



Guide to Teen Dating Violence



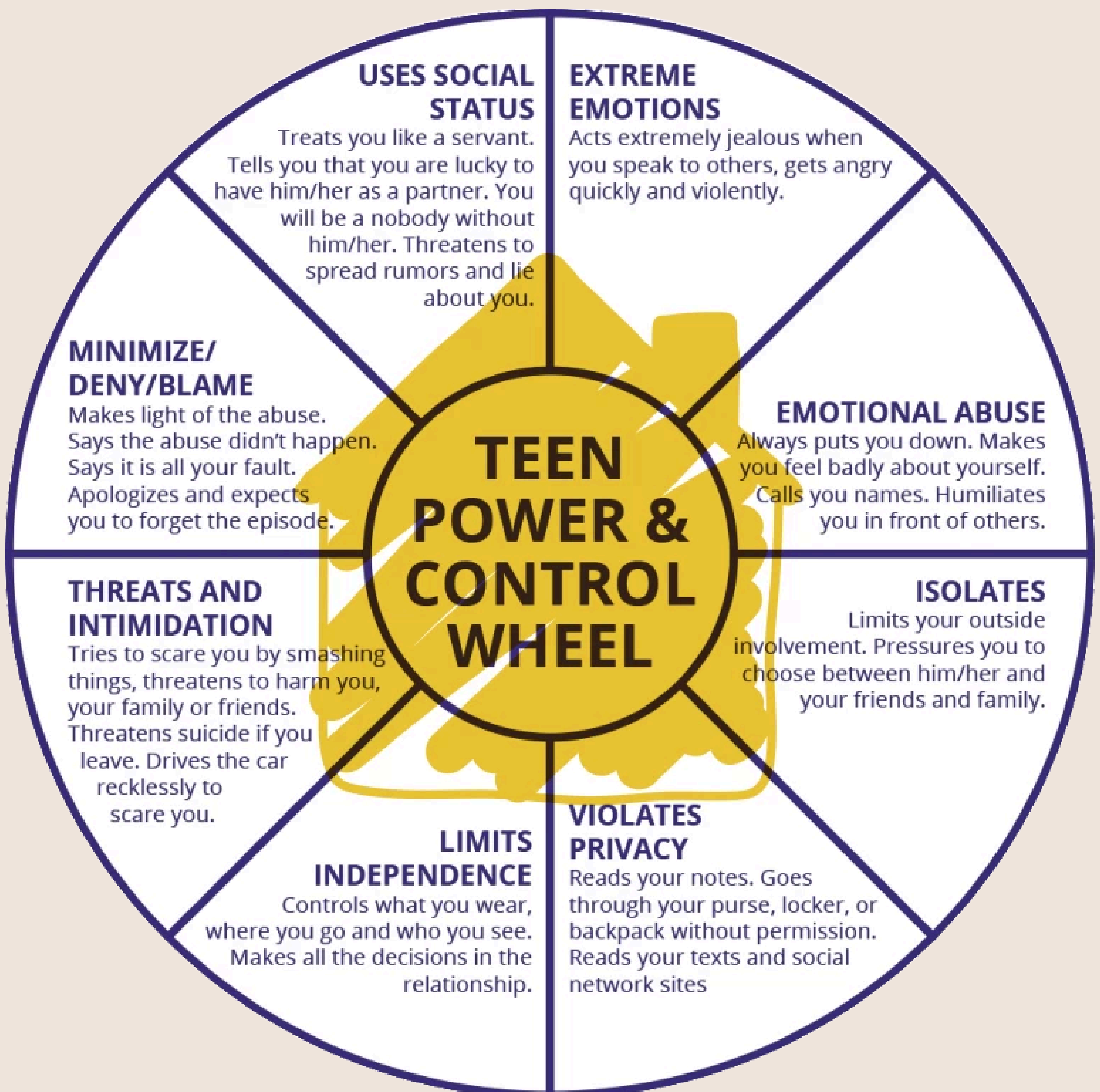
This guide includes excerpts from Respondinc.org and the One Love Foundation

541 E. 8th Street, Loveland, CO 80537
Call 970-669-5150 / Text 970-669-5157
alternativestoviolence.org

What is Teen Dating Violence?

Teen dating violence describes actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, psychological, and verbal harm by a partner, boyfriend, girlfriend or someone wanting a romantic relationship. It includes abuse between two young people in a current or former relationship and can occur among heterosexual, same-gender, and non-binary couples. It can also include using the internet, social media sites, calls, or text messaging to harass, pressure, or victimize.

Dating abuse is about one person using power and control over another person. The diagram below can help you recognize different ways this might be present in teenage relationships.



Only 33% of teens who are in an abusive relationship ever tell anyone about the abuse while it is happening and 81% of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue, or don't know if it is. Talking to teens about relationships can help them recognize warning signs and stay in healthy relationships. There is no easy solution, but open dialogue can encourage them to seek support (from you or someone else) if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

WARNING SIGNS

- They are withdrawn and isolated. They don't talk about their day-to-day life.
- They are on their phone texting, calling and messaging excessively – even throughout family meals and late at night.
- There are changes in their appearance, including clothes, makeup and hairstyle.
- They are isolated from other friends and family.
- Worried about upsetting their boyfriend/girlfriend.
- Decreased interest in extracurricular activities or other interests.
- Depression or anxiety.
- Giving up things that used to be important to them.
- Unexplained marks, bruises or injuries. This red flag specifically may signal an abusive relationship.
- Declining grades or missing school.
- Making excuses for their boyfriend/girlfriend's behavior.

Have any questions? Call 970-669-5150 or text 970-669-5157.

Signs of a HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Views you as an equal.

Is trusting and respects boundaries.

You have the freedom to be yourself.

Does not get upset if you need space or time.

Supports your goals.

TALKING TIPS



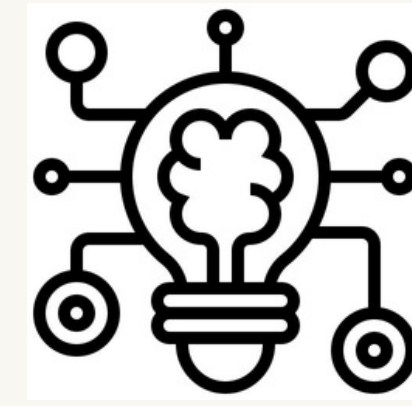
Be Open

Allow your teen to articulate their values and expectations for healthy relationships. Rather than dismissing ideas as wrong, encourage debate —this helps young people come to their own understanding. Avoid analyzing, interruptions, lecturing, or accusations.



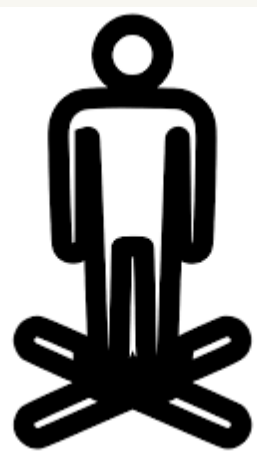
Don't Judge

Being too pushy or judgmental can lead a teen to be defensive, stay in a bad relationship and make them less likely to come to you in the future. Believe them and take them seriously. Stress that you are on their side and remember – any decisions they make need to be their own.



Understand

Understand the pressure and the risk teens face. Teens face new and increasing pressures about sex, substance abuse and dating. Time and time again, teens express their desire to have parents/role models take the time to listen and help them think through the situations they face – be that person!



Take a Stand

Tell the teen you are concerned for their safety and that everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship. Remind the teen they have the right to say no. Let the teen know it's not their fault. Make it clear that you don't blame them and you respect their choices.



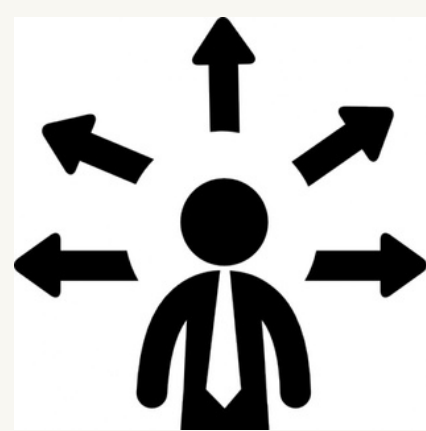
Examples

Use TV episodes, movies, music lyrics, news, community events, the experiences of friends, and your own lives to discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships.



Encourage

Teach teens how to stand-up for friends when your teen observes unhealthy treatment of their peers.



Options

If your teen is in a relationship that feels uncomfortable, awkward, or frightening, assure them that they can come to you and offer to connect them with other resources.



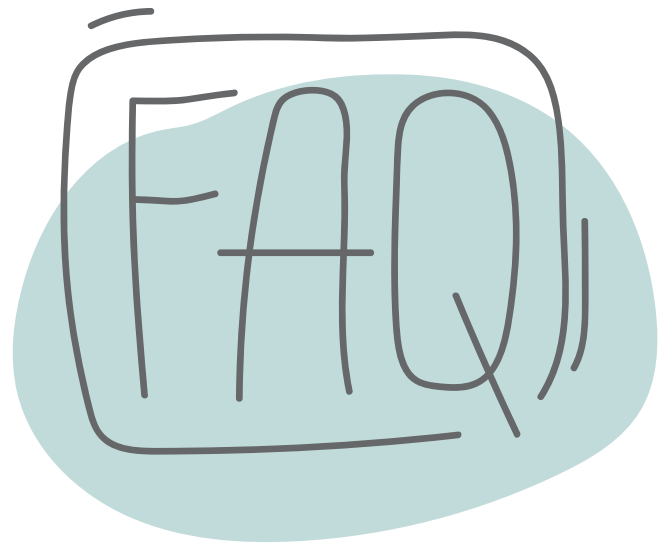
Be Positive

Conversations about relationships do not need to focus solely on bad behavior or negative consequences. Conversations should also promote healthy development. Reinforce that dating should be fun!



Low Key

Do not push if your teen is not ready to talk. Make sure they know you are there for them and try again another time.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

Are any of your friends dating? What are their relationships like?

What makes a relationship good or bad?

What qualities would you want in a relationship?

Have you seen unhealthy relationships at school? How did you feel about it?

Do you know what you would do if one of your friends was in a bad relationship?

What would you want your friends to do if you were in a bad relationship?

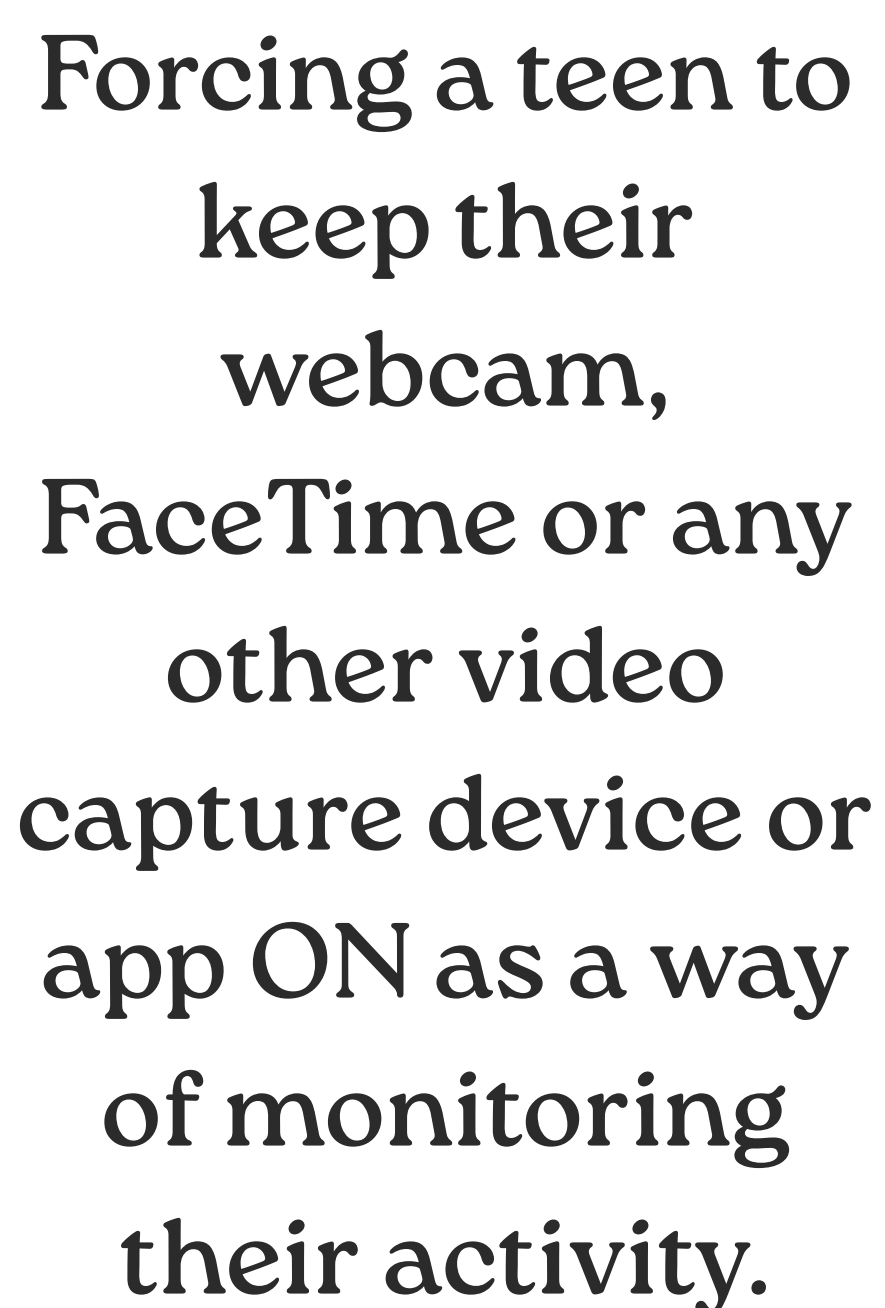
I've heard that teen dating violence is really common these days. What have you heard about that?

I remember being confused and a bit scared dating at your age. What is it like for you and your friends?



DIGITAL ABUSE

Digital tools such as social media, text messaging, and e-mails have given bullies and abusers a new way to control, degrade, and frighten their victims anywhere, at any time, even when they're apart. Here are some signs not to miss.

An orange smartphone icon with a white screen and a white home button. The text is centered on the screen.

Forcing a teen to keep their webcam, FaceTime or any other video capture device or app ON as a way of monitoring their activity.

Constantly calling and texting them in a way that makes them feel afraid if they don't answer right away.

Coercing or pressuring them into sharing their location or passwords to their phone and/or social media accounts.

Sharing or threatening to share explicit texts or explicit pictures without their permission.

Looking through their phone to check text messages, calls, photos, etc.

Threatening to harass or humiliate them on the internet and/or on social media.

Pressuring them to send pictures they feel uncomfortable with, such as nude photos and/or proof of where they are or who they are with.



RESOURCES

Alternatives to Violence

24/7 Phone Line: 970-669-5150

Text: 970-669-5157

Love is Respect

loveisrespect.org

Call: 1-866-331-9474

TTY: 1-866-331-8453

Text “loveis” to 22522

Online chat available

Break the Cycle

breakthecycle.org

support@breakthecycle.org

That’s Not Cool

thatsnotcool.com

National Domestic Violence Hotline

24/7 hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

TTY: 1-800-787-3224

ndvh.org

Online chat available

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

24/7 hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

rainn.org

Online chat available

Futures Without Violence

www.futureswithoutviolence.org