Plan and rehearse what you will do if he or she becomes abusive.

**How To Be a Friend to a Victim of Dating Violence**

Most teens talk to other teens about their problems. If a friend tells you things that sound like his or her relationship is abusive, here are some suggestions on ways to help.

- Don’t ignore signs of abuse. Talk to your friend.
- Express your concerns. Tell your friend you’re worried. Support, don’t judge.
- Point out your friend’s strengths—many people in abusive relationships are no longer capable of seeing their own abilities and gifts.
- Encourage your friend to confide in a trusted adult. Offer to go with the friend for professional help.
- Find out what laws in your state may protect your friend from the abuser.
- Never put yourself in a dangerous situation with the victim’s partner. Don’t try to mediate or otherwise get involved directly.
- Call the police if you witness an assault. Tell an adult—school principal, parent, guidance counselor, or school resource officer—if you suspect the abuse but don’t witness it.

**Take Action**

- Educate teens and adults in your community. Start a peer education program on teen dating violence.
- Encourage your school or a community organization to start a program to help abusers conquer their behavior. Teaching them how to be in a relationship without resorting to violence will help break the cycle.
- Read up on healthy relationships and dating violence. Ask your school library to purchase books about living without violence and the cycle of domestic violence.
- Inquire about having health, social studies, contemporary living, and other classes incorporate discussions of teen dating violence and its prevention.
Are you going out with someone who ...  
- is jealous and possessive, won’t let you have friends, checks up on you or won’t accept breaking up?  
- tries to control you by being bossy, giving orders, making all the decisions or not taking your opinion seriously?  
- puts you down in front of friends or tells you that you would be nothing without him or her?  
- scares you? Makes you worry about reactions to things you say or do? Threatens you? Uses or owns weapons?  
- is violent? Has a history of fighting, loses his or her temper quickly, brags about mistreating others? Grabs, pushes, shoves, or hits you?  
- pressures you for sex or is forceful or scary about sex? Gets too serious about the relationship too fast?  
- abuses alcohol or other drugs and pressures you to use them?  
- has a history of failed relationships and always blames the other person for all of the problems?  
- believes that he or she should be in control of the relationship?  
- makes your family and friends uneasy and concerned for your safety?  
If you answered yes to any of these questions, you could be a victim of dating abuse. Both males and females can be victims of dating violence, as can partners in heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

**What if Your Partner Is Abusing You and You Want Out?**  
- Don’t put up with abuse. You deserve better.  
- Know that you are not alone. Teens from all different backgrounds across the country are involved in or have been involved in a violent relationship.  
- Understand that you have done nothing wrong. It is not your fault.  
- Know that the longer you stay in the abusive relationship, the more intense the violence will become.  
- Recognize that being drunk is not an excuse for someone to become abusive.  
- Talk with your parents, a friend, a counselor, a faith leader or spiritual leader, or someone else you trust. The more isolated you are from friends and family, the more control the abuser has over you.  
- Know that you can get help from professionals at rape crisis centers, health services, counseling centers, or your family's health care provider.  
- Alert a school counselor or security officer about the abuse.  
- Keep a daily log of the abuse for evidence.  
- Remember that no one is justified in attacking you just because he or she is angry.  
- Do not meet him or her alone. Do not let him or her in your home or car when you are alone.  
- Avoid being alone at school, your job, or on the way to and from places.  
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.