

What Parents Can Do About Teen Dating Violence

Parents should start talking to their children about healthy relationships well before they start dating.

Provide children with examples of healthy relationships in your own life.

Point out healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors on television, in movies, and music, and use that as an opportunity to talk with your child about what is appropriate and what is not.

It is never too early to teach self-respect. Let your child know no one has the right to insult, control, or hit another.

Encourage your child to come to you. Take the time to talk with your child whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Be open, understanding, and non-judgmental. Listen to your child, and refrain from lecturing.

Ask your teen questions to encourage conversations about healthy relationships and awareness of dating violence, such as:

- What makes a healthy relationship?
- What do you want in a relationship?
- What are the relationships like at school or among friends?
- Have you seen any acts of violence?
- Do you know anyone who uses social media/texts to insult or control any of your friends?
- What would you do if you witnessed or experienced dating violence?
- How could you help someone in an abusive relationship?

If you suspect your teen is the victim of dating violence, make sure he/she knows you are there to help. Express your concern— keep the focus on your child, not the abuser. Be clear that you do not blame your teen, and that you are, and always will be, there to provide love and support. When parents are involved, it is more likely the abused teen will break up with the abuser. Help your teen develop a safety plan.

Get advice and resources and develop a safety plan from a domestic violence agency.

Where To Go For Help:

- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- 24-Hour Statewide Hotline
- 1-800-33-HAVEN (That's 800-334-2836)

Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline and our partners at Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

