

## DATING MATTERS: UNDERSTANDING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING HANDBOOK

The following material summarizes key points from each training module of Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention. Use the reflection questions at the end of each module to promote critical thought and discussion about how you may handle or prevent a potential teen dating violence situation.

When this training refers to teens, keep in mind that we mean young people from pre-teen (age 11) throughout adolescence (to early 20s). Educators include anyone who works with teens in a learning capacity and/or setting, from teachers, administrators, and counselors to coaches, youth mentors, and other school and after-school personnel.

### MODULE ONE

This training module contains the following chapters:

1. Welcome (video)
2. Opportunities for Healthy Relationships (interactive)
3. Module 1 Takeaways and Reflections (interactive)
4. What to Expect Next (video)

### KEY POINTS:

- Adolescence is a time of enormous physical, emotional, and social change. During this time, youth seek greater independence and may try new roles and identities.
- Throughout adolescence, there is a gradual transition from sex-segregated peer groups (girls hanging out with girls, boys hanging out with boys) to mixed-sex peer groups (while also maintaining same-sex ties). Dating typically unfolds in this context.
- Friendships and dating relationships provide an opportunity for youth to learn and practice healthy communication, social skills, and managing strong feelings.
- Giving youth room to develop independence is important during this process. However, it's also our job as adults to make sure this time of exploration and discovery remains safe and productive.
- Opportunities are everywhere to redirect, empower, and help teens make healthy choices about how they communicate and connect.
- Positive relationships with friends, family members, educators, and other trusted adults can both support the development of healthy dating relationships and lower the risk of dating violence.

See the chart below to learn more about the various social connections in a teen's life, how these exchanges can be beneficial to his/her development, and where you might observe these interactions take place:

# Opportunities for Healthy Relationships

RELATIONSHIP TYPE	DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP	POTENTIAL BENEFIT(S)	OPPORTUNITIES FOR OBSERVATION/ INTERACTION
Peers	These individuals are better known as friends.	Learning to make and keep friendships also builds skills needed for healthy dating relationships. A strong network of healthy friendships is linked to lower rates of dating violence.	In hallways, at lunch, and other times teens are together, you can see how they interact with each other and encourage positive social skills and behaviors.
Parents	For many teens, this is the first example of an intimate relationship they observe.	If they have conversations with a teen around how to build healthy, respectful relationships and model those behaviors, this connection can impact how a teen communicates and deals with conflict/stress in a dating relationship.	Learning about a student's home life and family bonds can give you valuable insight. Coordination between school and home is also linked to better school performance.
Educators	These individuals help teens learn how to navigate the world beyond their home and family in school and other learning environments.	Students engaged at school tend to have more positive outcomes later in life.	Besides the classroom, other learning environments where these individuals can be observed include sites where teens participate in extracurricular activities and/or school-sponsored programs. This may be your chance to see what successfully engages a teen and what does not.
Dating Partners	Adolescents may spend a great deal of time thinking about these relationships, even if they don't have one. Teens will have the least experience with this relationship type.	This relationship type can be another source of support for a teen, if it is healthy.	Teens don't always have private spaces to be alone with other teens. Unfortunately, this may mean more private behavior happening in public. You may be in a position to guide healthier behavior.
Other Trusted Adults	These individuals are mentors and family friends who may not have an official role in the lives of teens, but they have taken the time to show interest and build trust.	When problems arise with parents, friends, or dating partners, having someone who is not as closely involved can be helpful. The outsider status of these individuals can make it easier for teens to share concerns and accept advice.	If you know a teen is struggling but you are not close to the teen, you may want to look for these connections in their neighborhoods or communities.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What changes have you noticed as youth move from childhood to adolescence? At what point have you noticed youth start to be interested in dating?
- What do you hope to learn about your ability to influence the health of teens' relationships?

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## MODULE TWO : Dating and Adolescent Development

This training module contains the following chapters:

1. Dating and Adolescent Development (video)
2. Brandon and Gabi (graphic novel)
3. Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship (interactive)
4. Teen Culture & Environment (video)
5. Welcome to Gabi's Room (interactive)
6. Module 2 Takeaways and Reflections
7. An Educator's Influence and What to Expect Next (video)

### KEY POINTS:

- Youth learn a lot about how to communicate by watching family members, teachers, coaches, and other important adults in their lives.
- School may be one of the first places youth learn to navigate the world beyond their home and family.
- Educators have a responsibility to both model and teach youth the skills needed to form and maintain healthy relationships.
- Healthy and unhealthy behaviors can happen in any relationship, between male and female students, same sex students – even friends.
- Cultural and environmental factors that influence each of us individually—in our relationships, in our communities, and throughout our society—tend to affect how we respond to certain situations and what we each feel is “normal.”

## Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship

The following characteristics are associated with a lower risk for dating violence:

- Belief in non-violent conflict resolution
- Effective communication skills
- Ability to negotiate and adjust to stress
- Belief in a partner's right to autonomy
- Shared decision-making
- Trust in one's partner

In a healthy and safe relationship, each partner:

- **Keeps their individuality.** Each partner feels free to spend time apart, enjoy other friends, and keep the activities and interests that are important to them. Each person feels like they can be themselves.

- **Respects boundaries.** Partners give each other physical and emotional space and respect each other's privacy.
- **Listens.** Each partner takes the time to get to know the other persona and what he/she values.
- **Points out the positive.** Each partner is respectful and encouraging toward the other person, including pointing out positive qualities and giving compliments.
- **Can agree to disagree.** It is expected that dating partners (like friends and other types of relationships) will not always share the same point of view or feelings about the same situations. The key to a healthy and safe relationship is how those disagreements or conflicts are handled.
- **Uses healthy communication.** It is important that each partner communicates in a healthy way. This includes being honest with each other and expressing thoughts and feelings by using respectful words.
- **Is an equal partner.** Each partner treats the other as an equal, and both make decisions in the relationship.
- **Has fun!**

## Four Level Social – Ecological Model:

This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to address that factors that put people at risk for experiencing or engaging in violence.

INDIVIDUAL	RELATIONSHIP	COMMUNITY	SOCIETY
This level identifies personal characteristics or biological factors like age and gender. Each individual has a unique personal history—experiences they have been through, such as witnessing violence—that influence how they think and act.	This level is about how the people in your life affect how you act. It could be a close relationship between two people or interaction among a larger group, like a circle of friends. As outlined in Module 1, key relationships that can influence how a teen behaves and communicates include peers, parents, dating partners, educators, and other trusted adults.	This level explores the settings in which social relationships occur. For at least six to eight hours a day, five days a week, school is a significant community for young people. A school's policies, culture, expectations of students, level of discipline, and even its physical layout can impact teen behavior. Other communities of influence include neighborhoods, social hangouts, and workplaces.	This level looks at the broader world that we live in and how it influences our level of acceptance or tolerance for violence. Often, we don't spend much time thinking about it or we may not be aware of it, because it helps define what we consider normal. For example, young people don't always think critically about the messages in TV, music, movies, and other media that make violence or other controlling behaviors seem glamorous.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- As an educator, you are a relationship level influencer. How might you be able to support healthy relationship behaviors in teens?
- What could your school or organization do to support healthy teen relationships?

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## MODULE THREE : Prevalence & Consequences of Teen Dating Violence

This training module contains the following chapters:

1. Prevalence and Consequences of Teen Dating Violence (video)
2. Devon and Rachel (graphic novel)
3. Types of Dating Violence (interactive)
4. Prevalence of Teen Dating Violence (interactive)
5. Devon and Rachel - A Closer Look (video)
6. Consequences of Teen Dating Violence (interactive)
7. Broader Risks of Teen Dating Violence (interactive + slides)
8. Module 3 Takeaways and Reflections (interactive)
9. From Understanding to Application (video)

### KEY POINTS:

- Teens often think that some behaviors, like teasing or name-calling, are a “normal” part of a relationship. However, these behaviors can often become abusive – and even develop into more serious forms of violence.
- It is sometimes hard to tell when a behavior has crossed the line and is not only unhealthy, but also unsafe. Educators can help youth explore and understand when this line has been crossed and connect youth with resources and support.
- Teen dating violence is defined as any physical, sexual, and/or emotional/psychological violence within a dating relationship, including stalking. Dating violence can take place both in person and electronically.
- Involvement in dating violence can lead to potentially severe and long-lasting consequences.
- The impact of violent behaviors has been shown to reach far beyond just those involved in the relationship. Evidence suggests that other students or bystanders to a conflict are impacted as well. Any kind of violence among youth affects all kids in the school.
- Teens who feel unsafe or unhappy have difficulty focusing on learning.

### Types of Teen Dating Violence:

- **Physical** – When a partner is physically attacked such as pinched, hit, shoved, or kicked.
- **Emotional/Psychological** – Threatening a partner or harming his or her sense of self-worth. Examples include name-calling, coercion, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping him/her away from friends and family. This form of teen dating violence can happen in person or online, such as through email or social media.

- **Sexual** – Forcing a partner to engage in a sex act when he or she does not or cannot consent. Sexual violence is not just rape. It includes forcing any type of sexual act, including touching or kissing. People can force others into sexual contact by using physical force, or by using words—such as threats or pressure. Some forms of sexual violence do not involve physical contact and include acts like exposing sexual body parts to someone else.
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## Prevalence of Teen Dating Violence:

- A survey of U.S. high school students suggests that 1 in 5 female students and 1 in 10 male students who date have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual teen dating violence during the past 12 months.

[Source: Vagi, Olsen, Basile, & Vivolo-Kantor (2015); <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2173573>]

- Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 1 in 5 women and nearly 1 in 7 men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 & 17 years of age.

[Source: [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/summary\\_reports.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/summary_reports.html)]

- We know that emotional/psychological violence is the most common type of dating violence. Numbers range depending on the survey and type of population surveyed (e.g. just girls or just boys), but about a third to three quarters of youth who date report perpetrating this type of violence against a dating partner at least once.

[Source: Niolon et al (2015); [http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(14\)00314-0/pdf](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(14)00314-0/pdf)]

- Sexual dating violence is often reported at lower rates than the other types of dating violence.

[Source: Miller et al (2015); [http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(14\)00712-5/pdf](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(14)00712-5/pdf)]

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## Consequences for Victims of Teen Dating Violence:

- Increased absenteeism
  - Problems in non-dating relationships
  - Decline in well-being
  - Failure to participate in school activities
  - Poor academic performance
  - Thoughts of suicide
  - Fear
  - Depression and/or anxiety
  - Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use
  - Injury
  - Delinquent behavior
  - Experiencing violence in subsequent relationships
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## Consequences of Engaging in Teen Dating Violence:

- Loss of friend's respect
- Poor academic performance
- Alienation from friends and family
- Physical and health problems
- Juvenile or criminal record/confinement
- Loneliness
- Expulsion from school
- Loss of job

## Broader Risks of Teen Dating Violence:

- A recent study evaluated the relationship between dating violence and suicide attempts among urban teens aged 14 and older. According to this study, teen girls who experienced recent dating violence were 60% more likely to report at least one suicide attempt in the past year than those who did not experience recent dating violence.

[Source: Olshen et al (2007); <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=570505>]

- Students who report experiencing multiple forms of TDV may be at more risk for negative outcomes vs. youth who report experiencing one type of TDV.

For example, female students who experienced both physical and sexual TDV were twice as likely to attempt suicide as students who reported experiencing one type of TDV. In this same study, male victims of both types were about 3 times as likely to attempt suicide as male students who experienced one form of victimization.

[Source: Vagi et al (2015) <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2173573>]

- Both male and female students who say they have experienced TDV are more likely than their peers to experience a range of health-risk behaviors, including:
  - using alcohol
  - binge drinking
  - using marijuana
  - thinking about suicide and attempting suicide
  - carrying a weapon
  - having more sexual partners

[Source: Vagi et al (2015) <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2173573>]

- Dating violence victimization has been linked to:
  - academic underachievement
  - negative views of school
  - drop-out

[Source: Vagi et al (2015) <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2173573>]

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Emotional/psychological violence involves threatening a partner or harming his/her sense of self-worth. Have you noticed any emotionally/psychologically unhealthy behaviors between youth in a dating relationship? If so, what types of behaviors have you seen or heard?
  - How do you think a teen's reaction to dating violence might look and feel different for boys and girls?
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# MODULE FOUR : Recognizing Unhealthy Relationships

This training module contains the following chapters:

1. Recognizing Unhealthy Relationships (video)
2. Marissa and Jason (graphic novel)
3. Risk Factors and Warning Signs (interactive)
4. Seeking Help (video)
5. Emotion Regulation and Healthy Communication (interactive)
6. Feeling Safe (video)
7. Module 4 Takeaways and Reflections
8. Training Wrap-Up and Challenge (video)

## KEY POINTS:

- Educators are in a unique position to spot unhealthy relationship behaviors (in the hallway, classroom, basketball court, etc.) and connect youth with resources and support as needed.
- Not speaking up when you are around one teen hurting another is the equivalent, in youth eyes, of endorsing behavior. Do not wait for a student to ask for help.
- Seeking help can be difficult, even for adults, and this is especially true when it comes to relationships. You may need to be the one to offer to connect the teen to a resource or get a professional involved.
- Some victims of teen dating violence don't seek help because they think their partner will change, they feel responsible for or embarrassed by the abuse, they fear retaliation, or they don't realize that they're in an unhealthy relationship.

## Risk Factors for Teen Dating Violence:

- Belief that dating violence is acceptable
- Symptoms of anxiety and/or depression
- Aggression toward peers or other aggressive behaviors
- Drug or alcohol use
- Early sexual activity and multiple sex partners
- Conflicts with a partner
- Exposure to violence in the home

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## Warning Signs for Teen Dating Violence:

- Problems at school
  - Consistent school attendance problems
  - A noticeable drop in grades
  - A sudden request for class schedule changes
- A noticeable weight change
- Changes in behavior
  - Passive or quieter than usual
  - Drop in self-confidence
- Isolation from social group
- Regular bruising or other injuries
- Alcohol or drug use
- One teen seems to be controlling the other
  - **Physically** – one person's arm is always firmly around the other person
  - **Socially** – one person monopolizes the other person's time
  - **Electronically** – one person is repeated calling, texting, e-mailing, messaging online, etc., when communication is unwanted.

## Warning Signs for Engaging in Teen Dating Violence:

- Insists on walking a dating partner to class
  - Threatens to hurt others
  - Threatens to hurt self if dating partner breaks up with him/her
  - Insults a dating partner in public or private
  - Damages or destroys a dating partner's personal belongings
  - Attempts to control what a dating partner wears
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## Suggested Adult Responses:

### ***Model and teach healthy behaviors.***

When you became an educator, you became a role model. Teens take notes on more than just the subject matter or activity or sport you teach. They watch how you handle your emotions and interact with other youth and adults. Think about how you would like teens to communicate and relate to one another and model that. You can also teach these same skills to youth. Want to learn more? Go to the resource center to download information about teaching youth positive self-talk, deep breathing, and mindfulness - three skills that help us stay in control of our feelings and build healthy relationships with others.

- Positive Self-Talk
- Deep Breathing
- Mindfulness

### ***Model and teach healthy behaviors.***

"Use your words" isn't just for kindergarteners. The simple act of naming something diminishes its power. Calmly expressing difficult feelings, or emotions, and using healthy communication skills provides a positive example for teens. You can also teach these same skills to youth. Want to learn more? Go to the resource center to download information about teaching youth 4 steps for staying calm and other tips for effective and healthy communication.

- 4 Steps for Staying Calm  
Tips for Effective & Healthy Communication

### ***Be aware and take action.***

Remember that seeking help, even for adults, can be difficult when it comes to anything about a relationship, including unhealthy or violent behaviors. You may need to be the one to offer to connect the teen to a resource or get a professional involved. Want to learn more? Go to the resource center to download information about potential resources for teens.

- Resources for Teens
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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are some resources in your community for helping teens navigate dating relationships?
- What is your school's policy around teen dating violence? What steps would you take if you knew a teen had been abused by someone he or she was dating?

## POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Self-talk is the stream of unspoken thoughts that run through our heads. These thoughts can be positive or negative. Some self-talk comes from logic and from a clear understanding of what is going on. But other times, **self-talk may be based on a lack of information or a biased or unbalanced perspective.**

When we experience uncomfortable or strong emotions, our self-talk is sometimes negative. “I cannot believe that just happened! How could I be so stupid? What is wrong with me?” Instead of letting negative thoughts run unchecked, we can **take control of the conversation** by looking critically at what we are saying to ourselves. Just like there are things we say or think to ourselves about a situation that can make us feel worse, there are things we can say or think that can help us calm down. **We call these things positive self-talk.**

As an educator, it is important to both model positive self-talk, as well as teach youth how to check their negative thoughts and think more positively. Below are some important points when talking to youth about this skill.

1.

### Try to consider both sides of a situation.

Positive self-talk does not mean that you ignore what is going on around you or ignore how you are feeling. It just means that you approach stressful situations in a more positive and balanced way. Help your students counter a negative thought (e.g., “I do everything wrong”) with a more positive and balanced one (e.g., “It is clear you can do this -- you received a B+ on an exam earlier this year.”). **Try to find a positive spin somewhere.**

2.

### Stay in the moment.

Stay focused on the present situation, not what has happened in the past or what may happen in the future. **We can't see into the future.**

3.

### Don't wait to laugh about it later.

One day you may look back and find it funny - you might as well make that day **today.**

4.

### Know your triggers.

If you are about to enter what you know will be an uncomfortable situation (e.g., telling a parent about a poor test grade), **plan ahead:** What can you tell yourself beforehand? What can you do or tell yourself during the situation? What about afterward?

## DEEP Breathing

Deep breathing is a calming strategy. Deep breathing can help relax your body and allow you to take a pause – this is especially important when your mind is racing or you are experiencing intense or tough feelings. When you breathe deeply through your nose, filling your lungs and causing your abdomen to expand, you exchange more oxygen for carbon dioxide than when you take shallow breaths. Deep breathing also evokes a relaxation response, lowering your heart rate and blood pressure.

**Deep breathing is not just about the amount of air you take in and out – it's also about *how* you breathe.**

As an educator, it is important to both model deep breathing (and other calming strategies), as well as teach and encourage youth to use this skill in everyday life. Below are some important steps when talking to youth about this skill.

### STEP 1

Place one hand on your abdomen just above your belly button and the other on your chest.

### STEP 2

Breathe in through your nose – the hand on your abdomen should move up, **like a balloon expanding**. The hand on your chest should stay still.

### STEP 3

Slowly release the air out of your mouth so that the hand resting above your belly button goes down - like a deflating balloon. **Keep it slow**. You want to take twice as long to breathe out than you did to breathe in.

### STEP 4

**Practice five breaths in a row.** Aim for being able to feel your breathing without using your hands.

It's easiest to learn (and teach!) this skill with your hands on your abdomen and chest. Soon, you'll be able to breathe this way by just imagining your abdomen rising and falling as you breathe (or by imagining a balloon inflating and deflating). **It gets much easier with practice.**

## MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness quiets and shifts the chatter of the mind to focus on what is happening right now. Mindfulness can help you learn to pay close attention to many things, including your feelings and bodily sensations. The goal is to **pay attention to the present moment**, rather than thinking about the past or imagining the future.

Based on ancient Buddhist meditation, mindfulness techniques are building an impressive body of research. Mindfulness **improves stress management** and has numerous health benefits, including improving eating habits, boosting the immune system, and increasing positive feelings and well-being. Importantly, mindfulness helps you tune out distractions and improves memory and attention skills – which has clear benefits both inside and outside of classroom walls! **Mindfulness encompasses many aspects of the strategies mentioned in this training.**

As an educator, it is important to both model being present as well as teach and encourage youth to use this skill in everyday life. Below are a few exercises that may help teach this concept to youth.

### BODY Scan

Find or create a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Starting at the top of your head and going down to your toes, focus your attention on sensations in your body (e.g., tenseness, a tickle) and accept what you feel without trying to control or change it. This exercise gives you a moment to just be instead of do.

### RAISIN Exercise

Adding in one sense at a time (first holding, then eating), observe a raisin in as much detail as possible. Focus on the present moment and various sensations, from how the raisin looks, feels, and smells to how it tastes as you chew and swallow it. Giving an ordinary fruit your undivided attention might sound unusual or simplistic, but this exercise can help you slow down and appreciate an everyday act that is often taken for granted.

### WALKING Meditation

For a defined number of steps or path, give your full attention to the movement of your body. Feel your knees bend and each part of your foot as it makes contact and then lifts off the ground. This exercise is an opportunity to break up a long period of sitting and keep both the body and mind healthy.

Keep in mind that mindfulness takes practice and the longer you practice, the easier the process becomes. More information, including videos demonstrating the above exercises and tips on teaching mindfulness in schools, can be found at the University of California, Berkeley Greater Good Science Center →

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/>

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips\\_for\\_teaching\\_mindfulness\\_to\\_kids/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_teaching_mindfulness_to_kids/)

## STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUTH HANDLE TOUGH EMOTIONS:

### 4 Steps for Staying Calm

It is easier to think clearly, communicate with others in a healthy way, and make healthy and safe decisions when we're calm. Below are the *4 Steps for Staying Calm*. As an educator, it is important to both model these steps for staying calm, as well as teach youth how to use these steps in everyday life.

1.

#### Notice what your body is telling you. Then, **PAUSE!**

When you experience a strong feeling, your body sends you clues. You might feel your muscles tense up, your heart beat faster, or your hands shake. You might feel other changes, too. When you start to feel these physical clues, say to yourself: **PAUSE!** Just like when you pause a movie, you need to pause the action and words in your own life.

2.

#### Name what you are feeling.

Healthy communication requires that you put your feelings, or emotions, into words. Are you sad, frustrated, disappointed, nervous, jealous, angry, afraid, or something else? **Building an emotional vocabulary** helps you identify your feelings, better understand yourself, and make yourself better understood by others.

Labeling your emotions has also been shown to reduce reactivity with negative emotions in particular. This is part of the reason you tend to feel better when you talk to a friend or trusted adult about something that is upsetting you.

Know that all emotions are important. Some may be less comfortable than others, but sometimes these uncomfortable feelings (e.g., fear) help us recognize when we are in danger and need help.

3.

#### Choose the strategy that suits you best.

- **Take deep breaths.**  
(For step-by-step instructions, click or download "Deep Breathing" in Module 4.)

- **Use positive self-talk.**  
(For more information, click or download "Positive Self-Talk" in Module 4.)

- **Do something physically active or relaxing.**

- **Talk to someone you trust.**

4.

#### Check in with yourself.

Do you feel calmer and are you thinking more clearly? If not, you may need to try a different calming strategy. It also may be time to talk to someone you trust.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Healthy communication is a balancing act in any relationship. Healthy communication means feeling heard, understood, and respected while also being able to listen to, understand, and respect what the other person is saying.

How well we communicate has a major impact on our interactions with others. Communication skills affect our ability to prevent or resolve conflict, connect, and build or break trust in a relationship.

Practicing these nonverbal and verbal skills can help you have more productive conversations with others and provide a positive example for the teens you work with on a daily basis. It is also important to teach and encourage youth to use these skills in everyday life. Below are overviews of nonverbal and verbal communication skills – both types of skills should be utilized together for the most effective and healthy communication.

### NONVERBAL Skills

1.

#### Stay in control of your feelings.

When we are feeling strong emotions, such as anger, it is often hard to express ourselves in a way that will not be misunderstood or ignored by the other person. It is important to first calm down; for more information and helpful tips, click or download “4 Steps for Staying Calm” in Module 4.

2.

#### Maintain good eye contact.

One of the best ways to show you are focused on the conversation is to really focus on the person who is speaking. It’s not a staring contest but a way to let the speaker know that you value what he or she is saying.

3.

#### Watch your facial expressions and body language.

These send as much of a message as the words that you say. Keep your body relaxed, open, and turned toward the speaker. Try not to cross your arms and legs; this could be interpreted as disapproval or disinterest. Make the other person feel welcome and safe through encouraging gestures like smiling, nodding your head, and leaning forward. Try to limit fidgeting with your hands or feet; this may be distracting or show impatience.

### VERBAL Skills

1.

#### Stay calm; think about how you react.

Speak in a respectful, calm, and positive manner that encourages further conversation. If you raise your voice or sound sarcastic, the other person may be less likely to listen to you. Try to avoid criticizing or dismissing the other person’s viewpoint. Instead, be constructive.

2.

## Listen actively.

Refining this skill requires patience, practice, and a few key steps:

### 1. Try to recap what the other person has just said.

Use statements such as “It sounds like you are saying...” or “I think what you are saying is...” to show that you have been listening and want an accurate understanding of the conversation.

### 2. Take turns talking.

Don't let one person dominate the conversation. Make sure that both people have a chance to express their views and are able to do so without being interrupted.

### 3. Ask questions that promote conversation and understanding.

To avoid receiving one-word answers, use open-ended questions like “How do you feel about...?” and “What do you think about...?” When it's appropriate and you need something clarified, ask for further explanation.

### 4. Don't jump to conclusions.

Try not to assume that you know what the other person needs or how he/she feels before that person has the opportunity to express it. Additionally, by taking time to hear the other person's perspective, you might learn that the disagreement (if there is one) was all a misunderstanding.

3.

## Express your feelings.

Use “I” statements to avoid blaming the other person or making him/her feel defensive. Be specific. Examples of what you could say include: “I feel \_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.” and “I am \_\_\_\_ and need \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_.”

## RESOURCES FOR TEENS

**If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911.**

### Safety Planning

A safety plan is an individualized, practical plan that outlines ways to stay safe while in a relationship, while planning to leave a relationship, or after a relationship has ended. A good plan includes vital information about how to cope with emotions, reach out to and talk to others, and how to take action. It is important that teens have this type of information laid out in advance of stressful situations when it is often difficult to think clearly.

As an educator, you can help a teen in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship develop a safety plan. Safety plans are relevant to all individuals in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship. They are relevant for both teens being hurt by their partner, in addition to teens trying to change their unhealthy or violent behavior toward others and plan for situations that challenge their emotional control.

### **Loveisrespect.org has an interactive tool to create a safety plan.**

<http://www.loveisrespect.org/get-help/safety-planning>

Once you've taken notice and listened, you may need to connect a teen in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship to professionals trained to help teens navigate relationships and assist in identifying options.

Below is information for national resources. Many of these websites can also help you identify more local organizations. There are also additional resources available on the home page of this training and by clicking the notebook icon that appears in the top-right corner of each module.

#### **LOVEISRESPECT**

<http://www.loveisrespect.org> | 1-866-331-9474

Loveisrespect provides 24/7 support and help to teens in an unhealthy or unsafe dating relationship, including a free and confidential helpline, an anonymous online chat with a peer advocate, and a text chat (text "loveis" to 22522). The website also contains resources on dating and dating safety.

#### **GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER (GLBT) NATIONAL HELP CENTER**

<http://www.glnh.org/chat> (Online Peer-Support Chat)

1-800-246-PRIDE (7743) (National Youth Talkline)

The GLBT National Help Center offers free, confidential, and one-to-one support for teens and young adults up to age 25 who need to speak about relationship concerns, coming-out issues, school problems, parent issues, and other topics.

## **RAINN NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE**

<https://ohl.rainn.org/online/> | 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

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The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) offers free, confidential, 24/7 support online and by phone to sexual assault victims and their friends and families. Trained staff members provide support and information about sexual assault, including resources and referrals to local sexual assault service providers.

## **NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE (NRS)**

<http://www.1800runaway.org> | 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

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The NRS is a 24-hour crisis line and website that provides solution-focused, confidential support to keep runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth safe and off the streets. The website also contains runaway prevention curriculum and other resources and tips for educators and parents.

## **THE TREVOR PROJECT**

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org> | 1-866-488-7386

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The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24. Teens can get immediate help by calling the 24/7 lifeline or chat with a trained counselor online and via text (text "Trevor" to 1-202-304-1200). The website also contains online, interactive trainings and other resources for adults to learn about the risks and challenges LGBTQ youth face and how they can help.

## **LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND SERVICES**

<http://www.loveisrespect.org/legal-help/> | 1-866-331-9474

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Loveisrespect provides information about what the police can do, ways to document abuse, and how to get a restraining or protection order. In 2010, the organization conducted a National Survey of Teen Dating Violence Laws and created state report cards that detail what legal protections are available to victims based on where they live. The report cards are available on the loveisrespect website (<http://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/teen-dating-violence-laws/>). Although loveisrespect staff cannot give you specific legal advice, they can locate a legal advocate in your area who can help.

## **COUNSELING OR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

<http://locator.apa.org>

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The Psychologist Locator is a service of the American Psychological Association Practice Organization that makes it easier to find practicing psychologists based on geographic location, area of specialization, cultural sensitivity, language(s) spoken, ages served, and type(s) of insurance accepted.