



dating violence

info for young people

Domestic Violence Prevention Centre
Gold Coast Inc.

domestic violence prevention centre gold coast inc.

free confidential counselling and support

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young people & relationships

Being in a relationship or going out on a date with someone new can be one of the best experiences, but there is no denying that dating and relationships can also be daunting and challenging too, particularly when you are just starting out.



Between ages of 16 and 25 is a time of rapid growth and change where young people's identity grows and develops. During this time you learn much about the world around you and you will discover many things about yourself too. It's likely you will date several different people who might be all quite different from one another. This is not surprising given how much you are likely to grow and change over this time. All of these very normal and an expected part of being a teenager and growing up.

It is important to prepare yourself for relationships and dating. You can do that by knowing how to recognise the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships and knowing what to know if things go wrong. This will help you enjoy this fantastic time and live your life to the fullest so you can enjoy getting to know plenty of people.

healthy relationships

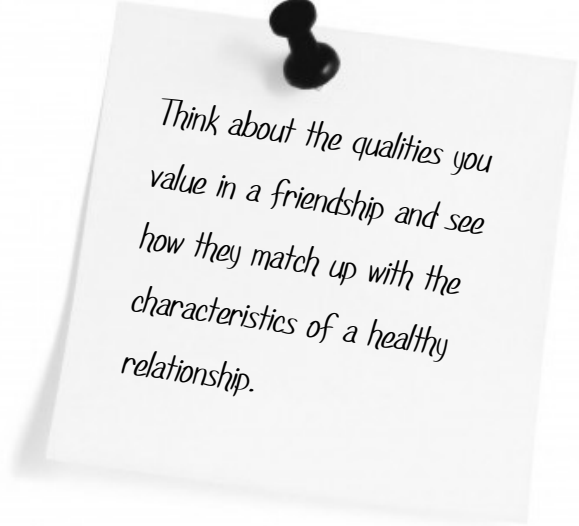
In a healthy relationship both people show respect, trust, and consideration for the other person. Each person feels valued for who they are, and their beliefs, culture and choices are respected. Each person encourages and supports the other's goals, talents and strengths.

Both people value the other person's feelings and opinions even when they are different from their own, and they each listen to the other without judging the other person. You feel like you can talk to one another openly even if you disagree you can discuss it without yelling or shouting. Decisions are agreed upon together and apply equally to both people. Both people can accept responsibility for their own actions, acknowledge their mistakes and admit when they are wrong. In a healthy relationship both partners always feel completely safe with one another no matter what, and feel totally comfortable expressing their opinions and making their own decisions.

Both parties are always honest with each other and you trust one another. You both respect each others privacy and recognise that it's okay to keep certain things private about yourself. Each person decides where they go, what they do and who they are with. You both trust each other, and you both behave in ways that shows the other person you can be trusted. Both of you maintain your friendships with others and your relationships with family, and you participate in activities outside of the relationship. You both enjoy spending time apart and respect when one of you wants some space.

You make consensual decisions about sex together and respect each other's opinions. You can talk about what's okay and what isn't. Each person feels okay about saying no to any sexual activity they are not comfortable with, and their decisions are respected.





Think about the qualities you value in a friendship and see how they match up with the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

The following is a list of some of the essential ingredients of a healthy relationship:

- enjoy each other's company and have fun together more often than not
- both enjoy spending time separately with your own friends, as well as with each other's friends
- always feel safe with each other
- trust each other
- support each other's individual goals in life, like getting a job, studying or travel
- respect each other's opinions, even when they are different
- able to resolve conflicts without putting each other down, yelling or making threats
- both accept responsibility for your actions
- each person apologises when they are wrong
- each person has a say in decision-making about what happens in the relationship
- each person controls their own money
- both are proud to be with each other
- both encourage each other's interests such as sports and other activities.
- both have some privacy - things like your email, texts, or phone calls are respected.
- your friends and family like your partner and are happy about the relationship.
- you never feel like you're being pressured for sex.
- you allow each other 'space' when you need it.
- You both always treat each other with respect.

dating myths and realities

Myth: Young women are at greatest risk of being assaulted by strangers.

Reality Check: Young women are at far greater risk of being assaulted by a male they know. Dating partners are more dangerous than strangers.

Myth: Jealousy is a sign of love.

Reality Check: Jealousy is the most common reason for assaults in dating relationships. When a man continually accuses a woman of flirting or having an affair, and is suspicious of everyone he sees with her, he is possessive and controlling. This is not a sign of love.

Myth: When a girl gets hit by her boyfriend she must have provoked him in some way.

Reality Check: No one ever deserves to be hit, violence is always wrong.

Myth: Women in abusive dating relationships stay because in the relationship because they like bad boys.

Reality Check: Young women who are abused by their dating partners do not enjoy being abused. Often young women want to improve their relationship rather than end it. Girls often feel social pressure to stick it out because having a "bad" boyfriend is considered better than having no boyfriend at all.

Myth: If a guy pays for a date then he has a right to expect sexual favours.

Reality Check: Initiating or paying for a date does not entitle anyone to sex with someone.

Myth: You can tell if someone is going to be abusive by looking at them.

Reality Check: It is impossible to tell by looking at someone, there is no typical abuser. They come in all shapes and sizes, it could be someone at your school, at your gym, someone you meet at a party or the person you live next door to.

Myth: It'll never happen to me!

Reality Check: Dating violence can happen to you. It is not limited to a particular social class, or any single ethnic or racial group. Some women are victimized on their first date while others are assaulted after dating a long time. Everyone is at risk.



Myth : Guys don't experience the same emotions as girls

Reality Check : Guys feel exactly the same range of emotions as girls. However in our society some guys are reluctant to publicly express certain emotions such as sadness or fear as there is a perception it is not masculine to do so.

Myth : Guys think how a girl looks is really important

Reality Check : Girls and guys are often attracted to how someone looks initially but in reality it is what is on the inside that counts. The things that hold a relationship together are traits such as intelligence, a sense of humour, a fun personality and someone who is caring and honest are far more attractive than just good looks alone.

Myth : Guys and girls are so different

Reality Check : Guys and girls are different, but generally both want similar things in their relationships with others such as feeling safe and secure, to have friends they can rely on, to be respected for who they are.

Myth : Guys are intimidated by confident intelligent girls so girls should act dumb if they want a guy to go out with them.

Reality Check : If a guy is intimidated by confident and intelligent young women, this guy is probably not the right guy for you. Remember no-one is right for everyone.

Myth : Girls are kinder, gentler and more relationship orientated than guys.

Reality Check : This is a massive generalisation—yes some guys are looking for a relationship and others aren't. In a healthy relationship guys are caring, loving and gentle.

Myth : Love conquers all

Reality Check : Love is a strong and powerful emotion and when you're in love it is wonderful. However, you have to make sure there is also respect, that you share similar values and you have good communication. Loving someone unfortunately is not enough to ensure you will be happy.

Myth : When a girl says no to sex she really means yes, she's embarrassed to say so.

Reality Check : No always means **NO**, end of story.



what is dating violence?

Dating violence is not an argument or a disagreement about which movie to see or what to do on the weekend. Dating violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour used by one person in a dating relationship to cause fear to try to gain **power and control** over another person. Dating violence is serious.

It can happen to anyone at any age, and between different sex or same sex couples, no matter what culture, race or religion they are, no matter what their level of education, or their socio-economic background. Dating violence is confusing and frightening at any age, but for young people just starting it can be difficult and confusing. Dating violence can cause injury and even death.

Dating violence can include one or all of the following six types of abuse:

- Dating violence is physical violence
- Dating violence is verbal abuse
- Dating violence is emotional abuse
- Dating violence is psychological abuse
- Dating violence is sexual abuse
- Dating violence is economic abuse

When the abuse is physical or sexual, it can be easier to recognise than other forms of abuse such as emotional abuse can cause serious psychological harm.

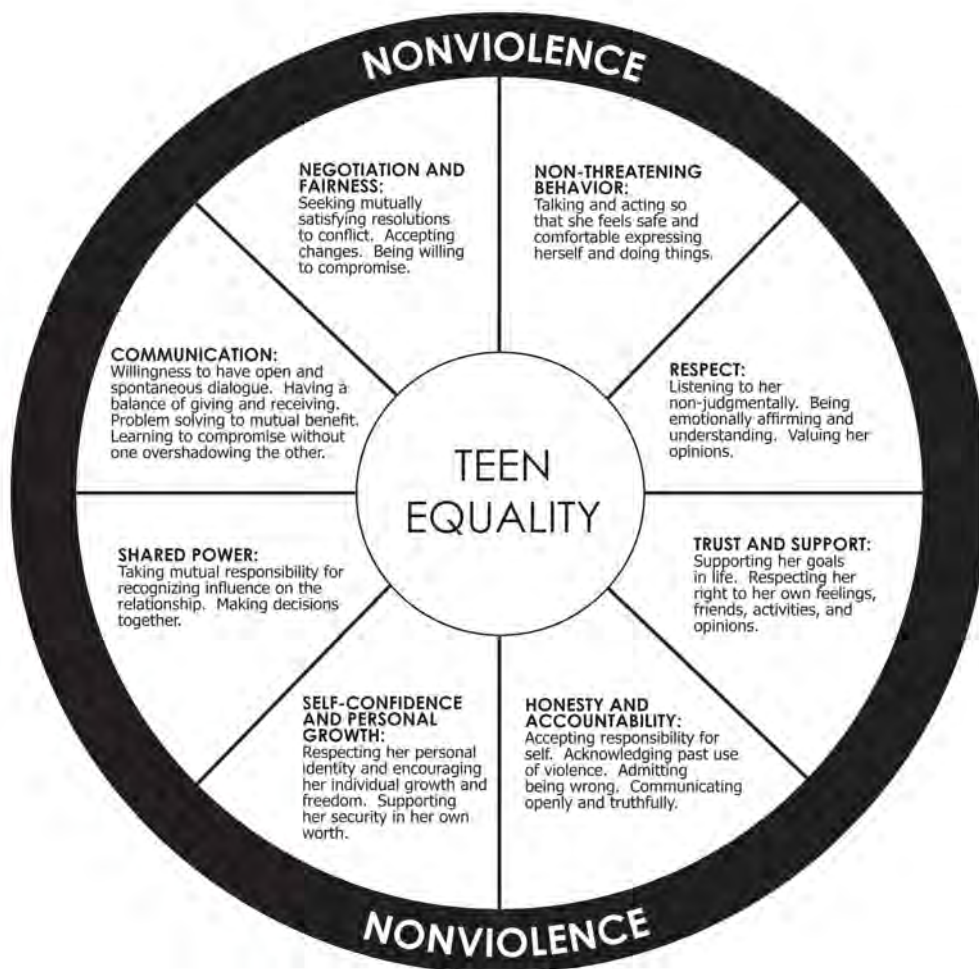
the facts

- It is difficult to know the exact number of young people who are affected by dating violence as it is often not reported to the police or other authorities but surveys show dating violence is not uncommon among young people aged 12 –25.
- Younger women are most often victims of dating violence.
- It is estimated 1 in 4 young women aged 18 –24 have experienced some violence from a current partner or a previous partner.
- Dating violence has serious implications for the health and wellbeing of young people. Physical health including sexual and reproductive health of young women and mental health are seriously affected by dating violence.
- Domestic violence is a leading contributor to death, disability and illness for Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years (Vic Health 2004).
- Women who have been exposed to violence report poorer physical health overall, are more likely to engage in practices that are harmful to their health (WHO 2000).



healthy relationships

EQUALITY in Dating Relationships



Adapted from:
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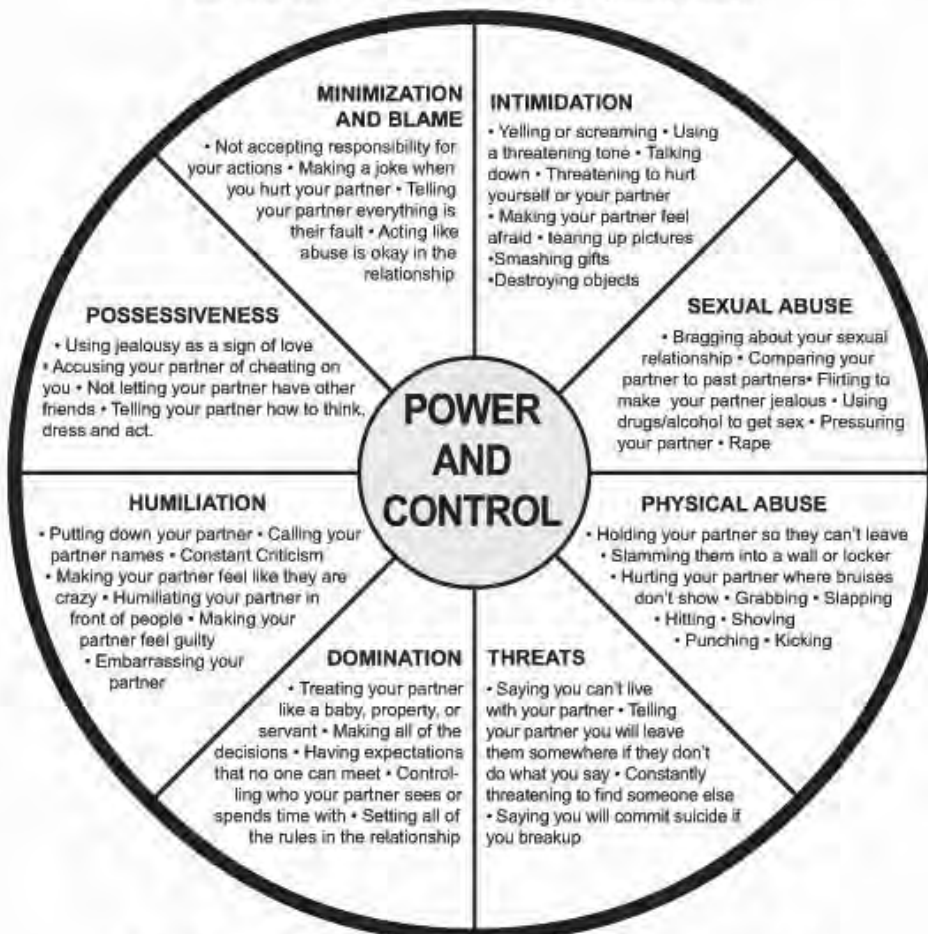


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dating violence

POWER & CONTROL in Dating Relationships

When one person in a relationship repeatedly scares, hurts or puts down the other person, it is abuse. The Power & Control Wheel lists examples of each form of abuse. Remember, abuse is much more than slapping or grabbing someone.



A relationship full of control is really out of control.

Adapted with permission from the "Power & Control and Equality Wheels," developed by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN

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UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE



emotional abuse

Emotional abuse also known is when one person tries to control the other person's feelings and thoughts causing them to feel afraid and hurt it can cause as much if not more pain than physical violence. It is important to know emotional abuse as it will usually start first before there is ever any physical abuse. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise because unlike physical violence it is not always obvious when it is happening. It might begin subtly and progress as the relationship continues, increasing the chances that physical abuse will occur within the relationship.

The following are examples of emotional abuse:

- * acting possessively
- * sending threatening messages or excessive amounts of text messages
- * keeping constant tabs on a person
- * trying to access other persons Facebook, MySpace, email account or messages
- * giving you no privacy
- * having to justify yourself
- * making fun of your family, cultural identity or racial background
- * embarrassing or humiliating you in public
- * withholding affection as a way of punishing you
- * controlling where you go, what you wear, and who you're friends with
- * making all the decisions in the relationship
- * Threatening to harm themselves or someone else to make you feel guilty
- * using jealousy to justify controlling behavior
- * threatening to break up with you if they don't get their own way
- * accusing you of cheating on them
- * playing mind games to try to make you think you are going crazy

Laura

At first, I couldn't believe it when Laura starting going out with Mike. Every girl at school wanted him how did she do it? He played rugby, his family was well-off, and he was so hot. He was really thoughtful too—he was always picking Laura up for school, buying her lots of stuff. He even bought her an iphone. I was jealous, my boyfriend never even bought me flowers. She was always telling me how much she loved being with him. He called her all the time just to see what she was and to tell her that he loved her.

It was like they were totally obsessed with each other. Actually, it was more like he was obsessed with her. She stopped playing netball because Mike wanted to spend more time with her. I know when you start seeing someone, it's new and everything and you want to spend time with them, but giving up your favourite sport? He was always buying her stuff, it was like he was trying to own her or something. I kept telling her it was weird, and that you shouldn't have to buy people things to make them care about you. She told me he'd been so good to her and she felt guilty about not being with him.

We barely saw each other, and if we did, he would always check up on her. We couldn't even get coffee without him wanting to know where she was. I finally had it and told her he was being so controlling-buying her things so

she felt like she owed everything to him, wanting to be with her all the time. She has to answer the phone



whenever he calls and trust me he's always texting and calling it drives me crazy.

We stopped catching up so much, I told Laura she wasn't the same person when she was with Mike, and she told me I didn't know what it was like to be in love. Well, if being "in love" is having to be with your boyfriend 24-7 and always worrying about upsetting him, I didn't want that kind of life. How could she not see the way Mike was turning her into something else he owned? She let him buy her like he bought all those presents. It was so obvious to me that something was wrong, but when I pointed out his controlling behaviour, she was really defensive about it. I'm really worried about what is going to happen to Laura.

verbal abuse

Verbal abuse is a way of controlling someone and hurting them the other person with words. This type of abuse is stuff like teasing, bullying, and humiliating threat, intimidation, putdowns, and betrayal all can really hurt — not just during the time it's happening, but long after too.

Verbal abuse includes:

- insulting the other person
- calling the other person names e.g. Slut, bitch
- yelling at the other person
- putting them down
- frequently swearing at the other person
- deliberately embarrassing you in public
- frequently criticizing the other person
- frequently correcting the other



Sarah

Sarah is gay, but she hasn't told her parents yet, they'd completely freak out. She and Matt are twins, they're really close and tell each other everything. Matt told me about Sarah, because he's really worried about her. He thinks Sarah's girlfriend is abusing her. He said he doesn't know for sure, but sometimes Sarah has weird bruises on her arms, and she cries a lot when she's by herself. Honestly, I didn't even think gay couples fought like that. I thought it was just stupid guys who think they own everybody.

I started paying more attention to Sarah and Jessica. We were all in the same class at school, so I ran into them all the time. Everyone thought they were best friends, so it wasn't weird that they were always together. I noticed that Jessica always did all the talking, while Sarah never said a word. Jessica was always poking fun at Sarah, joking about her clothes and how she should watch what she ate. Sarah always smiled but she looked like she didn't want to be there.

One day, I got out of class early and was walking to my car. I heard someone yelling, and when I turned the corner, I saw Jessica pushing Sarah and threatening to tell everybody that Sarah was gay. "You're nothing. Nobody likes you but me and if I tell the school, it's over for you. Everybody will hate you. I love you and I want what's best, but if you keep pissing me off I'm going to do something!" Sarah was in tears, promising Jessica that she loved her and would do whatever she



wanted. I ran to the car and told Matt what had happened. He was so mad I was worried he might do something drastic, but he didn't thank god. We were both there when Sarah got home, she looked awful, her eyes were puffy. Matt told her what I had seen and he asked her how could she let someone treat her like this? Why hadn't she said anything?

Sarah didn't say a word-she just stood there, looking like she'd been caught stealing. She told Matt no one could find out that she was gay, and Jessica threatened her to tell everyone. Sarah felt so guilty and stupid for getting into this mess, she thought she had no other option but to stay. When Jessica was in a good mood, she was great. But if she was angry or upset, Sarah was always to blame. Matt didn't understand why Sarah wouldn't just break up with Jessica, but Sarah kept saying no one could love her and understand her the way Jessica did.

physical abuse

Physical abuse is any behavior meant to cause hurt to another person's body or to control the other person's physical freedom or movement. Physical abuse can cause serious injury and even death. If your partner is physical with you, there is a very strong possibility it will happen again.

The following are some examples of physical abuse:

- * Grabbing
- * Kicking
- * Pinching
- * Biting
- * Pulling Hair
- * Burning
- * Choking
- * Pushing or Shoving
- * Arm twisting
- * Slapping
- * Punching
- * Holding someone down or blocking the doorway so they can't leave
- * Throwing objects at the other person
- * Using weapons to hurt or threaten someone
- * Grabbing someone by arm so they do not leave
- * Holding someone against their will, trapping someone in a room or a car
- * Abandoning someone in an unsafe place - forcing you out of car at night
- * Hiding car keys, shoes, clothes, or money
- * Standing in front of car so person cannot leave
- * Sabotaging the car to prevent a person from leaving
- * Refusing to help someone when they are sick or injured
- * Chasing
- * Following or stalking someone
- * Holding fist in air threatening to punch someone.
- * Punching a hole in the wall next to someone's head.



Paul and Ella

When I started at my new school I didn't know very many people. I met Paul in the first week. He looked much older than the rest of us, and he seemed mysterious, the "bad boy" kind of guy. A couple of days later he called my house. He had gotten my number from one of my friends...I couldn't believe he was making such an effort for me. We talked for an hour, and he asked if he could come over that Saturday.

At first things were great. Well, sort of. A lot of girls would tell me he was just using me, I thought they were just jealous, but it still hurt to hear them say that. I'd try to just ignore them. When I asked him about it, he'd tell me that guys said stuff like that to him too, "they're just jealous of what we have" he'd say. Sometimes Paul wasn't so nice. He was always making jokes, especially in front of other people. But sometimes he took it too far like the day we all went to a friend's house after school and Paul pulled out a pocket knife, and was showing it off. Suddenly I felt Paul holding me very tightly from behind. I yelled at him to stop it and everyone told him to let go of me, and finally he did, laughing, and kissing me and telling me to calm down. I hated when he embarrassed me like that.

When we were alone one day he started to get really aggressive. All he ever talked about was when we were going to have sex. He knew I wasn't ready, but he thought eventually I'd give in. He started accusing me of liking other guys, and he'd get mad at me if I didn't call him first before going to a friend's house.



I'd get upset, and we'd fight, but I just cared about him so much...Finally I broke up with him. But the next day, seeing him so sad in school, it broke my heart. He asked me for a hug and suddenly, the next thing I knew we were kissing again, and he was holding my hand and walking me to my next class. I kept trying to end things, but he'd write me these love notes, or come over to talk, and suddenly, we'd be back together again. Maybe this is love, I thought, but something told me it wasn't.

We started fighting in school but the worse our fights got, the nicer he was afterwards, and I just couldn't end it. He'd tell me no one would ever love me the way he did, and I started to believe him. The thought of being alone was scary. But then it got worse. One day we were arguing and he started getting angrier and angrier, and he suddenly got this crazy look in his eye. I tried to get away, but he held me there and I screamed. Thank goodness a teacher saw what was happening and he was suspended.

His parents didn't want it to go on his school record, so he left the school. It was only then that I was able to get away from him.



sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior that is forced or manipulated. It can happen to anyone - guy or girl, young or old, heterosexual or gay. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional. It is wrong to be forced into participating in any type of sexual experience that you don't want. Being a victim of sexual assault is one of the most violating experiences anyone can endure and it can cause immediate, as well as long-term, physical and mental health consequences. The following are some examples of sexual abuse:

- manipulating or pressuring someone into having sex by using guilt trips or making threats
- touching someone when they don't want you to or grabbing or touching genitals or breasts
- using force during sex even if it was 'playful'
- treating partner like a sex object
- threatening to break up or hurt them if they say no to sex or saying they'll get it from someone else
- lying to get them to agree to sexual acts
- ripping or tearing at someone's clothes
- forcing someone to take off their clothes
- forcing someone into any kind of sexual act
- forcing someone into sexual acts with a third person
- forcing someone to watch sex between others
- taking pictures or videos of someone undressing without their consent
- rape with an object
- rough sex that hurts
- withholding sex as a way of manipulating someone into doing what you want
- having sex with someone when they are too drunk or too stoned to make a decision
- spiking someone's drink and having sex while they're incapacitated to make a decision


Kim

Kim was invited to a party at the celebrate David's 19th birthday. Kim and knew David were friends from school and Kim knew quite a few other people who were going. It was going to be a great party.

David's parents were away for the weekend and everyone was excited about the party, Kim was really looking forward to going.

There were heaps of people at the party, including Steve her ex-boyfriend who she broke up with last year. Everyone was having a great time. As the evening progressed Kim had quite a bit to drink. After a whilst she decided to lay down as she wasn't feeling well and try to sleep it off, she and curled up in David's bedroom where she passed out.

When Kim woke up she realised she was partly undressed and Steve, whom she had dated for a while last year, was sitting on the side of the bed grinning at her. Kim couldn't remember what had happened.



*A guy who rates you or other girls
as a number from 1 to 10 is a
loser, even if he gives you a 10.
You're a young woman, not some
animal in a cattle yard.*



financial abuse



Financial abuse is a type of dating violence where money is used as a means of having power and control over a person in a relationship. Financial abuse can look different depending on the relationship.

Sometimes the abuser will expect the victim to pay for everything all the time but refuses to do the same for you. Or if the abuser does buy something for you he will use it as a means of trying to control you.

Sometimes the victim is prevented from working so that they are totally dependant on their partner. Or if they are permitted to work then they have to give their whole pay to the abuser.

Often the abusive partner will withhold money, credit cards, food, clothes, medication from the victim. When the victim asks for money the abuser will deny them so they have to beg their partner for everyday necessities such as food. Other times the abuser may give their partner some money but not enough to buy everything, and often the partner has to be able to account for every cent and provide receipts to the abuser.

Often the victim ends up with all the bills in their name but they are prevented from seeing bank statements and bills and the abuse destroys their partners credit rating.



The following are some examples of financial abuse:

- * one person controls all the money
- * one person takes the others money
- * stealing from the other person
- * not allowing the other person to work
- * not allowing the other person to have access to bank accounts or statements
- * one person has to account for every cent spent, supply receipts
- * not giving the other person enough money to live on
- * forcing the other partner to hand over their income
- * forcing the other person to go into debt for them
- * spending family payment or child support money on themselves
- * ruining the credit rating of victim
- * controlling access to food and
- * using victims money to feed gambling addiction
- * forging the victims signature to get a credit card or other loan.



Is your relationship healthy?

Do you sometimes wonder if the things happening in your relationship are normal? Does the way your boyfriend or girlfriend treats you bother you? The following questions may help you decide if your relationship is healthy or not.

Do you not see friends because your of his or her jealousy?

YES NO

Are you frequently accused of things you haven't done?

YES NO

Are you constantly blamed for arguments or problems, and is everything said to be your fault?

YES NO

Does your partner always want to know what you're doing and whom you are with?

YES NO

Are you constantly criticised about your body or your looks?

YES NO

Have you had lies told about you or been humiliated in front of your friends by your partner?

YES NO

Are you told how lucky you are to have him/her, since no one else would ever want you?

YES NO

Does your partner threaten to hurt you or others if you end the relationship?

YES NO

Have you become secretive with or hostile toward your parents because of this relationship?

YES NO

Are you protective of your partner when he/she mistreats you - do you rationalize their behavior?

YES NO

Have you ever been grabbed or shoved by your partner?

YES NO

is your behaviour abusive?

Are you concerned that you may be abusive ? Have friends or family ever told you they thought your behaviour was controlling? Abusive behaviour is a pattern of behaviour designed to have power and control over another person and causing fear. Abusive behaviour has no place in a healthy normal relationship.

Do you ever:

- Call your dating partner derogatory names?
- Text or call them excessively and get upset when they don't respond?
- Monitor their email, phone or keep checking their Facebook profile?
- Feel you have a right or need to know where they are most of the time?
- Get jealous or angry when they spend time with friends or family?
- Ask them to change their clothes or style of dress?
- Get in their face during a disagreement?
- Push, slap, or punch them for any reason?
- Restrain them to keep them from leaving during an argument?
- Guilt or force them into having sex?
- Threaten to hurt them or yourself if your relationship ever ends?
- Do you ever get upset when your partner spends time with their family or friends without you?
- Have you ever checked their phone or text messages without them knowing?
- Have you ever tried to convince your partner to be more sexual with you?

If you recognise these behaviours in yourself then you need to learn to address your issues of power and control so you can have a healthy relationship. A healthy loving relationship is built around respect and trust, not constantly worrying about the possible end of the relationship.

If you feel nervous or insecure about your relationship, it's important to talk it through with

are you being abused?

Do you have concerns about your relationship? Are your friends or family worried about you? Check the following list to see if dating violence is happening to you. Remember, even if any of these things have only happened once that you should take it seriously as your safety is at risk.

Does your partner ever:

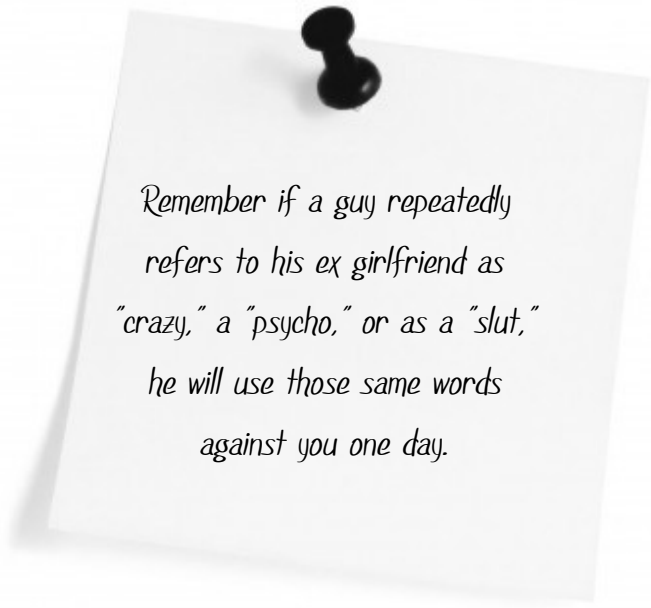
- Called you names such as a bitch or a slut?
- Get upset or jealous when you want to spend time with your family or friends?
- Accuse you of cheating or constantly question who you've been with or spoken to?
- Tell you to change your outfit because they don't like what you're wearing?
- Do you ever feel pushed into sex and sexual activity you're not comfortable with?
- Do you ever feel sick or worried when you are late meeting your partner?
- Has your partner ever threatened to or hit you?
- Have you ever been stopped from leaving a situation you felt uncomfortable in?
- Have you ever taken drugs or participated in any dangerous behaviour because you were too scared to say no.
- Have you ever gone into debt for your boyfriend or girlfriend such as a credit card or loan?
- Has your partner ever threatened to kill themselves or someone else if you end the relationship?
- Have you ever felt unsafe or concerned for your personal safety around your partner?
- Has your partner ever forced you to get out of the car dropped off somewhere unsafe.

Remember dating violence and abuse is **not your fault**
nobody ever deserves to be abused.

warning signs

Often there are warning signs present early on in a relationship that can alert you to the fact that the relationship with could become abusive. The signs are usually there but often people mistake or confuse them believing they are just romantic or they are concerned about you.

It is likely you may have not had too many relationships to compare them to so the only thing you can rely on are your feelings and learning to recognise warning signs to protect yourself from violence or abuse in the future. For example when you first start dating someone it can be a bit confusing if your boyfriend or girlfriend starts to act very jealously, you might even feel flattered that they are that interested in you. It might seem as though they really care. But actually, excessive jealousy and controlling behaviour are not signs of affection at all. It is a warning sign that you are likely to be in danger in the future. Take notice of the warning signs and protect yourself from dating violence.



Remember if a guy repeatedly refers to his ex girlfriend as "crazy," a "psycho," or as a "slut," he will use those same words against you one day.



The following is a list of warning signs to alert you the relationship may be abusive and you may be in danger:

- comes on very strong to begin with, is extremely charming and a smooth talker
- gets serious very quickly in a relationship
- gets extremely jealous of other people
- isolates their partner by making them feel guilty for wanting contact with family, friends or for participating in activities outside the relationship.
- never takes responsibility for themselves, always blames others or something else
- abuses drugs and / or alcohol
- acts hurt when they don't get their own way
- takes offense when other people disagree with their opinion
- has been cruel to pets or other animals in the past
- has ever threatened you with violence
- calls partner names, puts them down or swears at them
- is extremely moody, and switches quickly from being nice to explosive anger
- intimidates others e.g. threatening body language, punching walls or breaks objects
- holds partner against their will to keep them from walking away or leaving the room
- has abused children
- has hit a previous girlfriend or boyfriend.



breaking up

You may have come to the realisation that you're in an abusive relationship or you might be feeling some pressure from your friends and family to end the relationship and move on, but it isn't usually that simple. The person you're dating may have become a huge part of your life so its quite normal to feel a bit worried about feeling lonely after the break up and to miss them after you break up, maybe a lot and maybe just on occasion. Even if they've been abusive and controlling, this is normal. It might help to write down all the reasons you want to end the relationship now and keep them as a reminder for later on.

If your boyfriend/girlfriend is controlling and jealous, they may make a lot of decisions for you. It can take time to adjust to making your own decisions again. Talking to friends or finding activities to fill the new time you have may make this easier. If you are feeling scared to end the relationship you need to take that fear seriously. Ending a relationship with an abusive or controlling person is not the same as ending a healthy relationship.

Ending an abusive relationship can be difficult and even dangerous. Your boyfriend/girlfriend may become angry and violent - even if they have not been violent in the past. If you are thinking of ending your relationship, consider these safety tips:

If you don't feel safe, don't break up in person. It may seem cruel to break up over the phone or by email, but these ways can provide you the distance needed to stay safe.

If you decide to break up in person, consider doing it in a public place. Have friends or your parents wait for you nearby. Take a mobile phone with you if possible.

Don't try to explain your reasons for ending the relationship more than once. There is nothing you can say that will make your ex happy about the break up.

Let your friends and parents know you are ending your relationship, especially if you think your ex will come to your house or try to get you alone.

If your ex tries to come to your house when you're alone, don't go to the door.

dating safely



- * Work out for yourself what your personal boundaries are, what you feel comfortable with.
- * Communicate clearly, let your partner know your boundaries and expectations.
- * Avoid using drugs and/or alcohol. Alcohol and drugs are involved in many sexual assaults by the perpetrator and/or victim. When someone is under the influence of a substance, they are not always as cautious as they would be normally.
- * Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid isolated and dark areas. It is a good idea to meet your date in a public place.
- * Where possible try to avoid being alone with your date until you get to know them and feel safe around them.
- * Have your own transport organized so you don't have to rely on your date getting you home. Also, if you start feeling uncomfortable, you now have a way of getting to a safe place.
- * Carry a mobile phone and always let someone know where you are going, who you are going with and when you expect to return.
- * Be aware of your date's actions. If your date is saying or doing things that are disrespectful to you or others, take this as a warning that they might not be respectful later on.
- * Date in groups. Keep an eye out for each other.
- * Make a safety plan with your friends. Talk about what you would do in certain situations. Come up with ways that you'll be able to let your friends know you are in trouble or feeling uncomfortable in a situation such as a code word.
- * Trust your intuition. If your gut is telling you something is wrong, there is probably something wrong with the situation you are in. Do not be worried about being polite. If you are feeling uncomfortable, let your date know and leave the situation. Do not be worried that you will hurt their feelings.
- * If your date does not let you leave, don't be afraid to draw attention to yourself so someone can help you.



looking after you

One important way of looking after yourself is to set healthy boundaries around yourself. A boundary is like an invisible line around you that defines what you are comfortable with and what you are not comfortable with. What is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

Having healthy boundaries helps us to control many things in our lives including our own behavior and helps us to recognize what behaviours we will accept from others.

Boundaries can help keep you safe and let you know when someone is crossing the line.

safety planning



- If you are in immediate danger ring police on 000.
- Mobile phones are always able to dial 000 even if service has been cancelled, as long as the battery is charged.
- Carry a mobile phone with you at all times.
- Make sure you have your family and friends and other important phone numbers stored.
- Keep the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc. phone number (55329000) somewhere safe. Store it under a different name in your phone if necessary.
- Plan for how you could leave a situation quickly if you feel worried about your safety.
- Develop a code word or signal with your family and friends to alert them of when you are in danger and ask them to notify the police of your location if you use the code word.
- Although talking about your relationship can be difficult and uncomfortable, it is important that you tell as many people as you can—family, friends, school staff or your co-workers about the abuse, this will help to help keep you safe.
- If needed, you can apply for a Domestic Violence Protection Order, staff from the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre will be able to assist you with this.
- Police can also apply for a Protection Order on your behalf.
- If you have a protection order notify your school, university or your work, or other places that you spend time that the order exists. Keep a copy with you at all times in case the order is breached.



helping a friend

Talking to a friend who is in an abusive relationship is not easy, before you do this you have a think about where and when it will be safe for your friend to talk to you. It's also worth giving some thought as to how your friend might react, there's a good chance that they might minimise or deny that the abuse is happening or they may become angry with you, tell you to mind your own business or they might cry. All of these responses are to be expected. It takes time and courage to end an abusive relationship, they might feel scared and upset by what is going on, but at the same time want to stay in the relationship. How you react to your friend is important, the following are some important hints:

- * Don't spread gossip, it can put a victim in danger. You also need to show your friend she can trust you with confidential information.
- * Don't tell your friend what to do, it's her decision. Don't try to end the relationship for them.
- * Don't confront the abuser. This is important for the victims safety and also your own.
- * Don't blame your friend for the abuse. There is nothing anyone can do to make another person behave abusively. A victim should never feel as though the abuse is their fault.
- * Don't rush the victim into making decisions

or leaving. Be there and be patient, so the victim can emerge from the problem on his/her own timetable.

- * Don't judge or criticise your friend or their partner. Even if you disagree with them as this may isolate your friend even more by making them feel that no one approves, or that they have to hide their relationship.
- * Do tell your friend that you believe them.
- * Do let your friend know that you understand her or his feelings. For example, you might say, "You must have been very frightened."
- * Don't give your friend an ultimatum hoping they will be shocked into leaving the relationship.

what you can do

- * Do ask how you can help.
- * Do offer to accompany your friend to see a doctor if needed or to go to counselling appointment or to the police, these things can be daunting on your own.
- * Do remind your friend that they are not responsible for the abuse.
- * Do offer your friend a place to stay or companionship so that your friend doesn't have to be alone.
- * Do tell your friend it's not his/her fault. Stress that he/she does not deserve the abuse and that abuse is NEVER acceptable. Remind her/him often that you are there for support whenever necessary.
- * Help your friend to identify a support network of people they can rely on this might include friends, parents, teachers, counsellors.
- * Help your friend to develop a safety plan. Suggest to your friend that they should tell their parents or another trusted adult.
- * Recognise your friends strengths! It's a good idea to remind your friend of all the qualities you like about them and all the things they are good at. This will help to rebuild their self confidence.





tips for talking to a friend who is abusive

Do talk to your friend if you feel safe doing so.

Talk about your concerns and refuse to accept any excuses. Be clear that you are still a friend, but you disapprove of the behavior.

Don't cut off your friend.

Reject their behaviour, but not the person. Be very clear about.

Do encourage them to be honest.

Show your support when they are.

Do help them clarify their feelings.

Explain that possessiveness and jealousy are not love.

Do understand that abuse is a choice.

Help your friend understand this. He has to choose non violent or abusive ways of behaving.

Don't encourage abuse.

Laughing at degrading jokes or put-downs signals acceptance of the behavior.

Don't condone the abuse.

Abuse is never okay. Not because of a bad day, because someone was drunk, and not because someone was really angry.

Do encourage them to talk to a counsellor.

Go with them if that's what it will take.

Don't get stuck in the middle.

Don't be a mediator or offer to be a 'go between' for the couple. He needs to change in his abusive behaviour.

Test your knowledge

1. Which of the following could be considered a sign of relationship abuse?
 - A) My boyfriend didn't ring me last night.
 - B) My boyfriend forgot our anniversary.
 - C) My boyfriend called me a slut in front of his friends because I was wearing makeup.
2. Which of the following is a crime?
 - A) Robbery
 - B) Rape
 - C) Relationship violence
 - D) All of the above
3. Which of the following could be considered relationship abuse?
 - A) Keeping someone away from their friends or family
 - B) Calling someone names
 - C) Controlling what someone wears
 - D) All of the above
4. You think a friend of yours might be in an abusive relationship. What should you do?
 - A) Take her shopping
 - B) Talk to her, ask if everything's okay, in a calm non-judgmental way.
 - C) Get your boyfriend to bash up her boyfriend
 - D) Nothing, it's none of my business
5. If everyone said you and your boyfriend were a cute couple but he was starting to get violent, what could you do?
 - A) Talk to a parent
 - B) Talk to a teacher
 - C) Talk to a counsellor or other trusted adult
 - D) All of the above
6. What can you do if you end a violent relationship, but your ex-boyfriend keeps trying to see you?
 - A) Explain the situation to an adult you trust
 - B) Avoid situations where you might see your ex
 - C) Call the police if you are threatened or if you feel afraid
 - D) All of the above.

Answers:

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| 1) | c | 4) | b |
| 2) | d | 5) | d |
| 3) | d | 6) | d |



information for parents

The best thing parents can do when their teenager starts dating relationships is to stay aware and be involved in what is happening and make yourself available if your teenager wants to talk. Unless you actually witness your daughter or son being abused it can be difficult to know if they are in an abusive relationship. In most abusive relationship there are signs that can be observed by family members or friends. These may include:

- Has the young person's school performance become inexplicably worse?
- Has the young person stopped giving her own opinion
- Are there marked changes in their mood eg. emotional outbursts or depression?
- Does the young person isolate themselves and insists on more privacy than usual?
- Do they often have unexplained signs of physical injury such as cuts, scratches and bruises?
- Does the young person makes excuses for their partners behaviour?
- Has the young person begun to put herself/himself down?
- Does the young person appear to be afraid of his or her boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Does their partner constantly criticise, belittling or insult them?
- Has the young person stopped spending time with family or friends or withdrawn from activities such as sports teams or clubs.
- Are they unwilling to make a decision without consulting with their partner first?
- Has the young person become angry or despondent over seemingly insignificant events?
- Does one of the partners constantly check up on the other? e.g. phone, text messages, email
- Have they become involved in uncharacteristic behaviours such as substance abuse, wagging school or other criminal behaviours?

If you suspect that your teenager is being abused
don't ignore it, dating violence can escalate to extremely serious levels
with long term consequences for the young person.