

Caring

Respect

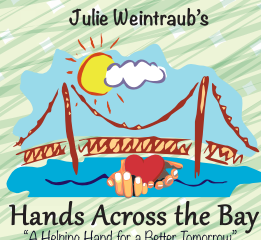
Trust

Breaking the Cycle

of teen dating abuse
2018



Tampa Bay
**Times
NIE**
newspaper in education
tampabay.com/nie



Melissa Dohme Hill: Sur-Thriver



On Jan. 24, 2012, I found myself in a hospital, surrounded by family, covered in bandages, connected to machines, with tubes down my throat, praying and thanking God for saving my life. Hours before this moment I was lying alone in the road outside my home, covered in blood, taking what I thought would be my last breath.

I had just been viciously attacked, beaten and stabbed 32 times.

I remember the exact moment I met Robert. He was a charming, sweet and funny guy. We attended Clearwater High

School and quickly sparked a friendship. Our friendship blossomed into a relationship and we fell in love. As I prepared for my high school graduation, things began to change. Robert became extremely jealous, controlling and short-tempered.

I was going through verbal and emotional abuse throughout our two-year relationship without understanding it was abuse. The abuse turned physical in the last few months. Robert would tell me if I was to leave or tell anyone about the abuse, he would kill me, my family and himself. He began attempting suicide to scare me but would stop and threaten me with weapons to prove he was serious. I felt trapped.

One night, I had the opportunity, courage and strength to run away and call the police. Robert was arrested for domestic battery. I felt my shackles of shame and fear release. After three months, Robert began calling me repeatedly in the middle of the night. He had one request — a hug.

He was crying and told me after all we have been through, we needed closure to move on after the terrible end to our relationship. My gut was screaming no, but I ignored my intuition and walked outside. I was immediately ambushed. He had a switchblade.

The result was 19 stabs to my head, neck and face, and 13 stabs to my hands and arms in my attempt to defend myself. Two teens nearby heard me screaming, attempted to intervene and called 911. Once Robert believed he succeeded in taking my life, he drove away and attempted suicide.



We were both saved that night, and he is now serving a life sentence in prison with no chance of parole. I was airlifted to the hospital, where Dr. Jeff Johnson and his team saved my life. I flat-lined four times, received 12 units of blood, suffered a stroke in my cerebellum, had a fractured skull and nose, lost two teeth and had right facial

paralysis and a stabbed larynx. The doctors say it is a miracle I am still alive today.

Through my faith I learned to accept, forgive and move on. I realized I was given a voice for those who are too afraid to speak or no longer have the chance because their abuser succeeded in taking their life. I was saved to educate teenagers of the dangers of dating violence.

That is why I am completely overjoyed that you have the publication *Breaking the Cycle of Teen Dating Abuse* in your hands. This tool could have saved and changed my whole life.

When I was in high school, no one spoke about teen dating violence. If I knew I could have anonymously texted LOVEIS to 22522 to connect with an advocate for help or advice (this is a loveisrespect.org resource), if I knew resources surrounded me, if I knew I wasn't alone, if someone just told me these things, I firmly believe I would have never gone through what I did.

Following that horrific night, I felt the conviction to speak out, become an advocate and create change. I now proudly work as a domestic violence prevention advocate and speaker for a local nonprofit organization, Julie Weintraub's Hands Across the Bay. Every day I walk into work, talk to a survivor or step on a stage, I feel I am fulfilling my life purpose: why I was saved that horrific night. Together, I know we can end this violence that is currently wreaking havoc across the world. If you want to stay connected, please follow @HandsAcrossTB on social media.



Melissa Dohme Hill, 26, lives in Clearwater. She has been featured in national and international publications and on television shows, including: *People* magazine, *48 Hours: Live to Tell*, *20/20 In an Instant*, *Inside Edition*, *Today*, and *Nancy Grace*. In recognition of her effective advocacy in the community, Hill has been awarded CASA's 2013 Victory Over Violence award, WEDU's 2016 Be More Outspoken: Voice of Tampa Bay Award, the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force's 2016 Outstanding Achievement in Preventing Domestic Violence Award, and the 2017 Award of Appreciation from OneBlood. Hill works for a Tampa Bay nonprofit organization, Hands Across the Bay, as a domestic violence prevention advocate and speaker. Teachers, principals and community groups can request Hill to speak to their schools and organizations. Go to handsacrossthebay.org/Contact-Us/Speaker-Request, and fill out the online request form.

Dating violence: a serious issue

Dating violence is a serious problem in the United States. Often, teen dating violence goes unreported for many reasons, including a teen's fear of further abuse and embarrassment.

- One in four adolescents reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year.
- Among high school students who dated, 21 percent of females and 10 percent of males experienced physical and/or sexual dating violence.
- Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 22 percent of women and 15 percent of men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.

Dating violence has substantial negative effects on the mental and physical health of young people, as well as on their school performance. Violence in an adolescent relationship sets the stage for problems in future relationships.

Sources: Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; JAMA Pediatrics



Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Dating violence often starts with teasing and name calling. These behaviors are often thought to be a normal part of a relationship. But

THINK about it!

these behaviors can set the stage for more serious violence, like physical assault and rape.

In a nationwide CDC survey, 9.4 percent of high school students reported being hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months prior to the survey. Approximately one in 14 women in the U.S. was a victim of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in her lifetime, and first experienced these or other forms of violence by that partner before age 18.

Victims of teen dating violence are more likely to do poorly in school, and report binge drinking, suicide attempts and physical fighting. Victims may also carry the patterns of violence into future relationships.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention

Taking action

Oftentimes, adolescents in abusive relationships feel alone and isolated. You can help. Talking to a friend dealing with relationship violence can make an enormous difference to her or him. She or he is probably feeling very isolated and alone. Let your friend know that he or she can trust you to listen and not be judgmental.

Going beyond the text

Sensationalism and violence

Violence is a serious issue. On any given day, the newspaper is filled with articles about violence. No matter where you live, there seems to be an increase in violence involving teenagers. Look in the *Tampa Bay Times* for two or three articles on teen violence (domestic violence, bullying, gang). Write down the main idea or thesis of each article. Write a one-page essay discussing the issues presented in the articles. Also include some possible suggestions to avoid the violence noted in the article. Be sure to use specific examples from the articles to support your ideas. Share what you have learned with your classmates.

Hands Across the Bay

Founded in 2010 by philanthropist and business owner Julie Weintraub, Hands Across the Bay has a simple purpose: "A Helping Hand for a Better Tomorrow."

Weintraub developed the nonprofit organization to positively impact the lives of Tampa Bay residents. The mission of the organization is to assist and mentor hardworking families in need, advocate for change, support other organizations and spread love with various acts of kindness. Through Hands Across the Bay's work, Weintraub hopes to inspire our community to become more compassionate, empathetic and charitable.

Hands Across the Bay takes the unique approach of identifying the circumstances surrounding a crisis in order to best serve families. The team strives to be creative in utilizing their resources and partnerships in an effort to sufficiently assist families in getting back to the road of independence. The families they assist are those who they believe need a helping hand and honestly desire transformation for their lives.

The organization's Domestic Violence Division was developed due to the increasing level of domestic violence in the Tampa Bay community. The team members are devoted to speaking throughout the community to educate, inspire and raise awareness. Presenting the facts about teen dating and domestic violence along with sharing personal experiences lies at the core of their presentations.

The Hand Across the Bay office is located in the Gold & Diamond Source store, located at 3800 Ulmerton Road in Clearwater. To learn more about the organization and request a dating violence

presentation, go to handsacrossthebay.org or call 727-573-7720.

You also can like Hands Across the Bay on Facebook or follow them on Twitter and Instagram @HandsAcrossTB.



Hands Across the Bay
"A Helping Hand for a Better Tomorrow"



This publication was originally produced in partnership with the Verizon Foundation and ABC Action News and funded through the generosity of the Verizon Foundation.

Dating relationships

Relationships exist on a spectrum. In other words, relationships can range from healthy to unhealthy to abusive, and everywhere in between. People are not the same, and how they interact with others, particularly in an intimate relationship, will vary. It can be difficult to determine where your relationship falls, especially if you haven't dated a lot.

Signs of a healthy relationship:

- Your partner respects you and your individuality.
- You are both open and honest.
- Your partner supports you and your choices even when he or she disagrees with you.
- Your partner understands that you need to study or hang out with friends or family.
- You can communicate your feelings without being afraid of negative consequences.
- Both of you feel safe being open and honest.
- A good partner is not excessively jealous and does not make you feel guilty when you spend time with family and friends.
- A good partner compliments you, encourages you to achieve your goals and does not resent your accomplishments.

Myth: Men cannot be victims of domestic violence.

Fact: Recent studies show that while 85 percent of domestic violence victims are women, 15 percent are men. Thirty percent of women killed are killed by an intimate partner; 4 percent of men are killed by an intimate partner. Men are victimized in much the same way women are. Physical size and strength is not a prerequisite for being a batterer — women can batter, too. Both men and women also can be victims of domestic violence in same-sex relationships.

Signs of an unhealthy relationship:

- Your partner is inconsiderate, disrespectful or distrustful.
- Your partner doesn't communicate his or her feelings.
- Your partner tries to emotionally or financially control you.
- Your partner keeps you from getting a job, gets you fired or prevents you from participating in after-school activities and clubs.
- Your partner humiliates you on social media or in front of your friends.

- Your partner makes threats to out you to your family.
- Your partner forces you to do things you would not normally do.

Source: loveisrespect.org

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline

800-500-1119
TTY: 800-621-4202
fcadv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE (7233)
800-787-3224
loveisrespect.org

Abusers may use different tactics to have power or control over their partner, including:

- Intimidation
- Threats
- Isolating a person from friends or family
- Emotional and verbal abuse
- Cyberstalking
- Abuse via social networking
- Bullying

All relationships are unique. Not all abusive relationships involve the same types of unhealthy behaviors, and the frequency and severity of the violence may also be different.

Source: *Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

Warning Signs of Abuse

Does your partner

- Check your cell phone or email without permission?
- Constantly put you down or call you names?
- Display extreme jealousy or insecurity?
- Have an explosive temper?
- Isolate you from family or friends?
- Make false accusations?
- Display erratic mood swings?
- Physically hurt you in any way?
- Display possessiveness?
- Tell you what to do?

Source: loveisrespect.org

WARNING

SIGNS

OF AN ABUSIVE PERSON

- Is extremely jealous
- Isolates partner from support systems – friends, family or outside activities
- Attempts to control what partner wears and does
- Is abusive toward other people
- Blames others for his or her own misbehavior or failures
- Abuses drugs or alcohol
- Is overly sensitive when not getting his or her way or if others disagree with an opinion
- Has ever been cruel to animals or children
- Has ever threatened violence
- Calls partner or parents names, puts others down or curses at others
- Uses threatening body language, punching walls or breaking objects



Source: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.; Sunrise of Pasco County

THINK
about it!

Is your relationship unhealthy? Drawing the line between unhealthy and abusive can be difficult. If you think your relationship is going in

the wrong direction, you should follow your gut feeling. Remember, there are many types of abuse, and while you may think some types are normal, they are not. Even though teen relationships may be different from adult ones, young people do experience the same types of physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse that adults do. If there is violence happening in your relationship, you need to take it seriously.

If you think you are in an abusive relationship, you're probably feeling confused about what to do. You may fear what your partner will do if you leave or how your friends and family will react when you tell them. You also may think that the police and other adults won't take you seriously. These are all understandable reasons to feel nervous about leaving your partner, but staying in the abusive relationship isn't your only option.

Source: loveisrespect.org

Taking action

If you are in an abusive relationship, seek help. Talk to a trusted adult — a counselor, coach, teacher or relative. Or, you can call the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 866-331-9474 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE.



Dating abuse statistics

— from Love is Respect

- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.
- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
- One in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- One quarter of high school girls have been victims of physical or sexual abuse.
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average.
- Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18.
- Only 33 percent of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.
- Eighty-one percent of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.
- A teen's confusion about the law and their desire for confidentiality are two of the most significant barriers stopping young victims of abuse from seeking help.

Going beyond the text

Being courageous

Dating violence is a form of bullying. Bullying and violence are not just part of growing up. Abuse by another person leads to pain, shame and possible serious injury. It takes courage to stand up to a bully, especially if you are dating that person. There are many articles in the news about negative behavior, but the newspaper is also filled with courageous actions. We hear a lot about police officers, firefighters and soldiers doing brave things. But many other people demonstrate courage every day. Look in the *Tampa Bay Times* for a story about a person demonstrating courage. In a fully developed paragraph, summarize the story and explain why you think the people involved are being courageous. Be sure to include the who, what, where, when, why and how facts of the article, and include specific examples that you can share with your class.

Violence is a choice

“Violence is anything that denies human integrity and leads to hopelessness and helplessness.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King

At the individual level, violence exists when one person with power attempts to exert their power or control over another person that may not have as much power.

Violence may include physical, verbal or emotional abuse. This may lead to the survivor(s) of the violence feeling hopeless or helpless. However, violence is never the survivor’s fault. Violence is a choice.

LEGAL DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, FLORIDA STATE STATUTE 741.28

Any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another who is or was residing in the same single dwelling unit.



True or False

1. One in 10 adolescents reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year.

Answer: False. One in three adolescents reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year. Dating violence is a prevalent issue that affects a large number of teens regardless of socioeconomics, race, ethnicity or other factors.

Myth: Using alcohol or drugs is a cause of dating violence.

Fact: Alcohol or other drugs are usually an excuse used to justify the abuser’s use of violence. The cause of dating violence is the abuser making the choice to engage in this behavior. Substance abuse and dating violence are two different issues that need to be addressed separately.

Source: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention & Treatment Board

Answer: False. Each year, women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes. Men are the survivors of about 2.9 million intimate partner-related physical assaults.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the “Tween and Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study” conducted by Liz Claiborne Inc.

2. Among 11-14 year olds in relationships, 62 percent say they know friends who have been verbally abused (called stupid, worthless) by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Answer: True. Abusive relationships often involve more than physical violence. Verbal abuse also may be a part of abusive relationships. Verbal abuse can be as harmful as physical abuse and can leave lasting scars.

Taking action

Are you concerned that your friend is being abusive in his or her relationship? It can be helpful to talk to an adult, either with your friend or by yourself if he or she doesn't admit the problem or refuses to go with you. Make a list of local resources that you can share with your friend, so he or she can seek help.

3. Each year, women experience about 2 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes. Men are the survivors of about 750,000 intimate partner-related physical assaults.



Dating violence is a type of intimate partner violence. Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online. Dating violence often starts with teasing and name calling. These behaviors are often thought to be a normal part of a relationship. But these behaviors can lead to more serious violence. Dating violence is a serious problem in the United States. Many teens do not report it because they are afraid to tell friends and family.

Falling into a trap

People who have never been abused often wonder why a person would stay in an abusive relationship. There are many reasons why both men and women stay in abusive relationships.

- Fear
- Believing abuse is normal
- Lack of money
- Fear of being outed
- Embarrassment
- Social or peer pressure
- Low self-esteem
- Cultural or religious reasons
- Love
- Distrust of adults or law enforcement



Question relationships with partners who ...

- Make you nervous about how they may respond or react in certain situations
- Have a history of trouble with the law or getting into fights
- Blame you for how they treat you, or for anything bad that happens
- Put down people, including your family and friends, or call them names
- Try to isolate you and control who you see, where you go, how you dress or how you act
- Expect you or force you to be sexual when you don't want to be or when you have already said no
- Are physically rough with you (push, shove, pull, yank, squeeze, restrain)
- Take your money or take advantage of you financially in other ways
- Accuse you of flirting or "coming on" to others or accuse you of cheating on them
- Don't listen to you or show interest in your opinions/feelings or say things always have to be their way
- Tell you to shut up or tell you you're dumb, stupid, or fat, or call you some other name

Source: Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Being a good friend

Oftentimes, people stay in abusive relationships hoping that their abuser will change. Think about it — if a person you love tells you he or she will change, you want to believe that person. Your friend may only want the violence to stop, not for the relationship to end entirely.

If you have a friend in an unhealthy relationship, support him or her by understanding why he or she may choose to not leave immediately. If you have friends or family members who are in unhealthy or abusive relationships, the most important thing you can do is be supportive and listen to them.

Understand that leaving an unhealthy or abusive relationship is never easy. Try to let your friend know that he or she has options.

Source: Love is respect

Do you have a friend in an abusive relationship?

- Remain supportive.

- Give your friend the hotline numbers: 813-247-SAFE or 800-500-1119.
- Do not blame the victim for the abuse. Let your friend know that it is not his or her fault. No one deserves to be abused.
- Gather information about warning signs and relationship violence, as well as a list of services to help.
- Let your friend know he or she is not alone. One in four women and one in 10 men are victims of relationship violence.
- Encourage your friend to tell a parent or teacher.
- Encourage your friend to focus on his or her safety while in the relationship, or leaving it.
- Understand that the abuser may become suspicious of your help, so it's important to create a safe system of communication.
- Be patient and realize that fear, power and control in a relationship make it difficult to leave.

Source: The Spring of Tampa Bay

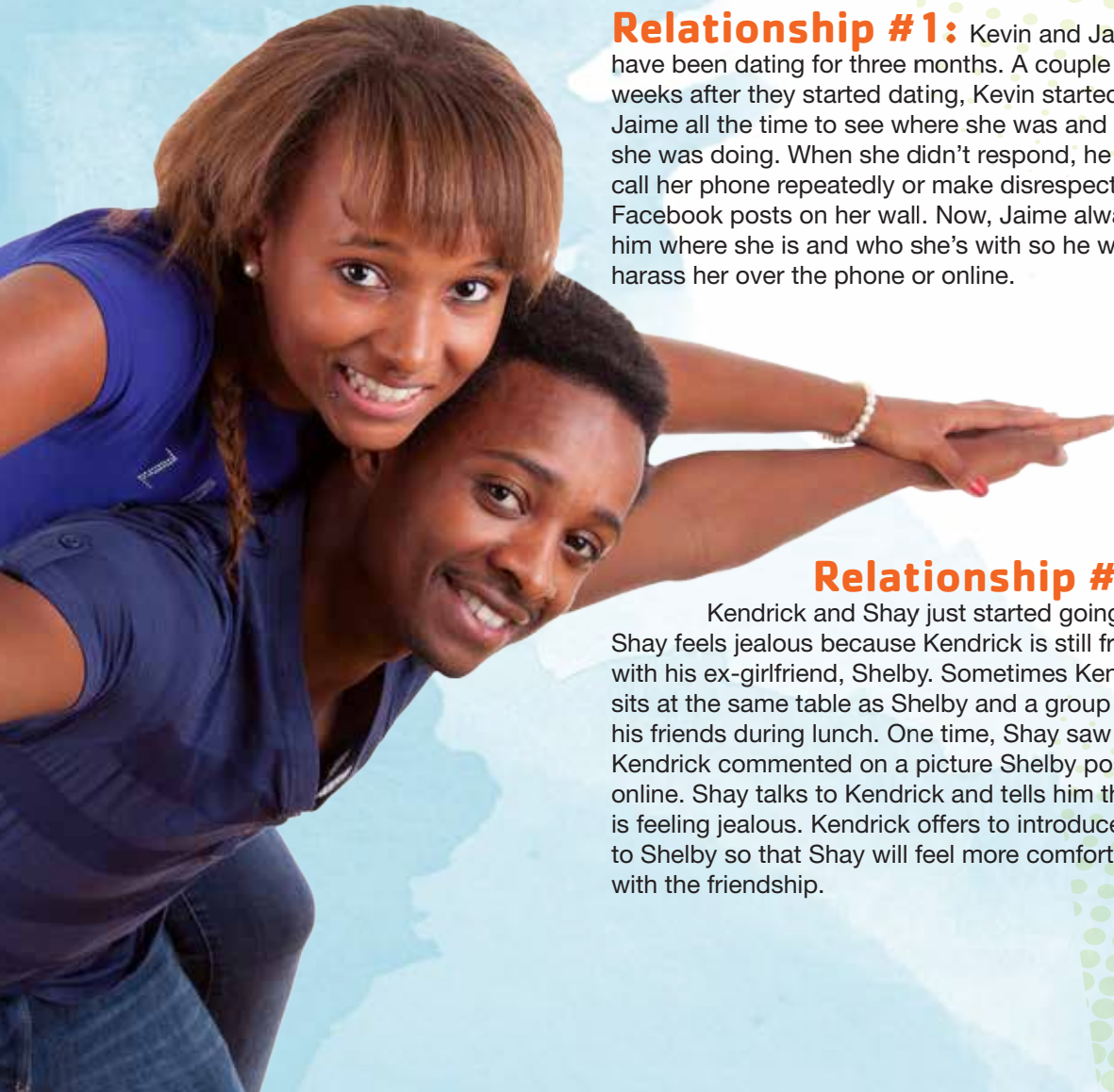
Going beyond the text

Bystander phenomenon

A bystander is a person who sees a dangerous or unsafe situation. Many times that person stands back and does not call for help or stop the situation because of fear, intimidation or a feeling of helplessness. Research shows that educating and engaging bystanders is an effective way to help prevent the widespread problem of sexual violence and abuse within communities. Does silence hurt? Think about events in history that may have been prevented or their impact lessened if people had spoken up and did not close their doors against violence or bullying. Research this issue in your local library or school media center. Look for articles in the *Tampa Bay Times* depicting incidents or crimes that could have been prevented if someone stood up to help. Write a research paper focusing on this issue in historical and modern times. Be sure to document your sources. Share what you have learned with your class.

“All violence, all that is dreary and repels, is not power, but the absence of power.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, author and philosopher



Activity

Read through these scenarios by yourself and decide where they fit on the Power and Control wheel on the next page.

Write down your thoughts. With a small group of students, discuss your thoughts about the scenarios and the wheels.

Write a brief paragraph for each scenario and present your thoughts to the rest of the class.

Relationship #1: Kevin and Jaime have been dating for three months. A couple of weeks after they started dating, Kevin started texting Jaime all the time to see where she was and what she was doing. When she didn't respond, he would call her phone repeatedly or make disrespectful Facebook posts on her wall. Now, Jaime always tells him where she is and who she's with so he won't harass her over the phone or online.

Relationship #2:

Kendrick and Shay just started going out. Shay feels jealous because Kendrick is still friends with his ex-girlfriend, Shelby. Sometimes Kendrick sits at the same table as Shelby and a group of his friends during lunch. One time, Shay saw that Kendrick commented on a picture Shelby posted online. Shay talks to Kendrick and tells him that she is feeling jealous. Kendrick offers to introduce Shay to Shelby so that Shay will feel more comfortable with the friendship.

Relationship #3: Maria and Dante have been dating for six months and are in love. They spend almost all of their time together. Dante used to play ball with his friends once a week. But since he started dating Maria, he sees his friends less. Whenever he tries to make plans with them, Maria gets upset and tells him how much she loves him and misses him when he hangs out with his friends. She says they have more fun when it's just the two of them and if he loves her he'll cancel the plans. Dante feels guilty, so he continues to cancel on his friends. He misses them, but he's worried that he'll make Maria upset again if he tries to hang out with them.

Relationship #4: Chris and Jessica started talking a couple of weeks ago. Jessica is really into Chris because he's cute and popular. Jessica has never been a part of the popular group at school, but now that she's with Chris everyone knows who she is and wants to talk to her. Last night, she and Chris got into a fight because she was talking to Ryan, a long-time friend, in the hallway at school. Chris told Jessica it was wrong and disrespectful to talk to other guys. Chris said if Jessica doesn't end her friendship with Ryan, he will break up with her and none of his popular friends will talk to her anymore. Jessica feels trapped. Either way, she'll lose someone.

Relationship #5: Lavonya and Josh are at a party together. They've been dating for a few months, but they haven't done anything physical yet. Josh keeps pressuring Lavonya to do stuff, but she doesn't want to. Tonight, Josh has been drinking. He is pressuring Lavonya even more than usual and grabs her wrists. He says if she loves him, she'll give it up. Lavonya is scared.

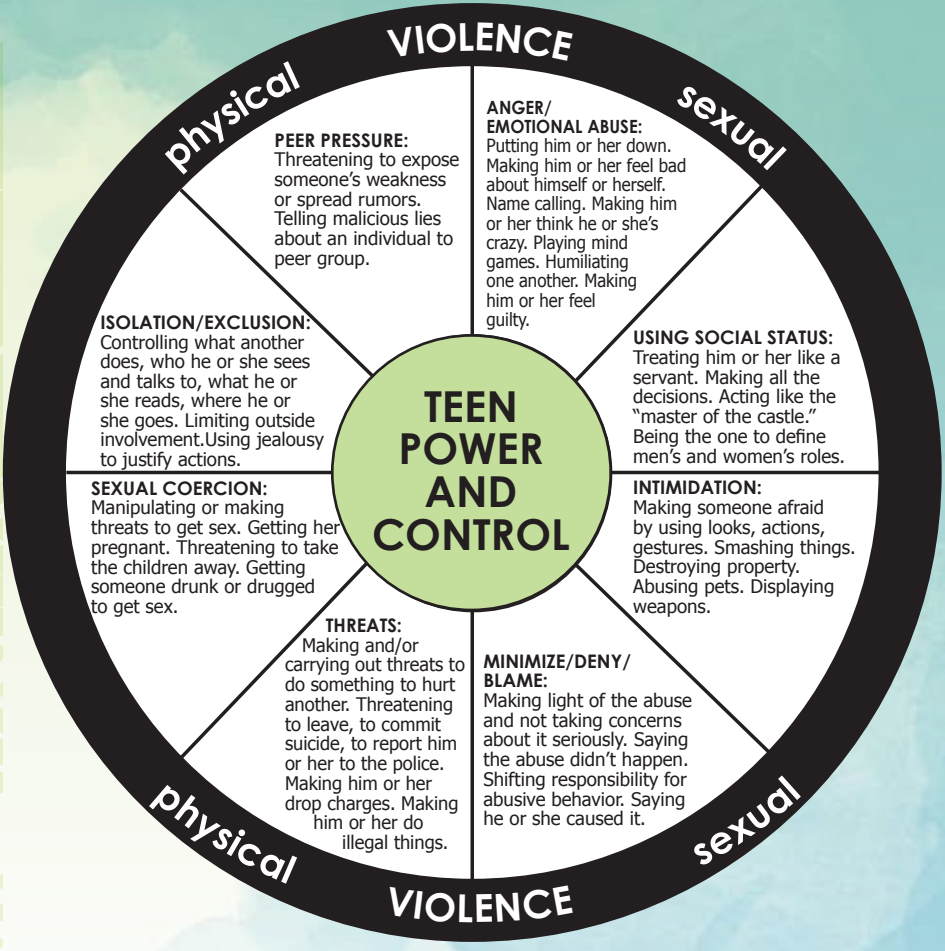
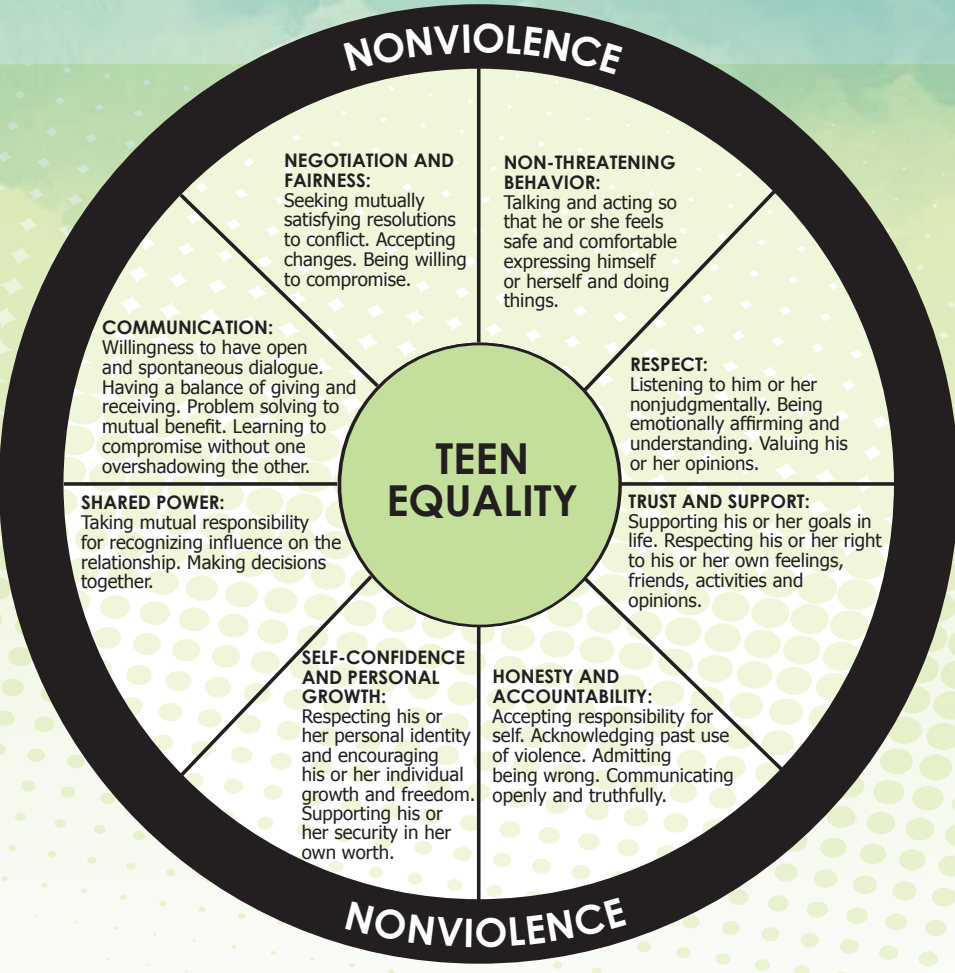
Relationship #6: Alexa and Jason are going out. Jason's friend sends Jason a picture of Alexa and another guy at the mall. Alexa said she was with her sister. Jason tries to text Alexa once, but she doesn't respond. Later, when Alexa calls Jason, he speaks to her calmly and asks her what happened. Alexa says the guy was her cousin. Jason feels relieved and is glad they talked.

Source: Sunrise of Pasco County

Going beyond the text

Individual versus societal violence

Relationships exist on a spectrum. In other words, relationships can range from healthy to unhealthy to abusive, and everywhere in between. In a healthy relationship, the “power” is shared. When it is not, the relationship becomes unhealthy. At the individual level, violence exists when one person with power attempts to exert their power or control over another person who may not have as much power. Violence may include physical, verbal or emotional abuse. Violence at the societal level is when a group of people with power attempts to exert their power or control over a group of people who may not have as much power. This may lead to the survivors of the violence feeling hopeless or helpless. It is important to note that violence is never the survivor's fault. Violence is a choice. Look for an example of individual violence and an example of societal violence in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Compare the acts in these articles. Create a Venn diagram using specific examples from the articles to show the differences and similarities. Share what you have learned with your class.



Teen equality

There is a lot of pressure in school to be with someone and to be in love. This pressure makes it very hard to break up even when there is physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse. It may be hard to recognize that a relationship is abusive and some may settle for situations that could be harmful or even deadly.

The Teen Equality Wheel includes:

- Communication
- Respect
- Trust and support
- Nonthreatening behavior
- Self-confidence and personal growth
- Honesty and accountability
- Shared power
- Negotiation and fairness

These are traits of a healthy and safe relationship.

Source: Know More; the Marjaree Mason Center

Power and Control

Power is defined as possession or control, authority or influence over others; the ability to act and to produce an effect; a source of energy.

This Power and Control wheel represents a snapshot of what a violent teen dating relationship looks like. It portrays the most common tactics teen abusers use against their dating partners.

You will notice that the center of the wheel is "Teen Power and Control." This is at the very heart of this wheel because power and control are the reasons abusers choose to use violence and other harmful tactics against their dating partners.

In order to get that power and control, most teen abusers start out very slyly using the various tactics, shown as spokes on this wheel, but usually increase their use of them over time. These include anger/emotional abuse, using social status, intimidation, minimize/deny/blame, threats, sexual coercion, isolation/exclusion and peer pressure.

Sources: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention & Treatment Board; Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence



What is stalking?

Do you have a feeling you are being watched? Are you being harassed or followed? Do you feel afraid because every time you turn around the same person is there? A stalker can be someone you know, a past boyfriend or girlfriend or even a stranger. While the actual legal definition varies from one state to another, here are some examples of what stalkers may do:

- Show up at your home, school or place of work unannounced or uninvited.
- Send you unwanted text messages, letters, emails and voicemails.
- Leave unwanted items, gifts or flowers.
- Constantly call you and hang up.
- Use social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram) and other technology to track you.
- Spread rumors about you via the Internet or word of mouth.
- Wait at places you hang out.
- Damage your home, car or other property.

If you're being stalked, you may be feeling stressed, vulnerable or anxious. You also may have trouble sleeping and concentrating at school. Keep in mind that you are not alone. Every year in the United States, 3.4 million people are stalked and people between the ages of 18 and 24 experience the highest rates.

Source: loveisrespect.org



Emotional and verbal abuse

Myth: Dating violence happens mostly to teenagers who provoke it.

Fact: Abusers make decisions about when they will abuse, how frequently they'll abuse, what the severity will be and where the abuse will take place. This decision-making process has nothing to do with the teen victim's demeanor or behavior.

Source: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board

Emotional and verbal abuse includes nonphysical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or "checking in," excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking.

Are you a victim of verbal or emotional abuse? Does another person ...

- call you names and put you down?
- yelling and scream at you?
- intentionally embarrass you in public?
- prevent you from seeing or talking with friends and family?
- tell you what to do and wear?
- use online communities or social media to control, intimidate or humiliate you?
- stalk you?

- blame your actions for their abusive or unhealthy behavior?
- threaten to commit suicide to keep you from breaking up with them?
- threaten to harm you, your pet or people you care about?
- make you feel guilty or immature when you don't consent to sexual activity?
- threaten to expose your secrets such as your sexual orientation or immigration status?
- start rumors about you?

Source: loveisrespect.org

Types of abuse:

~ Emotional abuse

~ Verbal abuse

~ Stalking

~ Financial abuse

~ Physical abuse

~ Sexual abuse

~ Cyber abuse

Taking action

If you think you are being stalked, talk to a trusted adult. Be sure to save emails, text messages, voicemails, letters, photos and Internet posts to share with law enforcement. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Abuse via technology

Cyber-dating abuse is the use of technologies, such as texting and social media, to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. In a healthy relationship, all communication is respectful, whether in person, online or by phone. People in healthy relationships do not pressure their partners to share passwords. They do not monitor another person's texts, social media accounts or private messages.

It is never acceptable for someone to do or say anything that makes you feel bad, lowers your self-esteem or manipulates you. You may be experiencing cyber abuse if your partner:

- Tells you who you can or can't be friends with on Facebook and other sites.
- Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, DMs or other messages online.
- Uses sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and others to keep constant tabs on you.
- Puts you down in his or her status updates.
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and/or videos and demands you send some in return.
- Steals or insists to be given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through your phone frequently to check your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.

In a healthy relationship ...

- Your partner respects your relationship boundaries.
- It is okay to turn off your phone. You have the right to be alone and spend time with friends and family without your partner getting angry.
- You do not have to share any pictures or statements that you are uncomfortable sending, especially nude or partially nude photos, known as "sexting." Did you know that you lose control of any electronic message once your partner receives it? He or she may forward it, so don't send anything you fear could be seen by others.
- You do not have to share your passwords with anyone.

Source: loveisrespect.org



Teens who abuse their girlfriends or boyfriends do the same things that adults who abuse their partners do. Teen dating violence is just as serious as adult domestic violence. Research shows that physical or sexual abuse is a part of one in three high school relationships. In 95 percent of abusive relationships, men abuse women. However, young women can be violent, and young men can also be victims. Both young men and women can be victimized in same-sex relationships.



Did you know?

One in three adolescent students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. Many teen victims may not recognize when they are in an abusive relationship. Dating violence is more than just arguing or fighting. Dating violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors that one partner uses to get power over the other, including:



- Physical violence
- Emotional or mental abuse
- Sexual abuse

Source: loveisrespect.org

Emergency Services

Call: 911

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

crisiscenter.com

Call: 211

Going beyond the text

Public awareness campaign

Teen dating violence is an important issue, and as a proponent of teen safety, it is your job to educate your fellow students by planning a school Dating Violence Awareness campaign. You may make posters, plan daily morning show announcement spots, create slogan buttons and/or plan a schoolwide assembly. You may want to organize your information according to the following subcategories: facts about dating violence, different types of violence, warning signs, effects of dating violence, breaking the cycle of violence and the law. Look through the advertisements, editorials and cartoons in the *Tampa Bay Times* to help plan your campaign. Create an informational news spot about the campaign that could air as a public service announcement (PSA). Create advertisements, cartoons and an editorial for the *Times* as well as your school newspaper.

If you are in an abusive relationship:

- Stay in contact with friends.
- Continue activities you enjoy.
- Try not to be alone, even when you are with your partner.
- Tell a teacher, parent, counselor or trusted adult.
- Change your routine (follow new routes to classes or work).
- Carry a phone in case you need transportation or help.
- Keep a list of important numbers with you.
- End the relationship in a public place.
- Inform someone of where you're going and when you'll return.
- Trust your instincts.
- Get an injunction for protection (restraining order).

dating abuse

in the Twenty-first Century

Social networking safety

You deserve to be in a safe and healthy relationship, whether in person or online. It is important to know that is not acceptable for your partner to be abusive online. His or her behavior also may be illegal. Check out the tips below from loveisrespect.org for staying safe on social networking sites.

- Only post things you want the public to see or know. Once it's online, it's no longer under your control.
- Be protective of your personal information.
- Set boundaries and limits. Tell people not to post personal information, negative comments or check-ins about you on social media. Ask people not to post or tag pictures if you're not comfortable with it.
 - Keep your passwords private.
- Don't do or say anything online you wouldn't in person. It may seem easier to express yourself when you are not face-to-face, but online communication can have real-life negative consequences.
- Don't respond to harassing, abusive or inappropriate comments.
- Keep a record of all harassing messages, posts and comments.
- Always report inappropriate behavior to the site administrators.
- If you are leaving an unhealthy relationship, start by blocking your ex on Facebook and other social networking pages. Don't check in on other location-based sites or apps.
- Adjust your privacy settings to reduce the amount of information that particular people can see on your page. Remember, registering for some apps requires you to change your privacy settings.
- Avoid posting private details on your friend's pages.
- While it is inconvenient and may seem extreme, disabling your social media accounts entirely may be your best option to stop continued abuse or harassment.

Source: loveisrespect.org

Texting and sexting

Texting is one of the most instant forms of communication there is. While texting might be the perfect way to say a quick "Hi," there are some things to watch out for in a textual relationship with your partner.

Excessive texting: If your partner texts too much, it's not only irritating, but unnecessary. Keeping in touch with your significant other throughout the day can be thoughtful, but constant contact is probably overdoing it. Remember, if your partner is using texting messaging to monitor everywhere you go, that is a warning sign of abuse.

Sexting: Does your partner ask for inappropriate pictures of you? Or send you inappropriate pictures of himself or herself? Even if you trust that your partner will be the only one to ever see the pictures, you can never be guaranteed that they won't end up on someone else's phone or online. Remember you never have to do anything you aren't comfortable with, no matter how much your partner pressures you.

Reading someone else's texts: Does your partner ask to read your texts? Or does he or she read them behind your back? Healthy relationships are built on trust, not jealousy. You have the right to privacy and the ability to talk to whomever you like.

Threatening texts: Threats over text should be taken seriously — try not to write them off as angry venting. Keep track of threatening texts and think about talking to someone you trust about what is happening. Being in a violent relationship is dangerous — don't go through it alone.

Source: loveisrespect.org



A Public Health Crisis

Dating violence is a widespread issue that has serious effects, both long and short term. Many teens do not report the violence because they are afraid to tell friends and family, or because the teens do not consider themselves victims of a crime.

Dating violence is not an isolated incident. Dating violence can have a negative effect on health throughout a person's life. Young people who are victims are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as using tobacco, drugs and alcohol, and to think about suicide than young people who are not victims of dating violence. In addition, teens who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

what you can do to stay safe

Here are tips from Love is Respect to keep you safe and healthy:

- Turn off your phone. Just be sure your parent or guardian knows how to contact you in an emergency.
- Don't answer calls from unknown or blocked numbers. Your abuser can easily call you from another line if he or she suspects you are avoiding him or her.
- Don't respond to hostile, harassing, abusive or inappropriate texts or messages. Responding can encourage the person who sent the message and won't get him or her to stop.
- Save or document troublesome texts, as you may need them later for evidence in case you file a criminal report or ask for a restraining order.
- Many phone companies can block up to 10 numbers from texting or calling you. Contact

Myth: If a person stays in an abusive relationship, it must not really be that bad.

Fact: People stay in abusive relationships for a number of reasons: fear, economic dependence, confusion, loss of self-confidence, not recognizing that what's happening is abusive, belief that the abuser needs their help or will change.

Source: *A Safe Place*

your phone company or check their website to see if you can do this on your phone.

- If you are in or coming out of a dangerous relationship, avoid using any form of technology to contact your abuser. It can be dangerous and may be used against you in the future.
- It may seem extreme, but if the abuse and harassment don't stop, changing your phone number may be your best option.

Source: *loveisrespect.org*

Going beyond the text

Working together

It is healthy to communicate about your feelings in a respectful way so that you can learn to work with other people and compromise, especially in romantic relationships. When someone tries to control who his or her dating partner can or cannot be friends with, it is an unhealthy behavior. Review the relationships scenarios from Pages 8 and 9. With a classmate, decide which scenarios represent healthy relationships and which depict unhealthy ones. Write a couple of sentences for each scenario explaining your view. Next, look for two examples of healthy relationships in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Write a fully developed paragraph about each relationship. Be sure to include specific examples from the articles to explain how they fit into the category of being healthy relationships.

Safe. Inclusive. Confidential.

Loveisrespect is a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle. The goal of loveisrespect is to be the ultimate resource to engage, educate and empower young people and their advocates to prevent and end abusive relationships.

The website provides comprehensive education on healthy, unhealthy and abusive dating relationships and behaviors. Trained personnel offer support, information and advocacy to young people who have questions or concerns about their dating relationships. Information and support is available to concerned friends and family members, teachers, counselors, service providers and members of law enforcement.

Free and confidential phone, live chat and texting services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Chat at loveisrespect.org

Text loveis to 22522*

Call 1-866-331-9474

Break the Cycle

The 2018 Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month theme – Healthy Me, Healthy We! a journey of self-love, strength, and positivity – was created by the members of the Let's Be Real team. The team members want “to remind each and every one of you that you are good enough, you deserve to spend your time and energy as you wish, and you are always worthy of a love that builds you up - especially love from yourself.” Learn more about the Break the Cycle campaign and how you can participate in the Let's Be Real movement, #BTCRealTalk, at breakthecycle.org.

Everyone deserves to be loved

These are the qualities of a healthy relationship:

- ♥ Your partner makes you feel safe.
- ♥ Your partner makes you feel comfortable.
- ♥ Your partner listens to you.
- ♥ Your partner values your opinions.
- ♥ Your partner supports what you want to do with your life.
- ♥ Your partner is truthful with you.
- ♥ Your partner admits when he or she is wrong.
- ♥ Your partner respects you.
- ♥ Your partner always tries to understand how you feel.
- ♥ Your partner likes that you have other friends.
- ♥ Your partner makes you laugh.
- ♥ Your partner trusts you.
- ♥ Your partner treats you like an equal.
- ♥ Your partner respects your family.
- ♥ Your partner understands your need to have time alone with friends and family.
- ♥ Your partner accepts you as you are.

Source: Soroptimist International of Largo

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline

800-500-1119
TTY: 800-621-4202
fcadv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE (7233)
loverespect.org

Going beyond the text

Fact versus opinion

Knowing the difference between fact and opinion is very important, especially when it comes to personal safety. With your classmates, discuss the definition of both fact and opinion. Look through the news section of the *Tampa Bay Times* and select several articles of interest to you. Using two differently colored highlighters or colored pencils, underline the facts in one color and the opinions in another. Discuss the articles with your class.



LGBTQ abusive relationships

Everybody deserves a safe and healthy relationship. You may think same-sex couples cannot be in abusive relationships, but that is not true.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth experience dating abuse at the same rates and in similar ways as heterosexual couples do. In fact, one in three young people — straight, gay and everyone in between — experience some form of dating abuse.

Many LGBTQ teens believe that no one will help them because they are transgender or in a same-sex relationship. If you're LGBTQ, you may face additional obstacles when asking for help, such as:

- Shame or embarrassment.
- Fear of not being believed or taken seriously.

Myth: Domestic violence is more common in heterosexual relationships.

Fact: Studies have proved that battering occurs at as high a rate in same-sex relationships as in heterosexual relationships. One survey found that more than 55 percent of gay women reported abuse in their relationships, while 44 percent of gay men reported abuse.

Source: *The Spring of Tampa Bay*

- Fear of retaliation, harassment, rejection or bullying.
- Less legal protection.

Regardless of these obstacles, you deserve to be safe and healthy. Learn the state's laws and talk to an adult.

Source: *loveisrespect.org*

The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention services to LGBTQ youth:

Trevor lifeline: 866-488-7386
thetrevorproject.org



In the past 12 months, one in 10 teens reported being hit or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend at least once. And nearly half of all teens in relationships say they know friends who have been verbally abused. It is important to note that before violence starts, a teen may experience controlling behavior and demands. One partner may tell another what to wear and who to hang out with. Over time, the unhealthy behavior may become violent. Victims of teen dating violence are more likely to do poorly in school, and report binge drinking, suicide attempts, physical fighting and current sexual activity.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Local organizations

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-500-1119

Citrus County - Citrus Abuse Shelter Association (CASA)
24-hour hotline: 352-344-8111

The mission of the Citrus Abuse Shelter Association, located in Inverness, is to help victims and survivors of domestic violence by providing shelter, safety, intervention and education, and to educate the community for social change. To learn more, go to casafl.org.

Hernando County - Dawn Center of Hernando
24-hour hotline: 352-686-8430

Located in Spring Hill, the mission of the Dawn Center of Hernando County is to break the cycle of domestic and sexual violence by providing supportive services and leadership that promotes social change. To learn more, go to dawncenter.org.

Hillsborough County - The Spring of Tampa Bay
24-hour hotline: 813-247-7233 (SAFE)

The Spring of Tampa Bay, located in Tampa, is the certified Domestic Violence Center for Hillsborough County. The shelter gives victims a safe refuge, time to heal and encouragement and support to move toward a self-determined life. For more information, go to thespring.org.

Manatee County - Hope Family Services
24-hour hotline: 941-755-6805

Located in Bradenton, Hope Family Services' primary purpose is to provide services to survivors of domestic violence and help them stay safe, gain strength and evaluate their options. The mission of Hope Family Services is to promote safety, strength and well-being for those affected by domestic violence in Manatee County. For more information, go to hopefamilyservice.org.

Pasco County - Salvation Army
24-hour hotline: 727-856-6498

This domestic violence safe haven, located in Port Richey, offers a place for victims and their pets. For more information, go to salvationarmyflorida.org/westpasco/faith/domestic-violence-shelter, or connect on their Facebook page at facebook.com/SAspascoDVshelter.

Pasco County - Sunrise of Pasco
24-hour hotline: 352-521-3120

Sunrise of Pasco is a domestic and sexual violence center, located in Dade City. The Youth Community Action Team (YCAT) is a group of engaged students working together to create a safer community in Pasco County. For more information, call 352-521-3358 or go to sunrisepasco.org.

Pinellas County - CASA
24-hour hotline: 727-895-4912

Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) provides safety, empowerment and prevention programs to help domestic violence survivors and stop the generational cycle of violence. CASA is the official domestic violence center based in southern Pinellas County. For more information, go to casa-stpete.org.

Pinellas County - The Haven of RCS
24-hour hotline: 727-442-4128

The Haven of RCS empowers survivors of domestic violence and offers school programs for elementary, middle and high school students. Located in Pinellas County, the organization provides resources and referrals. For more information about these programs, visit rcspinellas.org/domestic-violence or call 727-584-3528.

Taking action

Does your school have a club or organization devoted to combating teen dating violence? Contact your local domestic violence organization to find out. You also can check with your school guidance counselor or the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) faculty advisor to find out if there is one. Check with your domestic violence organization and school principal to find out how to start a club at your school.

In a healthy relationship ...

- Both partners communicate feelings calmly.
- Both partners have their own lives and independence.
- Both partners are treated equally.
- Both partners feel respected.
- Both partners make joint decisions.
- Both partners feel safe together.
- Both partners respect the other's sexual limits.
- Partners take turns paying on dates.
- Both partners are allowed to have friends outside of the relationship.
- Both partners accept responsibility for their actions.
- Both partners respect each other's privacy.
- Both partners have equal responsibility in the relationship.

Source: Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Did you know?

Young adult dating violence is a big problem. It affects people of all races, genders, sexual orientation and cultures. Only 33 percent of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Violence is not acceptable



Teens receive messages about how to behave in relationships from peers, adults in their lives and the media. All too often, these examples suggest that violence in a relationship is okay. But violence is never acceptable! Communicating with your partner, managing uncomfortable emotions like anger and jealousy, and treating others with respect are a few ways to keep relationships healthy and non-violent.

Myth: The person I'm dating wouldn't get so jealous if he or she didn't really love me.

Fact: If the person you're dating really loves you, they wouldn't try to control you through jealousy. What's left unsaid is that they are insecure about their own feelings, and are unsure of themselves and mistrustful.

Jealousy is a negative emotion.

Source: National Center for Deaf Advocacy



TAKING ACTION Against DOMESTIC Violence

Every year, without fail, someone will ask me if I'm a survivor of domestic violence. The awkward "DV question" started coming up ten years ago when ABC Action News launched our "Taking Action Against Domestic Violence" campaign. No matter how many times I say I'm not a victim, the question still comes up and thank goodness for that! DV and dating abuse are everywhere, but few of us ever talk about it. It cuts across all socio-economic backgrounds, gender and age, but it's rarely in 'timelines,' Instagrams and snapchats!

DV is not just an adult problem. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 50 percent of teenagers say they know an "abuser" at school. That's another teenager being physically, sexually or verbally abusive to the teen they're dating!

Awareness programs like this publication provide the ammunition to change that. Every inch of this paper has basic information on what a healthy relationship looks like vs. an unhealthy one. Knowledge is power! Become the master of your own destiny.

— Lissette Campos, WFTS – TV ABC Action News
www.abcactionnews.com/DV



About Newspaper in Education

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) is a cooperative effort between

schools and the Times Publishing Co. to encourage the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources – a "living textbook." Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text, a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world.

NIE serves educators, students and families by providing schools with class sets of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Tampa Bay Times* plus award-winning original educational publications, teacher guides, lesson plans, educator workshops and many more resources – all at no cost to schools, teachers or families. In 2016-2017, NIE provided more than 1.8 million print copies and 10 million digital editions of the *Times* to area classrooms free of charge thanks to our generous subscribers and individual, corporate and foundation sponsors. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are aligned to the Florida Standards.

Tampa Bay Times subscribers can support NIE by adding a donation to their subscription renewal amount or by donating their newspapers while on vacation.

For more information about NIE, visit tampabay.com/nie, call 727-893-8138 or email ordernie@tampabay.com. Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE).

NIE staff

Jodi Pushkin, manager,
jpushkin@tampabay.com
Sue Bedry, development specialist,
sbedry@tampabay.com
Noelle Sansom, coordinator,
nsansom@tampabay.com

Credits

Written by Jodi Pushkin, *Times* staff
Designed by Stacy Rector, Fluid Graphics
and JoAnn Vega, *Times* staff
© *Tampa Bay Times* 2018

Florida Standards

This publication and its activities incorporate the following Florida Standards for middle and high school students. **Health:** HE.68.B.3.3; HE.6.B8.3.4; HE.68.B.4.1; HE.68.B.4.2; HE.68.B.4.3; HE.68.C.2.2; HE.68.C.2.3; HE.68.C.2.5; HE.68.C.2.6; HE.68.C.2.8; HE.68.C.2.9; HE.68.P.7.1; HE.68.P.7.2; HE.68.P.8.3; HE.912.B.3.2; HE.912.B.3.4; HE.912.B.4.2; HE.912.B.4.4; HE.912.B.5.1; HE.912.B.5.5; HE.912.C.2.6; HE.912.C.2.7; HE.912.C.2.8; HE.912.P.8.3; HE.912.P.8.4 **Language Arts:** LAFS.68.RI.1.1; LAFS.68.RI.1.2; LAFS.68.RI.1.3; LAFS.68.RI.2.4; LAFS.68.RI.2.5; LAFS.68.RI.2.6; LAFS.68.RI.3.7; LAFS.68.SL.1.1; LAFS.68.SL.1.2; LAFS.68.SL.1.3; LAFS.68.SL.2.4; LAFS.68.SL.2.5; LAFS.68.SL.2.6; LAFS.68.W.1.1; LAFS.68.W.1.2; LAFS.68.W.1.3; LAFS.68.W.2.4; LAFS.68.W.2.5; LAFS.68.W.2.6; LAFS.68.W.3.7; LAFS.68.W.3.8; LAFS.912.RI.1.1; LAFS.912.RI.1.2; LAFS.912.RI.1.3; LAFS.912.RI.2.4; LAFS.912.RI.2.5; LAFS.912.RI.2.6; LAFS.912.RI.3.7; LAFS.912.SL.1.1; LAFS.912.SL.1.2; LAFS.912.SL.1.3; LAFS.912.SL.2.4; LAFS.912.SL.2.5; LAFS.912.SL.2.6; LAFS.912.W.1.1; LAFS.912.W.1.2; LAFS.912.W.1.3; LAFS.912.W.2.4; LAFS.912.W.2.5; LAFS.912.W.2.6; LAFS.912.W.3.7; LAFS.912.W.3.8

Educators – share 100 words about how you used this resource in your classroom for a chance to win a \$15 gift card! Visit tampabay.com/nie for details and to enter.

Resources

Break the Cycle
breakthecycle.org

CASA of St. Petersburg
casa-stpete.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/features/datingviolence

Citrus Abuse Shelter Association (CASA)
casaf1.org

Dawn Center of Hernando
dawncenter.org

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
fcadv.org

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
Florida Rape Crisis Hotline
fcasv.org

Futures Without Violence
futureswithoutviolence.org

Hope Family Services
hopefamilyservices.org

I Am Courageous
iamcourageous.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
ncadv.org

National Dating Abuse Helpline
loveisrespect.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
ndvh.org

Sunrise of Pasco County Inc.
sunrisepasco.org

The Haven of RCS
rcspinellas.org/domestic-violence

The Salvation Army of Pasco County
salvationarmyflorida.org/westpasco

The Spring of Tampa Bay
thespring.org