



## [ TEENS TALKING TO TEENS WHO ARE ABUSIVE ]

- Tell your friend that violence is NOT okay or cool; it's a sign that the person has a problem and needs help.
- Offer to go for help with him.
- Be honest with your friend and let him know:
  - Dating violence is serious.
  - It is not right that he emotionally, psychologically, physically or sexually control his dating partner.
  - You do not want him to get into trouble with school authorities or the police.
  - You encourage him to change his behavior before this happens.
- Treat your friends and dating partners with respect. Be a role model.
- Give him examples of the abusive/controlling behaviors you have observed.
- Reiterate that his behavior is his choice. Emphasize that his dating partner does not need to change in order for him to stop his abusive behavior. If the relationship is not working for him, he has the right to end it respectfully, not change/control it by using abuse. The violence ends only when he chooses to stop his violent and emotionally abusive behaviors. While you acknowledge that this kind of change is not easy and that he can't do it alone, remind him that he has alternatives.
- DO NOT make excuses for your friend's abusive actions. Protecting him will do more harm than good. The abuser is counting on you to support his choices or not say anything at all. By ignoring his behavior, you become part of the reason he is allowed to continue abusing his dating partner, you send a strong message to the victim that there are few people, if any, willing to help her, and she becomes more isolated and less likely to be able to escape the abuse.
- DO NOT let the conversation turn to a discussion of her faults. No matter what his partner has done, she does not deserve to be beaten, kicked, pinched, shoved, intimidated, or abused in any way.
- If you witness an incident of dating violence, try to get immediate help. Call 911 and report it to the local police department.

**NOTE:** Both females and males can be victims of dating violence, but numerous studies reveal the reality that the majority of victims are female (usually over 95%). In this package we often, but not always, refer to victims as female and abusers as male. That reference does not change the fact that every survivor—male and female—deserves support, options, resources and safety, and that denying the reality only delays finding the solution.

*Data compiled by and reprinted from: The Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline, Hawaii and the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence "Resource Guide for Educators"*

If you or someone you know is being hurt in a dating relationship, please call (800) 799-SAFE or TDD (800) 787-3224 to be referred to the domestic violence program in your area.



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