

# Healthy Relationships Toolkit

Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships



## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS 7TH GRADE

*Parent Handbook*

Write your name here:



U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE  
CONTROL AND PREVENTION



# About the Program

## Welcome to the Healthy Relationships Toolkit for Parents (7th Grade).

Parenting can be rewarding, difficult, and fun all at the same time. Parents want to guide, protect, and nurture their children, but as children get older, they want more independence from their parents. Parenting strategies often need to change as children mature, become more independent, and develop new relationships. The purpose of this program is to support parents in their important role as relationship educators for their children. Parents still have a lot of influence in their children's lives, even if it does not feel that way. We provide information to help parents understand the unique challenges and pressures their children face, and we discuss the importance of open and honest communication. We also provide information on the role of parents in preventing their children from doing things that may keep them from achieving their goals in life. Parents can help their children make good decisions and form healthy relationships—we believe that parents make a difference!



**Note:** The Healthy Relationships Toolkit (HeaRT): Empowering Teens to Build Safe and Supportive Relationships was previously referred to as Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships.



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# Session I: Parenting Positively

## Goals of HeaRT for Parents

- Learn how to become better communicators with our children.
- Build our knowledge and skills so we can communicate our values about relationships to our children.
- Learn how to prepare our children to build healthy relationships before they start dating.
- Learn the skills needed to assist our children with problems that may happen in their relationships with others.
- Learn information we can share with our family and friends.
- Have fun and enjoy our time together!

## Overview Of Sessions

### Session 1: Parenting Positively (group session)

- Changes and pressures children face as they get older
- Positive parenting skills
- Parent-child communication skills

### Session 2: Let's Talk, Part 1 (in-home session)

- Practice using communication skills with your child

### Session 3: Parenting by Example (group session)

- Healthy versus unhealthy relationship behaviors
- Teen dating violence
- Parents as relationship models

### Session 4: Let's Talk, Part 2 (in-home session)

- More practice using communication skills with your child

### Session 5: Parenting Skillfully (group session)

- Parental supervision
- Risky behaviors (e.g., sex, drugs) during the teen years
- Conflict resolution

### Session 6: Let's Talk, Part 3 (in-home session)

- More practice using communication skills with your child



## Group Ground Rules

List below the rules that are decided upon by members of your group.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Changes During Adolescence

Children go through a lot of changes during adolescence and the teen years. Many of these changes have already started happening in your 7th graders and may have started as early as the 4th or 5th grade (or sooner in some cases).

- Physical changes
- Emotional changes
- Changes in social relationships

What are some of the pressures your children will face during this time?

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What happens if your children give in to or do not handle these pressures well?

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Parents usually want what is best for their children—we would all like to see our children do well in life.

Having a good relationship with your children is one way to help prevent them from engaging in behaviors that will keep them from achieving their goals in life.



## Interacting Positively With Your Child

### 1. Positive attention to good behavior

Notice and appreciate good behaviors of your child.

Use encouraging phrases (e.g., “You can do it!” “You are doing a really good job!”) to encourage your child to continue with the good behaviors.

### 2. Mutual respect

Let your child know that they matter. This does not mean that parent and child are equals but the child understands that their thoughts and feelings will be considered by the parent.

### 3. One-on-one time

Take an interest in doing something your child likes to do (e.g., going to see a movie).

### 4. Open communication

You and your child have an opportunity to speak and to be heard.

You show an interest in what your child has to say.

### 5. Appropriate supervision and rules

Enforce the rules—children want and need rules.

Always know where your children are, what they are doing, who they are with, and when they will be home.

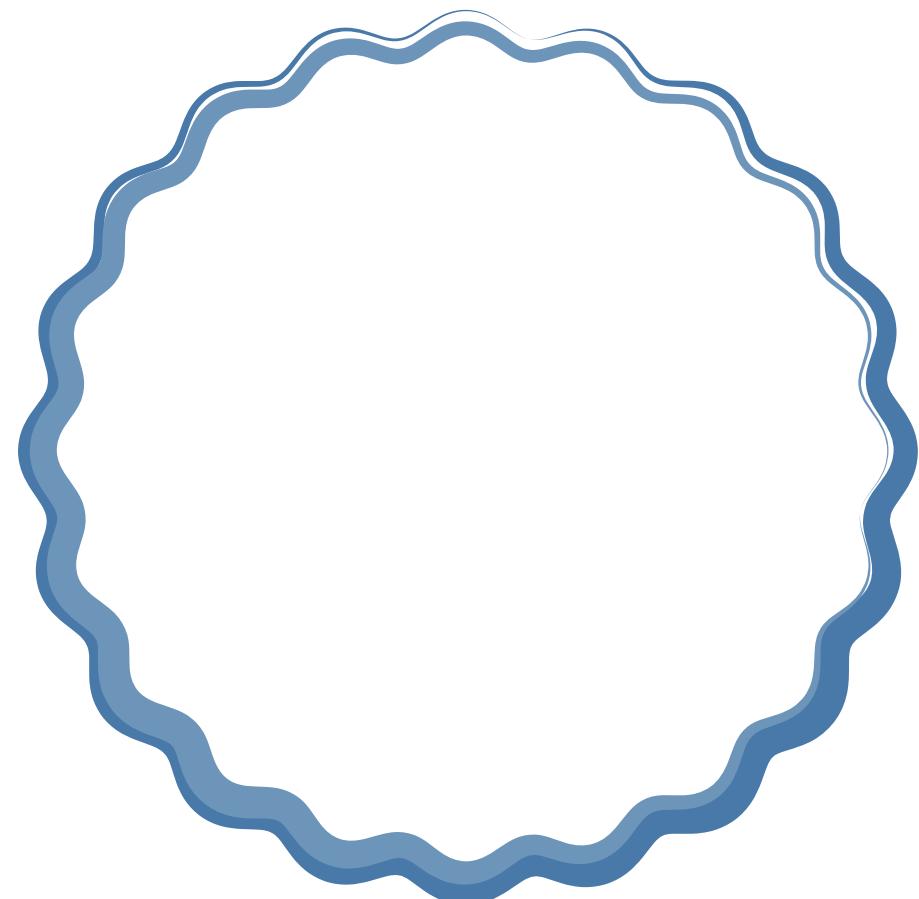
### 6. Accept your child.

Even if you don't see eye-to-eye with your child on everything, it's important to show them acceptance and support. Children will develop their own beliefs, and their caregivers and immediate family members may have differing beliefs too. Remember that these conversations are not necessarily going to end with your child agreeing with everything you think, and that is okay. Continue to show your child

your love and support. Research shows that youth who feel close to their parents are less likely to use drugs, have improved mental health, and are less likely to experience physical or sexual violence.

## Activity 1: Parenting Pie

In this activity, you will identify the ingredients you think are essential in the recipe for a good parent-child relationship.





## Communicating Effectively With Your Child

### TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

#### Be aware of your body language.

- Make eye contact.
- Keep your verbal and nonverbal messages consistent.

#### Actively listen.

- Be open to listen to other views.
- Summarize what your child is saying.
- Say “tell me more” if your child provides yes/no or other one-word answers like “fine.”

#### Ask open-ended questions.

- Start with “What”, “Why”, and “How”.
- Say “tell me more” if your child provides yes/no or other one-word answers like “fine.”

#### Use “I” messages to describe how you feel.

- Say how you feel without attacking or blaming; opposite of “you” messages. Examples:
  - “**You** need to stop changing the channels on the TV.”
  - “**I** feel annoyed when you switch the channel without asking. I want to be able to watch my show all the way through.”

## Activity 2: Communication Blockers

Decide if the cards read aloud are communication “road blocks” or “building blocks”.

- **Communication road blocks** are statements that block the communication between you and your child.
- **Communication building blocks** are statements that encourage

communication between you and your child.

How can the communication road blocks be turned into building blocks?

## Session Recap

Today’s session focused on positive parenting strategies and tips for good parent-child communication.

What do you think was the most important thing discussed today?

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In the next session, we will talk about:

- Our role in helping our children form healthy relationships
- Unhealthy relationships
- Things we can do to keep our children from getting involved in unhealthy relationships

## Home Session Overview

In this program, you will complete three home sessions. In the home sessions, you will have an opportunity to practice the skills learned today with your child at home. The information needed to complete the home session is included on the pages that follow. During the next group session you will share your experiences from the home session.

# Session 2: Let's Talk, Part 1

## What Can I Expect In The Home Sessions?

HeaRT for Parents includes three home sessions. These sessions include information and activities to help parents and their children talk comfortably about issues that are relevant in their child's life. Some activities in the home sessions will require that the parent(s) and child identify times when they can get together and complete the activities. Parents will complete the other activities on their own.

## Tips For Successful Home Sessions

To get the most benefit from the home sessions where you and your child complete activities together, it is important to limit interruptions as much as possible. Below are some ideas for planning the home sessions so that interruptions are minimized. Read through these tips and decide what is going to work best for you and your child in planning the home sessions. You can also come up with your own ideas to make the home sessions more successful.

### Choose a time that is convenient for you and your child.

- The time should not conflict with other important things.
- The time should not come right before or after stressful events.

### Make sure you and your child understand when the session activities will occur.

- You can mark it on a calendar, write it on a chalkboard, post a reminder on the refrigerator, or put it in another place you will both see.

### Choose a place where there will be few interruptions.

- TV should be off.
- Home phones and cell phones should be allowed to go to voicemail or to an answering machine.
- No texting should be allowed.

### Choose a place where you and your child can have private conversations.

- Other family members should not be around or allowed to disrupt the home session (unless there is an emergency).

Some activities will not require you to involve your child. In these instances, you can choose to do the activities at a time that is most convenient for you.

## Instructions

1. This home session contains two activities. In the first activity, you will practice using words of encouragement and praise at least once per day with your child. Examples of things you can say and do are included in the activity. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you are encouraged to practice your communication skills with your child. You will first generate a list of "everyday" topics you can use in talking with your child. You should practice using your communication skills each day but set aside one day where your child is aware that you are doing the activity. That way they can practice good communication skills too. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.



## Activity 1: Using Words of Encouragement and Praise

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent to practice using words of encouragement and praise with the child.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes total during the week (approximately 5-10 minutes each day)

**INTRODUCTION:** Children thrive on positive attention. Children need to feel loved and appreciated. Unfortunately, positive or appropriate behaviors often do not get the same amount of attention as negative or inappropriate behaviors. Parents are often quick to notice when things go wrong, but they may not be as quick to notice the good behaviors. When parents start praising and encouraging a child's good behaviors, they often find that the child starts paying more attention to them and will try harder to please. When providing encouragement and praise, the more specific parents can be, the better it will work because children will be more aware of exactly what they have done that the parent liked. Praise and encouragement tend to work better when specific behaviors are praised (e.g., great job on that math test), as opposed to some characteristic of the child (e.g., you are smart). Parents can also SHOW the child how they feel using small gestures such as a pat on the back or a thumbs up.

If parents do not use these skills already, they may be difficult to use at first, but like any skill, they get easier with practice.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** First, make a list of your child's behaviors that you want to see more often and that you want to praise or encourage. Then, when you see your child doing these things, praise them to let them know you liked what they did. You can use some of the examples provided in the table on the next page or you can come up with your own words of praise and encouragement. Ways to physically show your child you care are also provided in the examples. Try to use these skills at least once per day (and more often as it becomes easier for you).

These are the behaviors that I want to see more often from my child and are behaviors I can praise and encourage...

## Words of Encouragement and Praise

Listed below are some examples of words you can use to encourage and praise your child:

Good job!	Excellent!	Wonderful!	Terrific!	I am proud of you for _____!
Very nice!	That's the way!	You worked hard on that!	What a clever idea!	I like the way you _____!
I noticed that you _____!	Keep it up!	You showed a lot of responsibility when you _____!	You are the best!	I like the way you _____ without having to be reminded!
I am sure glad you are my child!	I love you!	Thank you for _____!	I appreciate _____!	Way to go!
I had fun _____ with you!	You are improving at _____ more and more!	You are great at that!	Incredible!	Remarkable!

## Ways to Physically Show Encouragement and Praise

Listed below are examples of ways you can physically praise and encourage your child:

Smile	Nod	High five	Clap	Hug
Signal or gesture to signify approval (e.g., thumbs up)	Pat on the shoulder, head, knee, back	Touch cheek	Laugh with (not at)	Kiss on cheek or forehead



**Assessment:** When the activity is completed each day, you can complete this Checklist and indicate what your child did that resulted in your encouragement and praise.

	<b>Used Words of Encouragement &amp; Praise</b>	<b>Physically Showed Encouragement &amp; Praise</b>	<b>What did my child do that I praised?</b>
<b>Sunday</b>			
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			
<b>Saturday</b>			

## Activity 2: Starting a Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent and child to practice using good communication by talking about everyday stuff.

**TIME NEEDED:** 40 minutes total during the week (approximately 5–10 minutes each day)

**INTRODUCTION:** Children have many things going on in their lives. Their bodies are changing, they want to spend more time with friends, and their coursework at school is becoming more difficult, among other things. These are everyday topics that parents can discuss with their children on a regular basis; however, as children get older, parents find it more difficult to talk to their children and often stop asking questions. But, parents can use these topics to prompt a conversation with their children about what is happening in their lives. This opens the lines of communication so that when/if an important issue comes up, the child will be more likely to talk to the parent.

Although it may be difficult to do this at first, the goal should be to talk about everyday stuff **EVERY DAY**. The more you practice, the easier it gets. Being able to talk about the everyday stuff keeps your relationship strong and comfortable and will make it easier when you need to discuss more difficult topics. Even if you do not talk about everyday stuff already, it is never too late to start.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a list of topics you can use in starting a conversation with your child. Once you have a list of topics, your goal is to use them in at least one conversation with your child each day. Use the conversation as an opportunity to use good communication skills and actively listen to your child.

Before you start, let your child know that you are practicing some new skills to help you talk and listen to them better. Show your child the Communication Checklist. Talk them through each of the communication strategies—and help them understand what those skills look like in practice and how they can use those skills themselves. This is an opportunity to teach them what you learned in Session 1! Let them know that it is not necessary

to use all of the skills all of the time—but that they can think about these strategies when they are talking with you and others.

At the end of at least one of the conversations, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other. If you are having difficulty getting your child to talk, if you want more details, or if you simply want to stimulate the conversation, you can ask open-ended questions by beginning sentences with “Why”, “What”, and “How”.

### Topics I can discuss with my child...

#### *Examples:*

*Why did \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What happened that has made you upset?*

*Tell me about your friend \_\_\_\_\_.*

**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists to see how you did. You may not use every skill in all of your conversations with your child. Some conversations may be shorter than others—that is ok. Just remember to use the skills when you have an opportunity.

**“I” messages** allow you to clearly express to your child how you feel. See the examples below on how to use “I” messages.

**A:** “You hurt my feelings. You know I did not want anyone to know about that.”

**B:** “I feel hurt that you told James what I told you because it was supposed to be private.”

**Statement A** is an example of a “You” statement. “You” statements tend to put people on the defensive.

**Statement B** is an example of an “I” statement. The speaker clearly expressed what they felt and accepted responsibility for the feeling.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent’s Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended question?
- Use “I” messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Communication Checklist

### Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

### Notes:

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## Notes:

# Session 3: Parenting by Example

## Activity 1: Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors

Your group leaders will give you some relationship behavior cards. You will decide if these are good/healthy (Green Light), worrisome (Yellow Light), or unhealthy (Red Light) relationship behaviors.

Healthy Relationship Characteristics	Unhealthy Relationship Characteristics
Both partners feel equal power	One or both partners feels a lack of power
Trust	Absence of trust
Open and honest communication	Poor communication
Respectful interaction styles	Partners are disrespectful to one another
Space to pursue individual interests	Not enough space is allowed to pursue individual interests
Appropriate boundaries	Boundaries may be overstepped or disregarded

## Relationship Behaviors

When youth start dating, we want to make sure that their relationships are positive and healthy so that they come to expect this of relationships later in life.

There is often a gray zone between when a relationship is unhealthy and when it starts to become unsafe, abusive, or violent.

Teen dating violence is a specific type of unhealthy relationship, where the unhealthy behaviors cross the line and are unsafe, abusive, or violent. These behaviors may occur multiple times but they do not have to occur more than once to be considered dating violence. They are often attempts to gain or maintain power and control.

Teen dating violence can be physical, sexual, and/or emotional (psychological or verbal) in nature, and it also includes stalking.

- **Physical dating violence** refers to instances when a partner is pinched, hit, shoved, or kicked. These are acts that involve some inappropriate physical interactions between the dating partners.
- **Sexual dating violence** involves the use of force or pressure to engage a partner in a sex act when they do not or cannot consent.
- **Emotional (psychological or verbal) violence** refers to instances where someone's sense of self-worth or how they feel about themselves is threatened or harmed. Examples include name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping one away from friends and family.
- **Stalking** refers to harassing or threatening acts used by a person who perpetrates violence that are unwanted and cause fear in the person who experiences them.

Teen dating violence can occur between current or former partners, boyfriends, girlfriends, or others wanting romantic relationships, such as with stalkers, and can occur among different-sex and same-sex couples.

Teen dating violence can occur in person or electronically, such as through text messages or social media (e.g., TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat).

## Activity 2: Facts about Teen Dating Violence

**Instructions:** During this session activity, you will discuss six true or false questions about teen dating violence. Below are some facts to consider.

Although we may think teen dating violence does not apply to our child or our families, approximately 40% of youth report that they “date” by the time they are in the 8th grade. So, if this is not affecting your family right now, it is possible that your children will be dating in the near future, at which time, the risk for teen dating violence will also increase.

Nearly 1 in 12 high school students report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend. It is important to note that emotional violence in dating relationships is often seen before physical violence. Additionally, both boys and girls are at risk for perpetrating (abusing) and experiencing teen dating violence. However, boys are more likely than girls to inflict injuries when perpetrating teen dating violence. Although girls are less likely to cause an injury when perpetrating teen dating violence, it is still abusive and not part of a healthy relationship.

Open communication is one of the keys to ensuring that children go to their parents with any questions or problems they have, including difficult topics such as teen dating violence, sex, or drugs. We may think that by not talking about those things, our children will be less likely to think about them, or perhaps not even be interested in the topics, but the reality is that if our children are not learning information about these topics from us, they are getting the information from other sources. Parents are in the best position to be relationship educators for their children.

## Parents As Relationship Models

Parents are key in teaching children appropriate relationship skills and expectations for relationships. One of the major ways children learn is by watching others. They observe what we do and often copy these behaviors without even realizing it. In other words, we set an example for how our children will act. Being a healthy role model in the home is one of the best ways to educate our children about relationships.

Sometimes we, as parents, may be in unhealthy relationships. If you need assistance with your relationship or want to refer to other resources on this topic, check out the resources found at the end of your handbook.

## Activity 3: Relationship Scenarios

This activity will allow you to take a look at family situations to determine whether the parents are modeling healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviors.

## Session Recap

Today's session focused on healthy and unhealthy relationships, with a specific focus on teen dating violence. We are important role models in our children's lives and are in the best position to be relationship educators for our children.

What do you think was the most important thing discussed today?

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## Home Session Overview

In the next home session, you will have an opportunity to continue practicing your communication skills with your child. You will be asked to talk to your child about a difficult or sensitive topic so you can get comfortable talking with your children about anything that may happen in their life. You will also take a look at your child's relationships and determine if there are any inappropriate relationship behaviors that may need to be discussed with your child.

The information needed to complete the home session is included next. During the next group session you will share your experiences from the home session.



# Session 4: Let's Talk, Part 2

## Instructions

1. This home session contains two activities. In the first activity, you are encouraged to practice your communication skills with your child. You are encouraged to continue talking with your child about everyday stuff. This week you are also asked to engage in at least one conversation with your child about a more difficult topic, such as violence, sex, drugs, or other issues to which your child is exposed. More information about completing this activity can be found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you are encouraged to take a look at your child's relationships to determine whether there are clues that they are at risk of becoming a person who experiences or perpetrates an unhealthy relationship, such as teen dating violence. Even if your child is not involved in a dating relationship, you can look at their relationships with friends and others to get a clue about how they might act in dating relationships.  
More information about completing this activity can be found on the pages that follow.

## Activity 1: Starting a Difficult Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for you to practice using good communication skills and opening the lines of communication to talk about difficult topics.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and other difficult things in their everyday lives. They see these things in the media all the time, whether in video games, on TV, in the lyrics of music, or in books. Although these topics are often difficult for parents to discuss with their children, parents should not rely on the media or other influences in the child's life to provide correct or appropriate information. Children want to hear about these topics from their parents, even if it may not feel that way. Parents can use situations that happen in the media or everyday life to prompt conversations with their child. These situations are called "teachable moments" and are not too personal because parents do not actually discuss events that are happening in their child's life. During these conversations, parents have an opportunity to share their expectations and thoughts on the issue with their child. This opens the lines of communication so that when/ if this issue arises in the child's life, it will be easier for the child to talk to the parent about the issue.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a list of things your child likes to play, watch, listen to, or read. Choose one thing and play it, watch it, listen to it, or read it with your child. Pick an example of a tough issue, whether in a game, on a TV show, in a song, or in a book and talk about it with your child. Some examples are provided on the next page. If something has happened in the news recently, you can use it as a topic of discussion as well. Remember to actively listen to your child's opinions. At the end of the activity, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other on how you did. Although it may be difficult to do this at first, the goal should be to talk about difficult issues whenever they come up. The more you practice, the easier it gets. Being able to talk about these things at any time will increase the likelihood that when your child has a problem that is directly affecting them, they will come to you to help them solve it. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

Things My Child Likes To Do...	Issues/Topics I Would like To Discuss...
1. Play video games	1. Shooting, violence, and cursing in the games
2. Listen to rap music	2. Whether the lyrics disrespect or call women names
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

The first time you talk about a difficult topic, it may be helpful for you to think about what you will say or ways you can start the conversation. Below are some examples you can use to start conversations about the topics you may discuss.

**EXAMPLES:**

- What do you think about the violence in this game? How do you think conflict should be handled?
- How do you think women should be treated?

I can start a conversation with my child by saying...

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**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, you and your child should complete the Communication Checklists to see how the conversation went. Remember, you do not have to use each skill in every conversation but try to use the skills as much as possible.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### *Did I...*

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended question?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Communication Checklist

### Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### *Did I...*

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.



## Activity 2: My Child's Relationships

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for you to take an objective look at your child's relationships to determine whether your child is at risk of experiencing or perpetrating dating violence.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** The relationships that our children form in childhood and as teenagers are laying the foundation for the types of relationships they will have later in life. We want to make sure that these are positive, healthy relationships. The way our children act in relationships with friends and family members may be an indication of how they will act toward dating partners. As we noted in Session 3, dating violence can be physical, sexual, or emotional, and includes stalking, and individuals can be a person who experiences, perpetrates (abuses), or both. Unfortunately, many children have already experienced violence in their lives, and it can happen at a young age. Dating violence usually first happens when youth are around 12 years old, but it can begin earlier. In a recent survey, about 1 in 12 youth reported experiencing physical violence in a dating relationship. It is important parents are aware of the signs and symptoms so that they can help prevent violence before it occurs and/or stop it from happening again. We know that once these behaviors occur, there is an increased chance they will happen in later relationships.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the checklist on the next page to determine whether your child is involved in any unhealthy relationship behaviors, either as a person who experiences or perpetrates them. To do this, you can observe the behaviors of your child or you can ask them questions if you are not sure about some of the answers. Even if your child is not dating, you can look at how they interact with their friends or others in their lives to determine whether they are at risk. In the table on the next page, you can use "friend" or "dating partner" depending on your child's relationship status.

## Signs My Child May Be Involved in Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors

	My child is doing this	This is happening to my child
Calling a friend/dating partner a name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making a friend/dating partner feel bad about themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being jealous of a friend/dating partner or angry if they spend time with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criticizing a friend's/dating partner's opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreading rumors about a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to share private information about a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Controlling friends/dating partners, telling them what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolating friends/dating partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignoring friend's/dating partner's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intimidating a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lying to a friend/dating partner to manipulate them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trying to make a friend/dating partner feel guilty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to hurt oneself to make a friend/dating partner feel guilty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging friends/dating partners to do things they do not feel comfortable doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Putting down other people (e.g., other friends, family) in a friend's/dating partner's life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humiliating friends/dating partners in private or in public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfairly blaming a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurting a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insulting a friend's/dating partner's beliefs or values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally threatening friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting violent with a friend/dating partner when angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to out a friend/partner to friends or family as gay, lesbian, or bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**ASSESSMENT:** The more boxes you check in this list, the more unhealthy relationship behaviors you are noticing in your child, which means that they may be establishing unhealthy relationship patterns. When the activity is completed, you may decide that you should talk with your child about these issues, especially if you think your child is being hurt, is hurting someone else, or is at risk of being hurt or hurting someone else. Seek professional help if you need it. You may also choose to see what resources are available in your community if you need them.

## Notes:

# Session 5: Parenting Skillfully

## Parental Supervision

### Parental supervision includes:

- the expectations we have for our child's behavior.
- the actions we take to keep track of our child.
- the ways we respond when our child breaks the rules.

Supervision should start in early childhood and continue throughout the teen years, changing as children grow and mature. How the child thinks, behaves, and reacts should play a role in how much they are supervised. Children need more supervision when they fail to follow the rules that are set. Additionally, children need to be supervised—we should have clear expectations for all children's behavior.

### Supervision is important because:

- it promotes clear communication.
- it shows that we care.
- it strengthens the parent-child relationship.

Children whose parents supervise their activities are less likely to make poor decisions related to a variety of risky adolescent behavior (e.g., smoking, drinking, having sex at an early age).

### Ways Parents Can Supervise Their Children

We are using parental supervision when we ask our child the **four W's**:

- **Where** will you be?
- **Who** will you be with?
- **What** will you be doing?
- **When** will you be home?

### We are also supervising when we:

- Talk to our child about our rules and expectations, and explain the consequences for breaking the rules.
- Talk and listen to our child often about how they feel and what they are thinking.
- Know who our child's friends are.
- Talk with our child about how they spend time or whether they are making safe choices. We can do this by talking with our child about the plans they have with friends, what they are doing after school, and where they will be going.
- Set expectations for when our child will come home and expect a call if they are going to be late.
- Check in with our child by phone.
- Ask whether an adult will be present when our child is visiting a friend's home.
- Get to know our child's dating partners.
- Get to know the parents of our child's friends.
- Talk with our relatives, our neighbors, our child's teachers, and other adults who know our child. Ask them to share what they observe about our child's behaviors, moods, or friends.
- Watch how our child spends money.
- Pay attention to our child's mood and behavior at home and discuss any concerns we have.
- Enforce the consequences fairly and consistently if a rule is broken.
- Make sure our child knows how to contact us at all times.



#### **Too much supervision can:**

- Lead to problem behaviors because the child may rebel in an attempt to obtain some level of freedom.
- Limit the child's opportunities to grow and develop their independence.
- Send the message to the child that they are not trusted, which can create challenges in the parent-child relationship and affect how the child feels about themselves.

## **Supervising Children's Online Activities**

If your child's online or text messaging activities are not supervised, the following may occur:

- Exposure to online predators.
- Cyberbullying of your child or by your child towards others on social media, email, or messaging.
- "Sexting" which involves sending or encouraging someone to send sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos electronically; this is illegal and can get your child in a lot of trouble.

Information on supervising children's online activities is included on the following pages. Also included is a sample set of rules that you may use with your child to ensure their safety online.

Just as it is important to supervise your child's activities when they leave the house, it is equally important that you supervise your child's use of cell phones and the internet. Although the vast majority of people do not encounter serious problems online, children have been confronted with material that is disturbing or inappropriate.

Teenagers are particularly at risk because they often use cell phones and go online without supervision at home, at school, and at their friends' houses. They are also more likely to text and have online discussions about dating, relationships, or sexual activity. There are a number of steps you can take to supervise your child's activity online.

#### **Make sure your child understands online safety.**

- Children need to think about who they text and talk with on cell phones, as well as who they chat and communicate with online.
- Children should never text, talk, or chat about sex with strangers.
- Phones should only be used to communicate with people children know in person and trust.
- Many cell phones have GPS technology installed, which means your children can easily pinpoint their friends' physical location—or be pinpointed by their friends. Talk with your children about using such technology and advise them to use it only with friends they know in person and trust.

**Keep electronic devices such as tablets, gaming systems, and computers in a central location in the house.**

- Allows you to see what is going on.
- Makes your children more responsible about sites they are looking at.
- Children are less likely to sneak peeks at inappropriate sites or disobey rules.

**Limit internet access on smart phones.**

- Limited internet access allows you to have more control over the material your child is viewing.
- Many mobile carriers offer software that allows parents to limit the child's access to information. In addition, some companies sell phones for children and teens with access to a limited app store, texting, and voice calls but without internet access.
- If your child has web access, consider checking their browsing history occasionally to see what they have viewed. Let your child know that you may be checking what they view. Keep in mind that browser histories are easy to erase so it may not tell you everything they are viewing.

**Establish age-appropriate restrictions for your child.**

- There are services and software that allow parents to limit access to certain types of information.
- Some services allow you to personalize settings for different users.
- Even with limited access you still need to censor what your child sees.
- It is important to talk with your children about internet use and what is and is not appropriate on any devices and platforms they may be using.

**Set up family rules.**

- Sit down with your child and together work out some rules for electronic device use.
- Clearly outline to your children:
  - What kinds of searches can lead them to harmful exposure or content,
  - When they can use the electronics, and
  - How often it should be used.
- You can set electronic devices rules that are similar to the rules for phone usage. In addition to when they can use the computer, gaming systems, or tablets consider rules that address:
  - How long they can use it and
  - Who they may call or chat with.

**Remind your children that the same manners you have taught them about "real life" apply when using cell phones and the internet.**

- Cyberbullying and harassment occur via cell phones and the internet.
- Children should be encouraged to be respectful of themselves and others by not posting or sending pictures or other content via the internet or through text messages that will embarrass them (or others) or get them (or others) into trouble.
- Children should be told never to let other people photograph or film them in embarrassing or inappropriate situations (and vice versa). Once it is in the public domain, it will be with them forever.

### **Manage incoming information.**

- Teach your children about computer viruses and the computer damage they can cause.
- Explain that viruses are often attached to emails and are activated when the attachments are opened.
- Do not allow children to review attached files before you have reviewed them.

### **Set VERY firm rules about what personal information can be provided online.**

- Establish a clearly defined set of things that your child should not share with anyone online:
  - Full name
  - Address or other location information
  - Phone number
  - Personal information that would expose your child or your family to risk such as social security number and credit card numbers.
  - Passwords
  - Inappropriate or sexual photographs or videos of themselves or others
  - Other sensitive information that could cause embarrassment or risks to themselves or others
- Once information is online, it is very difficult to make it go away. Although children may not worry about this now, it can affect them in the future when applying for jobs or school.

### **No secret relationships or secret use of the electronic devices.**

- Children should not develop intimate relationships with adults, even older teenagers like 18-19 year olds, online. Teenagers haven't stopped growing in body or in mind, and they're not able to have fully mature relationships with adults.
- Make sure this rule is clearly understood.

- Help your child understand that people online may not really be who they appear to be.

### **Review what your children view.**

- Monitor which web sites your children have visited.
- Let your children know that you know what they look at, what sites they visit, and how long they spend there.
- Make sure your children understand that you are gathering this information for their protection and not to threaten or punish them.

## **Child's Rules for Online Safety**

1. I will not give out personal information such as my full name, address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.
2. I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring a parent along.
4. I will talk with my parents about posting pictures of myself or others online and will not post any pictures that my parents consider to be inappropriate.
5. I will check to make sure that my social media profiles are only visible to friends and family, and not set to be "public". I will not share my profile (e.g., friend, follow) with anyone that I do not know in real life.
6. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do I will tell my parents right away.

7. I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online and using a mobile phone. We will decide on the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate sites for me to visit. I will not access other sites or break these rules without their permission.
8. I will not give out my passwords to anyone (even my best friends) other than to my parents.
9. I will check with my parents before downloading or installing software or doing anything that could possibly hurt our computer or my mobile device or jeopardize my family's privacy.
10. I will be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.
11. I will help my parents understand how to have fun and learn things online and teach them things about the internet, computers, and other technology.

## Other Risks During The Teen Years

High school students report high rates of risky behaviors so it is important to talk to your child about the behaviors **before** they start.

- 60% of students have used alcohol
- 18% of students have tried cigarette smoking
- 36% have tried electronic vapor (“vape”) products
- 30% of students report having sex
- 48% of sexually active students say they did not use a condom the last time they had sex

Children want to talk to their parents about sex, drugs, and alcohol. When we talk to our children about risky behaviors, it does not mean that we are approving the behavior or that our children will be more likely to do it.

Instead, it will give us a chance to share our thoughts and expectations about the topic and may actually delay when our children try them.

## Resolving Conflict

Parents need a plan to resolve conflicts with their children so they can avoid arguments and model good conflict resolution skills. Sometimes, this means that both parents and children need to have a give and take approach to resolve a conflict.

## 4-Step Plan for Resolving Conflicts

### Step 1: Define the issue or problem.

- You and your child express your views about the problem
- Listen and try to understand each other's point of view
- Use good communication skills

### Step 2: Discuss possible solutions.

- You and your child suggest solutions to resolve the conflict
- Listen to each other's suggestions without interrupting or being defensive

### Step 3: Choose and use a solution.

- Review parent and child suggestions
- Choose a solution you can both agree on
- Use the solution

### Step 4: Evaluate how well the solution worked.

- Parent and child should evaluate the problem and solution after some time has passed
- If solution has not worked, start the process again at Step 1

## Session Recap

## Today's session focused on:

- The risks our children face, including dating violence, drugs, alcohol, and technology.
- Tips we can use to help prevent risky behaviors from happening in our child's life.
- Parental supervision and how supervision can be used in preventing many risky behaviors that may happen as our children get older, including teen dating violence and drug/alcohol abuse.
- The 4-step plan for resolving conflicts, which can be helpful in reducing conflict in the family and with our child and in improving our relationship with our child.

## Home Session Overview

**In the next home session, you will participate in three activities:**

- You will have an opportunity to continue practicing your communication skills with your child talking about a difficult topic that is happening in their lives.
- You will complete an activity with your child on myths and facts related to risky behaviors that may occur in the child's life.
- You will have an opportunity to think about (and hopefully get involved in) things in your community that can help prevent risky behaviors in teens.

The information needed to complete the home session is included on the following pages.

## Notes:

# Session 6: Let's Talk, Part 3

Congratulations on making it to the last session of HeaRT for Parents. This is the last home session for this program.

## Instructions:

1. This home session contains three activities. Activities 1 and 2 can be completed at the same time if you choose to do so. In the first activity, you are encouraged to continue to practice your communication skills with your child about everyday topics while also having at least one conversation about a difficult and potentially personal topic. You can choose a difficult topic that you know may be relevant to your child or you can use Activity 2 as an opportunity to ask your child questions about a number of different topics. You and your child will complete a communication checklist after completing the activity. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you will complete a myth versus fact activity with your child about a number of risky teenage behaviors. This activity will provide you with an opportunity to dispel any myths that your child (and maybe you) believes to be true. This activity also may allow you an opportunity to talk with your child about how these behaviors are affecting both of your lives. In your discussion with your child, you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and expectations about these behaviors. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
3. After completing this program, many parents feel like they want to do more to address issues affecting their children, their children's friends, and other teens in their community. The third activity provides some suggestions for activities you can do in your community. You can also generate your own ideas for things specific to your community. Even if you decide to focus on your own children, remember that talking to them about their experiences and helping them make good choices is key. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.

Thank you for your time and hard work in this program. We hope that the information you have received will be helpful for you in parenting your child. Remember that you are the expert on your child—some of the strategies and tips might work well for you and your family, while others will not work as well. Feel free to use what works best for you and your family.

## Activity 1: Starting a Difficult & Personal Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent to practice using good communication skills and opening the lines of communication to talk about difficult topics.

**TIME NEEDED:** 20 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and risky behaviors in their lives on a daily basis. Even if they do not have these things happening to them directly, they have friends who are likely affected by them. In fact, dating violence usually first happens when youth are around 12 years old, but it can begin earlier. In a recent survey, 1 in 12 youth reported experiencing physical violence in a dating relationship. In addition, millions of adolescents each year become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted infection. Unfortunately, exposure to some of these things can cause problems in children's lives and prevent them from reaching their goals in life. We know that conversations with children about difficult topics can delay their engagement in the activity. For example, if parent-child communication about sex occurs before the child has sex, the child is more likely to delay the first sexual experience and less likely to participate in risky sexual behaviors, like having sex without condoms.

**Instructions:** Make a list of difficult topics that you would like to discuss with your child. You do not have to provide your child with all of the information you would like for them to have related to a particular topic, but you can start a conversation that will continue in the weeks, months, and years to come. When you begin the conversation with your child, remember to actively listen to your child's opinions. At the end of the activity, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other on how you did. Remember, the more you practice talking with your child, the easier it gets, and it increases the likelihood that your child will come to you with any problems they are having. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

**These are topics I want to talk to my child about...**

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**I can start a conversation with my child by saying...**

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**Assessment:** When the activity is completed, you and your child should complete the Communication Checklists to see how the conversation went. Remember, you do not have to use each skill in every conversation but try to use the skills as much as possible.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended question?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Communication Checklist

### Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Activity 2: Myth or Fact

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent and child to have an opportunity to talk and dispel myths related to pressures that teens face.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** As we said before, children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and risky behaviors in their lives on a daily basis. Even if they do not have these things happening to them directly, they have friends who do. Parents have a special role to protect teens from the bad effects this risky behavior can have on their health. Parents have a chance on many occasions and over time to talk to their children about what they think and feel about these issues and what they expect. Chances are that by being open, honest, and respectful, parents will prevent their child from taking risks or make them more careful about risks so that the consequences are not as bad. Parents can help prevent their child from taking risks by listening and talking openly, by being respectful of the child's thoughts, and by paying attention and setting age appropriate limits.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Go through the Myth or Fact activity with your child. Use the questions as an opportunity to ask your child whether the issues have affected them directly or if they know people who have been affected. Remember, the more you practice talking with your child about these issues, the easier it gets, and it increases the likelihood that your child will come to you with any problems they are having. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

As you have in the past, think about how you can use the questions in this activity to start a conversation with your child. On the next page are some examples you can use.

### EXAMPLES:

- It sounds like boys can experience teen dating violence. Why do you think this happens?
- Respect and trust in relationships is important. How do you show someone you trust and respect them?

I can start a conversation with my child by saying...

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**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, think about how your conversations went with your child. List below any issues you would like to follow-up on with your child at a later time.

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For each of the following questions, circle the answer you think is correct.

### Myth or Fact?

1. Dating violence cannot happen to my child.	MYTH	FACT
2. Teenage boys rarely experience dating violence.	MYTH	FACT
3. Parents/caregivers would know if their teen is being abused by a dating partner.	MYTH	FACT
4. Witnessing violence in the home increases a child's risk for experiencing or perpetrates teen dating violence.	MYTH	FACT
5. Teen dating violence happens in same-sex relationships as often as it happens in straight relationships.	MYTH	FACT
6. Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.	MYTH	FACT
7. Being insulted a few times by someone you are dating is not that big of a deal, as long as there is no physical violence.	MYTH	FACT
8. When dating abuse happens once, it is likely to happen again.	MYTH	FACT

## Myth or Fact?

9. Most people who experience sexual violence do not know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.	MYTH	FACT
10. Alcohol is not as harmful for my teen as other types of drugs or substances like marijuana or prescription pills.	MYTH	FACT
11. Sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies really do not occur that frequently among adolescents.	MYTH	FACT
12. Teens from families that have open communication about sex and its potential risks have more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually transmitted infections, like HIV.	MYTH	FACT
13. Motor vehicle (car) crashes are the leading cause of death among teens.	MYTH	FACT
14. Suicide is common among teens.	MYTH	FACT
15. Cyberbullying typically happens by people you do not know.	MYTH	FACT

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

1. Dating violence cannot happen to my child.  <b>About 1 in 12 high school students say that they have experienced physical dating violence in the past year, and almost 1 in 9 say they have experienced sexual dating violence in the past year.</b>	MYTH
2. Teenage boys rarely experience dating violence.  <b>About equal numbers of boys and girls experience physical dating violence. However, girls experience higher rates of dating violence overall including physical and sexual dating violence.</b>	MYTH
3. Parents/caregivers would know if their teen is being abused by a dating partner.  <b>Most teens involved in dating abuse do not tell their parents. Only 33% of teens who experience dating violence ever tell anyone about the dating violence. Teens will go to great lengths to hide it because they feel embarrassed, ashamed, and afraid of losing their independence. Teens often say they are afraid their parents will overreact, be judgmental, or make them end a relationship they are not ready to end.</b>	MYTH
4. Witnessing violence in the home increases a child's risk for experiencing or perpetrates teen dating violence.  <b>When we are young, we learn a lot about how to communicate with others by watching our parents/guardians. Still, many teens who are involved in dating violence have never witnessed any violence between their parents. And, it is never an excuse. Everyone has the power to decide how to treat others.</b>	FACT
5. Teen dating violence happens in same-sex relationships as often as it happens in straight relationships.  <b>Anyone can experience abuse and violence in their relationships and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are no different.</b>	FACT

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

<p>6. Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.</p> <p><b>Jealousy and possessiveness are warning signs of teen dating violence. Healthy relationships (where someone really cares about the other person) are characterized by trust and room to be oneself.</b></p>	MYTH
<p>7. Being insulted a few times by someone you are dating is not that big of a deal, as long as there is no physical violence.</p> <p><b>Insulting someone shows disrespect which is a type of emotional violence. Many people who experience physical violence say that the person they were with used emotional violence before they used physical violence.</b></p>	MYTH
<p>8. When dating abuse happens once, it is likely to happen again.</p> <p><b>Abuse usually occurs again in the relationship—it does not just go away.</b></p>	FACT
<p>9. Most people who experience sexual violence do not know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.</p> <p><b>More than half of females and males who experience sexual violence know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.</b></p>	MYTH
<p>10. Alcohol is not as harmful for my teen as other types of drugs or substances like marijuana or prescription pills.</p> <p><b>Drinking in early adolescence is one of the most important risk factors for a wide variety of problems during the transition to young adulthood. Young people who report drinking alcohol in the 7th grade are more likely to use hard drugs, have drug/alcohol problems (e.g., treatment, been arrested for drunk driving), and engage in violent or criminal behavior than those who do not report drinking in the 7th grade.</b></p>	MYTH

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

<p>11. Sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies really do not occur that frequently among adolescents.</p> <p><b>Adolescents ages 15-24 account for nearly half of all new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) each year; young people acquired 11.9 million STIs in 2018. While the teenage pregnancy rate has declined almost continuously since the 1990s and fewer than 2% of teen girls became pregnant in 2019 , the vast majority of those pregnancies are unintended.</b></p>	MYTH
<p>12. Teens from families that have open communication about sex and its potential risks have more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually-transmitted infections, like HIV..</p> <p><b>Family communication about sex and its potential risks has been found to relate to more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV, among adolescents.</b></p>	FACT
<p>13. Motor vehicle (car) crashes are the leading cause of death among teens.</p> <p><b>Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for nearly 1 in 3 deaths in this age group.</b></p>	FACT
<p>14. Suicide is common among teens.</p> <p><b>In 2021 suicide was the third leading cause of death among high school students ages 14-18 years. However, suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts among youth were higher. The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that approximately 1 in 3 female high school students and almost 1 in 7 male high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.</b></p>	FACT
<p>15. Cyberbullying typically happens by people you do not know.</p> <p><b>Nearly 3 out of 4 teens know who is cyberbullying them. Nearly 1 in 6 teens report that they have experienced some form of cyberbullying in the last year. Girls experience cyberbullying more often than boys, with the highest rates reported by girls in 10th grade. More U.S. high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual report having been cyberbullied in the past year than their straight peers.</b></p>	MYTH

## **Activity 3: Adult and Community Responsibility for Preventing Problem Behaviors in Adolescents**

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for parents to understand what they can do to prevent teen dating violence.

**TIME NEEDED:** 10 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Although talking with your child about violence, sex, and drugs can be uncomfortable or tough at times, the good news is that you have a chance to share your thoughts and expectations. You also have a chance to prevent your child from participating in unhealthy behaviors. The focus of this activity is things you can do to prevent unhealthy behaviors in your community and in the lives of your child's friends. It is also our responsibility as concerned and caring citizens to do our best to promote healthy choices in our community.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Below is a list of things you can do to prevent teen dating violence and other risky behaviors that often occur during the teen years.

**Model healthy relationship behaviors** and take a stand when others do not do the same.

**Spread awareness** of how often these issues occur by talking with other parents, educators, friends, and neighbors.

**Pass out information at various venues** such as churches, community centers, libraries, or PTA meetings—just make sure the information you are passing out comes from a good and reliable source, such as one of the websites at the end of this handbook.

**Join groups that already exist in your community** whose goal is to decrease these problem behaviors, or volunteer your time during a busy period for the group. For example, February is teen dating violence awareness and prevention month and many rape and domestic violence centers plan activities for the month of February. You can volunteer your time to assist with teen dating violence prevention activities that occur in February.

**Host or participate in community events**, such as suicide prevention marches or fundraisers for groups focusing on issues relevant to youth.

**Organize or participate in informational courses for parents and teens** such as HeaRT for Parents.

**Organize school- or community-wide pledges** where everyone takes the pledge and takes a stand against the issue. For example, if you want to decrease the rate of car accidents among teens in your community, you can try to get all teens in the community who drive to agree to no texting while driving or no cell phones while driving.

In the space below, make a list of things you can do to prevent unhealthy or risky adolescent behaviors from happening in your community.

As a member of my community, as a neighbor, and as a friend, these are things I can do to prevent unhealthy and risky behaviors for the adolescents in my community. These can be items listed above or things that will work in my community.

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If you decide to do something on a large scale in your community, you can use the table below to help figure out your next steps to taking action.

<b>Issue:</b> (what issue do I want to address?)	
<b>Target groups:</b> (who do I want to be the focus of my efforts/who do I want to reach?)	
<b>Event description:</b> (what type of event will I plan?)	
<b>Location of event:</b> (e.g., school, park)	<b>Date/time of event:</b>
<b>Marketing materials/plan:</b> (what will I do, what materials will I use to let people know about what I am doing?)	
<b>Slogan:</b> (will I have a catchy phrase or some way for people to remember or recognize my activities?)	

## Notes:

# Appendices

## **Thank you for your time in completing HeaRT for Parents.**

We hope this information will be helpful for you as a parent. We also hope that your children are able to reach their goals in life. Sometimes parents who participate in programs like HeaRT for Parents start to take a close look at their own lives and relationships. If you have any questions about the information that has been presented, feel free to ask your facilitators for additional resources. You also may wish to talk to family members, friends, neighbors, clergy, or other individuals you can trust if you have questions or concerns. We wish you the best of luck in parenting during the teen years!



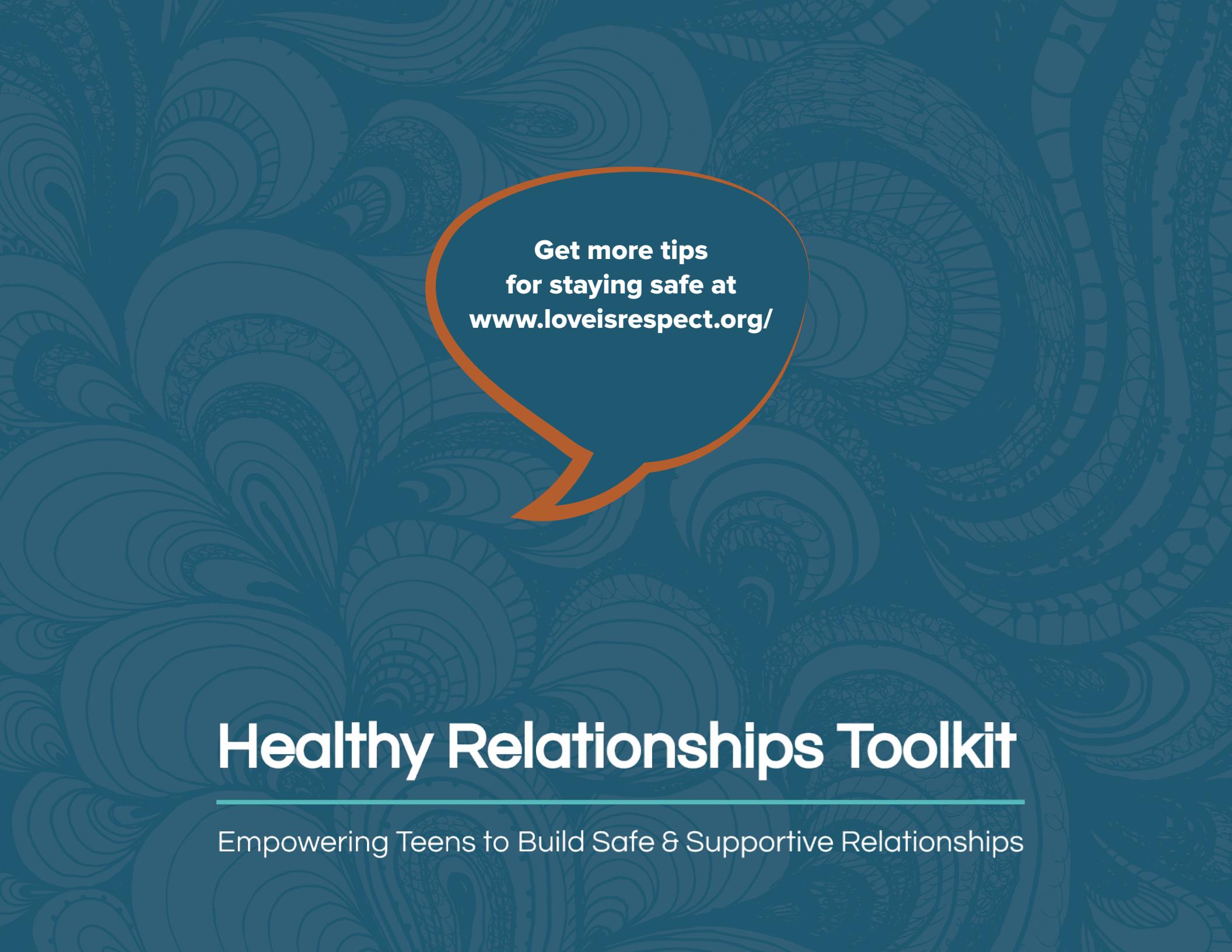
## Appendix A: Local Resources for Parents

## Possible Local Resources

- Alcohol and drug prevention and treatment programs
- Child care
- Cultural resources and services
- Education programs (include schools)
- Family counseling services
- Food bank
- Health services, clinics, and hospitals
- Job training
- Library
- Parks and recreation programs
- Pregnancy services
- Social services
- State child health insurance programs
- STI/HIV counseling, testing, and treatment services
- Transportation
- Violence prevention programs and shelters
- Youth programs

## Notes:





Get more tips  
for staying safe at  
[www.loveisrespect.org/](http://www.loveisrespect.org/)

# Healthy Relationships Toolkit

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Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships