

Parents Can Help Prevent Teen Dating Abuse

One in three teens reports abuse in their dating years. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or mental. Starting in the childhood years, parents can play an active part in preventing abuse. Data suggests that how a parent raises a child from the early years can affect teen dating experiences.

Children copy what is around them. If they are taught abuse, then abuse will be normal for them. If a parent hits or insults a child or another parent, then a child will learn abusive ways. Parents can teach children how to solve problems without hitting, putting down, threatening, or shouting. Parents can help a child to develop a healthy and respectful outlook when they:

- Speak in a clear and calm tone.
- Consider the child's point of view and unique needs.
- Teach the joy of life.
- Go along with or celebrate a child's ideas.
- Give love and kindness every day.
- Laugh often with the child.
- Discourage watching violent television and movies.

Parents who are living with abuse can seek counseling. If a child sees abuse at home or on television, speak with the child on his or her level about the sadness of violence. Discuss with teens how violence negatively affects them and others they care about. By the time a teen is dating, respect and the right to say "no" should be understood.

For you and your child, always feel free to contact your local domestic violence shelter for counseling and other support options.

If you are worried about your safety and you need to talk, please call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.ndvh.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

1-866-331-9474

1-866-331-8453 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.loveisrespect.org