Ann is a well-balanced high school student—she has perfect grades and is an excellent athlete. Enter Connor, the troubled young man Ann can't help but gravitate toward. She feels that only she understands him enough to fix him while only he can give her the love she needs and deserves. Ann finds herself sacrificing everything to be with him from grades to friends. Her life becomes about walking on eggshells around Connor as just the slightest misstep can cause his abusive tendencies to surface.

**Jager, Talia (2010).** *Damaged: Natalie's Story*. Self-published.

Seventeen-year-old Natalie falls in love with Josh very quickly but is forced to end her relationship with him due to his aggressive outbursts that often turn violent. After apologizing profusely and declaring his love for her, Natalie takes Josh back. Unfortunately, Josh has another violent outburst that puts Natalie in the hospital close to death. Her condition is so serious that the doctors tell her and her family that she will never be the same again. This story follows Natalie through her rocky journey to rediscover herself and pick up the pieces from her violent relationship with Josh.

**Jones, Patrick (2004).** *Things Change*. New York: Walker and Company.

Johanna, a fantastic student, wants nothing more than to be a part of popular Paul's life. She can't believe it when he begins to return her affections, and he becomes Johanna's first boyfriend. Johanna's life changes when she begins to see how angry and controlling Paul can be. Her grades begin to slip and she becomes distant from her family and friends as she tries to keep Paul happy. Their relationship is a repeating cycle of abuse, apologies and reuniting. Johanna must find the courage to put herself, and not Paul, first in order to preserve her safety and become reconnected with the people who care about her.

**Peters, Julie Ann (2009).** *Rage: A Love Story*. New York: Knopf.

Reliable Johanna cannot resist the dangerous, damaged and alluring Reeve. Her flaws spark a flame inside Johanna that compels her to want to help Reeve through the harsh realities that life deals her—such as being battered by her prostitute mother's boyfriend—despite friends and family warning Johanna against it. At times, Reeve is violently angry with Johanna, and Johanna struggles to satisfy her attraction to Reeve while preserving her well-being. This book transcends issues of sexuality and focuses on the difficult dynamics between the person displaying abusive behavior and the victim.

**Peters, Kimberly Joy (2006).** *Painting Caitlyn*. Montreal: Lobster Press.

Caitlyn feels invisible and unimportant. Her mother and stepfather are preparing for the arrival of their new baby, and her best friend has been obsessed with her boyfriend of eight months, causing Caitlyn to be cast off to the side. Much to her delight, she meets Tyler at an amusement park and they hit it off immediately. Tyler is her dream boy—daring, personable and gorgeous. Caitlyn no longer feels lonely, as Tyler's influence causes her to engage in risky behavior. When their relationship begins to get serious, Tyler's jealousy becomes apparent. She knows he cares about her deeply, but she cannot deny that he insists on controlling her. Caitlyn ignores advice from others until a physical confrontation between her and Tyler causes her to choose between remaining Tyler's puppet and empowering herself. Note: Caitlyn has forced sexual experiences in this novel.



## BOOK LIST

Rue, Nancy (2010). *Boyfriends, Burritos, and an Ocean of Trouble (Real Life)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Bryn O'Connor gets involved in a car accident with her boyfriend, and shortly after, he becomes abusive toward her. Her attempts to hide the abuse fail, as her father discovers bruises and forces Bryn to file for a restraining order against Preston. She becomes the target of threats and bullying from Preston and his friends but finds solace in her grandmother and surfing. Wondering if she will ever find love again, Bryn meets fellow surfer Sean, who truly supports her. Note: The Bible is discussed in this novel as a source of inspiration for Bryn and her grandmother.

Stratton, Allan (2008). *Leslie's Journal*. Toronto, ON: Annick Press.

Prone to attracting trouble wherever she goes, Leslie feels like things couldn't get any worse. Just when she thinks she's hit rock bottom, Jason, the handsome new boy, kisses her in front of her friends. Leslie becomes the instant envy of all the other girls at school, but she and Jason begin an unstable romance. Jason hits, threatens and blackmails Leslie. He apologizes often but is quick to return to his abusive ways. When a substitute teacher reads Leslie's private journal and brings the violent relationship to the attention of the principal, the teacher unwittingly puts Leslie in even more danger. Leslie is forced to make terrifying choices to take back her life.

Tashjian, Janet (2003). *Fault Line*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Becky dreams of being a stand-up comic. With a great family and close friends, life is good for this seventeen-year old. At an amateur comic event, Becky meets Kip, who also seeks to be a star in the San Francisco comedy scene. Kip seems to care about every detail in Becky's life—great boyfriend material. Becky discovers a darker side to her joke-telling beau, however, as Kip becomes controlling and abusive. The harder Becky tries to please him, the worse her situation gets. Becky must find the strength to leave her relationship and save herself.

Wolf, Jennifer Shaw (2012). *Breaking Beautiful*. New York: Walker and Company.

Trip is dead. He drove his truck over a cliff, and Allie was found on the side of the road, right by the cliff. Unfortunately, she can't remember what happened, and this book follows her as she pieces together details from her past. Trip abused Allie, and each remembered incident inflicts tremendous pain—even if her abuser is dead. The only person she can trust is Blake, her best friend from childhood. They slowly fall in love but face resistance from friends and family who suspect Allie and Blake may have been scheming to kill Trip. Allie must come clean to everyone about the kind of relationship she had with Trip.

### NONFICTION

Landau, Elaine (2005). *Date Violence (Life Balance)*. Chicago: Children's Press.

Elaine Landau incorporates personal stories with helpful guidelines, concepts and advice to illustrate the difference between healthy and abusive relationships. This self-help book explains basic concepts such as warning signs and cycles of violence along with strategies to form healthy relationships and navigate emotionally confusing situations. Landau also provides resources, including procedures for accessing the justice system, for those seeking help.

Waldal, Elin Stebbins (2011). *Tornado Warning: A Memoir of Teen Dating Violence and its Effect on a Woman's Life*. Encinitas, CA: Sound Beach.

Elin Stebbins Waldal describes the rollercoaster relationship she was involved in at seventeen. She tells her story through journal entries, relating that early abuse to issues she faces in adulthood, and shows the reader how her present life is affected by the abusive relationship that occurred years ago. By recalling her past, she aims to caution young people and equip them with wisdom they can use to make healthy decisions in their personal and romantic lives.

## WEBSITES

### [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

Loveisrespect is the ultimate source of support for young people to prevent and end dating abuse, inspiring them to create a culture of healthy relationships.

### [www.acalltomen.org](http://www.acalltomen.org)

A Call to Men is a national men's organization addressing domestic and sexual violence prevention and the promotion of healthy manhood.

### [www.atask.org](http://www.atask.org)

The Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Inc. is a coalition that aims to eliminate family violence and strengthen Asian families and communities.

### [www.athinline.org](http://www.athinline.org)

MTV's A Thin Line is an initiative to empower America's youth to identify, respond to and stop the spread of digital abuse.

### [www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org)

Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with measurable impact.

### [www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)

Break the Cycle is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage, educate and empower youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating abuse.

### [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters)

Dating Matters™: Understanding Teen Dating Abuse Prevention is a 60-minute, interactive training session designed to help educators, youth-serving organizations and others working with teens understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with teen dating abuse. The training was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in partnership with Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc.

### [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers an online resource for violence prevention.

### [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

Childhelp is a leading national non-profit organization dedicated to helping victims of child abuse and neglect.

### [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org)

Children Now finds common ground among influential opinion leaders, interest groups and policymakers, who together can develop and drive socially innovative, "win-win" approaches to helping all children achieve their full potential.

### [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org)

Darkness to Light raises awareness of the prevalence and consequences of child sexual abuse by educating adults about the steps they can take to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to the reality of child sexual abuse.

### [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org)

Darkness to Light raises awareness of the prevalence and consequences of child sexual abuse by educating adults about the steps they can take to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to the reality of child sexual abuse.

### [www.dayoneny.org](http://www.dayoneny.org)

Day One provides preventive education and direct legal services to young people and technical assistance to professionals related to teen dating abuse and violence in New York.

### [www.deanaseducationaltheater.org](http://www.deanaseducationaltheater.org)

Deana's Educational Theater is an arts-based organization that develops and produces educational theater and other programs to promote healthy relationships.

# WEBSITES

## [www.dvinstitute.org](http://www.dvinstitute.org)

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community provides a forum for identifying appropriate and effective responses to prevent/reduce family violence in the African American community.

## [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)

Futures Without Violence is a national nonprofit organization that focuses on domestic violence education, prevention and public policy reform.

## [www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org)

Girls Inc. provides research, advocacy information and tips on issues related to girls and young women.

## [www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)

Men Can Stop Rape mobilizes male youth to prevent men's violence against women. It builds young men's capacity to challenge harmful aspects of traditional masculinity, value alternative visions of male strength, and embrace their vital role as allies with women and girls in fostering healthy relationships and gender equity.

## [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) organizes for collective power by advancing transformative work, thinking and leadership of communities and individuals working to end the violence in our lives.

## [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) provides information and resources to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized youth, their families and communities throughout the United States.

## [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

The 24-hour, toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline links individuals to help in their area using a nationwide database and offers information on local domestic violence shelters, other emergency shelters, legal advocacy and assistance programs and social service programs.

## [www.neahin.org](http://www.neahin.org)

NEA Health Information Network, the nonprofit health affiliate of the National Education Association, provides health information on topics of concern to educators and students.

## [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org)

The National Network to End Domestic Violence is a social change organization dedicated to creating a social, political and economic environment in which violence against women no longer exists.

## [www.peaceoverviolence.org](http://www.peaceoverviolence.org)

Peace Over Violence is a social service agency dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual, domestic and interpersonal violence in Los Angeles. They operate Youth Over Violence, a campaign to empower teens to end violence and abuse.

## [www.safeplace.org](http://www.safeplace.org)

Safe Place works to end sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing and prevention for individuals and the community in Austin, Texas. Safe Place's Expect Respect Program helps build healthy relationships for youth.

## [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to professional school counselors around the globe.

## [www.safehorizon.org](http://www.safehorizon.org)

Safe Horizon works in New York City's five boroughs to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities.

## WEBSITES

### [www.startstrongteens.org](http://www.startstrongteens.org)

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships is a national initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to stop teen dating abuse before it starts.

### [www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety](http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety)

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program is a leadership initiative that motivates student-athletes and student leaders to play a central role in addressing rape, battering and sexual harassment.

### [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)

Run by WiredSafety, Stop Cyberbullying helps communities address and prevent when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

### [www.teensagainstabuse.org](http://www.teensagainstabuse.org)

Teens Experiencing Abusive Relationships (TEAR) is a teen-run organization that works with schools and organizations to educate people about teen dating abuse.

### [www.teenangels.org](http://www.teenangels.org)

A division of WiredSafety, Teenangels is a chapter organization comprised of thirteen to eighteen year-olds committed to making the Internet safer.

### [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com)

That's Not Cool is a national public education campaign that uses digital examples of controlling, pressuring and threatening behavior to raise awareness about and prevent teen dating abuse. That's Not Cool is sponsored and co-created by Futures Without Violence the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women and the Advertising Council.

### [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

Originated by a group of volunteers, this website provides one-to-one help, extensive information and education to cyberspace users of all ages on a wide range of internet and interactive technology safety issues.

### [www.womenslaw.org](http://www.womenslaw.org)

Women's Law provides easy-to-understand legal information to women living with or escaping domestic violence and sexual assault.



**LESSON 1:**  
**DATING ABUSE 101**

# PURPOSE

To understand the dynamics of teen dating abuse.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define vocabulary related to dating abuse and apply it to the text and their own experiences.
- Identify different forms and examples of dating abuse.
- Understand the roles of abuser, victim/survivor and bystander in teen dating abuse.
- Identify characteristics of healthy relationships.
- Describe basic steps that a bystander can take to help someone experiencing dating abuse.

## MATERIALS

- Read “Teacher Background Information” and familiarize yourself with the teaching tips, activities and handouts.
- Photocopy “I Thought Things Would Change” excerpt for all students.
- Photocopy “What Is Teen Dating Abuse?” for all students.
- Photocopy “Roles in Dating Abuse” for all students.
- Photocopy “Helping a Friend Who Is Being Abused” for all students.
- Photocopy “Am I in a Healthy Relationship?” for all students.
- Photocopy “A Letter to Parents/Caregivers on Teen Dating Abuse” for all students.
- Photocopy the optional story, “Dylan and Alejandro,” for all students if you choose to use it.



# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This information is not intended for distribution to students.

## TEEN DATING ABUSE OVERVIEW

The following statistics come from *Teen Dating Abuse Report 2009: Impact of the Economy and Parent/Teen Dialogue on Dating Relationships and Abuse*, which surveyed 1,233 teens throughout the US.

- Teens experienced dating abuse as follows:
  - 47% had a partner exhibit controlling behaviors.
  - 29% experienced threatening behavior or some form of physical or sexual abuse by their dating partner.
  - 24% experienced tech abuse.
  - 11% experienced repeated verbal abuse.
- 21% of African American teens revealed that they were pressured into sex compared to 12% of teens overall.
- 31% of Hispanic respondents reported that they had been physically hurt in a dating or serious relationship compared to 20% of respondents overall.
- Teens who reported economic problems in their families were 52% more likely to have witnessed abuse between parents.
- Teens who witnessed abuse between parents reported 50% higher incidence of dating abuse themselves than teens who had not witnessed family violence.
- 80% talked to a friend rather than reaching out to an adult, accessing online resources or calling a help line.
- 78% of teens who were encouraged by a parent to break up with a person showing abusive behaviors reported staying in the relationship despite their parents' advice.

Gender does not necessarily determine who is the person showing abusive behaviors and who is the victim. Girls are almost as likely as boys to perpetrate abuse,<sup>2</sup> and in some violent relationships, both partners display abusive behaviors. Girls are more likely than boys, however, to experience sexual abuse and serious physical harm.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, dating abuse is prevalent among teenagers in all sexual orientation groups. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teens are as at risk as heterosexual teens. Many of the organizations listed in this curriculum are prepared to serve LGBTQ youth and some of the materials address them specifically. Love Is Not Abuse includes an optional story that you may plug into any part of this curriculum if you want to discuss dating abuse in LGBTQ relationships. You can find “Dylan and Alejandro” at the end of Lesson One.

1 Commissioned and Developed by Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc. (formerly Liz Claiborne Inc.) and Family Violence Prevention Fund.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Youth risk behavior surveillance: United States, 2011. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports, 61, 1-162.

3 Hamby, S., & Turner, H. (2012). Measuring Teen Dating abuse in Males and Females: Insights from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence. Psychology of Violence.

# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## WARNING SIGNS

There are warning signs that an intimate relationship may become abusive. Not all signs appear in every abusive or potentially abusive relationship, and sometimes there are no signs. The existence of one or several of these behaviors does not necessarily mean that a relationship is abusive, but it may signal that the relationship is not healthy. Abusive behaviors can occur in all spheres of a young person's life: school, work, home, community and online.

Common warning signs include:

- Extreme jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Frequent put-downs in person or online
- Making fun of the other person in front of friends or online
- Telling the other person what to do
- Explosive temper
- Verbal threats in person or through email or text message
- Preventing the other person from doing what they want to do
- Severe mood swings
- Making false accusations about the other person and/or people the person spends time with face to face and online
- History of violence
- Isolating the other person from family and friends, both in real life and online
- Encouraging the other person to block friends and family from friend lists online
- Seeking financial control over the other person
- Questioning the other person about what they are doing, who they are with, what they are wearing, etc.
- Calling, emailing, or texting the other person every few minutes or at un reasonable hours to check up on their whereabouts and becoming angry if they do not immediately respond
- Checking the other person's cell phone or computer to see who they have been communicating with (missed calls, emails, voicemail and text messages)
- Constantly monitoring the other person through any other means
- Deleting any of the person's friends, photos or messages on social networks
- Altering online profiles without consent
- Using passwords without permission
- Pressuring the other person to send nude photos



# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## BARRIERS TO ASSISTANCE

Abuse in teen relationships is similar to abuse in adult relationships, but teenagers face unique obstacles in recognizing and escaping abusive relationships. Barriers may include distrust of adults, adults' lack of knowledge about dating abuse, lack of knowledge about or access to resources, constant pressure from peers to be in intimate relationships, close proximity to the person showing abusive behaviors and their friends at school and worries about their reputation at school.

Teenagers who do not have financial resources or transportation may face practical barriers to seeking help from community agencies. In addition, social service agencies that deal with domestic violence issues frequently do not provide direct services to minors because of concerns about legal liability. Confusion about legal rights adds another layer of difficulty for young people in need. They may also have fears about lack of confidentiality, mandated child abuse reporting and parental consent laws.

It is tempting to assume that the solution to an abusive relationship is simply to end it. Ending an abusive relationship is fraught with complexities due to psychological control, threats and increased levels of violence. In fact, breakups can be the most dangerous time for victims. It is important to be sensitive to why individuals may have trouble breaking free from abusive relationships or even reaching out for help.

It is critical that teachers, counselors and administrators recognize the warning signs of teen dating abuse, understand the dynamics of an abusive relationship and know how to respond to a young person who is experiencing dating abuse.

## WHEN A STUDENT REACHES OUT FOR HELP

Some students may respond to this curriculum by asking for more information about dating abuse and/or disclosing that they are involved in an abusive relationship or believe that someone they care about is in one. Before you present any materials, you should have already developed a plan for students seeking help or in crisis and created a safe space in the school for students who need to leave the room during the lesson.

Your plan may include:

- Ensuring that professionals, such as school counselors or professionals from the community, are on hand to serve students.

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Collaborating with local service providers and learn how teen victims, people who are abusive and bystanders can access community resources.
- Providing printed materials from local service providers.
- Connecting students to the online resources listed in this curriculum and [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org), where they will find resources on healthy relationships, determining if a relationship is abusive, how to stop being abusive, safety planning and how to help others.
- Suggesting that students contact Loveisrespect, where trained peer advocates are prepared to respond to students in straight or LGBTQ relationships through:

Phone calls—dial **1-866-331-9474**

Texting—text “**loveis**” to **22522**

Live chats—click on the icon at [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org)

If a student confides in you, it is important to acknowledge to the student the courage that it takes to reach out for help, and, in the case of victims, remind them that the violence is not their fault.

Before implementing this curriculum, it is important to review Title IX guidance on dating abuse, your state’s mandatory reporting laws and your school’s policy on mandatory reporting. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational institutions, and gender-based violence, including dating abuse, is considered a form of discrimination. Your school should have a Title IX coordinator who can review with you the school’s grievance procedure and responsibility under this law.

Additionally, most states have laws that require those working in child-oriented professions to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of violence of a minor. In most states, teachers are mandated reporters. In some states, the definition of reportable abuse is narrowly limited to that inflicted by someone legally responsible for a child. In others, the definition of abuse is broader, including injury inflicted on a minor by any person. Under the more inclusive laws, abuse of a minor may include teen dating abuse and statutory rape.

If these laws apply to you, you should tell students about your duty as a mandated reporter. Since this fact may keep students from reaching out to you, offer a confidential alternative to seeking help, such as contacting Loveisrespect’s peer advocates by calling their **24/7** phone

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

service at **1-866-331-9474**, texting “**loveis**” to **22522** or going to **loveisrespect.org** and clicking on the live chat icon. All communication is confidential, one-on-one and anonymous.

### PARENTS DEALING WITH TEEN DATING ABUSE

Despite its prevalence, dating abuse often remains hidden from adults and is rarely discussed by teens and their parents or caregivers. Research from Fifth & Pacific Companies, Inc. in 2009 indicates that 58% of parents and caregivers cannot correctly identify the warning signs of dating abuse. Therefore, you will find a handout for parents and caregivers in Lesson 1. Distribution of this element is at your discretion, though it is often a great way to get families to start an ongoing discussion on teen dating abuse and healthy relationships. You can also refer parents and fellow teachers and administrators to **breakthecycle.org** for more information.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Remind students that their comments in the classroom should remain confidential. No one should repeat what they have heard.
- Watch out for trigger warnings. Always give students notice when a potential trigger is coming.
- Since students will come to class with misconceptions of dating abuse, they may say things that perpetuate those myths. Keep in mind the following points as you lead the discussion:
  - Abuse is never acceptable, and the victim is never to blame.
  - Boys can be victims, girls can be abusive and dating abuse exists in LGBTQ relationships.
  - Adalix cannot change Richard; only Richard can change Richard.
- Watch out for comments that are sexist, reflect cultural relativism (e.g., dating abuse is acceptable in my culture) or promote strict gender roles for everyone.
- As you teach this lesson, you may find that your students' reaction warrants an extension from one class period to two.



# ACTIVITIES

## STEP ONE (20 MINUTES)

Discuss dating abuse basics.

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

- Explain that the class is starting a new unit on healthy relationships. Give each student a copy of “**I Thought Things Would Change.**” Ask them to follow along as you read it aloud and then ask what they think the excerpt is about.
- **Ask** students what they think of when they hear the phrase “teen dating abuse.” As students brainstorm, record their responses on the board. See if you can work their responses into a definition somewhat like this: Teen dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally and/or emotionally, and digitally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship.
- **Ask** students for examples of dating abuse behaviors. Prompt them to consider the different forms dating abuse can take (i.e., physical, sexual, verbal/emotional, digital).
- Point out that an abusive relationship can involve any of these forms of violence. Physical violence does not have to be involved for a relationship to be abusive.
- Give each student a copy of “**What Is Teen Dating Abuse?**” and review the handout with them.
- Point out that dating abuse affects people of all ethnicities, religions, cultures, genders and sexual orientations regardless of their income or the neighborhood they live in.
- Explore with students how dating abuse feels by asking:
  - **What forms of dating abuse did Adaliz experience?**
  - **How did Adaliz feel when Richard was being abusive to her?**
  - **How does Richard’s violence affect Adaliz’s day-to-day life?**
  - **Why does Richard think it’s acceptable to treat Adaliz this way?**
  - **Where might Richard get his ideas about violence?**
- Explain that people who abuse, like Richard, use abuse to control. Violence is a learned behavior that can be shaped by observation, experience, family, culture and community. People who abuse may believe that abusive behavior is normal and may lack positive role models for their relationships. We live in a world with all sorts of violence, including family violence, school violence, street violence, mass shootings, terrorism and war. All of that is played back for us through various media, such as TV, movies, video games and music. All of this together can make us feel like violence is normal. There is

never an excuse for dating abuse, however, and it is never acceptable.

- Emphasize that dating abuse is never the fault of the person who is being abused. Nothing this person says, does, believes or wears causes violence or gives anyone the right to hurt them.
- **Ask** students what they think are some of the effects of dating abuse on the person who experiences it. Describe some of the effects that students do not mention, such as:
  - Feeling ashamed
  - Feeling anxious
  - Becoming depressed
  - Having thoughts of suicide
  - Doing poorly in school
  - Losing interest in friends or favorite activities
  - Dressing differently, changing hairstyles
  - Engaging in self-harm, such as eating disorders or cutting
  - Isolation
  - Discarding or changing friends

## STEP TWO (6 MINUTES)

Define the roles of the person showing abusive behaviors, victim/survivor and bystander.

- Explain that dating abuse involves three key players: a person showing abusive behaviors, a victim/survivor and, often, a bystander. Give each student a copy of “Roles in Dating Abuse” and review the definitions.
- Discuss gender and dating abuse. Many teens report that abusive behavior goes both ways and boys and girls can be both victims and abusers. That’s why it is important for everyone to learn how to have safe and healthy relationships and how to identify abusive and controlling behavior in themselves and others.
- Point out that the term “victim” can be stigmatizing and disempowering, so some prefer “survivor.” Not all victims are survivors yet, however, so both terms are loaded. Talk about these terms by asking:
  - What does the term “victim” make you think of?
  - How would it feel to be identified as a victim?
  - Is there anything useful about the term “victim”? When we hear the word “victim,” whom do we think of as being responsible for the abuse?
  - How can we avoid thinking of victims as helpless?

## ACTIVITIES

- Explain that bystanders don't have to be present when violence happens; they simply have to know about it. In addition, some bystanders witness behavior that can lead to dating abuse, such as joking about various forms of dating abuse or making sexist comments. Tell them that other lessons will deal more with bystander intervention. Ask students who might be bystanders to Richard's abuse of Adaliz? (Possible answers: Richard's friends who monitor Adaliz and report back to Richard about her behavior, Richard or Adaliz's friends or family members who witness or know about the abuse, teachers, coaches.)

### STEP THREE (18 MINUTES)

Consider factors of healthy relationships.

- **Ask** students for examples of healthy relationships. They may pull them from the media or their own lives. Follow up by asking for characteristics or anecdotes that convince students those relationships are healthy.
- **Ask** them to help you make a list of factors that define a healthy relationship. Possible answers include trust, honesty, open communication, kindness, compassion, respect, encouragement, compliments, emotional support, no pressure, support of the other person's interests, happiness with the other person's achievements, comfort with the other person spending time with friends and family, spending time with the other person's friends and family and satisfaction with the other person the way they are.
- Have students take another look at **"I Thought Things Would Change"** and work with a partner to plug in healthy characteristics for the abusive ones. Make it clear that this activity isn't about Adaliz finally getting Richard to change because we can't change other people. They have to change themselves and be ready and willing to do so. Instead, the activity is about exploring alternatives for how the relationship could have played out. Discuss the changes students make and refer to the teacher's copy for ideas.

### STEP FOUR (1 MINUTE)

Conclude the lesson.

- Explain that dating abuse is a serious problem that affects everyone involved, whether they display, experience, witness or know about abusive behaviors. Now that the class knows a little more about healthy relationships and the problem of dating abuse, in the next few lessons the class will explore how someone can become trapped in the pattern of violence in a dating relationship and what to do to seek help.
- Give each student a copy of **"A Letter to Parents on Teen Dating Abuse"** to take home.

## TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS

**OPTION 1:** Write the following question on the board: *Why do you think it was hard for Adaliz to end her relationship with Richard?* Tell students to copy the question in their journals. For homework, they should write their response to the question in their journals.

**OPTION 2:** Give each student a copy of “**Helping a Friend Who Is Being Abused.**” Tell students to have a conversation with a close friend about Adaliz’s situation. They should read “**I Thought Things Would Change**” with the friend and ask the person to help them craft a letter to Adaliz. The next day students could share their letters in class.

**OPTION 3:** Give each student a copy of “**Are You in a Healthy Relationship?**” Tell them to work on it in private and then write about it in their journals if they want to.



## TEACHER'S COPY

# I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD CHANGE

Excerpt by Adaliz Rodriguez

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: "This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time."

Adaliz describes her abusive relationship with Richard.

### EXCERPT:

What hurt me the most were his mean words. I wasn't used to the kind of names he called me. My parents never allowed that kind of language. I cried a lot. I walked looking down. I'd ditch [skip] school a lot and, although I made sure I passed, I was falling behind. I was miserable. I'd tell him he was hurting me verbally. I'd try to break up with him, then he'd cry and say, "I'm sorry, don't leave me. I'll stop hitting you." I'd believe him because I didn't want to leave him; I wanted him to change.

...He had to make sure I wasn't doing anything. He'd find out from his friends if I was talking to someone, and we'd get in a big argument. He'd call me disgusting names and make me cry. He'd hit me, push me, sock me in the stomach and in the head. He was smart. He knew not to leave me with bruises that showed.

He told me about the problems his parents had. He used to jump on his father to stop him from hitting his mother. He said he'd never hit me like his father did. Then when he hit me, he'd say he didn't mean to and turn it around so that it was my fault: "If you just didn't do those things, I wouldn't hit you." In other words, I shouldn't get him so mad or provoke him to hit me.

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### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SUGGESTIONS:

He spoke to me respectfully and complimented me. He supported me emotionally even when I was crying and let me talk things out. He encouraged me and made me feel good about myself. Sometimes we did our homework together, and he helped me study. It was important to each of us that we both succeeded in school. I was happy. If he did something that upset me, I was honest with him, and we would talk about it. Mostly, he let me be me and I let him be him. We weren't trying to change each other.

## TEACHER'S COPY

...He trusted me to do things without him. If a friend of his mentioned that I was talking to someone, he didn't worry. A few times he asked me if I was interested in someone else, but I explained that I wasn't. I appreciated that he could be honest about those things. Sometimes we disagreed but we tried our best to see the other person's side.

He told me about the problems his parents had, and I listened and supported him. He used to jump on his father to stop him from hitting his mother. He said he'd never hit me like his father did. Sometimes I could tell that it was hard for him to be peaceful when he had so much stress at home, but he would take deep breaths and walk away if he had to.

# HANDOUT

## I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD CHANGE

Excerpt by Adaliz Rodriguez

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

Adaliz describes her abusive relationship with Richard.

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...He had to make sure I wasn't doing anything. He'd find out from his friends if I was talking to someone, and we'd get in a big argument. He'd call me disgusting names and make me cry. He'd hit me, push me, sock me in the stomach and in the head. He was smart. He knew not to leave me with bruises that showed.

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# HANDOUT

## WHAT IS TEEN DATING ABUSE?



Teen dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, digitally, verbally and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship. It can happen to anyone regardless of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, religion, income or any other category. It can take place in any environment, including digital environments such as social networks, online games, email, online chats, text messages, videos, photo-sharing and video-sharing sites, webcams, digital gaming devices and instant messaging.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Any intentional use of physical force; does not have to leave a mark or a bruise.

Examples:

- Scratching
- Biting
- Pinching
- Spitting
- Hair-pulling
- Slapping
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing/Shoving
- Pulling/Yanking
- Shaking
- Burning
- Strangling
- Smothering
- Restraining
- Trapping
- Abducting (e.g., forcing the person into a car)
- Targeting with thrown, kicked or driven objects
- Using a weapon or an item that is turned into a weapon
- Threatening with a weapon
- Intimidating with violence in close proximity (e.g., punching the wall next to the person)

# HANDOUT

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the other person's right to say "no."

Examples:

- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Forcing the person to go further sexually than they want to (ranging from kissing to any kind of penetration)
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
- Preventing the person from using birth control or protection against STDs (including sabotaging birth control methods)
- Sending the person unsolicited and unwelcome sexual images
- Forcing the person to pose for still or video images while partially or fully nude or while performing sexual acts
- Forcing the person to watch others posing nude or engaging in sexual acts in real life or in still or video images
- Forcing the person to take nude or sexual images of themselves and share them
- Forcing the person to expose themselves sexually to others or in public
- Forcing the person to wear or not wear items of clothing (such as underwear)
- Videotaping or recording a sexual act or nude image of the person without their knowledge or consent
- Altering an image of the person to make it appear that they were posing in the nude or engaging in sexual activities

## DIGITAL ABUSE

Digital dating abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner.

- Excessive or unwanted text messaging, instant messaging, phone calls or emails to check up on the person
- Signing the person up for unwanted websites or services
- Sending the person pornographic videos, images or other media
- Sharing sexual or nude pictures of the person that were given in confidence
- Posting fake or altered images of the person or "photoshopping" their images to add or remove others with the intention of hurting the person

# HANDOUT

- Creating an abusive group or profile about the person or setting them up for attacks by others online
- Posting nasty, false or abusive comments on the person's profile or accounts
- Accessing someone's accounts and changing passwords so they no longer have access to them and/or posing as the person and altering their accounts and profiles

## VERBAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Saying or doing something to the other person that causes them to be afraid and/or negatively affects their self-esteem; trying to manipulate or control the person's feelings or behaviors, including through digital communications designed to threaten, harass or embarrass.

Examples:

- Yelling and screaming
- Name-calling and put-downs
- Insulting the person, their family or their friends
- Embarrassing the person in front of others on purpose
- Intimidating
- Spreading negative rumors
- Making racial, ethnic or religious slurs about the person, their family or their friends
- Making unwanted sexual comments or sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature
- Making sexual comments in front of others
- Preventing the person from seeing or talking to friends and family
- Telling the person what to do/controlling their actions such as choice of clothing or activities
- Making the person feel responsible for the abuse
- Making the person feel guilty about wanting to leave the relationship by talking about how much the person showing abusive behaviors needs them
- Stalking
- Harming or threatening to harm the person or their family, friends, pets or property
- Threatening to harm self or commit suicide
- Threatening to expose private information about the person (e.g., sexual orientation, immigration status, embarrassing secrets)
- Threatening to take away the person's child or children

# HANDOUT

## ROLES IN DATING ABUSE

**PERSON SHOWING ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS:** A person who physically, sexually, digitally, verbally or emotionally hurts or attempts to control an intimate partner.

**VICTIM/SURVIVOR:** A person who is subjected to controlling behavior or hurt physically, sexually, digitally, verbally or emotionally by an intimate partner.

**BYSTANDER:** A person who is aware or suspects that someone is being abused in a dating relationship; a person who witnesses behavior that enables or promotes dating abuse (e.g. rape jokes, sexist comments, aggressive behavior with potential sexual partners).

# HANDOUT

## HELPING A FRIEND WHO IS BEING ABUSED



- Tell the person who is being abused that you are concerned for their safety. Make it clear that you know about the abuse and that you are concerned. Tell them that they do not deserve to be abused.
- Acknowledge that the abuse is not this person's fault and that only the person showing abusive behaviors is responsible for abusive actions. Tell them that they are not alone.
- Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let them know that you are available to listen or help any time.
- Avoid judging the person. They may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. It's understandable that you may disagree with their choices, but too much criticism can make them feel powerless and push them away.
- Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help them talk to family, friends, a teacher, a staff person at school, a mentor or a leader at their place of worship. Look online with them at [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org). They can help find a local counselor, victim advocate or support group. If they decide to go to the police, to court or to see a lawyer, offer to go along, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.
- Help the person develop a practical and specific safety plan that focuses on preventing future harm or violence. Visit [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org) to use the [Interactive Guide to Safety Planning](#).
- Do not confront the person showing abusive behaviors during an act of violence; it could be dangerous for you and your friend. It is better to call the police or get help from an adult. However, if it feels safe to do so, you can let a friend know if you think their words or behavior are hurtful or controlling and encourage them to get help so they can have happier, healthier relationships.
- Remember that you cannot rescue someone from dating abuse. Although it is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt, they must be the one to decide what to do. They must be able to make their own choices, and your job is to be supportive.

**DIRECTIONS:** Imagine that you are one of Adaliz's friends and you know Richard is abusing her. Work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz in which you reach out to help her. As you write, keep in mind the above suggestions.

Adapted from Loveisrespect, 2013. [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org).



## HANDOUT

# ARE YOU IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

All relationships are different. No relationship is perfect, but it's important that the people involved make a commitment to keep their relationship healthy. That doesn't mean mistakes won't be made; it means that we learn from them and avoid repeating them. If some of your past behaviors have been unhealthy, you can commit to changing them. For example, if you felt angry with the other person and called them names, you can decide not to insult them again and focus on ways to keep your anger from getting the best of you. You could try to breathe deeply when you feel angry or take a timeout before continuing the conversation at a lower level.

Ask yourself the following questions for any current or past relationship, and keep them in mind for the future. You might put this handout in a safe place where you can refer to it if you need to. Using your journal to write about the thoughts it brings up can also be helpful.

1. Do you try to change your partner? Does your partner try to change you?
2. Do you both communicate your needs clearly?
3. Do you feel like you can open up to each other without harsh criticism?
4. Do you keep secrets that would affect each other?
5. Do either of you lie to the other about things you do?
6. Are you able to see things from each other's point of view?
7. Can you and your partner hang out separately or do you need to be in constant contact?
8. Do you support your partner's interests and goals even if they don't involve you?
9. Do you treat your partner the way you want them to treat you?
10. Do you give each other space and freedom to grow?
11. Do you have models of healthy relationships in your life?

# HANDOUT

## A LETTER TO PARENTS ON TEEN DATING ABUSE

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As a physician who specializes in care for adolescents, a researcher on teen dating abuse and a parent of a teen, I am often asked by other parents to talk about the warning signs of dating abuse, what parents should be looking for and how they can help their child navigate out of an unhealthy relationship. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to these questions.

### A COMMON CHARACTERISTIC

A common characteristic of unhealthy and abusive relationships is the control that the person showing abusive behaviors seeks to maintain in the relationship. This includes telling someone what to wear, where they can go, who they can hang out with, calling them names, humiliating them in front of others. The isolation from one's social network increases, as the person showing abusive behaviors insists on spending time—"just the two of us"—and threatens to leave or cause harm if things do not go the way they want, saying, "You must not love me." Creating this isolation and dissolution of one's social supports (loss of friends, disconnectedness from family) are hallmarks of controlling behaviors. In addition, people showing abusive behaviors often monitor cell phones and emails, and for example, may threaten harm if the response to a text message is not instant. Parents are rarely aware of such controlling tactics as these occur insidiously over time, and an adolescent may themselves not recognize the controlling, possessive behaviors as unhealthy. "He/she must love me because he/she just wants to spend time with me."

### WARNING SIGNS

While the following non-specific warning signs could indicate other concerning things such as depression or drug use, these should also raise a red flag for parents and adult caregivers about the possibility of an unhealthy relationship:

- No longer hanging out with his/her circle of friends
- Wearing the same clothing
- Distracted when spoken to
- Constantly checking cell phone, gets extremely upset when asked to turn phone off
- Withdrawn, quieter than usual
- Angry, irritable when asked how they are doing
- Making excuses for their boyfriend/girlfriend
- Showering immediately after getting home
- Unexplained scratches or bruises



# HANDOUT

Sexual coercion and violence are also not uncommon in teen dating abuse. Again, because of the emotional violence and control, victims of sexual violence may be convinced that they are to blame for what has happened. “You’d do this if you loved me” or “If you don’t have sex with me, I’ll leave you” are common examples of sexual coercion. In some instances, girls in abusive relationships describe how their partners actively tried to get them pregnant. Rarely do teens disclose such sexual violence to their parents as they may feel shameful, guilty and scared. Parents need to be aware of the possibility of sexual violence and to ensure that they communicate with their child that they are never to blame if someone tries to make them do things sexually that they don’t want to do. And certainly, that no one ever has the right to put their hands on them, period. The physical and sexual violence can escalate quickly in these unhealthy relationships where the person showing abusive behaviors has significant control over the other.

## ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Perhaps the best advice for parents is to start talking about what constitutes a healthy, respectful relationship early on with your child. Sharing the warning signs of teen dating abuse with your child and saying, —“If you know someone who’s experiencing something like this, let’s talk about it - let’s talk about how you can be a good friend and help them stay safe.”— Please assure your child that they are not to blame for an unhealthy relationship and that you are available to help them be safe and happy. Please avail yourself of the many good resources available on teen dating abuse for youth and adults.

Peace,

Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD

Chief of Adolescent Medicine, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh  
Love Is Not Abuse Coalition Member for Pennsylvania

## OPTIONAL HANDOUT

### DYLAN AND ALEJANDRO

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

I didn’t know how to get help. Nobody talks about dating abuse in relationships like ours, so I had no clue where to start.

It was my first relationship. I met Alejandro through some friends, and he really swept me off my feet. He was charming and sweet and he was the first guy to show that kind of an interest in me. I understand now that some of the things he did early on were warning signs of what was to come, but how could I have known?

I thought jealousy was a sign of love. If Alejandro didn’t need to know where I was all the time and didn’t get upset when I talked to another guy, then he didn’t really love me, right? I felt like it showed that I was always on his mind, which was where I wanted to be. Until it became too much.

Alejandro constantly checked up on me through texts and phone calls. One time he showed up unexpectedly at my dad’s birthday dinner, and I had to pretend he was a friend. I tried to get him to leave, but he pulled up a chair next to my dad. I was terrified that he would say something. My parents understood that I’m gay but they mostly acted as though I wasn’t. It was something they avoided discussing, so I was afraid of how they would react if they found out about my relationship with Alejandro, and he used that fear against me.

After that dinner, he started threatening me. If I didn’t do this, he’d go talk to my parents. If I didn’t do that, he’d send them pictures of us. I felt like I had no choice but to go along with whatever he wanted, respond immediately to every check-in and be available for him at any moment. Once he even pushed me against the wall and screamed in my face and another time he threw a glass that shattered next to my head. It really scared me, but he apologized and said he’d never do it again.

A couple of my friends tried to talk to me about him one day. They said they thought he controlled too much of my life and they felt like I was becoming a different person. I did feel different. I felt like I’d shrunk. I was always on guard—quiet, stuck in my head, preparing for Alejandro to shift from charming and sweet to commanding and cruel. Somehow I had thought only Alejandro had changed. I didn’t realize how much he had changed me.

But I didn’t know what I could do about it. I didn’t know any gay adults, and even if I did, I figured they’d laugh at me and say there’s no such thing as abuse in gay relationships. That’s for straight people. I didn’t want to talk to any teachers or my parents because that meant talking about being gay. But that’s how tricky Alejandro was. He knew my fears, my isolation, and he played on that. I felt like I had no support system. For so long, I thought he was all I had.



**LESSON 2:**  
**POWER AND CONTROL**

## PURPOSE

To identify the pattern of power and control in dating abuse and steps victims can take to end that control.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand how power and control are used in dating abuse.
- Identify behaviors that exemplify spokes on the power and control wheel.
- Understand media literacy as an important tool in preventing and responding to dating abuse.
- Identify steps victims can take to end abuse and/or be safer.

## MATERIALS

- Read “Teacher Background Information” and familiarize yourself with the teaching tips, activities and handouts.
- Photocopy “Teen Power and Control Wheel” for all students.
- Photocopy the “*But I Love Him* Excerpt” for all students.
- Photocopy “Looking at Conner and Ann” for all students.
- Photocopy “Safety Plans and Action Steps” for all students.
- Photocopy “The Cycle of My Life” for all students.



# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This information is not intended for distribution to students.

## POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

The power and control wheel is a useful tool in understanding patterns of abuse. The original power and control wheel was developed in the 1980s by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and there have been several iterations since then. Loveisrespect created the wheel included in this curriculum to specifically address teen dating abuse. Each of the spokes on the wheel highlights a tactic that people showing abusive behaviors use to gain control:

- Peer pressure
- Anger/Emotional abuse
- Using social status
- Intimidation
- Minimize/Deny/Blame
- Threats
- Sexual coercion
- Isolation/Exclusion

An abusive incident is typically accompanied by behaviors that fit into other spokes of the wheel. Some are less visible than others, but all work together to establish and maintain control over the victim. The wheel gives an overall picture of this pattern of behaviors, helping to make less-visible tactics more apparent and to emphasize the intentional, and often methodical, nature of dating abuse.

## MAKING A SAFETY PLAN

Teens in abusive relationships have options for increasing their safety. Even if they decide to stay with the person showing abusive behaviors, they can still commit to improving their safety while in the relationship by developing and following a safety plan. Teens prepared to end abusive relationships should create a safety plan for the break-up and beyond since leaving is often the most dangerous time for victims and abusive behavior does not end just because the relationship did.

A safety plan helps those experiencing dating abuse think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in crisis. The plan should be practical and specific. Victims should go over the safety plan repeatedly to ensure that they can remember it easily when they are in danger. A good tip is to connect it with something they do regularly. For instance, every time a victim ends a phone call, they could mentally rehearse their safety plan. Victims could also keep in their school bag or purse a special reminder that carries no meaning for the

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

person showing abusive behaviors, such as a smooth stone or simple childhood memento. Each time they see it or touch the item, it will act as a trigger to think of their safety plan.

Note that [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org) offers the [Interactive Guide to Safety Planning](#) for teens in abusive relationships. You may want to connect victims and survivors to this resource. We do not recommend giving the guide to all students because abusers might use it to learn to recognize signs that the victim is planning to leave the relationship, which could put that person in more danger.

Here are a few safety tips you can share with a student who is **not ready to leave** an abusive relationship:

- Keep important phone numbers (e.g., police, dating abuse helpline, domestic violence shelter, family, friends) nearby at all times. Always have a phone handy.
- Explain to trustworthy friends and family that if they think you may be in danger for any reason, they should call 911.
- Create a new email account with a password that the person showing abusive behaviors will not be able to guess, so they will not be able to read incoming and outgoing mail related to safety.
- Put originals and copies of important documents (e.g., identification, health insurance, immigration papers) in a location that cannot be easily found by the other person.
- Preserve evidence. Keep a record of all incidents of the abuse. Save any threatening or harassing letters, emails, texts and voicemail messages sent by the the other person.
- Plan escape routes from the places they frequent, such as school, home and the other person's home.
- Keep subway/bus/taxi fare on you at all times.
- Be aware of the closest emergency room. An emergency room waiting area can act as a brief safe haven as you consider your next steps.
- Try not to be alone in isolated areas in public. Get a ride to school or ask someone to walk or ride the bus with you.
- Join a support group for teenagers who have experienced dating abuse.

Should a student **want to leave** an abusive relationship, you can share the following steps in addition to those above:

- Tell close family and friends that you are no longer in the relationship.
- Go to court to get a restraining order or order of protection. Keep at least one copy and give copies to the police, school administrators, people at work, etc.
- Screen calls and/or considering changing your phone number.
- Avoid arriving at and leaving school at the same time as the other person.



## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Work with school staff to change your schedule to avoid being in class with the person showing abusive behaviors.
- Avoid going to locations where the other person might look for you.

### ACCESSING SHELTER, COUNSELING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Many communities have resources for individuals experiencing dating abuse, such as confidential emergency shelters, counseling services, legal accompaniment and support groups. Often, domestic violence organizations are prepared to serve teenagers as well as adults. These organizations are staffed by people who are specially trained to serve victims/survivors in a variety of situations and may include culturally specific services. For help in finding youth-friendly resources in your area, visit [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org).

### ACCESSING THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Teens who experience dating abuse can seek help from the legal system through the civil law, the criminal law or both. All states provide some protection from domestic and dating abuse in both the criminal and civil law, but the details of the protections available vary greatly from state to state. For help understanding your state's civil and criminal laws, visit [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org).

While utilizing the legal system does not automatically guarantee safety, it can be a critical step in ending abuse. Calling the police or going to court establishes an official record of the abuse, which makes any further action easier and opens up additional opportunities for safety and justice.

The criminal and civil justice systems provide different options for legal protection. In the criminal system, your abusive partner may be charged with a crime. Once charges are filed, the prosecutor alone makes the decisions about your case. You may be required to testify in court and if convicted, the abuser may be jailed or placed on probation. In the civil justice system, you make all the decisions regarding your case instead of the prosecutor. Also, your abusive partner does not face criminal charges unless he or she violates your protection order. A protection or restraining order is a FREE court order that a judge can issue to protect you from an abusive dating partner.

### CRIMINAL LAW: CALLING THE POLICE

Many acts of dating abuse are crimes for which the person who commits them can be arrested and sent to jail. In order to use the criminal law system, the victim, a bystander or someone who found out about the abuse (e.g., a

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

the victim, a bystander or someone who found out about the abuse (e.g., a parent) must report what happened to the police. Sometimes social networks or other websites and services discover abusive behavior and report it to police themselves.

If the prosecutor decides to press charges, a judge or jury will hear the evidence and the prosecutor's case against the defendant. If the defendant is a minor, they are typically tried in juvenile court. If the defendant is found guilty, a judge will determine the sentence, which may be jail time, probation, community service, counseling and/or a fine.

### CIVIL LAW: OBTAINING A RESTRAINING ORDER

People who experience abuse can also use civil law for protection. In this case, the victim asks to be protected from the person showing abusive behaviors by a restraining or protective order, which makes it illegal for the other person to harm, come near or contact the victim in any way. Some jurisdictions call it a protection-from-abuse, stay-away or peace order. Often, these orders can also serve to protect the victim's children or other people who live in their home. Restraining orders can even extend to school, so it's important that the victim/survivor asks the court to address school in the order.

In order to qualify for a domestic violence restraining order, an individual must have a domestic relationship with the abuser. Many state laws do not include the kind of relationships teenagers typically have (i.e., people who are dating but not living together) in their definition of domestic relationships. Additionally, some state laws specify that restraining orders are only available to adults. Teenagers will need to find out if they qualify for an order in their state and whether or not they need to have an adult involved. When a minor does not want to tell a parent about the abuse, they may be able to have another adult, such as a relative, friend or teacher, go to court with them instead of a parent.

Staff at local domestic violence organizations and law enforcement officers should be able to explain how to initiate civil or criminal action. You can also visit [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org) to learn more about the laws in your state or to identify local resources for legal assistance.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Remind students that their comments in the classroom should remain confidential. No one should repeat what they have heard.
- Watch out for trigger warnings. Always give students notice when a potential trigger is coming.
- In this lesson, it's important to help students see how abuse is not always visible to outsiders; sometimes the pattern of abuse itself allows a person showing abusive behaviors to intimidate in ways others cannot see.
- Since there will be a lot of discussion about how victims feel and what they can do to be safer, be sure to watch out for victim-blaming. Remind students that victims are never responsible for abuse even if they do not take steps to protect their safety.
- As you teach this lesson, you may find that your students' reaction warrants an extension from one class period to two.



## ACTIVITIES

### STEP ONE (4 MINUTES)

Discuss the power and control wheel.

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

- Explain to students that in many abusive dating relationships, physical, emotional and/or sexual violence is not a one-time incident. It usually happens again and again and becomes more frequent and severe over time. Point out that even one incident of dating abuse is one too many.
- Give each student a copy of “[Teen Power and Control Wheel.](#)” Review the handout. Explain that it shows the different tactics that people who abuse use against victims and that these tactics work together to allow that person to gain control over the victim. Make sure students understand that every relationship is different and each one will not necessarily include every spoke on the wheel.
- Mention that victims of dating abuse often believe that the first incident of abuse is an isolated one that will not occur again. Ask students why a victim might think that way. Possible answers include: apologies and promises that it won’t happen again, they feel like they know the person, they think they can keep it from happening again.
- Point out that once an individual has demonstrated abusive behavior toward a partner, they are likely to abuse the partner again. As the abuse becomes more severe and occurs more frequently, the victim is likely to become more isolated and fearful. They may be afraid for themselves but also afraid to reach out for help.
- Explain that people who abuse are often extremely jealous of the victim’s friends and family, claiming to love their partner so much that they don’t want anyone else around. This kind of possessiveness and jealousy is not a sign of love, but an example of the extreme control that people who abuse seek to have over their partners. People who abuse often work to create an “us vs. them” situation between the victim and their friends and family, thereby making it much harder for the victim to reach out to friends and family for help.

### STEP TWO (28 MINUTES)

Analyze a text that illustrates examples from the power and control wheel.

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

## ACTIVITIES

- Tell students that the class is going to read aloud an excerpt from a novel that illustrates spokes of the power and control wheel.
- Give each student a copy of the *“But I Love Him Excerpt”* and give them time to read through it silently.
- Explain that they will work in small groups to put Connor’s behaviors into the various spokes of the power and control wheel.
- Give each student a copy of *“Looking at Connor and Ann.”* Remind them that as they work to answer the questions in their small groups, they should provide specific examples from the text rather than trying to remember the text and responding in a general fashion.
- When they are ready, review the questions on the handout, selecting a group per question to share their answers with the class.
- Have them think about the excerpt they just read and the essay from Adaliz. Discuss the value of critical thinking in responding to social issues like dating abuse by asking:
  - How can a piece of literature affect the way we think about relationships?
  - Have any of the texts we’ve read so far had an impact on you? Which one? Why?
  - Do you think reading and discussing works like *But I Love Him* will make you pay more attention to other forms of media that can shape your ideas about relationships?

### STEP THREE (11 MINUTES)

Discuss the options victims in abusive relationships can take to end violence and/or be safer.

- Explain that it can be very difficult and dangerous for teens like Ann and Adaliz to get out of an abusive relationship. It is not unusual for a couple in an abusive relationship to break up and get back together several times before the victim leaves for good.
- Ask why it might be hard for Ann to leave Connor even though she is afraid of the abuse. Possible answers include: fear of what he will do if she leaves, fear of others finding out about the abuse, belief that he will change, low self-esteem, convinced that abuse is part of love.
- Explain that even if Ann isn’t ready to end her relationship, there are steps she can take to increase her safety. Ask students what some of those steps might be.
- Possible answers include: talk to someone she trusts; plan escape routes from home, work, school and Connor’s place; ask friends to call police if they think she’s in danger; join a support group; preserve evidence.

## ACTIVITIES

- Give each student a copy of “[Safety Plans and Action Steps](#).” Review the safety section with them. Emphasize that even when someone is planning to end—or has already ended—an abusive relationship, they should continue these precautions in case the other person attempts additional violence.
- Tell students that once someone is ready to leave an abusive relationship, there are options. Go over the second half of the handout with them.

### **STEP FOUR (1 MINUTE)**

Conclude the lesson.

- Give each student a Loveisrespect wallet card, which can be found at the end of this curriculum. Let them know that they can go to the website for additional resources and contact Loveisrespect’s peer advocates for assistance at any time.

## TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS

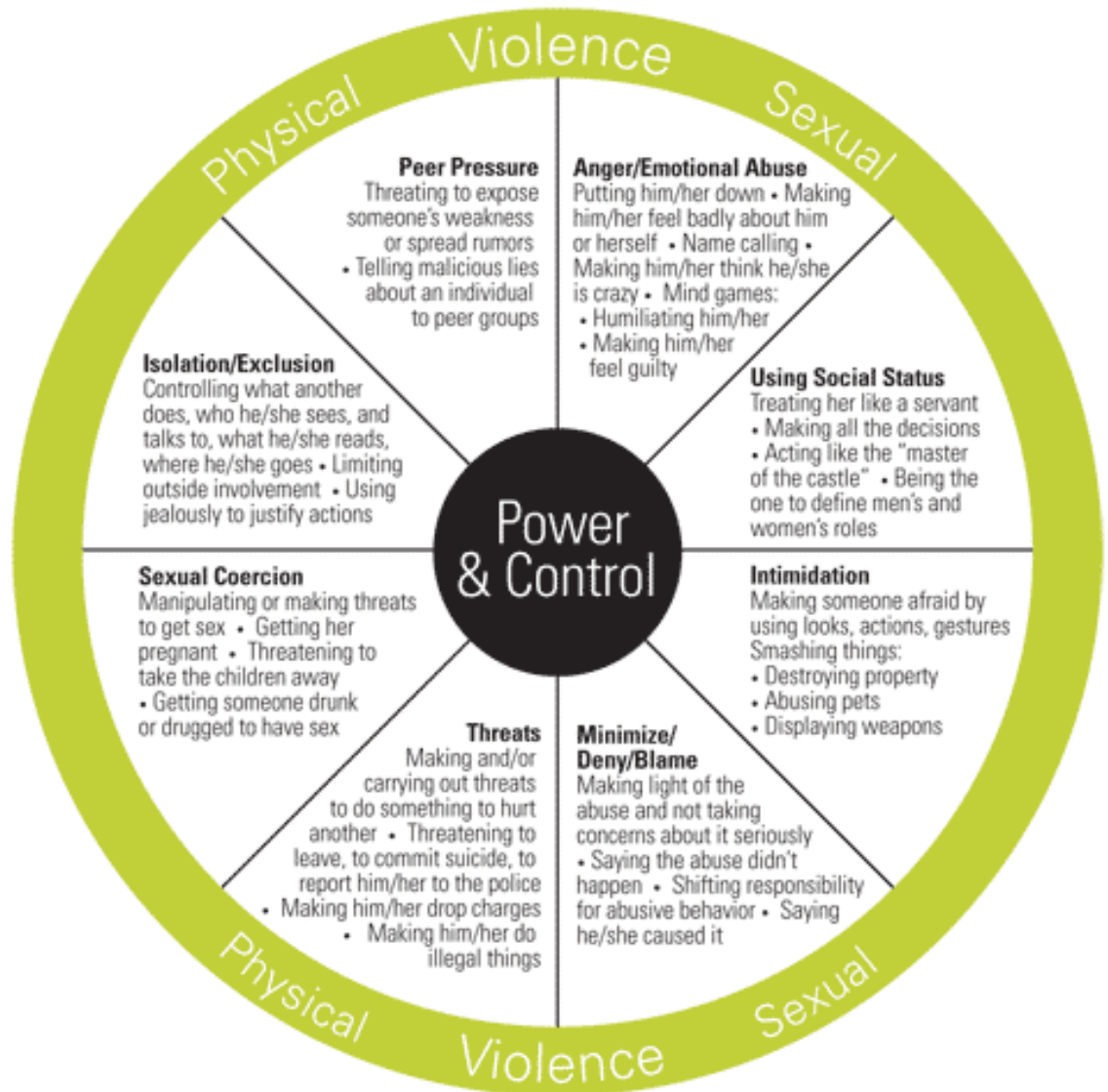
**OPTION 1:** Give each student a copy of “[The Cycle of My Life.](#)” Using everything they have learned about power, control and safety, they should write their own poems in their journals from the perspective of a person experiencing abuse or a friend who is a bystander.

**OPTION 2:** Instruct students to use “[Teen Power and Control Wheel](#)” to write a few paragraphs analyzing a relationship from a novel or short story they have read outside of this curriculum. You may have suggestions of works they have read for class or that are popular at the moment. If any students choose a work that most have read, you could have them share their thoughts in the next class if they are comfortable.

**OPTION 3:** Tell students to share the “[But I Love Him Excerpt](#)” with a close friend. Using “[Safety Plans and Action Steps,](#)” they should work with their friend to create a safety plan for Ann while she is still in the relationship with Connor.

# HANDOUT

## TEEN POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL





# HANDOUT

## **BUT I LOVE HIM\* EXCERPT**

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

In Amanda Grace’s novel *But I Love Him*, Ann, a high school senior, describes how her relationship with Connor takes her from a happy, straight-A student and athlete to a broken, bruised girl who no longer recognizes herself.

### **EXCERPT:**

August 15

Eleven Months, Sixteen Days

I’ve made a mistake. A huge, monumental mistake.

I forgot Connor’s truck broke down. I forgot he was going to be waiting for me when I walked out of Subway. I’ve only been back on the job for two weeks, and it’s already putting a strain on my relationship with Connor. And now he’s seen me. He’s seen me laugh and push Mark, the new guy.

And I know what he’s thinking, and I know where his mind is going, and I know without asking that he’s steaming, waiting for me. I know the fear he has of losing me overpowers everything else, even his common sense. I know deep inside he trusts me, but I know his raging insecurities will always prevail.

He’s so afraid of losing me that he can’t see I’d never leave him.

And I know he had to have seen the way Mark hugged me with one arm, just a loose sideways hug, but still a hug. He won’t believe me when I say Mark means nothing. He’ll just replay that hug over and over in his mind and he’ll spin a story that’s so far from the truth.

I’ve been so careful for so long. It was bound to happen eventually. I was bound to slip and do something like this. Why do I even wonder why I have no friends anymore? Why do I even wonder why no one talks to me? It’s my own doing. It’s my own fears that something will happen and I’ll say the wrong thing to the wrong person, and they’ll interfere somehow. And this is what will happen.

Even Abby knows it. It’s why she stays away without me telling her to. It’s why she smiles that sad smile when she sees me. It’s why she’s stopped trying to be my friend. She was the last to give up. The last to surrender me to Connor.

I hate this. I hate it so much, this waiting as we walk toward my car, Mark having no idea what’s about to happen and me knowing it too well. I’m afraid. I hate that I’m actually afraid of him right now. I hate that I know what this silence means, and all I can do is wait for it to explode.

I feel claustrophobic and I’m not even in the car yet. I consider running. Away from him, away from everything. I could go five, ten miles before I had to stop. I’d be halfway to Aberdeen by then. Our tiny ocean town of Westport, Washington, is a town of nothing. I’d be gone in ten minutes.

## HANDOUT

But that won't solve it, and maybe this time he'll talk to me. He's been getting a little better, now that he's away from his dad so much. He's been cooling. Adjusting. Maybe this time he'll understand, and he'll see that Mark is just some random guy who means nothing at all, and we can use this to grow from.

I know that's going to happen, if I stick with him long enough. He just needs some guidance, some love, some understanding. He wants so badly to become that person.

But of course that's not the case. When he clicks his door shut, and before I start the car, he grabs my wrist and squeezes, too hard. It's always too much, too intense, too everything.

"Forget the store. Take me to the apartment. Now."

And for some reason, the whole ride there, the whole deathly silent ride, I keep hoping that my car will break down too and I'll have to get out, that we'll never make it to his apartment.

But we do. I pull up at his fourplex, parking so carefully, perfectly between the white lines. I stare at the other three doors, hoping no one is home in those apartments. It's a tiny building, two apartments downstairs, two up. Connor's is on the upper left, with a big crooked number three nailed to the door.

I follow him up the old wooden stairs, my heart pounding. I can hardly feel the thin railing as it slides underneath my hand, guiding me toward the front door with the peeling red paint.

We're barely through the entry before he shoves me, hard, and I'm sent sprawling all over the floor. I bang my elbow and a jolt of electricity shoots up my arm. I hear the door slam behind me, and the pictures on the wall rattle with the force.

I lie there longer than I should, trying to keep my breathing down, trying to suppress the instinct to curl in a ball. I know his moods can turn with the right words. I know if I think clearly, I can steer him back toward being himself again. If I do this right, Connor will be back.

...

"You have no idea how...stupid you are."

And then he reels back, his hand fisted, and punches.

The wall.

It caves in around me, bits of drywall showering down around my shoulders.

And that is that.

The first hit, the first good, hard hit, usually wakes him up. I can actually see it in his face, this abrupt before and after.

I always know when it shifts. I think maybe the pain, so raw and real, pulls him out of his rage. Today I am lucky. Today it is the wall, and not me.

He blinks, twice, and looks at me. At the way I tremble in front of him.

## HANDOUT

“Oh. I ...” He steps away from me. There is always a moment like this. A moment where I think he is seeing himself, where he’s reeling everything back inside him, forcing it back down and bottling it back up, and then he turns to me. For that split second before he gains his senses again, I see that same shock and fear on his face as must be mirrored on mine. I see that he has no idea what he’s done. That he had no control of himself.

But it’s not fair. It’s not fair that he lets his rage take over, that he lets it rule him. I don’t know why he has to be two people. I don’t know why he gets to be two different people, and I only get to be me, the one who is here to take what he has to give, and who is here to pick up the pieces afterward.

Me. It’s always me. I don’t want it to be like this anymore. I can’t handle more of this. I’m barely holding it together. I’m barely holding him together.

It’s just not fair.

He steps forward to hug me, but I stiffen and he has to force his arms around me to get the hug to work.

And I let out a sob of relief, because it’s over. The episode is over. Today he didn’t touch me. And I think this may be a good thing, it may mean he’s not going to. Ever again. If he can see me with another guy and get this angry and not touch me, it has to mean something. I let myself hope that it means something, because otherwise I’m not sure how much longer I can last. He holds me and I melt into a mess of sobs, which shocks me. I thought I was done doing this. I thought I could steel myself from this. But I can’t handle the roller coaster anymore. I can’t handle this up and down.

He lets me slide to the floor and then he pulls me into his lap and he rocks me, back and forth, as I sob so hard I can’t breathe and start hiccupping.

“I’m sorry, Ann. I’m so sorry.”

I snifle, my breath coming out in funny little rasps. “I don’t want you to be sorry. I want you to stop doing this. I want it to be like it was when we met.”

“I know. It will be, I promise. I’ll treat you like I used to. I swear.”

I nod my head, wanting to believe it.

But even when I stop crying, even when we fall asleep and I’m nestled in his arms, this will leave another scar. No one will see it. No one will know. But it will be there. And eventually all the scars will have scars and that is all I will be, one big scar of a love gone wrong.

\*From *But I Love Him* by Amanda Grace © 2011 Flux, an imprint of Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd. 2143 Wooddale Drive, Woodbury, MN 55125. All rights reserved, used by permission.

# TEACHER'S COPY

## LOOKING AT CONNOR AND ANN

### (WITH SAMPLE ANSWERS)

**DIRECTIONS:** In your small group, use “The Teen Power and Control Wheel” and “*But I Love Him Excerpt*” to respond to the following questions:

1. Cite two specific examples of anger/emotional abuse from *But I Love Him*. Remember that the pattern of Connor’s abuse leads Ann to see things an observer might miss.
  - “I’m afraid. I hate that I’m actually afraid of him right now. I hate that I know what this silence means, and all I can do is wait for it to explode.”
  - “You have no idea how...stupid you are.”
2. How does Connor use intimidation to control Ann?
  - “I’m afraid. I hate that I’m actually afraid of him right now. I hate that I know what this silence means, and all I can do is wait for it to explode.”
  - Although she is driving, Connor barks orders at her: “Forget the store. Take me to the apartment. Now.”
  - “We’re barely through the entry before he shoves me, hard, and I’m sent sprawling all over the floor.”
  - He punches the wall instead of Ann: “Today it is the wall, and not me.”
3. Ann talks about feeling isolated from her friends. Using examples from the text, explain how you think Connor achieved this.
  - All of Ann’s friends have given up on her, including Abby, who was the last to “surrender” Ann to Connor. It’s likely that Connor had an “us vs. them” attitude regarding Ann’s friends. He may have told her that he was the one who really cared about her, not her friends. While they were convincing her that he was no good, he was manipulating her feelings about them. Connor may have made Ann feel like her friends did not understand their love.
  - Ann’s job has already caused “strain” in her relationship with Connor. Clearly, he is jealous of time she spends without him. He does not approve of the way she interacts with her coworkers and does not want her making friends with them.
4. Ann describes how she has come to blame herself and how she tries to change her behavior so that Connor will not abuse her. Give an example of something she says that reflects this way of thinking.
  - Any portion of the first seven paragraphs.
  - The way she parks so carefully at his apartment.
  - “I know if I think clearly, I can steer him back towards being himself again.”
  - “I’m barely holding him together.”

# HANDOUT

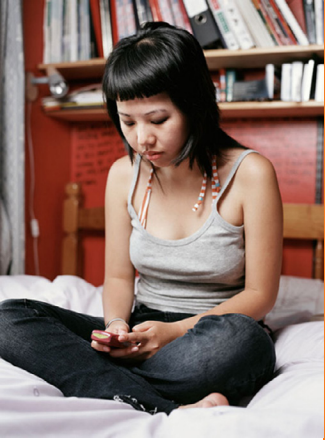
## LOOKING AT CONNOR AND ANN

**DIRECTIONS:** In your small group, use “The Teen Power and Control Wheel” and “*But I Love Him Excerpt*” to respond to the following questions:

1. Cite two specific examples of anger/emotional abuse from *But I Love Him*. Remember that the pattern of Connor’s abuse leads Ann to see things an observer might miss.
2. How does Connor use intimidation to control Ann?
3. Ann talks about feeling isolated from her friends. Using examples from the text, explain how you think Connor achieved this.
4. Ann describes how she has come to blame herself and how she tries to change her behavior so that Connor will not abuse her. Give an example of something she says that reflects this way of thinking.

## HANDOUT

# INCREASING YOUR SAFETY IN AN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIP



If you are in an abusive relationship, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave, there are steps you can take to increase your safety.

Talk with an adult you trust, such as a parent, guardian, teacher, counselor or clergy member, about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you feel less isolated and open up options you may not have known were available.

Create a safety plan. Safety plans help people who are experiencing dating abuse think about safety strategies and prepare to use them. A safety plan will allow you to think ahead about steps to take before and during a dangerous incident. You will plot out specific and easy steps to take to increase your safety and practice them in your head so that they are there when you need them.

Call the police. If someone is hurting you or you are in immediate danger, it may be best to call the police. Many physical acts of dating abuse, including sexual abuse, are crimes; the person using these behaviors can be arrested and go to jail for them.

Get a restraining order. Also called an order of protection, a restraining order is a court order that makes it illegal for the other person to harm you, come near you or contact you in any way. Once you have an order, you can call the police as soon as the person comes near you or contacts you, and they will be arrested. To find out about the laws in your state, visit [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org).

If your home is not a safe place and/or you live with the person showing abusive behaviors, consider going to a domestic violence shelter. A shelter is a safe place. It's usually a house or apartment in a secret location, where people experiencing dating abuse or domestic violence—and their children—can live for a limited time. Staff at the shelter can help you find a more permanent place to live and help you explore other options for taking action.

To get started on increasing your safety, contact Loveisrespect by calling **1-866-331-9474**, texting “**loveis**” to **22522** or clicking the live chat icon at [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org).

Adapted from Break the Cycle, Inc., 2005. [breakthecycle.org](https://breakthecycle.org).

## HANDOUT

# THE CYCLE OF MY LIFE

BY PAMELA, AGE 16

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

It all starts out wonderful until he strikes  
Constantly hearing I'm sorry  
Until it doesn't matter anymore  
Forgiving every time, forgetting never  
Calling out for him to stop  
Never stopping until it is almost too late  
Never thinking about the consequences of his actions  
Just making me think out every possible consequence of mine  
Hearing I'm sorry all over again  
Meeting him with open eyes  
Awaiting the gifts I know will pour forward  
Until it all stops—  
And the cycle begins all over again

**DIRECTIONS:** This poem was written by a real teenager in an abusive relationship, but it could just as easily have come from Ann. In your journal, try writing a poem from the perspective of someone experiencing dating abuse or from a friend who is a bystander. Think about the behaviors people who abuse use to gain control and the many steps victims take to find safety.

\*From [www.teenrelationships.org/teenssay/teensay.htm](http://www.teenrelationships.org/teenssay/teensay.htm).



**LESSON 3:**  
**DIGITAL DATING ABUSE**



# PURPOSE

To understand the role of digital technology in dating abuse.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Recognize the role digital technologies may play in dating abuse.
- Define vocabulary related to digital dating abuse and apply it to the text and to their own experiences.
- Understand the risks and legal consequences of digital abuse, password sharing and sexting.
- Know what to do if they are bystanders to digital dating abuse.
- Know how to report digital dating abuse and cyberbullying to digital service providers and social networks.

## MATERIALS

- Read “Teacher Background Information” and familiarize yourself with the activities and handouts.
- Photocopy “Malik’s Story” for all students.
- Photocopy “Looking at Maya and Malik” for all students.
- Read “Looking at Maya and Malik” teacher copy.
- Photocopy “The 20 Questions” for all students.
- Photocopy “Reporting Digital Abuse” for all students.
- Photocopy “Helping a Friend Who Is Being Abusive” for all students.
- Photocopy “Tech Tips for Parents” for all students.



# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This information is not intended for distribution to students.

## DIGITAL DATING ABUSE OVERVIEW

When teens experience dating abuse, it can affect all parts of their lives. It can affect them in school, at home, at work, at Grandma's house and in their social lives. Young people's lives are flooded with technology, so it's not surprising that dating abuse can be digital.

The same tactics of power and control that are the hallmarks of abusive relationships extend to these new technologies. With the growing availability of smart phones, everyone from kids to grandparents is expected to be reachable at all times. In teen dating relationships, partners may expect each other to be readily available and respond immediately to any digital communication. This always-on reality makes it easier for people to harass with repeated text messages and calls and harder for victims to avoid harassment and the consequences of not being available.

Cell phones and social networks are the two most commonly abused digital technologies in teen dating abuse. Applications that connect phones with social media allow people who abuse to do the greatest damage in the shortest amount of time by broadcasting images and comments to a vast peer group.

Spying, hacking and monitoring—with or without the other person's knowledge—are frequent digital abuse tactics. People who abuse may activate GPS devices, review call logs, use keystroke loggers, place spyware technology to report activities, hack webcams or demand that webcams be left on.

In 2007, *Tech Abuse in Teen Relationships Study*<sup>1</sup> revealed a wide range of increasingly common digital dating abuse among teens in relationships.

- 30% have been texted 10, 20 or 30 times an hour by a partner wanting to know where they are, what they're doing or whom they're with.
- 25% say they have been called names, harassed or put down by their partner through cell phones and texting.
- 22% have been asked by cell phone or online to engage in sexual activity when they did not want to.
- 19% had their partner use a cell phone or the internet to spread rumors about them, and 18% had their partner use a networking site to harass or put them down.
- 11% had a partner share private or embarrassing pictures/videos of them.
- 17% were afraid not to respond to a call, email, IM or text because of what their partner might do.

# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 10% have been threatened physically via email, IM, text chat, etc.
- More than a quarter did not tell their parents about abusive behavior because they feared losing computer and cell phone privileges.
- 27% did not tell their parents about abusive behavior because their parents might prevent them from seeing their partner.
- More than half of both teens and parents believe computers and cell phones make abuse in teen dating relationships more likely to occur and easier to conceal from parents.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL DATING ABUSE?

Digital abuse happens when someone uses digital technology as a weapon to hurt or control someone in a dating situation. Using technology to spy on, harass or embarrass a partner in social communities can be a powerful abuse tactic. Even though most teens are aware of the problems of cyberbullying thanks to increased media attention and deadly consequences, they may not connect this kind of behavior to digital dating abuse.

Cyberbullying is the use of digital technologies to deliberately harm or harass others. Unlike digital dating abuse, it does not require any particular relationship. Although victims of digital dating abuse may experience some of the same effects of cyberbullying, they also experience consequences that are specific to dating abuse, so it's important not to think of them as one and the same. Victims/survivors of digital dating abuse may be able to take action, however, through cyberbullying laws and/or dating abuse laws.

Here are five of the most common types of digital dating abuse:

1. Direct attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors against the victim. This might include name-calling, harassment, destruction of digital property, threats regarding friends or family. "You are stupid!" "If you refuse to listen to me you will be sorry!"
2. Public attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors about the victim. These tend to be posts, emails or texts designed to embarrass or damage the reputation of the other person and shared with a group or on a public online space. "Sarah is such a slut!" "André is a wimp!"
3. Privacy invasions by the person showing abusive behaviors spying on the victim or monitoring their communications or activities. This may be done without the other person's permission or the person showing abusive behaviors may manipulate them into giving permission.
4. Posed attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors using the anonymity offered by digital technologies to steal someone's ID or pose as someone else (even the victim, in some situations).
5. Abuse through others, where the person showing abusive behaviors manipulates others to commit direct attacks, public attacks, privacy

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

invasions or posed attacks designed to hurt the victim. This is similar to in-person dating abuse where the person showing abusive behaviors gets their friends to monitor or intimidate the victim.

- Reach out to the person showing abusive behaviors or the victim to discuss the abuse calmly.
- Reach out to other bystanders and encourage them not to perpetuate the abuse by passing it on to others.
- Report it to sites or networks and school authorities.
- Refuse to vote, forward messages or visit the profiles or sites where the abuse is happening.
- Share what they have learned in these lessons about digital abuse and dating abuse dynamics.
- Call someone out when they see them doing things like reprogramming their partner's cell phone.
- Seek help online from sites like [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org).

To make it easier for teens to report, consider setting up an anonymous report line at school or a digital abuse report box where bystanders can inform the school about incidents anonymously. Teach the students to act quickly when they see digital abuse. The faster they act, the more effective their actions are.

Digital dating abuse can be conducted using any digital device, from cell phones to computers to game consoles. Xbox, PlayStation, PlayStation Portable, Nintendo DSi and other consoles can be used to threaten and harass using typed chat, voice-over-IP, ID theft and posing and stolen accounts and points.

Hacking software, monitoring and GPS tools, video surveillance cameras and spyware can be installed in person or sent online to the computer, car or home of the victim to allow the person showing abusive behaviors to destroy devices, data and content or to set the victim up to look bad or be investigated for a crime. Text messages, instant messages, cache and history files, cell phone logs and telephone calls can all be monitored and recorded. Passwords can be guessed, saved on devices controlled by the person showing abusive behaviors and used without authorization.

# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## DIGITAL DATING ABUSE AND THE LAW

Many teens, and even adults, think that nothing can be done about digital abuse because of free speech, but all 50 states now have cyberbullying laws (through either cyberstalking or cyberharassment) that delineate online harassment from free speech. Wiretapping and hacking laws, which criminalize digital intrusions, ID theft and unauthorized access, cover most monitoring activities that fall under digital abuse. To learn more about digital abuse laws, visit [athinline.org](http://athinline.org), [stopcyberbullying.org](http://stopcyberbullying.org) or [wiredsafety.org](http://wiredsafety.org).

Teens who are targeted for digital dating abuse can take the following steps:

- Tell an adult if possible. They can help to keep the victim safe as they take action.
- Ask the person showing abusive behaviors to stop if they feel they can do so without causing more abuse.
- Block the person showing abusive behaviors from social networks, email and cell phone.
- Contact the school. Many schools are required to address cyberbullying, and all schools are required to address dating abuse. Digital dating abuse usually happens alongside more traditional forms of dating abuse, which may happen at school or affect the victim's ability to fully access educational opportunities. In addition, some online abuse happens at school.
- Save all communications for evidence, including screen shots, emails and text messages.
- Report the person showing abusive behaviors on related social media sites following each site's reporting protocols. Keep a record of contact with sites.
- Report the abuse to their internet service provider (ISP). Since most ISPs prohibit the use of their services for abuse and harassment, they can often intervene by closing the account. Keep a record of contact with ISPs.
- Contact the police and share the unaltered evidence and specific details of the digital abuse (e.g. dates, times).

# TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## SEXTING OVERVIEW

Sexting means sending nude, semi-nude or provocative pictures or videos between partners via cell phone. It is an increasingly common form of sexual communication for both teens and adults. In fact, 20% of teens report that they have sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves,<sup>2</sup> and nearly one-third of teens say that the image they sent was forwarded to someone they did not want to see it.<sup>3</sup> A 2008 report from The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy revealed the following about teens and sexting:

- 48% have received a sexually suggestive message via text, email or IM.
- 39% have sent sexually suggestive emails or texts.
- 44% say it is common for sexually suggestive text messages to be shared with people other than the intended recipient.

Though most sexts are sent through texting, some teens also send sexual images through the smart phone app Snapchat, which allows them to send photos and videos, or “snaps,” that are available to viewers for a few seconds before disappearing. Teens may think of Snapchat as a risk-free way to sext since the images disappear, but it’s actually not that hard to save the images. They don’t necessarily disappear forever.

Although some teens are comfortable with sexting, it can play a part in abuse. Through harassment or threats, people who abuse may coerce a partner to send sexual images of themselves. They may then blackmail the other person with the images in their possession. This is referred to as “sextortion.”

## SEXTING AND THE LAW

Many teens have seen naked or sexual images of classmates, requested or demanded images or sent images on their own. But they don’t know very much about the laws regarding when someone creates, shares or possesses a nude or sexual image of a minor.

There are two levels of laws regarding these images: federal laws and state laws. Underage sexual images and certain nude photos fall under sexual exploitation laws at both levels. The age of majority (after which young people are no longer treated as minors) for federal laws is 18, but a few states treat teens as minors until they are 19 or older. Some treat them as adults when they are as young as 16. That means the majority of teen sexting images likely constitute child pornography.

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Anyone who creates, distributes or possesses child pornography, even if it's an image of themselves, can be charged and convicted under child pornography laws and be classified as a registered sex offender. Regardless of whether the person asked for the image or not, if he or she has it, the law presumes the person is in possession of child pornography. While some states have changed their laws to treat minor-to-minor voluntarily shared images differently from adult-minor sex images, in many states, anyone along the chain of production, distribution and possession can still be labeled a sex offender and prohibited from living near a school or park. They may also have to register whenever they move, get a job or attend school.

Several cases of creating, sharing and possessing child pornography through sexting have been successfully prosecuted against teens. Remember, however, that the person pictured in the sexting photo may not have willingly participated in the taking or distribution of the photo. Sometimes, the person showing abusive behaviors forces or coerces the victim into taking and/or sending nude photos.

<sup>2</sup> O'Keeffe, G.S. & Clarke-Pearson, K., Council on Communications and Media. (2011.) *The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families*.

<sup>3</sup> Cox Communications. (2009.) *Teen Online & Wireless Safety Survey: Cyberbullying, Sexting, and Parental Controls*.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Remind students of confidentiality in the classroom and any mandated reporting requirements.
- Watch out for trigger warnings. Always give students notice when a potential trigger is coming.
- Keep in mind that students may be understandably defensive about their use of technology. For them, most of it is normal and acceptable, so it is important to display a positive attitude about technology and explain that what is not acceptable are instances of abuse being perpetrated, enabled or ignored through digital technology. Otherwise, technology can be a part of a healthy relationship.
- This lesson uses a story that involves an abusive female and male victim. Even though you've addressed this issue before, students may still express surprise that guys can be victims. It's important that they understand that abuse can go either way and that the prevailing idea that guys can't be victims keeps male teens and adults from reporting.
- There may be students in your class who are or have been victims or perpetrators of digital dating abuse or cyberbullying. Consider altering your crisis plan to include any victims of cyberbullying. Likewise, bystanders of cyberbullying may report to you after the lesson, so be prepared to support them. Use what you have learned in preparing for this lesson and be sure you are familiar with your school's policies and community resources.
- As you teach this lesson, you may find that your students' reaction warrants an extension from one class period to two.





## ACTIVITIES

### STEP ONE (8 MINUTES)

Create a framework for digital dating abuse discussions.

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: “This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time.”

- Encourage students to refer back to Lesson 1’s definition of dating abuse. Ask for a volunteer to recall the definition or refer them to the handout if necessary: *Teen dating abuse is a cycle of physically, sexually, digitally, verbally and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship.*
- Based on that definition, ask the class to define digital dating abuse. Help them get to a definition somewhat like this: *Digital dating abuse is when someone uses digital technology as a weapon to hurt someone else in a dating relationship.*
- Ask students to share ways a person showing abusive behaviors may use technology against the other person. Answers may include:
  - Calling, texting, emailing or instant messaging the other person to constantly check up on them.
  - Directing threatening calls, texts or emails to friends or family members of the other person.
  - Ganging up on the person by having friends send threatening calls, texts or emails.
  - Checking the other person’s missed calls, voicemail, text messages and emails to see whom they have been communicating with.
  - Calling or sending unwanted emails or texts that are threatening in tone.
  - Sending unwanted emails or texts that are sexual in nature.
  - Accessing the other person’s social media profiles and posing as them, altering their online profile or deleting their friends.
  - Stealing or breaking digital devices with the intent to harass or intimidate.
  - Using phones or webcams to take unwanted pictures of the other person and then using those photos as a form of blackmail or intimidation, sharing them with others, etc.
- Encourage students to think beyond Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Do they have other accounts online where they interact with friends, like gaming or video-sharing sites? What about Snapchat? Could people who abuse harass victims through video game systems connected to the internet? Does anyone use Skype or Vonage? How could those be misused?
- If time allows, ask students to help categorize the examples under the types of digital abuse. Some will fit into multiple categories. For example, a Facebook post can be both a direct attack and a public attack.

# ACTIVITIES

- o Direct attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors against the victim.
- o Public attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors about the victim.
- o Privacy invasions by the person showing abusive behaviors spying on the victim or monitoring their communications or activities.
- o Posed attacks by the person showing abusive behaviors using the anonymity offered by digital technologies to steal someone's ID or pose as someone else.
- o Abuse through others, where the person showing abusive behaviors manipulates others to commit direct attacks, public attacks, privacy invasions or posed attacks designed to hurt the victim.

## STEP TWO (25 MINUTES)

Explore how digital technologies fit into the power and control wheel.

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: "This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time."

- Give each student a copy of "Malik's Story."  
Introduce the text by reminding students of the power and control wheel and explaining that the following story illustrates how those behaviors play out through digital mediums.
- Have students read the story silently to themselves.
- Ask them to identify moments where different spokes on the power and control wheel appear.
- Give each student a copy of "Looking at Maya and Malik." Instruct them to work in small groups to answer the questions, providing specific examples from the text.
- Once they are finished, select one group per question to share their answers with the class.

## STEP THREE (5 MINUTES)

Explore the trend of password-sharing as a way teens sometimes show intimacy and trust in a relationship.

- Ask students if sharing passwords is common in dating relationships and friendships and ask how many have voluntarily shared their passwords with a partner or close friend.
- Have them to brainstorm ways to handle situations where a partner or friend requests a password they do not want to share.
- Ask how people can access someone else's accounts when they don't know the password. Students will likely say "hacking," so ask them to expand upon that. Other possible answers include:

## ACTIVITIES

- o Clicking the “forgot password” button and guessing the answer to the secret question
- o Asking a mutual friend or sibling that knows the password
- o Using a computer or phone that the person has asked to “remember” their password
- **IMPORTANT:** Remind students that even if a victim shares their password with an person showing abusive behaviors, they are NOT to blame for the violence, especially considering the additional ways a person showing abusive behaviors could have accessed their account.
- Give each student a copy of “The 20 Questions.” Point out that most people tend to choose easily guessed passwords. After they review the handout, ask how many of them know how their best friend would answer most of the questions. Recommend that they change their passwords to something that is both easy to remember and hard to guess.

### STEP FOUR (5 MINUTES)

Explore the trend of sexting as a way teens sometimes show intimacy and trust in a relationship.

- Ensure that everyone in the room understands the definition of sexting: *Sending nude, seminude or sexual pictures or videos of yourself or others via cell phone.*
- Get students to talk about sexting in relationships by asking the following questions:
  - o Why might some teens share intimate photos? Possible answers include: attract someone, express their love, keep their partner, avoid or delay sexual contact, remind them of what they are missing, or get revenge.
  - o How does sexting relate to digital dating abuse? Possible answers include: using threats to coerce the victim into posing for or sending photos/video, sending the photo/video(s) to other people to embarrass the victim or using the photo/video(s) as blackmail.
- Point out that viewing or possessing nude, semi-nude or sexual images of minors is considered child pornography. Whether students take the picture, view it or share it, they can be charged and should keep this in mind.

### STEP FIVE (2 MINUTES)

Conclude the lesson.

- Ask students what they learned today that they hadn’t known before. Ask them what they will do differently and what they will share with others. Thank them for participating in these lessons and remind them of available resources.
- Give each student a copy of “Tech Tips for Parents” to take home.

## TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS

**OPTION 1:** Give each student a copy of “Reporting Digital Abuse.” They should each choose one digital device (e.g., cell phone, game console) or social network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) that they use frequently and look into how to report digital abuse on the device, provider or network. Have them write out in their own words what procedure to follow. They should then write a paragraph responding to the following questions, which they should have copied down in their notebooks:

- Do you think this procedure will be effective?
- Do you see any problems or difficulties?
- Can you make recommendations for improvement?

**OPTION 2:** Send students to the “Talk It Out” forum on [thatnotcool.com](https://www.thatnotcool.com). Have them choose three different posts about an individual’s experience with current digital dating abuse, read the comments and provide their own feedback to the poster. They should then provide a written summary of each, the That’s Not Cool tip and their own feedback to submit for class. You may have them discuss a few posts and responses in the next class.

**OPTION 3:** Give each student a copy of “Reaching Out to a Friend Who Is Being Abusive.” Tell students to have a conversation with a close friend about either Malik and Maya or Adaliz and Richard from Lesson 1. They should read “Malik’s Story” or “I Thought Things Would Change” with the friend and ask the person to help them write out a scene where they try to help the person showing abusive behaviors. The next day students could act out their scenes in class.

## HANDOUT

# MALIK'S STORY

**TRIGGER WARNING!** Pay close attention to any emotional or physical cues from youth participants and be prepared to respond appropriately. Tell students: "This may be a sensitive subject for some students, so I would like to remind you that anyone experiencing difficult emotions is welcome to take a moment or ask for help privately at any time."

It wasn't easy changing schools in the middle of high school. I didn't know anyone, and no one made much of an effort to get to know me at first. I'd left behind all of my friends and teammates, and I missed my old basketball team. Because of basketball, everyone at my old school knew who I was and people cared about me. I'd started dating a girl I really liked, but since my parents announced we were moving just a few weeks into the relationship, she and I decided to break it off. We agreed that we were too young for a long-distance relationship.

So I was pretty lonely. Until Maya sat down next to me at lunch one day. She had this smile that made me forget what I was saying. She wanted to make movies someday, and I was into photography, so we had a lot to talk about. She'd already made a couple of short videos on her phone, and they impressed me. I took her to a movie that weekend, and we just clicked. After that, we spent every day together, and I forgot about everything I'd left behind.

Maya and I were so comfortable together, we could talk about anything. We talked on the phone late into the night, and sometimes we didn't want to say goodbye and go to sleep. She said that people who loved each other didn't have secrets, so we shared our deepest secrets. When she asked, I gave her all of my passwords because I knew I could trust her. I didn't have anything to hide from her anyway.

But everything changed once basketball season started. I began hanging out more with my teammates. Those guys were so funny, and I'd forgotten how good it felt to be on a team and just be with the guys. Sometimes after practice I'd head over to one of their houses while Maya was filming stuff for her theatre class.

When she found out where I'd been, she got upset. She said she knew those guys a lot better than I did and they would be a bad influence on me. She cried and said that she couldn't trust me around them. Man, I hated to see her cry and to think that I'd caused it, so I agreed to spend less time with them. Then she'd kiss me and say, "Malik, it's just that we're so good together, and I don't want anyone to ruin what we have. We have to protect what's special."

## HANDOUT

She got mad when I would talk to other girls at school. On game days, the cheerleaders would greet us in the hallways, bring us cookies and decorate our lockers. I told Maya it was a school spirit thing, but she laughed and called me an “idiot.” She said it was obvious those girls were flirting with me. She would check my phone and yell at me if she found texts from one of them even though they were just wishing me a good game. She yelled a lot. Sometimes she would get so frustrated and angry that she threw things. As much as I could, I always complied with what she wanted because I really loved her and didn’t want to lose her.

But she was always suspicious—logging into my accounts, reading my messages and denying friend requests from anyone she didn’t like. She blocked the girl I dated at my old school and told me never to talk to her again. When she was angry with me, she would change my status to read things like, “Malik is a jerk.” Anytime we weren’t together, she’d text me constantly, asking where I was and who I was talking to. If I didn’t answer right away, she’d accuse me of cheating on her.

One day I posted some photos I’d taken for the yearbook. There were a few pictures of the cheerleaders. She unfriended me and wouldn’t respond to my calls and texts. When she finally talked to me again, she said it was like announcing to everyone that I was choosing other girls over her. I begged her to forgive me and removed the pics immediately.

I started to feel kind of lonely again. Even though I still had Maya, she’d pushed everyone else out of my life. I was doing well at the games, scoring a lot of points, but the guys didn’t even invite me out anymore because they knew I’d turn them down for Maya. They would tease me about her sometimes, and in those moments I really did feel stupid like Maya said I was. I felt worthless and even thought about quitting the team.

Maya came to the games to support me, and she even filmed them. One night after losing to a tough team and making a stupid mistake on the court, I walked out of the locker room feeling defeated and really needing to see her. But she wasn’t around. I texted her, but she didn’t respond, so I finally went home, grabbed a slice of pizza and sat down in front of the computer.

What I saw shocked me. Everything from my Facebook account was gone—all of the pics with my old friends, of my dog who died last year, of Maya and me. All gone. In their place was a GIF zooming in on a cheerleader grabbing my hand as I came back in from halftime. Across the top, it read: Where Malik’s mind was in the game. It showed me turning to look back at her. She said something, I smiled and it happened all over again. Over and over again.

# HANDOUT

I felt sick. I threw the pizza down and closed my laptop. I knew Maya had captured this moment while filming the game, turned it into a GIF, deleted everything I had and slapped this up there. I couldn't believe she would do that! There were already comments joking about it. I was embarrassed for Maya, me and the girl. I couldn't even remember what the cheerleader had said to me. She wasn't important. I called Maya and left her a message explaining and begging her to fix everything.

An hour later she knocked on the door. She apologized and said she had backed up all of my photos, so it wasn't that big of a deal. She told me that she loved me and needed to teach me a lesson for my own good. She said she did it for us. Everything over the past few months had built up, and I started crying. She held me and kissed me and she cried too.

She pulled out her phone and said, "I want to show you the real video I've been working on." It was all about me playing basketball, taking photographs, telling her silly jokes. It felt like every highlight of my life over the past few months was on there. It was amazing. She promised never to leave me and hoped I had learned how much she cared about me.

Normally, once Maya calmed down and became a sweetheart again, I felt such relief and love. But this time I felt a lot of emptiness too.

# TEACHER'S COPY

## LOOKING AT MAYA AND MALIK

### (WITH SAMPLE ANSWERS)

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your group to respond to the following questions.

1. Cite five examples of Maya's abuse of Malik. Make sure that at least three examples are digital.

**Offline:**

- Calling him an "idiot"
- Criticizing his friends and trying to isolate him
- Accusing him of wanting to be with other girls
- Frequent yelling
- Throwing things
- Being suspicious of everything he does
- Displaying extreme jealousy over his yearbook photos

**Digital:**

- Misusing his passwords to log into his accounts, read his messages and delete his pictures
- Changing his social network status to say, "Malik is a jerk"
- Blocking certain people from his social networks
- Monitoring his friends list to delete anyone she didn't like
- Unfriending and blocking him from her Facebook page and messages
- Sending him constant text messages, demanding that he respond immediately and accusing him of cheating

2. Identify how Maya strategically uses digital abuse to attack Malik's self-esteem.
  - Makes him feel like he's incapable of making online decisions for himself
  - Repeatedly calls him "stupid" in his status updates
  - Uses social media to embarrass him in front of his friends
  - Convinces him that she has no choice but to teach him lessons

3. After the abuse, how does Maya justify her behavior and shift blame onto Malik? How do you think this approach affects Malik's ability to leave the relationship?

**Justifying behavior/shifting blame:**

- Continues to act like she knows better than he does
- Says she needed to teach him a lesson
- Makes it seem like what she did isn't a big deal because his photos are backed up
- Says she did it for their relationship
- Brings him a token of her love to remind him of how good they are together



**Affects Malik:**

- Makes him feel like she does know better
- Makes him feel like he needs her
- Calms his initial anger
- Normalizes the abusive behavior
- Reminds him of the good times
- Gives him hope that it won't happen again or things will change

4. Why doesn't Malik reach out for help? In addition to common reasons victims may not seek help, are there any cultural factors at play for Malik?

**Victimization:**

- Loves Maya and doesn't want to lose her
- May hope she will change
- May not know how to reach out
- Has been manipulated by Maya

**Cultural factors:**

- It's often much harder for males in heterosexual relationships to seek help or report abuse because people often think guys can't be abused by girls
- Because of this, there may be fewer local resources available to male victims/survivors

5. Are there any bystanders in "Malik's Story"? Remember that bystanders only have to suspect abuse, not always witness it. How does Maya use digitally abusive behaviors to isolate Malik from his friends and lessen the chance of them witnessing abuse?

**Bystanders:**

- Malik's friends who saw that he was spending less time with them
- Malik's friends who saw the faux status updates and/or were blocked online
- Malik's parents and/or teachers who may have recognized his isolation
- Any of Maya's friends who knew of her behavior

**Digital isolation:**

- Malik's friends may have thought he was rejecting them when Maya used his ID to refuse friend requests, block friends and delete messages and photos
- Malik's friends may have resented that their private messages were being viewed by Maya without their knowledge or consent
- If they did not know of the abuse, Malik's friends might have pulled away when they saw bizarre posts and status changes on his Facebook account

## TEACHER'S COPY

### 6. How could bystanders help?

- Try to show him how controlling Maya is and help him regain self-esteem
- Help him explain to friends that Malik is not rejecting them online and advise him to change his password
- Remind him that the abuse is not his fault and be there when he needs to talk
- Help him reach out to parents, teachers, counselors and/or victim advocates

# HANDOUT

## LOOKING AT MAYA AND MALIK

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your group to respond to the following questions.

1. Cite five examples of Maya's abuse of Malik. Make sure that at least three examples are digital.
2. Identify how Maya strategically uses digital abuse to attack Malik's self-esteem.
3. After the abuse, how does Maya justify her behavior and shift blame onto Malik? How do you think this approach affects Malik's ability to leave the relationship?
4. Why doesn't Malik reach out for help? Are there any cultural factors that may affect his ability to seek help?
5. Are there any bystanders in "Malik's Story"? How does Maya use digitally abusive behavior to isolate Malik from his friends and lessen the chance of them witnessing abuse?
6. How could bystanders help?

# HANDOUT

## THE 20 QUESTIONS



Shared or easily guessed passwords can be a serious threat, leading to someone hacking and or controlling online accounts. While 70% of polled students told WiredSafety that they share their passwords with their friends, others have passwords or secret questions based on facts many people know about them. Most passwords are created from this list. Is yours? How many of your friends know the answer to these? How hard will it be for them to guess your password? Too easy!

1. Favorite sports team
2. Favorite sports player
3. Favorite movie
4. Favorite book
5. Favorite band/singer
6. Favorite clothing store
7. Favorite color
8. Favorite animal
9. Favorite season
10. Where you go to school
11. College you want to attend
12. Year you graduate high school
13. Date of birth
14. Middle name
15. Best friend's name
16. Pet's name
17. Lucky number
18. Shoe size
19. Dream car
20. Dream job

# HANDOUT

## REPORTING DIGITAL ABUSE

Reporting digital abuse can be an important way to stop it, but if you are a bystander who wants to stop violence, you should always prioritize your own safety. If you are experiencing digital violence, you may want to talk to a trusted adult about how reporting can affect your safety. Fortunately, most reports to social networks are kept confidential, but be sure to check the terms of service.

### PHYSICAL THREATS

If you are being physically threatened and it won't put you in further danger, try to tell someone who can help like your parents, a favorite teacher or other trusted adult. You can also call the police. Make sure that any report to the online service provider includes a request that they retain all data for the police. Otherwise, when the post or profile is deleted, the evidence is often lost. Save a copy of everything, not just in printed form, but by clicking "save" on your browser and saving the email and text message live or taking a screenshot.

### SOCIAL NETWORKS

If you are being abused on a social network, you can report it to that network. Most social networks have a "report abuse" button or other reporting mechanism on their site. Take time to get to know the procedures on the social networks you use. Keep track of your communications with the network.

### STOP, BLOCK AND TELL!

- **Stop:** In many states, the victim must tell the person showing abusive behaviors to leave them alone and provide evidence of such communication to obtain a restraining order. If you decide to do this, it's best to have a safety plan in place.
- **Block:** Block the sender, message or account, so they can't continue to abuse you.
- **Tell:** Talk to a trusted adult and to the site or provider used in the digital abuse.

### GAMING SYSTEMS

Some console game systems also have built-in mechanisms for reporting abuse. A good example is Microsoft's Xbox 360. To learn more about how you can report abuse on Xbox Live, visit their code of conduct for US users at [www.xbox.com/en-US/legal/codeofconduct.htm](http://www.xbox.com/en-US/legal/codeofconduct.htm).

### EMAIL AND IM

If you receive an abusive, threatening or unwanted sexual email or IM, you can try to report the person responsible to their email, IM or Internet service provider. If the actions violate the terms of the provider, the person

# HANDOUT

showing abusive behaviors may lose the account or have it suspended. Start by exploring the provider's "terms of service" (TOS) or "terms of use section." Read the policy carefully and make notes about which sections you believe were violated and how. Copy and paste the section that applies to the communication you are reporting.

In the majority of cases, provider websites post an email address for sending violation reports. If they don't, you can usually use "abuse@[name\_of\_ISP\_goes\_here] or tos@[ISP\_name] to make the report. Copy yourself on the email. It's important that you have a permanent record of what you sent and where and when you sent it.

Like social networks, many providers have a "report abuse" button you can click. Save a copy of whatever you send. Be aware that networks don't always respond to the first communication due to privacy and legal considerations and the need to prioritize reports. Additionally, sometimes people who abuse pose as victims in an attempt to get the network to unknowingly assist in the harassment.

Often, the evidence provided has been made up or enhanced to look more serious than it actually is. If you have real evidence, it's critical that you do not alter it in any way. Marking your report with the kind of abuse you are reporting (e.g., digital dating abuse, sexual predator, suicide threat) will help them act more quickly.

## IMPROVING YOUR CHANCES OF NETWORK/PROVIDER ACTION

All reports should follow the rules that the network or provider set out in their directions. Double check to make sure you included all the information they request. Most ISPs require the following information to be provided, at minimum:

- **Date and time of the violations of their TOS:** Keep each violation separate in the report include your time zone.
- **Copies of violations:** For emails, the "help" instructions in your email application may walk you through the steps. For IMs or social networking, use the full and correct URL of the profile, website, forum, newsgroup or bulletin board postings.
- **Screen shots of offending IMs and profiles:** Save these to your computer since the profile or post may change and you will need proof of what used to appear.
- **A timeline:** List each incident you recall from the earliest to the latest, including copies of all communications. Refer to any notes you took as things progressed.

# HANDOUT

- **Any steps you took to deal with the abuse before reporting it to them:** Remember stop, block and tell if you used it and explain in detail how you took each step.

Be polite but firm. Don't make false accusations. Be sure to follow up in a few days if you have not received anything but an automatic response and the abusive situation is continuing. Check first to see if the network shut down the offending account.

Be firm and consistent when you follow-up. Remind them of the previous report or email or resend it marked as "resent on [fill in the date]." Always copy yourself on these reports for your own records. Do not copy help groups, the FBI or others on the correspondence. Be focused and clear in your communication.

You can find more information on digital dating abuse at [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org), where you can also reach out confidentially to peer advocates **24/7** by:

- calling **1-866-331-9474**
- texting "**loveis**" to **22522**
- clicking on the **live chat icon**

## HANDOUT

# REACHING OUT TO A FRIEND WHO IS BEING ABUSIVE



- Do not confront the person showing abusive behaviors during an act of physical violence; it could be dangerous for you and the victim. It is better to call the police or get help from an adult.
- Talk to the person in private. Make it clear that you know about the abuse and are concerned. Explain that you are still the person's friend but that you don't like it when they are abusive to their partner.
- Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let them know that you are available to listen or help any time.
- People who abuse often use excuses to justify their abusive behavior. Possible excuses include: It's not really abuse; I didn't mean to hurt her/him; It was one time and it'll never happen again; It's her/his fault; I only did it because I was stressed out/drunk/high. Do not accept excuses for the abuse. Say clearly that abuse is never acceptable.
- Do not go back and forth between the couple to help them work things out.
- Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help them talk to a family member, a teacher or staff person at school, a mentor, a leader at their place of worship or a counselor. If you know of or suspect abuse at home, do not recommend that they reach out to a family member.
- Be a good example for your friend by treating other people with respect.
- When you see your friend treat their partner with respect, acknowledge and praise the good behavior.
- Think about how your own attitudes and behaviors might contribute to abuse.
- Discourage abusive behavior by calling out language that promotes abusive attitudes and behaviors, such as degrading or sexist jokes and put-downs.
- Try to start a discussion with your group of friends about music you like that promotes abusive attitudes and behaviors. Ask them questions such as: Have you ever really thought about these lyrics? What do you think about them? Do you think it's ok to keep listening to it if we don't like the message?



# HANDOUT

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the suggestions above, write a scene where you talk to Maya or Richard from Lesson 1 about their abusive behavior. It should be at least one page and contain plenty of dialogue from both you and the person showing abusive behaviors. Remember the tactics people who abuse use to manipulate, justify and shift blame.

# HANDOUT

## TECH TIPS FOR PARENTS

### WHAT TEENS ARE USING

#### Internet

- Facebook (FB): Social networking service where comments, links, images and videos can be shared; most popular site among teens
- Twitter: Social networking service with written posts limited to 140 characters
- Instagram: Social networking service with photo-sharing and video-sharing
- Pinterest: Pin-board style photo-sharing site (like an interactive bulletin board)
- Blogs: Interactive journal (sites like Tumblr, Blogger, Blogspot, Wordpress)

#### Cell phones

- Apps: Ways to use a cell phone to access the sites above, play games, and virtually check in to physical locations; Foursquare is popular for check-ins
- Text Messaging: Instant written communication

### A FEW BENEFITS OF TEEN TECH USE

**Using Tech for Change:** Spread information about social change movements, share petitions and plan events; Tumblr, Facebook and Twitter are used the most

**Connecting Globally:** Link to other young people all over the world and keep up with current events in other places

**Accessing Resources:** Connect to important resources such as Loveisrespect, where teens can get information about dating violence

**Enhancing Academics:** Play games that improve cognitive functions, research anything and work with others on school assignments

### DIGITAL DATING ABUSE

**Definition:** The use of technology to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner; verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online

**Examples:** Monitoring through social media, webcams and GPS; humiliating, insulting or threatening in status updates, emails, texts; controlling communication on social networking sites; stealing or demanding passwords; checking phone log and messages

**What to Do:** Start by preserving evidence--save emails, texts and screenshots of abusive material

# HANDOUT

## SAFETY CONCERNS

**Privacy Settings:** On social media, any aspect of a profile or the overall profile can be private or public. Each site has its own procedures for changing privacy settings

**Facebook Guide for Survivor's of Abuse:** [https://fbcdn-dragon-a.akamaihd.net/hphotos-ak-prn1/851584\\_613437522011141\\_1298974833\\_n.pdf](https://fbcdn-dragon-a.akamaihd.net/hphotos-ak-prn1/851584_613437522011141_1298974833_n.pdf)

**Spyware and Webcam Hacking:** Use browser preferences for a strong firewall and keep applications up to date. Put a sticker over webcams when not in use

**Cell Phone GPS:** To check for unauthorized tracking, look for the flashing satellite icon or programs that run automatically when the phone starts. Watch for a decrease in battery life

## TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT TECH

### Conversation Tips

- Start the conversation early. As soon as young people start using these devices and services, you should be talking about them.
- Learn your way around the technology. Understanding what your teen is using can bring you closer to them and make it less scary for you.
- Don't act as though technology is the enemy. Don't focus on the negative and make the conversation about frightening, judging or criticizing your teen. Try to find balance. Even discussions about safety can be positive and non-judgmental by focusing on the ways teens can do all the things they love through tech and still stay safe.

### Conversation Starters

- If you aren't familiar with the technology your teen is using, ask them to show you how things work.
- Ask them to tell you about the things they are able to do through technology. Make it a fun conversation as they show and describe to you that part of their life.
- Ask about their favorite site and what they enjoy using it for.

### Problems with Ultimatums and Restricting Usage

- They will find other ways to use it so that you won't find out and then you won't be there to help them.
- They won't feel comfortable opening up to you about any problems they may be dealing with particularly related to technology.
- They will feel like they are being punished for their partner's abusive behavior.

# POSTERS/PALM CARDS/ETC

Visit [www.loveisrespect.org/download-materials](http://www.loveisrespect.org/download-materials) to download artwork for our resources such as palm cards, posters and handouts.



## Am I a Good Boy/Girlfriend? Quiz love is respect V org

Are you a good boyfriend or girlfriend? Answer yes or no to the following questions to find out. Make sure to check the boxes to record your responses. At the end, you'll find out how to score your answers.

### Do I

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Forget to thank my partner when they do something nice for me?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Ignore my partner's calls if I don't feel like talking?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Get jealous when my partner makes a new friend?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Have trouble making time to listen to my partner when something is bothering them?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Discourage my partner from trying something new like joining a club?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. Call, text or drive by my partner's house a lot?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. Get upset when my partner wants to hang out with their friends or family?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. Make fun of my partner or call them names?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 9. Criticize my partner for their taste in music or clothing?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 10. Make fun of my partner's appearance?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11. Accuse my partner of flirting or cheating even if I'm not sure that's what happened?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12. Take out my frustrations on my partner, like snapping at them or giving them attitude?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 13. Throw things if I'm mad at my partner or do things like hit walls or drive dangerously?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 14. Read my partner's texts or go through their personal things, like their wallet or purse?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 15. Tell my partner they are the reason for my bad mood even if they aren't?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 16. Try to make my partner feel guilty about things they have no control over?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 17. Sometimes say things to my partner knowing that they are hurtful?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18. Make my partner feel bad about something nice they did for me that I didn't like, even though I know they tried their best? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 19. Talk down to or embarrass my partner in front of others?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 20. Have sex with my partner even if I think they don't want to go that far?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

connect now!

chat at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

text "loveis" to 22522

call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options anonymously. Peer advocates are available 24/7.

For more information, visit [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged. Please contact Break the Cycle or the National Dating Abuse Helpline for more information.

**DATING ABUSE AFFECTS 1 IN 3 YOUNG PEOPLE**

You deserve a safe and healthy relationship. Visit [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

connect now!

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A collaboration between Break the Cycle and the National Dating Abuse Helpline

**LOVEISNOTABUSE.COM**

**NO MORE**  
TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT