

CHOOSE

RESPECT

Community Action Kit



**Helping Preteens and Teens
Build Healthy Relationships**

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**Campaign Background
and Overview**

CHOOSE RESPECT

What Is Choose Respect?

CHOOSE RESPECT is a campaign to promote healthy relationships and prevent dating (relationship) abuse. The campaign will reach boys and girls ages 11 to 14—and the adults who care about them—with messages about healthy relationships. CHOOSE RESPECT messages challenge harmful beliefs about dating abuse and stress the importance of respectful dating relationships.

CHOOSE RESPECT will teach young people how to recognize and avoid unhealthy relationships while pursuing healthy relationships. It will also help preteens and teens know where to seek help if they see or experience dating abuse. The campaign will also help parents, teachers, and other adults understand how to promote positive dating behaviors and recognize warning signs of dating abuse.

Not all preteen and teens are dating, but even those who haven't started dating have probably thought about what it means to be part of a couple. Attitudes and beliefs kids form early will affect how they treat dating partners later in life. As they deal with peers, young people in middle school are learning behaviors that will guide them

in future relationships. CHOOSE RESPECT will show teens and preteens what healthy relationships look like and why they are important.

Research has shown that young people who are victims of abuse, or abusers themselves, are *more likely* to be victims or abusers again in the future. This repeat nature of relationship abuse—for victim as well as abuser—makes it doubly important to stop it before it happens.

CHOOSE RESPECT messages stress the importance of self-respect and respecting others. Respect is the foundation upon which *all* successful relationships are built. Giving kids positive messages about giving and getting respect is important. And research shows

that **reaching young people early with positive messages**—even before they begin to date—is a good way to help prevent dating abuse.

The CHOOSE RESPECT campaign uses TV, radio, and print ads, as well as brochures, booklets, an interactive music video maker, and an educational video to reach girls and boys *and* the adults in their lives. Radio and TV messages may help raise awareness of a problem, but people are more likely to change attitudes and behavior when messages are combined with other community activities.

When we talk about relationship abuse or violence in this kit, we're generally talking about romantic relationships. The terms 'dating abuse' and 'relationship abuse' are used interchangeably.



The most effective health communication campaigns combine mass media with community, small group, and individual activities.

Community youth groups and other organizations that care about kids’ futures can support the CHOOSE RESPECT campaign in many ways, from one-on-one mentoring to sponsored events. The community can challenge ideas that support relationship abuse and support social skills that lead to healthy relationships. Dating abuse is preventable and non-violence is teachable. Be sure to look at *Section VI. Coming Together as a Community*, for ideas on how the community can get involved.

Community activities can reinforce CHOOSE RESPECT messages. Community events offer the opportunity for:

- ▣ judging the needs of the audience,
- ▣ customizing the message to the audience,
- ▣ interacting with members of the audience,
- ▣ answering specific questions from the audience, and
- ▣ adding a personal touch.

Examples of Supporting Community Activities

- Special events
- Forums
- School presentations
- Trainings
- Plays and film screenings

Campaign Components

- ▣ Radio and TV public service announcements
- ▣ Print Materials—including booklets and posters
- ▣ Multimedia Materials—including a Web-based interactive music video

Why Reach 11- to 14-Year-Olds?

Eleven- to fourteen-year-old boys and girls are becoming young adults, but many of their attitudes are still being formed and shaped. Normally, kids in this age group have one foot in childhood and the other in young adulthood. Some are dating already. Others aren’t, although they may be starting to think about it. Kids this age need positive role models and good information about being a part of a “couple.”

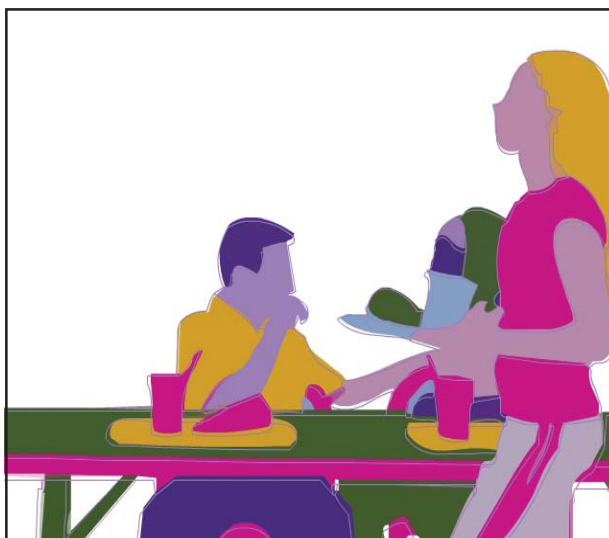
Adults can sometimes forget how hard it is to be a teen or preteen. When kids think about dating, everything’s not automatically clear. Kids may wonder, “*Do we like each other? Are we going out?*” Even kids who have boyfriends or girlfriends don’t know—if they don’t get good guidance from adults—what’s right and “normal” in relationships. They may turn to friends, who may not know what’s right and “normal” either, for advice. Whether kids realize it or not, they count on adults in their lives to *model healthy relationship skills and give them relationship guidelines.*



Young people are constantly learning and developing. They've already learned many life lessons by the time they enter middle school. Interest in dating becomes important as preteens become teenagers, and kids want to learn what dating is all about. Adults can make sure what kids learn is correct. Talking with young kids *openly and honestly* is a great way to shape their opinions and beliefs while they are still being formed.

Information on reaching youth early is derived from the Family Violence Prevention Fund document "Promoting Prevention, Targeting

Teens: An Emerging Agenda to Reduce Domestic Violence."



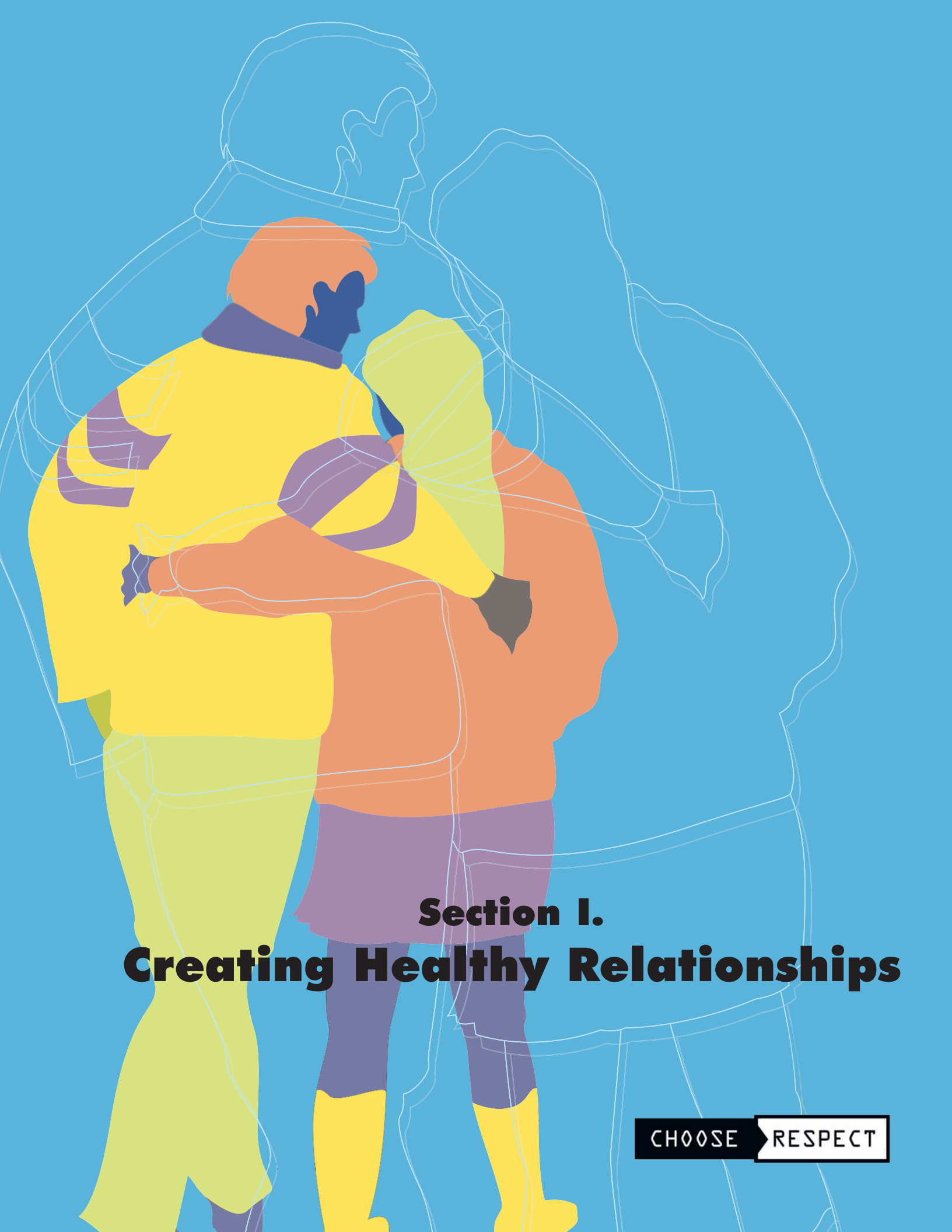
How This Kit Will Help

The information in this community action kit is not new. This kit is intended to provide a convenient collection of some existing resources. We've put this kit together to give caring adults ideas about how to help young people choose good relationships. The kit contains a broad overview of existing information and gives ideas of where to go for more information. *Section VII. Tips, Handouts, and Resources* lists some Web sites that are aimed at teenagers. Many of these have been created especially to be readable and understandable to preteens and teens. This kit is a good starting point but, remember, your opportunities to learn about preventing dating abuse are endless.

Disclaimer

Throughout this kit you will find numerous references to non-CDC Web sites. These references are intended to give the reader a starting point to explore the various topics we talk about in this kit. We are not holding these sites up as the "best" or "only" sources of information; nor do we endorse everything you find on the sites. As always, use a critical eye when researching anything on the Internet.





Section I.
Creating Healthy Relationships

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Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

People in healthy relationships respect each other. They can talk honestly and freely to each other and share power and control over decisions. They trust and support each other and respect each other's independence. In contrast, an *unhealthy relationship* is unbalanced. One partner (a person in the relationship) tries to control the other.

Table I. Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

<i>Healthy Relationships</i>	<i>Unhealthy Relationships</i>
Equality —Partners share decisions and responsibilities. They discuss roles to make sure they're fair and equal.	Control —One partner makes all the decisions and tells the other what to do, or tells the other person what to wear or who to spend time with.
Honesty —Partners share their dreams, fears, and concerns with each other. They tell each other how they feel and share important information.	Dishonesty —One partner lies to or keeps information from the other. One partner steals from the other.
Physical safety —Partners feel physically safe in the relationship and respect each other's space.	Physical abuse —One partner uses force to get his/her way (for example, hitting, slapping, grabbing, shoving).
Respect —Partners treat each other like they want to be treated and accept each other's opinions, friends, and interests. They listen to each other.	Disrespect —One partner makes fun of the opinions and interests of the other partner. He or she may destroy something that belongs to the other partner.
Comfort —Partners feel safe with each other and respect each other's differences. They realize when they're wrong and are not afraid to say, "I'm sorry." Partners can "be themselves" with each other.	Intimidation —One partner tries to control every aspect of the other's life. One partner may attempt to keep his or her partner from friends and family or threaten violence or a break-up.
Sexual respectfulness —Partners never force sexual activity or insist on doing something the other isn't comfortable with.	Sexual abuse —One partner pressures or forces the other into sexual activity against his/her will or without his/her consent.
Independence —Neither partner is dependent upon the other for an identity. Partners maintain friendships outside of the relationship. Either partner has the right to end the relationship.	Dependence —One partner feels that he/she "can't live without" the other. He/she may threaten to do something drastic if the relationship ends.
Humor —The relationship is enjoyable for both partners. Partners laugh and have fun.	Hostility —One partner may "walk on egg shells" to avoid upsetting the other. Teasing is mean-spirited.

The information in the above table has been adapted from the Liz Claiborne-sponsored web site www.loveisnotabuse.com, Youth Resource www.youthresource.com/our_lives/healthy_relationships, and the Center for Young Women's Health at www.youngwomenshealth.org/healthy_relat.html.



Many adults can read the descriptions in TABLE 1 and see that they could improve their own relationships. That's OK—no one is perfect, and you don't have to be perfect to talk to kids about healthy relationships. An open conversation that allows everyone to talk honestly about things they've done right and wrong will be more meaningful than a lecture.

Although anyone can become involved in a less-than-perfect relationship, the extreme behaviors listed in the “unhealthy relationships” column are never acceptable. They should be seen as “red flags” that something is wrong in a relationship.

Realistically, some young people may become involved in abusive relationships. Thankfully, adults can help. CHOOSE RESPECT offers information on how to recognize

the signs of an unhealthy relationship and how to help when necessary. This kit not only talks about how to form and maintain healthy relationships; it also gives advice on how to identify and deal with unhealthy relationships.



Social Skills for Healthy Relationships

Children need to learn social skills in order to function well in society. Social skills are more than just manners. They help us get along with family, friends, classmates, co-workers, and people we date. Without well-developed social skills, children have a hard time forming and keeping good relationships. They also may be at risk of getting involved in abusive relationships.

The list below, adapted from Liz Claiborne's *A Parent's Handbook—How to Talk to Your Children About Developing Healthy Relationships*, includes some skills kids need in order to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

Anger control.

We all get angry, but how we express our anger can affect what other people think of us. Kids need to recognize how they feel when they are angry. They also need to know how to control their emotions in healthy ways. For example, they could count to ten, take a deep breath, or walk



away from a situation until they feel more in control. They need to learn to think before they speak, especially if they're angry. And they should know to *never* express anger through physical violence. Anger can be a cover-up for other emotions, like fear. Rather than cover-up true emotions, kids should think about why they feel angry and work to find a positive solution. For more tips on managing anger, see the American Psychological Association's *Warning Signs* Web site at www.apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=38. Click on DEALING WITH ANGER and CONTROLLING YOUR OWN RISK.

Problem solving.

Problem solving is one of the most important skills children can develop. You can help children learn to solve problems by carefully looking at real problems they face. Teach them to break problems down into manageable pieces, identify possible solutions, and consider the likely outcome for each possible solution. People who can solve problems in a positive way don't need to use violence.

Negotiation and Compromise.

Children need to know that they won't *always* get their way. Compromise has a place in all healthy relationships. Kids should learn to look at issues, acknowledge different points of view, and discuss possible "win-win" solutions. In healthy relationships, partners often agree upon a "give and take" solution.

Assertiveness.

Being clear and open about feelings and desires can help prevent arguments. Assertiveness involves respect for one's own needs and those of others. Assertiveness is different from aggression, which is a violent way to express desires and feelings. Acting aggressively can take the form of



Don't forget to think about the kinds of messages kids get from the entertainment **you** watch or participate in—movies, television, music. Make sure kids have good adult role models to help them make responsible decisions, in spite of the unhealthy messages out there.

overpowering and harming other people or verbally abusing them. Kids who are comfortable stating their wants and needs are less likely to get involved in violent relationships. In addition, young people who have been taught to be assertive are less likely to abuse others.

Fighting fair.

Everyone has verbal arguments. How partners argue is very important to relationships. When partners fight fairly, they stick to the subject, avoid insults, and avoid talking about the past. Kids should be told that it's OK to walk away from a situation and come back when they've cooled down and can talk calmly.

Empathy.

Empathy allows people to feel what others are feeling. Kids should be encouraged to see things from other people's points of view and think about how others feel. Empathy can improve communication skills and make people less likely to hurt others on purpose.



Learning Relationship Skills

Preteens and teens have already seen and heard a lot about dating from family, friends, and the media. Adults have the tough job of helping kids make sense of what they see and hear. We can help them identify healthy behaviors and motivate them to choose respect in their relationships. There are many ways kids get messages about dating and how to act in dating relationships. These include:

From the media—*Ask kids to think about what they see and hear.*

Popular culture influences kids every day. It's almost impossible to keep kids from seeing “sexy” or violent messages, whether they're on TV, on billboards, or on the Internet. Adults can help teach kids how to think about what they hear and see. Then, adults can explain how kids can accept positive messages and tune out negative ones. Use negative messages that you can't stop as teachable moments. It's not possible to shield kids from all negative messages, but you can limit the amount of exposure they get. In other words, screen and limit TV, movies, and music.

From their friends—*Listen without criticism.*

It may seem like many middle-school-aged kids value their friends' opinions more than their parents' opinions. Unfortunately, friends often use peer pressure to make friends do things that are risky or wrong. Adults who listen to children without criticizing them learn about the pressures and stresses they face. This can help start talks about the importance of respect for self and others in all relationships.



Through their home life—*Monitor and model behavior.*

Parents who are in relationships can model what healthy relationships should look like. Parents are in a great position to show their children what behavior is appropriate and to shape how they get along with others. Kids from abusive households often see abuse as something normal that happens at home. This may put youth at risk of getting involved in abusive relationships. Adults who monitor their children's activities will be more aware of what skills they need to learn or improve.

It's never too early to teach kids about healthy relationships. The skills kids develop to deal with other young people can help shape the way they handle future relationships. It is very important to teach kids relationship-building skills like communication, respect, and empathy. Children also need to learn positive ways of dealing with common relationship issues, such as managing anger.



How Can Adults Help?

To help prevent abusive relationships, adults can prepare kids to develop healthy, loving relationships with supportive, trusting partners. We can also help them reject messages that support abuse. This isn't as simple as it may sound. In order to form healthy relationships, young people need to respect themselves. They need to care about other people, know how to communicate well, and understand the consequences of actions. They also need to learn to manage anger, solve problems in a positive way, say "no", and treat girls and boys as equals. Adults can help give kids the tools they need to develop meaningful relationships throughout their lives.



This is not an easy task. Even adults work hard to maintain healthy relationships. To help young people develop healthy relationship skills, consider your own attitudes about relationships. What kind of role model are you? What kinds of relationships are you involved in? What could you do better? Do your actions support your values? Remember, nobody's perfect. To help you teach kids how to create healthy relationships, however, you should look at the way you manage your own relationships. If you feel that your relationship with your spouse or partner is unhealthy, it's never too early or too late to get

help. You will find numerous informational resources in *Section VII. Tips, Handouts, and Resources*.

Kids want and need adults to be involved in their lives. Adults can't—and shouldn't—make all kids' decisions for them. Eleven- to fourteen-year-olds are growing up and becoming more independent.

It is good for them to start making their own decisions. They also need to take more responsibility for their actions. The decision-making skills they develop as preteens and teens will help them throughout their lives.

Adults should monitor kids, because they need guidance. When kids make wrong decisions, they need adult support to help them learn from their mistakes. When kids get involved in risky or scary situations, adults can help prevent them from making choices that could have dangerous consequences.

Talking with kids honestly and often, without lecturing, builds trust and teaches problem-solving skills. Adults should show support while acting as young peoples' advisors.

This kit includes sections for parents, teachers and administrators, and concerned members of the community. Each offers specific information about how members of these groups can help kids develop healthy relationships and avoid dating abuse.



An illustration of a person from behind, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and large black headphones. They are sitting at a desk and using a laptop with a green frame and a dark screen. The person's hands are on the laptop's trackpad. The background is a warm, orange-toned wall with faint red outlines of a window and door. The overall style is flat and graphic.

Section II. Dating Abuse

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Despite good instruction, some kids will get involved in unhealthy relationships. Dating abuse is a serious problem that affects everyone involved. We can help kids avoid relationship abuse by teaching that men and women have equal value. It's important to raise awareness of this problem, but more important to teach kids how to avoid dating abuse. We have to teach kids what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable. This is an important way to help them notice when something is wrong. Remember, most preteens and teens have little or no experience with dating. In many cases, their "knowledge" has come from movies and TV.

What Is Dating Abuse?

Dating abuse is the act or threat of abuse—physical, sexual, or emotional—by one partner in a dating relationship toward the other partner.

Any relationship that involves physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or the threat of abuse, is an unhealthy relationship.

Dating abuse is not about love—it's about power and control. Some young people may not understand this. Dating abuse or violence usually involves a pattern of behaviors that one partner uses to try to control the other. These behaviors may include:

- ▣ Physical violence, such as pinching, slapping, hitting, or shoving
- ▣ Emotional violence, such as threats, insults, or mean-spirited teasing
- ▣ Sexual violence, such as unwanted touching or forcing someone into sexual activities against his/her will

Young people may think of dating abuse as only physical violence—hitting, grabbing, or shoving. They may



not recognize that emotional abuse is a form of dating violence. Emotional abuse includes threatening or insulting words, spreading rumors, and controlling someone's activities. It also includes isolating someone from family and friends. Even abuse that doesn't leave any visible physical marks can leave painful emotional scars.

The terms 'dating abuse' and 'relationship abuse' are used interchangeably. We can also use the terms 'dating violence' and 'relationship violence' to describe the same types of behaviors.

Focus groups have suggested that physical abuse and sexual abuse aren't very common among kids in middle school. However, abuse such as name-calling and



emotional control is more common and is seen as more acceptable. Research shows that 11- to 14-year-olds (especially boys) don't think it's OK to physically abuse girls they date. Most are not aware of physical abuse happening among their peers. When asked why physical abuse is wrong, however, boys tend not to show empathy for the girls' feelings. Rather, they generally focus on what would happen if they hit girls. For example, they could get arrested, suspended, or look like less of a "man." Helping boys develop empathy toward girls would be a valuable step in changing attitudes that support dating abuse (see *Section I. Creating Healthy Relationships: Social Skills for Healthy Relationships*).

Who Is Affected?

Dating abuse affects people from all backgrounds. Anyone can be a victim or an abuser. It's important to help teens and preteens realize that dating abuse happens to young people as well as adults. It happens in the suburbs and the inner city, in same-sex and male-female relationships. *Both males and females can be victims as well as abusers.* Some studies have suggested that girls are just as likely as boys to become abusive within unhealthy relationships. However, girls are more likely to be emotionally or physically hurt by dating abuse, and are more likely to be afraid of their partners. Girls are also far more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse than boys are.

Victims of relationship abuse often struggle with:

- inability to concentrate on schoolwork or other activities;
- psychological or mental problems, such as depression, anxiety, shame, and guilt;
- unhealthy eating;
- risky sexual behavior;
- physical injury and other health problems; and/or
- suicidal thoughts or actions.

How common is dating abuse?

Dating abuse is more common than some people realize. It can start happening at an early age. One in four 8th and 9th graders in a study (The Safe Dates Project) reported having experienced some type of relationship abuse. About one in four female students (in grades 9 through 12) reported being physically or sexually abused by someone they've dated. Among kids who show certain risk factors, dating abuse is very common. For more information about these and other facts about dating and youth violence, see the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Web site at www.cdc.gov/ncipc/. See the next section, *Who Is Most at Risk*, for more information on risk factors.

Dating abuse is not something that happens only to adults. Kids start hearing and seeing messages that support abuse when they are very young. Adults should try to override these messages with messages of equality and nonviolence.



Who Is Most at Risk?

Certain kids may show warning signs that could make them prone to dating abuse before they've started dating. It's important for adults to be aware of warning signs. In fact, the ways young people interact with their friends give clues about how they'll eventually relate to people they date. Research on dating abuse shows that people who abuse their dating partners tend to be more depressed, have lower self-esteem, and be more aggressive than non-violent partners. The "red flags" below may help identify young people who are at risk of becoming abusive in dating relationships.

- Beliefs that it's OK to use threats or violence to get one's way or solve problems
- Alcohol or drug use
- Inability to manage anger or frustration
- Poor social skills
- Socializing with violent peers
- Cognitive difficulties and other problems at school
- Lack of parental oversight, support, or discipline
- Abuse between parents in the home
- A history of aggressive behavior or bullying

Some young people are at higher risk of becoming victims of abuse in dating relationships. Those who see violence in their community may think that violence is an acceptable part of dating. Girls with lower self-esteem are more likely to become victims of dating abuse. Feelings of depression (especially sadness and hopelessness) can make both girls and boys more likely to become involved in dating abuse. Sometimes girls feel like they "need" to have a boyfriend. They may be willing to give up their self-respect and safety to stay in any relationship, even an abusive one. Kids with physical disabilities may be at higher risk for abuse in relationships. Teens that date much older partners are also more likely to become victims.

Prevention Tips

- Know your children's friends—violent friends are a warning signal
- Monitor your children's activities—who are they with, what they are doing, where they are, and when they'll be home.



Early Warning Signs

Preteens and teens in abusive dating relationships may be embarrassed or afraid to talk about the issue with friends or family. Young people may hesitate to talk to adults—even those they trust and love—about personal things like dating. For these reasons, adults should watch for warning signs that something may be wrong in a relationship. Adults should be aware that abusers may not seem abusive in public settings. If you see warning signs or your instinct tells you something’s wrong, trust yourself. Some abusers can act very nice and charming when they are around adults.

Table 2. Warning signs of relationship abuse

<p>These “red flags” should alert you to the possibility that the young person may be a victim of relationship abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation from family and friends • Suspicious bruises or injuries • Loss of interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyable • Making excuses for a dating partner’s behavior • Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping patterns, or alcohol or drug use • Loss of self-confidence 	<p>These behaviors may indicate that the young person is currently abusive or is at risk of becoming abusive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening to hurt others in any way • Insulting a dating partner in public or private • Constantly calling to check up on a dating partner • Damaging or destroying a dating partner’s personal belongings • Attempting to control what a dating partner wears
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As parents, it’s difficult to accept that your child is the victim of dating abuse. It can be even harder to admit that your child may be an abuser. No one wants to believe that the worst could be true. But if you are worried, learn to recognize the warning signs and check out your suspicions. If necessary, get your child the help he or she needs.

What should adults look for? Watch for signs of anger control or conflict resolution problems, aggression, or lack of empathy. Understand the risk factors on the previous page, and recognize warning

signals listed in TABLE 2 above. Violence won’t go away on its own. Kids need help to learn healthy relationship attitudes and behaviors.



Victims of dating abuse risk losing things like:

- Trust in themselves and others
- Friendships
- Positive behavioral patterns that they'll need for healthy relationships
- Future relationships
- Healthy thought patterns
- Self-esteem

The Consequences of Dating Abuse

Relationship abuse never has a happy ending. Physical, sexual, and emotional violence hurts. It has a deep-down effect on how victims—and abusers—feel about themselves. Most of the time dating abuse destroys relationships. Young people in unhealthy relationships put their healthy emotional development at risk. They may feel the negative effects for the rest of their lives. And, for both victims and abusers, being in a violent relationship makes them more likely to be involved in abusive relationships later in life. Kids

who find themselves in abusive relationships can be helped through programs that teach them how to avoid future unhealthy relationships, and how to overcome the negative consequences described below.

Victims

Being a victim of dating abuse can interfere with a young person's emotional development in such areas as:

- Forming a positive body image
- Establishing an adult identity
- Developing a personal value system
- Achieving independence
- Establishing intimacy
- Becoming comfortable with one's sexuality
- Preparing to become a productive member of society

New York City's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Web site lists more information on how dating abuse affects the normal development of teenagers: www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/html/issues/teenagers.shtml.

Relationship patterns formed during the teenage years affect a person's relationships later in life. A victim of teen dating abuse is likely to enter into adult violent relationships. Kids remember what they learn about acceptable behavior, respect, and what feels right and wrong.



Abusers

Abusers in violent relationships may also suffer health consequences and carry scars into adulthood. Every time they are abusive and get away with it, the abuse is reinforced. They are very likely to repeat their violent behaviors with future dating and marriage partners. If they don't get help, abusers may develop lifelong patterns of unhealthy, unhappy relationships.

Some of this information was adapted from www.seeitandstopit.org. This Website, created by teens in Massachusetts, has a lot of information geared toward teens about relationship abuse and how to stop it.

Some of the consequences of inflicting abusive behavior include:

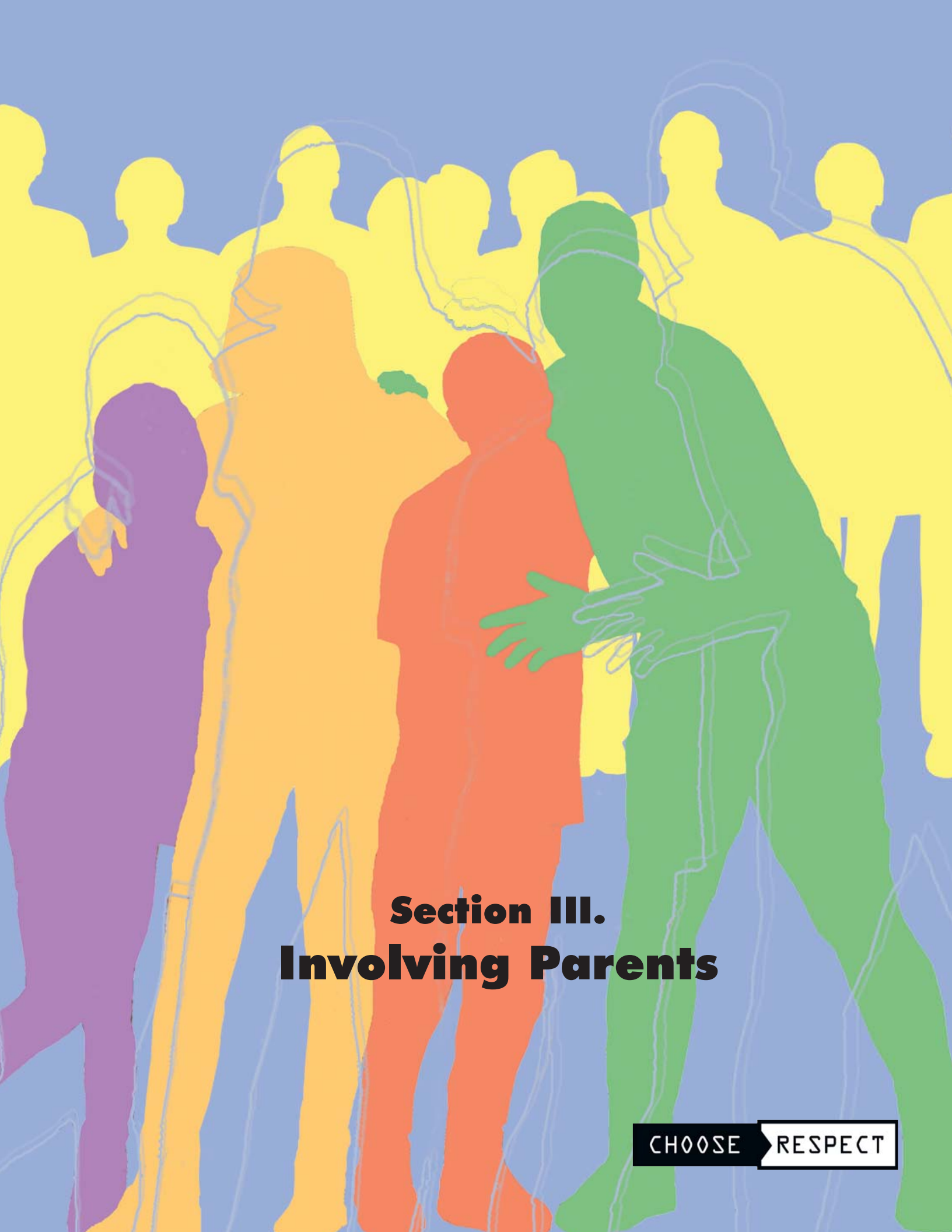
- ▣ Alienation from friends and family
- ▣ Loss of friends' respect
- ▣ Loneliness
- ▣ Physical health problems
- ▣ Expulsion from school
- ▣ Loss of job
- ▣ Criminal record/jail (and loss of personal freedom)

Dating abuse has a terrible effect on society and on the people involved. Adults should try to prevent dating abuse and its consequences. In the following sections, we talk about ways parents, educators, and community members can help solve the problem of dating abuse.

The groups we talk about in the next three sections are not three completely different groups.

In fact, there can be a lot of overlap. Many of us wear several "hats" in our lives. For example, teachers may be parents as well as members of the community. Our influence is not limited to one role. We can work on our own as parents or teachers, or together as members of schools and communities. Working together, we can gain the added benefit of learning from others who have different experiences and points of view.





Section III. Involving Parents

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Parents' Roles

Parents are in a special and powerful position to teach their kids about romantic relationships. First, it is very important that parents show mutual love and respect in their own relationships, if they are married or involved in dating relationships. Kids will be influenced more by what you *do* than by what you *say*.

It's important to

- ▣ know your children's friends
- ▣ monitor your children's activities

Kids will watch how you act with your spouse or partner and how you interact with other people in all kinds of situations and on good and bad days. Modeling kind, respectful behavior is important when teaching kids relationship skills. Parents model attitudes and behaviors for their kids every day.

Young boys today grow up in a world that often treats men and women unequally. Because relationship abuse is often male-on-female, it is crucial to teach boys to view girls as equal partners worthy of respect. For excellent tips on talking with boys and teaching appropriate attitudes about women, see the Family Violence Prevention Fund's *Coaching Boys into Men* Web site: www.endabuse.org/cbim/.

Kids see negative images everywhere. The media often glorify violence and reinforce disrespectful attitudes and stereotypes. The messages kids get about love and relationships from movies and TV may be very attractive, even though they are often unhealthy, unrealistic, and sometimes dangerous. Young people may not be able to separate reality from fantasy, yet they need to know the truth about what matters in relationships. Parents are

the *best* source of information for their children. But parents can't control every part of their kids' surroundings. One way to affect what messages kids see and hear outside of the home is to get involved in the community. Within a volunteer organization or a faith-based group, for example, parents can work toward influencing the broader world kids live in. *Section VI: Coming Together as a Community* offers ideas for working with other community members to teach relationship skills and prevent dating abuse.

Communication Tips for Parents

They may not always show it, but young people want their parents to talk to them. Even if they don't come out and say it, kids know they have important questions and they don't have the answers. They want and need to get advice and information from their parents.

Here are some common sense ideas to help you establish open, honest communication with your child:

- Use teachable moments to start conversations about healthy relationships and/or relationship abuse.

Current events, movies and television shows, popular music, and real-life situations can all serve as ways to start conversations. Take advantage of these opportunities. Start by laying out your own beliefs and values about acceptable behavior within relationships.

You can use Web resources to help pick family-friendly movies that can open up parent-child discussions about respect.



One example is The Movie Mom <http://movies.yahoo.com/moviemom>. The Movie Mom gives parents ideas for movies that are appropriate for kids between the ages of 2 and 18. The site lists movies available as rentals, as well as ones that are currently playing in theaters. Parents can use sites like this to guide them in making family entertainment choices that are interesting to kids as well as educational.

- **Pay attention!**

When talking with your child about important issues like healthy relationships, turn off your cell phone and the TV, and avoid interruptions as much as possible.

- **Don't be afraid to start the conversation.**

If your child hasn't brought up the subject of dating, don't assume that he or she isn't interested or doesn't need the information. If it's hard for adults to bring up certain subjects, imagine how hard it is for kids. Kids, just like adults, don't always know how to start conversations about important issues, but that doesn't mean they don't want to talk.

- **Keep the conversation ongoing.**

Frequent talks are important for keeping up-to-date on what is happening in your kids' lives, understanding their peer pressures, and reinforcing your values. Start when the kids are young and talk openly and honestly.

- **Don't worry about not being an "expert."**

If your child asks a question you're not sure how to answer, offer to work with him/her to find the answer.

- **Be honest.**

Your child may be more open to what you have to say if you admit your own relationship mistakes. Keep it real. Don't lecture. Instead, have an honest two-way conversation.

- **Lead by example.**

Be a good role model in your relationship with your spouse or partner (if you have one), with your children, and with other family members. How you communicate with your kids will teach them how to communicate in their own close relationships. Use good communication skills: this will not only help you talk with your children, but it will also teach (by example) appropriate behavior.

You'll find communication tips in *Section VII: Tips, Handouts, and Resources*. Another way to lead by example is to be responsible in your own media/entertainment choices and avoid

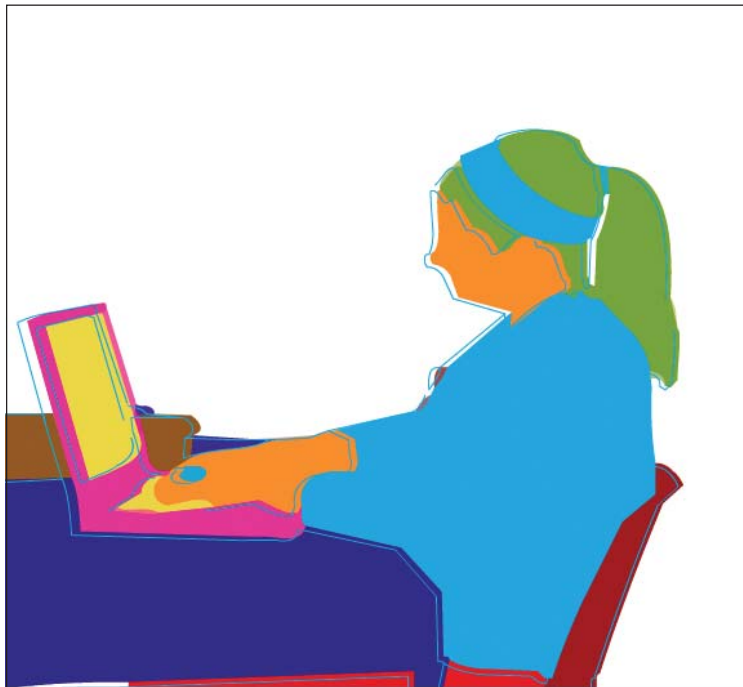
If your relationship with your spouse or partner is not a healthy one, you can find help.

The resources included in **Section VII** can steer you toward books, Web sites, and organizations that can help stop the abuse and, if possible, get your relationship back on track. It's never too early or too late to get help. Do it for yourself and for your kids.

those that may conflict with the values you are teaching your kids. For more information on media influence, see *Section VII*.



Section I: Creating Healthy Relationships talks about the social skills kids need in order to form and keep healthy relationships. Keep the lines of communication open and take advantage of opportunities to teach those skills to your kids. Even everyday opportunities—carpool rides or family dinners—are teaching opportunities.



Behavior is built upon attitudes and beliefs. Make sure your children understand that physical and emotional abuse is never acceptable. Help them form respectful attitudes toward others. Teach them communication and social skills and demonstrate loving relationships. For additional information on teaching kids to turn away from all forms of violence, see the American Psycho-

logical Association's *Raising Children to Resist Violence: What You Can Do* at www.apa.org/pubinfo/apa-aap.html.

Be sure to read the parents' brochure included in this kit. It offers good information in a handy format. In addition, there is a CHOOSE RESPECT Educational Video, in which young teens discuss dating abuse. CHOOSE RESPECT also includes an Interactive Music Video Maker on the Internet at www.chooserespect.org, which allows kids to read about common situations and choose the correct response. Choosing appropriate responses allows the kids to make a music video on the Web site.

Section IV. Involving the School offers detailed information about how teachers can blend Choose Respect messages into classroom activities. It also talks about things school administrators can do to increase the role of the schools in teaching kids to form healthy relationships and avoid dating abuse. In *Section VI. Coming Together as a Community* shows how all of us—parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and other interested adults—can work together to improve kids' chances of having healthy relationships. A successful campaign to prevent relationship abuse involves the home, the school, and the community and takes advantage of a range of skills and points of view.





Section IV.
Involving the School

CHOOSE RESPECT

How Can Educators Help?

Except for parents, teachers probably have more contact with young people than any other adults. Teachers have relationships with their students in the classroom and are seen as trusted adults who can give advice about important topics. Schools should make sure that educators—teachers and administrators—know about relationship issues and dating abuse, are aware of the warning signs, and are available to help young people.

Schools can blend positive messages about respectful attitudes and healthy relationships into lesson plans and extra-curricular activities. Remember, the idea of choosing respect in relationships is not for couples only. Lessons on how to interact positively can be woven into activities such as class projects, sporting events, and school plays. On the next page you'll find some concrete ideas for putting the theme of positive student interaction into effect in school activities. Reading assignments and films with relationship themes can raise the topic in the classroom. Educators can watch for everyday opportunities to reinforce respectful behavior in



the ways that students interact with each other. They can also model appropriate relationship behavior by the way they interact with students and each other.

In today's world, teachers are asked to do more than teach the basics. The school has become a place where students learn the skills they need for life. These skills go far beyond the three Rs—

reading, writing, and arithmetic. Schools have a role to play in teaching kids the skills they need to form healthy and satisfying relationships. Kids who don't develop good relationship skills can face unsuccessful futures—both in their personal lives and in their careers. Teaching sound relationship

skills and coaching teens to choose respect for themselves and others will help them establish healthy relationships and avoid relationship abuse.



Add Choose Respect to School Programs

There are many ways that you can integrate CHOOSE RESPECT messages into your curriculum. Below are some examples of things you can do with your students to start conversations about choosing respect and forming healthy relationships. Keep in mind that kids may be more excited to participate in activities if they help plan them. Take your cue from kids and try to tailor activities to their age, interests, and worldview.

Remember that you may have to make a conscious effort to draw those kids who are at higher risk—those who are on the “fringe”—into your activities. Often, it’s the children who don’t participate in class who are at greatest risk of developing poor social and relationship skills. These kids are also at greater risk of becoming involved in abusive relationships.

Looking for ideas? The Internet has many resources. Examples:

For ideas for teaching respect and other life skills and character qualities, check out www.goodcharacter.com. You will find free, downloadable lesson plans and resources related to healthy relationship skills as well as other character-building activities.

The research-based software available from Ripple Effects (www.rippleeffects.com/education/software/teens.html) includes complete curricula for such things as character education, health education, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and pregnancy prevention, social-emotional skill building, violence prevention, and much more.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration sponsors a site for kids at <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>, with useful information about the related topic of bullying that may be applicable to teen dating abuse.

These are just examples of the kinds of resources you have available to you. You have many other options. The Internet contains a lot of information about work that has already been done in the area of teaching kids good interpersonal skills and avoiding abusive relationships. The purpose of this kit is not to re-invent the wheel, but to point you in the direction of materials available today. The following activities are suggestions; you may put them into practice any number of ways with

your students—individually, in pairs, or in small or large groups—or modify them to your students’ needs. Some of these ideas were adapted from a list put together by the Boston University Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character Development. There are many ways to apply relationship skills-building exercises into the school setting. Allow these ideas to inspire you to creative, fun ways to teach these important lessons.



1. **English class**—Have students keep logs or journals, in which they list things they could do to be more respectful citizens at school and outside of school. These logs may also be used to record situations students see in the media that show respectful or disrespectful behavior. Ask your students to talk about how respectful behavior would affect their personal relationships and how they think they can benefit by showing respect to others. Start a class discussion of students’ journal entries. Give writers’ awards.

2. **English class**—Choose a movie that relates to the topic of respect and positive character development. Ideas can be found on sites like www.teachwithmovies.org. Movies like *Billy Elliot*, *Finding Nemo*, and *Remember the Titans* have good messages without being boring or preachy. Movies can be an entertaining educational option and can serve as the starting point for class discussions and assignments. Other ideas can be found at <http://eduscapes.com/seeds/bookmovie.html>.

3. **English class**—Choose a reading assignment that illustrates an unhealthy relationship. This could be a news or magazine article, a short story, or a chapter from a novel from the students’ reading list that includes relationship themes. Ask the class to talk about the relationship, and identify and discuss the unhealthy behaviors. Ask for suggestions of how the characters in the article or story could behave more respectfully and how that might affect their relationship. Refer to the behaviors listed in *Table I. “Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships,”* in *Section II* of this kit.

4. **Social Studies**—Ask some of your students to serve as “roving reporters” at school and outside of school. Ask them to observe, record, and report on everyday incidents in which respectful or disrespectful behavior was shown (caution them not to use actual names of people involved). When the “reporters” write up their articles, you might work to have one published in a school newsletter and/or give an award. This would be an excellent small group activity.

5. **General**—Host a student brainstorming session with popcorn and refreshments. Ask students to talk about common problems that arise in their relationships, or their friends’ relationships. Ask for their ideas for making relationships stronger and healthier, and for solving relationship problems between friends and dating partners. Collect their suggestions, put them on a poster, and hang it in the classroom.

6. **Art**—Introduce students to a CHOOSE RESPECT art project. In class, ask each student to create a painting, drawing, or sculpture that illustrates a relationship in his/her life. Encourage them to let their creativity run free on this project. Have a “showing” in class during which each student can talk about his/her creation. You might arrange for the works of art to be hung or shown in a location at school or in the community.



7. **Drama**—Find a short play (or develop one) that deals with relationship issues between friends or dating partners. Obtain or write scripts, cast for parts, and have students rehearse and perform the production. Invite as many students, other teachers, and parents as possible to see the final production. Distribute CHOOSE RESPECT materials and violence prevention tips at the performance. For example, the Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence (RICADV) has organized performances of the Yellow Dress Play, a play that addresses dating violence, at high schools throughout the state of Rhode Island. As a result, RICADV has received local media attention and has attracted diverse audiences. The RICADV Web site is www.ricadu.org. Click on ‘DATING VIOLENCE’ or other topics of interest.
8. **Drama**—Devise some simple relationship problem “scenarios” and assign students to role play in front of the class. Discuss the role play, pointing out positive and negative behaviors.
9. **Physical Education**—Arrange for a girl/boy sporting activity, like a game of capture the flag (no contact sports). Establish ground rules for good sportsmanship, and then announce rewards for good sportsmanship, like free ice cream coupons.
10. **English, Social Studies**—Post quotations on the topic of respect around the classroom several days prior to this activity. Ask students to select meaningful quotes that are worthy of discussion. Go around the classroom and ask students to discuss what their quote means to them. You can find quotes for this exercise is at www.brainyquote.com.
11. **Computers**—Introduce students to the CHOOSE RESPECT Web site at www.chooserespect.org. The campaign’s Interactive Music Video Maker will be available on this site and will be a fun learning tool for kids. Have a class session during which kids are allowed to use the Music Video Maker and create music videos.
12. **General**—Develop a list of reading materials and other resources. Mail the list to parents or distribute it at school-based events to which parents are invited. The list should include books and readings about respectful relationships and good citizenship. Parents should be encouraged to read books with their children. Movie rentals can be suggested in this list as well. Also, think about films that are playing in theatres or coming out soon.
13. **Extracurricular Activities and Clubs**—Use extracurricular activities and clubs, such as orchestra, marching band, and service and drama clubs, to sponsor school events aimed at raising awareness of dating abuse. After school activities also promote team building activities that teach and reinforce respect.
14. **Athletics**—Encourage coaches to teach youth the difference between aggression on the athletic field (acceptable) and aggressive behavior toward their peers (unacceptable).



Be sure to draw all students into these activities. Don't settle for comments and feedback only from the highest-achieving students who always participate. All kids need to feel connected to their families, schools, teachers, and peers. Some are at higher risk for academic problems than others are. They may need extra support from you to help them feel comfortable participating in these exercises.

Give students opportunities to work both alone and in groups. Kids aged 11–14 are usually

oriented toward peers and are concerned about social acceptance. Small group activity can encourage peer interaction, which may help students enjoy school projects.

Be creative in your thinking, and come up with additional ways to integrate campaign messages into activities. Suggestions in this kit can be done individually, in pairs, or in group. Each option will have its own unique advantages.

Communication Tips for Educators

It's easy to get to know the outgoing, talkative kids in your classroom. Your challenge is to draw *all* of your students into projects and discussions. Show an interest in students' lives outside of the classroom, and encourage them to trust and talk to you. Remember, some students aren't comfortable talking with their parents and need some other caring adult to take an interest in them.

Teachers are often in a better position than parents to recognize unhealthy relationship patterns because school is one of the main places where kids interact with each other in large numbers. Walking down the hall, a teacher may hear conversations or see actions that parents may never see. For this reason, teachers may sometimes be the first responders when it comes to recognizing relationship abuse.

Whether a student turns to you with concerns about a dating relationship or you choose to approach a student, keep the following communication tips in mind:

- Show interest, concern, and compassion but try not to overreact.
- Keep the conversation between yourself and the student, plus any counselor or organization to which you refer the student (if applicable).
- Realize that you will remain the link between the student and the counselor or organization to which you made the referral.
- Be sure to follow up with the student(s).



What Can Schools Do?

Administrators can set up school-wide measures to help prevent relationship abuse by:

- Making sure there are effective school policies in place that promote healthy and respectful relationships and discourage dating abuse. For example, educators and parents may choose to develop and implement policies that encourage equal treatment for girls under Title IX (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is a law that prohibits discrimination based on gender in any school that receives public funds).
- Being aware of current policies to prevent violence, making sure everyone knows the policies, and enforcing them consistently. Policies may define specific behaviors that are unacceptable, and outline the consequences of these behaviors (for example, bullying).
- Creating effective school policies, if none currently exist, on the subject of abusive behavior and how it should be handled. For example, school policies may outline who should be notified when a violent incident occurs.
- Training educators on ways to prevent relationship abuse.
- Integrating lesson plans on relationship abuse into school curricula.
- Inviting speakers and making classroom presentations on the subject of relationship abuse.
- Sponsoring performances related to relationship abuse.
- Coordinating volunteer opportunities for parents who wish to get involved.
- Developing strong relationships with local partners such as domestic and sexual violence organizations.



In general, schools should:

- Make sure that teachers, counselors, and all other personnel who work with youth know about relationship abuse and related community resources. Schools should establish training programs for teachers, if they have the funding and if necessary.
- Inform school employees about the school’s policy for making referrals to counselors and outside organizations. If no school policy exists, work toward creating, implementing, and enforcing one.
- Select or develop violence prevention curricula and lesson plans. These should be theory-driven and appropriate for students’ age and level of development. Lessons should be taught in multiple sessions, because research shows that learning is most effective when messages are repeated.
- Make sure that visiting presenters are highly qualified. Presentations should be interactive and include role-playing, behavioral rehearsal, feedback, and active student participation.
- Take steps to make sure students are well-supervised during school activities by professionals who know the warning signs of dating abuse. Provide opportunities for parents to get involved in the learning process as it relates to dating abuse prevention.
- Sponsor presentations for parents during PTO meetings or parent-teacher nights that focus on healthy relationship-building and/or preventing dating abuse.

Schools can find information on school/family/community partnerships on the National Center for Health Education’s *Youth, Parents, and Communities* Web site at www.nche.org/nche_ypc.asp and related pages. Be sure to read **Section VI. Coming Together as a Community** for ideas on how you can work for change within your community, and **Section III. Involving Parents** if you have kids of your own.

CHOOSE RESPECT also includes a brochure specifically for educators with this kit. In addition, there is a CHOOSE RESPECT Educational Video, in which young teens discuss dating abuse. CHOOSE RESPECT also includes an Interactive Music Video Maker on the Internet at www.chooserespect.org, which allows kids to read about common situations and choose the correct response. Choosing appropriate responses enables kids to make a music video on the Web site.





Section V.
Involving Preteens and Teens

CHOOSE RESPECT

CHOOSE RESPECT aims to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of 11- to 14-year-old girls and boys about dating abuse. It is important for kids to develop the skills and attitudes they need to have satisfying, healthy relationships. Adults can help guide kids, but kids must be willing to accept and practice the healthy relationship skills they are taught. Kids also need to reject messages that present unacceptable, disrespectful, or violent ways of handling relationship problems.

Stepping In to Help a Friend

Encourage action. Preteens and teens need to learn that there are many ways to help if they witness abuse:

- **Speak up.** When peers say things that support disrespect or violence, choose respect and speak up for what’s right.
- **Step in.** When one person is mistreating another verbally, physically, or emotionally, step in politely to stop the situation *if it is safe to do so*.
- **Talk later.** Sometimes it’s better to wait and talk to the abuser or the person who is being abused later, in private. The person may be less defensive and talk more openly in a one-on-one conversation.
- **Talk to an adult.** In some situations (for instance, if physical abuse is happening) it may be best to go to an adult. A teacher, coach, youth leader, family member, or another trustworthy adult may be the best person to help in this kind of situation.
- **Go for help.** If someone is in immediate danger, go for help right away or call 911. *Do not* try to get involved if anyone has a weapon or if a fight is out of control.

Like adults, young people may be afraid to speak up when they hear friends make statements that support abuse. They may not take action if they see an act of abuse. Kids should be encouraged to speak up when they see abuse or warning signs of abuse.



Dating abuse may not be apparent right away. It may start slowly, and only happen between dating partners when they are alone together. Sometimes, though, something just doesn't seem right.

Kids should know what signs might be signals that a friend is involved in an abusive relationship. Preteens and teens can look for the following signs:

Is a friend the victim of relationship abuse? Things to look for:	Is a friend being abusive or at risk of becoming abusive? Some signs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdraws from family and friends • Stops participating in activities and hobbies • Makes excuses for a dating partner's behavior • Is afraid of making the dating partner angry • Overeats or sleeps too much, or alcohol or drug use • Has suspicious injuries or bruises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores the dating partner • Insults a dating partner (directly or indirectly) in public or private • Spreads rumors about a dating partner • Flirts with others to make the dating partner jealous • Attempts to control what a partner wears or does

It may be difficult for a young person to ask if a friend is an abuser or being abused. Sometimes it can help just to *be there* as a friend who can offer support and show concern. Ask if something is wrong, be supportive, and don't judge. Offer to go with the friend to talk with an adult.

Abuse begins with the wrong belief that it's OK to use disrespectful language and violent behavior. Kids can challenge this belief when they speak up rather than remain silent when friends act disrespectfully or violently.

Here are some examples of situations in which kids can speak up and help:

- Friends are making fun of, or saying hurtful things about, a person or a group (girls or women, minorities, gays, etc.).
- Several boys are laughing and making loud, mean remarks about a girl who is standing nearby.
- A couple of girls are spreading false rumors about another girl.
- A boy brags to his friends about things he did with his girlfriend (whether it is true or not).
- A guy talks about his girlfriend in a mean way (for example, saying unkind things about her clothes or claiming that he's doing her a favor by going out with her).
- A boy ignores his girlfriend in front of his friends.



Speaking up can be simple. It can mean pointing out how hurtful someone's comments or actions



are. Or asking friends how they would feel if someone said or acted meanly toward them. It is always wise to speak up in a polite, non-judgmental way. This puts emphasis on the behavior, not on the person. For example, say, "Carrie would really be hurt if she heard you say that," rather than "You're being a real jerk to talk about Carrie that way."

Speaking up can mean telling a friend who is being hurt in a relationship that controlling or violent behavior is *not* normal or right, and that he or she doesn't deserve to be treated badly.

When kids see friends act abusively and don't speak up, abusers may feel that their behavior is OK. Abusers may not realize, because no one has spoken up, that they are not acting appropriately. This shows how

important it is for kids to get involved and speak out against violence when necessary. By doing so, they can show that not everyone agrees that violence and abuse are acceptable.

There are many helpful Web sites for teens about dating abuse. These sites tell kids what dating abuse is and how to recognize it, how to avoid it, and what to do if it happens. The American Psychological Association has a site called *Love Shouldn't Have to Hurt Teens* at www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen. Another useful site is www.seeitandstopit.org, created by Massachusetts teens for other teens.

Kids may enjoy using the CHOOSE RESPECT Interactive Music Video Maker, which can be found at www.chooserespect.org. The game includes a number of scenarios with several possible responses. Several of the scenarios are bystander situations. Correct responses allow kids to construct a music video on the site. You will also find sample scenarios in *Section VII. Tips, Handouts, and Resources*.

The CHOOSE RESPECT kit also includes brochures for boys and girls that talk about developing healthy relationships, recognizing and avoiding dating abuse, and what to do if faced with an abusive relationship.





Section VI.
Coming Together as a Community

CHOOSE RESPECT

When individuals in a community come together to work for the common good, they can create positive community change. On an individual basis, people all over are joining forces to solve problems and make their communities better and healthier places by tutoring and mentoring youth, serving meals to the homeless, answering helpline calls that come in to child abuse prevention centers, or coordinating leisure activities at a retirement housing facility. There are countless ways adults can get involved in improving communities for the benefit of the young people they care about.

Social, or community, change happens because caring people work together and support and encourage one another. People come together to strive to ensure justice, achieve freedom, and improve existing systems, programs, and overall community health. Throughout history, major strides have been made because people have united to create positive social change. Without communities organizing for change, an important piece of history—the Civil Rights Movement—may not have taken place.

When communities work together, what happens is “history in the making.” People can work together in groups to make changes in school policy. People in communities have banded together to pass clean indoor air ordinances to ensure a healthy environment for their children and themselves. Others have passed laws requiring use of child safety seats. Still other groups of parents have established school policies that protect youth from illegal drugs.

Did you realize that communities can do amazing things when their members work together? We can change attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and laws in history-making ways:

- ▣ Mothers Against Drunk Driving changed the way we look at driving under the influence of alcohol
- ▣ The Civil Rights Movement extended basic human rights to a group that had been excluded
- ▣ The Women’s Suffrage Movement mobilized women to demand the right to vote.



What Is a Community?

A community is a group that shares common interests or characteristics. There are communities within communities. For example, there are neighborhoods within a small city. Knowing and understanding your community—or communities—is important to preventing relationship abuse. Every community has its own characteristics, needs, and resources to offer. To develop a successful community program or activity, you need to understand the community.

Understanding your community and its cultural norms and attitudes, as well as how things get done and/or changed in your community, is important in preventing dating abuse. Attitudes form the foundation for behavior. It's hard to change behavior without changing attitudes first.

It's also important to know what kinds of resources your community offers (in terms of money, materials, and people). These resources will assist you with violence prevention efforts. Communities provide opportunities for deliver-

ing important messages face to face. When you add community activities, media campaigns have more effect on people's attitudes and behaviors.

Many types of communities exist, such as:

- ▣ Geographic (for example, subdivisions, apartment buildings, towns)
- ▣ Demographic (gender, age, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic group)
- ▣ Specialized interest (religious, retirement, military base, service club)
- ▣ Workplace or professional community

Communities offer many opportunities to work with groups like youth, health, and service organizations, as well as schools and universities. Some of the ways these community groups can help include:

- Providing information about the community to help plan effective CHOOSE RESPECT activities and events (for example, violence statistics, information about cultures represented in the community, etc.)
- Sponsoring or co-sponsoring events about creating and maintaining healthy relationships and/or preventing relationship abuse (for example, films or lecture series).
- Delivering messages to young people, youth mentors, government agencies, community organizations, and the media to:
 - Create awareness—organizations can distribute press releases to the media that help media professionals address dating abuse prevention.
 - Prepare for action—organizations can deliver tips and resources to those who need them.
- Form active partnerships to identify new ways to address issues related to dating abuse.



Getting Acquainted with Your Community

To find out how your community can get involved with CHOOSE RESPECT, you'll need to learn as much as you can about your community's needs. You should find out what's already being done in the area of dating abuse prevention, particularly with preteens and teens. For example, you should:

- Learn the characteristics of the community—things like age, ethnic groups, etc.
- Learn the extent of the problem.
- Find out what organizations address healthy relationships, dating abuse prevention, or general violence prevention.
- Identify organizations and people who are important in the field of dating abuse prevention.
- Determine what, if any, organizations/groups are doing similar things.
- Identify the organizations/groups that work with young people ages 11–14.

Moving to Action

Your community may already have a violence prevention coalition, which is a loosely organized group of experts and concerned citizens who are working to make the local community a supportive place for healthy relationships. If a group of concerned people or a coalition does not exist, you may want to get a few people together who are concerned with dating abuse to support the CHOOSE RESPECT campaign. A small group of people who care about relationship abuse issues might look at what the local schools are doing about such things as violence, bullying, and sexual harassment and how they are dealing with these things when they happen. Then, the group can learn how these and similar policies may be developed, strengthened, and /or enforced. You can find out if there is a local community group concerned about domestic and/or youth violence by searching the Web, calling your local children and family services agencies or United Way, asking local police department, etc.)

As individuals or small groups, volunteers work to help youth (as well as affected individuals of any age). If you would like to volunteer but have

not gotten started yet, it is never too late. People who volunteer do so not only to donate some time for a worthy cause, but also to feel challenged, learn new skills, meet new friends, feel proud and needed, and learn more about their communities.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and would like to work to benefit youth, a Web site that may help you locate local organizations is www.volunteermatch.org. By entering your zip code and the type of volunteer work you are looking for, you can generate a list of organizations (with contact information) that would welcome your skills and input!

People who volunteer bring different skills, knowledge, and contacts to organizations they serve. For example, community coalitions might draw members from:

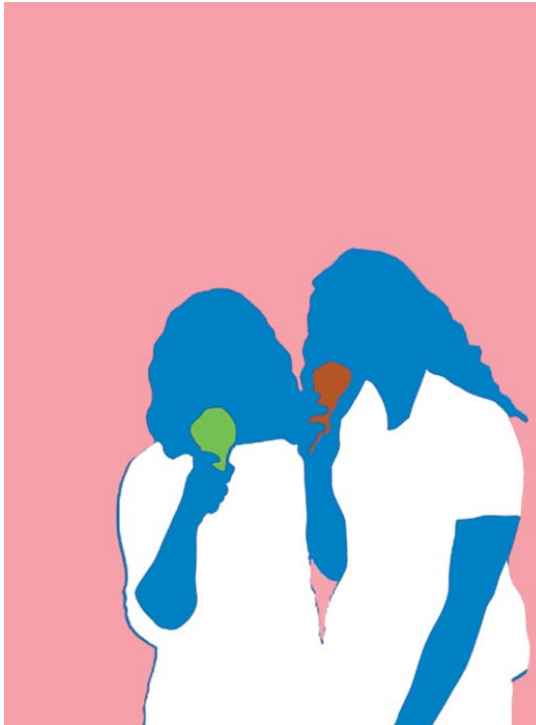
- Key community leaders who will act as advocates for CHOOSE RESPECT.



- Local businesses, health organizations, medical associations.
- Schools, PTOs, colleges and universities.
- Journalists, public relations and or marketing professionals.
- Churches, synagogues, mosques, faith-based organizations.
- Civic and service organizations, neighborhood associations, non-profits, violence prevention groups.

- Athletic organizations, YMCA, YWCA, juvenile detention centers, youth service centers, courts.
- Government and the military, including law enforcement.

Some of these groups may overlap. People may work with businesses *and* schools. The important thing is that you recruit people from a variety of areas, with a balance of skills and many points of view.



Potential Community Partners

The list of possible community partners is long. Think creatively about ways to involve different sectors of the community in this campaign:

■ Organizations that serve young people

- Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts
- YMCA /YWCA
- Junior Achievement, 4-H Clubs
- Recreation centers and athletic clubs

■ Service and business organizations

- Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Chambers of Commerce

■ Health organizations:

- Hospitals, doctors' offices, public health departments
- Medical associations

■ Military bases

■ Schools, colleges and universities

- Teachers, administrators, Parent-Teacher Organizations
- Fraternities and sororities

■ Local sports organizations

- Professional sports teams
- Youth athletic leagues

■ Local businesses

- Business associations
- Employee service groups



■ **Businesses frequented by young people**

- Mall management and security
- Movie theaters
- Video arcades
- Fast food restaurants
- Concert venues
- Athletic venues

■ **Law enforcement and public safety**

- Police and fire departments
- Juvenile detention centers/courts

■ **Religious organizations**

- Churches, synagogues, mosques
- Faith-based organizations

■ **Social service organizations**

- Women's shelters, domestic and sexual violence coalitions
- Rape crisis centers

■ **Arts organizations**

- Local theater companies and art galleries
- Arts festivals

■ **Neighborhood associations**

■ **News media**

- Television and radio
- Newspapers and community newsletters



Anyone Can Get Involved

All adults influence the kids in their lives. Adults can leave a lasting impression on young people regardless of whether they have close or casual relationships with kids. Adults need to model positive behaviors that support healthy relationships for young people.

When it comes to abusive dating relationships, anyone who becomes aware of suspected or known abuse can get involved. Someone who sees an abusive situation and gets involved is called a bystander. A bystander may be a friend, family member, acquaintance, or even a stranger. Often, someone who is being abused in a relationship can't—or won't—ask for help. Bystanders can help victims (and abusers) by getting involved instead of looking the other way.

Adult bystanders should learn what signs to look for and how to help. Then they will be able to offer knowledgeable support to young people affected by relationship abuse. Too often, bystanders don't offer help because they don't want to “interfere” in someone else's relationship. Things kids can do to help their peers are discussed in *Section: VI. Involving Preteens and Teens.*

For your own safety, be very careful about stepping into a possibly dangerous situation. When in doubt, get help.

Tell the preteens and teens in your life that you care about them and that you're prepared to listen and help. Then, go one step further and listen to

what these young people *don't* tell you. Watch for the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. Ask questions if something seems wrong, and be prepared to help.

When young people know they have adults who care and can give advice, they feel more comfortable and confident.

Actions Community Groups Can Take

The power of the community lies in the fact that the total is sometimes greater than the sum of its parts. We can often achieve more by working together than we can by working individually. Regardless of whom you are or where you live, you can get involved in helping prevent relationship abuse. You don't need to be an expert. Some ideas on how to get involved include:

- Find out what groups in your community are doing to prevent dating abuse and join them. If there are no existing groups, start one.
- Learn about existing policies on dating and relationship abuse (schools, youth sports, local youth organizations). These types of policies generally define certain negative behaviors and then tell what will happen (consequences) when kids choose those behaviors.
- Identify an existing coalition, or form a new one, to address issues related to dating abuse. Remember, two heads are better than one. It takes a community, starting with a small group of people, to provide a nurturing and



healthy place for youth to grow into well balanced and healthy, responsible adults.

- Help develop and improve school policies as they relate to relationship abuse. Make sure the rules are enforced consistently. Some questions to ask include:
 - What happens when violence takes place at the school or if someone is threatened?
 - What confidentiality rules are in place that allow peers to speak freely to teachers and administrators?
 - How does a student file a sexual harassment claim?
 - Who is the Title IX coordinator responsible for making sure school policies are equal and enforced equally for girls and boys?
- Involve your volunteer organization, place of worship, workplace, school, or pediatrician's office in handing out CHOOSE RESPECT information and materials.
- Volunteer your group or organization to mentor young people. Through supportive one-on-one relationships, you and your fellow volunteers can teach respectful attitudes and help young people learn to recognize, form, and enjoy healthy, supportive relationships.
- Mobilize your group or organizations to organize or sponsor a community event. Establish and maintain a speakers' bureau of adults and youth who can clearly explain

CHOOSE RESPECT principles. (Other examples, such as film screenings and lecture series, are mentioned earlier in this kit.)

- Engage the participation of businesses and programs where young people “hang out”—malls, fast food restaurants, movie theaters, concert venues, athletic events, etc.

Remember, all young people need trusted adults—parents or other role models—to help guide them.



The CHOOSE RESPECT Educational Video is available for community groups to use in dating abuse prevention programs. This video shows young teens talking about real-life abusive situations. CHOOSE RESPECT also includes an Interactive Music Video Maker on the Internet at www.chooserespect.org. This site allows kids to read about common situations and choose correct responses. Choosing appropriate responses allows the kids to make a music video on the Web site. Be sure to look at the resources listed in *Section VII. Tops, Handouts, and Resources* for other materials to use in promoting healthy relationships and preventing dating abuse.



Cultural Competence

All communities are made up of many different types of people. Some of the differences can be very big—things like language or cultural traditions. This diversity presents challenges to campaigns like CHOOSE RESPECT.

How do we make sure that our message is heard and understood by everyone in the community?

When we talk about healthy relationships and dating abuse, it is important to make every effort to deliver our prevention messages to members of groups that are most likely to experience relationship abuse. It is likely that some of these groups will have different languages or cultures from the majority population. Therefore, successful prevention efforts need to consider these differences. This is what we mean by the term *culturally competent*.

A culturally competent organization understands and accepts cultural differences. Cultural competence requires that organizations value and adapt to diversity. People, especially in a melting pot

like the United States, come from a variety of backgrounds. They often differ in the ways they think, communicate, and behave. Value systems, cultural norms, and traditions—even things like the way family is defined—vary.

For more information on cultural competence as it relates to dating abuse prevention, see the **Toolkit to End Violence Against Women**. This toolkit is a publication of the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office. The

first chapter of this toolkit provides information on how communities can work successfully to prevent dating abuse. It also gives tips for making community efforts culturally competent. To see the entire toolkit, go to <http://toolkit.ncjrs.org/>.

In order to promote CHOOSE RESPECT goals in our diverse communities, we must:

- ▣ Present materials that are easy to understand.
- ▣ Be careful not to offend anyone.
- ▣ Reach members of the community who are most at risk to be abused or become abusers.





Section VII.
Tips, Handouts, and Resources

CHOOSE → RESPECT

Communication Skills

Good communication skills are important to all healthy relationships. Successful communication flows in both directions and has two main parts:

■ Listening

A good communicator listens attentively and respectfully to what the other person is saying. He or she allows the other to express feelings and thoughts without interrupting, and makes an effort to understand.

■ Talking

A good communicator expresses his or her thoughts and feelings to the other person clearly, openly, and without extreme emotion.

Some tips for becoming a better communicator:

- Listen to what the other person has to say. Don't interrupt or show disrespect for the other person.
- Be aware of your body language as well as the other person's. Body language includes facial expression and body position and movement. It tells a lot about what people are thinking. Be sure that your body language and facial expressions do not send a negative message. Maintain an open expression and show that you are listening
- Use "I" statements. You'll have more success talking about what you are feeling than by accusing or blaming the other person for what he/she has or has not done. For example: "I really worry when you don't call to say you'll be late" instead of "You're so inconsiderate! Why didn't you call?"
- Talk in a normal, respectful tone of voice. Don't yell or raise your voice.
- Ask questions to show interest and to get more information about what the other person has said.
- Look the other person in the eye.
- If you're angry, take a break and cool off before continuing the discussion.
- Don't judge the other person.
- Be clear, straightforward, and specific. Ask for what you want.
- Practice empathy. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- Check for understanding by re-stating what you heard the other person say and asking for confirmation.

You can find additional communication tips at the Michigan State University Counseling Center's Web site: www.couns.msu.edu/self-help/suggest.htm.



Safety Tips

These safety tips are for all persons involved in relationships, and are helpful for teens as well as adults. These tips are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

- If you are the victim of relationship abuse, don't blame yourself but do seek help. Talk with people you trust and seek services. Contact your local domestic violence shelter or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233), 800-787-3224 TDD, or www.ndvh.org/. They can provide helpful information and advice.
- If you are or think you may become violent with the person you are dating, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233), 800-787-3224 (TDD), or www.ndvh.org/. They can provide helpful contact information.
- Recognize early warning signs of potential physical violence, like extreme jealousy, controlling behavior, or verbal threats.
- Know what services are available for people involved in violent relationships in your community. Keep a list of these services on hand in case you or a friend ever needs help.

Learn as much as you can about dating abuse. Information is available in libraries, from local and national domestic violence organizations, and on the Internet. The more you know about dating abuse, the easier it will be to recognize it and help yourself or friends who may be victims or abusers.



Relationship Questionnaire

The following questions refer to a girlfriend or boyfriend in a dating or romantic relationship.

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Does your girlfriend or boyfriend tease you in hurtful ways?			
Is he/she jealous of your other friends?			
Does he/she ignore your opinions or interests?			
Does he/she check up on you?			
Does he/she accuse you of flirting with other people?			
Does he/she tell you how to dress, or who you can hang out with?			
Does he/she insist that you spend all of your free time together, and get angry when you want to do other things?			
Does he/she try to control you or order you around?			
Does he/she make all the decisions?			
Does he/she insult or humiliate you or call you names?			
Does your boyfriend or girlfriend tell you it's your fault when he or she is mean to you?			
Are you afraid of him/her?			
Does he/she ever pressure you for sex?			
Does he/she provoke you into fights?			
Does he/she have a history of bad relationships?			
Does he/she refuse to accept breaking up, or threaten suicide if you end the relationship?			
Does he/she lie to you or keep things from you?			
Has he/she ever (even once) hit you?			
Has he/she ever destroyed something that belonged to you?			
Does he/she tell you that no one else wants you for a girlfriend/boyfriend?			
Do your family or friends dislike or distrust your girlfriend/boyfriend?			
Has he/she gotten too serious about the relationship too fast?			

Adapted from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence Web site: www.ricadv.org/violence.html

All of the above are signs that something is wrong in your relationship. You should seek the help and advice of a trusted adult.



What Would You Do?

Scenarios from the CHOOSE RESPECT Interactive Music Video Maker

When your friends tease you about your relationship with a girl, you choose to:

- Say she is cool.
- Call her names and deny you like her.
- Call your friends names and tease them back.
- Tell them she cannot keep her hands off of you.

Your girlfriend is mad because you went out with the boys and not her. You choose to:

- Yell back.
- Push her away and walk off.
- Tell her that it is just the way you are—take it or leave it.
- Wait until she calms down and talk it over.

You hear a guy threatening to smack his girlfriend. You choose to:

- Ignore it.
- Run over and push the guy away.
- Step in and ask them to talk it out.
- Step in and threaten the guy.

You are not interested in going out with a girl in your group anymore. You choose to:

- Make fun of her in the group.
- Try to hug and kiss her and get her to do other things she does not want to do in order to make her leave the group.
- Ignore her.
- Be honest and tell her you just want to be friends.

You asked a girl to go to the dance, but she says another guy already asked her. You choose to:

- Spread a nasty rumor about her all over school.
- Be rude to her every chance you get.
- Smile and say, “That’s cool, maybe next time.”
- Threaten to hurt the other guy.

You and your friends see a guy marking up his girlfriend’s locker. You choose to:

- Yell at him to stop.
- Laugh about it.
- Turn around and ignore that it is happening.
- Throw things at him.

Your boyfriend is staring at another girl and it is making you jealous. You choose to:

- Give him the silent treatment.
- Smack him and go off on him.
- Tell him how that makes you feel.
- Start telling your friends he is a jerk.

After the movies, he wants to hang out. You want to go home. You choose to:

- Yell at him in front of everyone for disagreeing with you.
- Do what he wants to because he is the boy.
- Walk home by yourself.
- Ask him to respect your wishes.

Your friend shows up with a new haircut. All the kids are making fun of her. Your friend gets so mad she is ready to throw her backpack at them. You choose to:

- Step in and help her calm down.
- Start cursing at the kids making fun of your friends.
- Sit tight and watch what happens next.
- Find something in your desk that you can throw at the hecklers.

Your girlfriend wants to go out with her friends. You choose to:

- Threaten to break up with her if she does.
- Tell her to have a great time.
- Ask if you can go along because you do not trust her.
- Accuse her of cheating on you.

You are playing ball with your buddies. A girl friend of yours wants to join in. You choose to:

- Blow her off to look cool to your friends.
- Let her play so you can beat her.
- Treat her as an equal and let her join the game.
- Tease her and tell her girls are not as good at basketball as boys.

Resources on the Internet

The list below includes links to other federal agencies and to a number of private organizations. Reference in this kit to any specific Web site does not imply CDC endorsement or recommendation. CDC is not responsible for the content of any “off-site” Web page referenced in this list or elsewhere in the kit.

Web sites listed were accurate at the time of printing. Web addresses sometimes change as sites are updated and improved. If you cannot access a site, try deleting the information to the right of the first slash (/) to connect to the home page of the site.

Teaching Respect and Other Healthy Relationship Skills:

Goodcharacter.com

www.goodcharacter.com

Character Counts!

www.charactercounts.org

Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (Respect and Responsibility)

www.cortland.edu/c4n5rs

Ripple Effects

www.rippleeffects.com/education/software/teens.html

Dating Abuse Prevention:

You may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) or visit their Web site (www.ndvh.org) to find community resources for help and advice about dating abuse. Additional sites with good information about dating abuse and how to prevent it include:

American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence

www.abanet.org/domviol/home.html

American Institute on Domestic Violence

www.aidv-usa.com

American Psychological Association

www.apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=38

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention

www.cdc.gov/injury



Communities Against Violence Network
www.cavnet2.org

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence
www.caepv.org

FaithTrust Institute (formerly The Center for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)—
an interreligious faith-based educational resource
www.faithtrustinstitute.org

The Family Violence Prevention Fund: Coaching Boys Into Men
www.endabuse.org/cbim/

The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
www.dvinstitute.org

Jackson Katz (men's violence prevention strategies)
www.jacksonkatz.com

Liz Claiborne: Love Is Not Abuse
www.loveisnotabuse.com

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse
www.mincava.umn.edu

National Center for Victims of Crime: Dating Violence Resource Center
www.ncvc.org/dvrc

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.ncadv.org

National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence
www.DVAlianza.org

National Network to End Domestic Violence
www.nnedv.org

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center
www.safeyouth.org



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration: Stop Bullying Now
stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp

Violence Against Women Electronic Network (VAWnet)
www.vawnet.org

Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action. Thornton, T.N., Craft, C.A., Dahlberg, L.L. Lynch, B.S., Baer, K. (2000). Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm

Sites for Preteens and Teens:

Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.acadv.org/dating.html

American Psychological Association: Love Doesn't Have to Hurt Teens
www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen

Bullyproof™
www.bullyproof.org

Love Is Not Abuse
www.loveisnotabuse.com/home.asp

Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.ricadv.org/violence.html

Stop Bullying Now
<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>



Helpful Books for Adults

A Parent's Handbook: How to Talk to Your Children About Developing Healthy Relationships. Liz Claiborne. www.loveisnotabuse.com or 1-800-449-STOP

Fortune, Rev. Marie M. *Love Does No Harm: Sexual Ethics for the Rest of Us.* New York: The Continuum Publishing Group, 1995.

Kivel, Paul. *Boys Will Be Men, Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring and Community.* New Society Publishers, 1999.

Levy, Barrie, editor. *Dating Violence, Young Women in Danger.* Seattle, Seal Press, 1991.

Levy, Barrie and Occhiuzzo Giggans, Patricia. *What Parents Need to Know about Dating Violence.* The Seal Press, 1995.

Miedzian, Myriam. *Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence.* New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls.* New York: Ballantine, 1994.

Wolfe, David A., et al. *Alternatives to Violence: Empowering Youth to Develop Healthy Relationships.* Sage Publications, 1996.



Helpful Videos for Adults

(For information about several films that may be informative and insightful, please visit www.mediaed.org. On this Web site, you will find descriptions of enlightening films and information on how to order copies. The following is a short list of some documentary films that you may want to watch, either with other adults or with young people you are close to.)

Causing Pain: Real Stories of Dating Abuse and Violence

This educational video, produced by the Choose Respect campaign, aims to raise awareness among teens, parents, educators, and communities about unhealthy, abusive relationships and what can be done to prevent them. This documentary style video features unscripted interviews with real teens who have experienced, perpetrated, or witnessed dating violence. Cut together in a fast-paced, MTV-style format, the video intersperses interviews with dramatizations to engage, inform, and motivate young teens and the adults in their lives regarding dating violence.

2005, approx. 13 minutes, VHS.

A Love that Kills

A Love that Kills is a powerful documentary that tells the story of Monica, a 19-year-old woman who was murdered by her former boyfriend. Monica's mother speaks passionately throughout the video, telling viewers about her daughter's life and tragic death. The video helps to identify the warning signs of partner abuse, especially in young people, and the damage it causes emotionally and physically. It will help generate discussion and action, and is appropriate for use in Health, Guidance, Family Law or Social Studies classes.

1999, 19 min. 32 sec., 9199 118, VHS CC

Right from the Start: Dating Violence Prevention for Teens

This film is part of an educational package designed to help teenagers recognize dating abuse and confront unacceptable attitudes and behaviour. The clips follow a group of teens at school, at home, in the drama club, and at a party to illustrate the escalation of boyfriends' abusive behavior from humiliating jokes to violent physical and sexual attacks. An easy-to-follow guide suggests questions and role-playing exercises for each dramatized scenario.

1992, 25 min., 9192 162, VHS CC

Purchase inquiries: kineticvideo.com

A Room Full of Men

This documentary examines a group of men who have abused women, and their efforts to change. As the story unfolds, both participants and viewers learn that violence is more than beatings and bruises. As long as men believe they have authority and control over women, both physically and mentally, the potential for violence remains.

1992, 48 min., 0192 147, VHS

Purchase inquiries: Heartland Motion Pictures Inc.



Still Killing Us Softly

This is the sequel to the widely acclaimed 1979 film, *Killing Us Softly*. In her continuous efforts to unmask the techniques used in selling products, Jean Kilbourne draws attention to the sexual, violent, and pornographic aspects of advertising. She points out that the image of women in advertising continues to be negative.

1987, 30 min., 9187 145, VHS CC

Purchase inquiries: kineticvideo.com

Breaking the Silence

Hosted by an RCMP constable, this video contains stories of hope for women who are in violent relationships and provides practical and valuable information on how to leave an abusive partner. *Breaking the Silence* also gives advice and understanding to people who know of—or witness—domestic violence, and offers help for abusers. The video focuses on the secrecy surrounding domestic violence, urging individuals and the community to speak out and ‘break the silence.’

1995, 50 min., 9195 217, VHS

Purchase inquiries: Friday Communications Inc.



Helpful Books for Preteens and Teens

Abner, Allison, and Vallarosa, Linda. *Finding Our Way: The Teen Girl's Survival Guide*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1996.

Bass, Ellen, and Kaufman, Kate. *Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth and their Allies*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

Bateman, Py and Mahoney, Bill. *Macho: Is That What I Really Want?* Briarcliff Manor, New York: Youth Education Systems, 1989.

Dee, Catherine. *The Girls' Guide to Life: How to Take Charge of the Issues that Affect You*. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1997.

Feed Your Head: *Some Excellent Stuff on Being Yourself*. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1991.

Kuklin, Susan. *Speaking Out: Teenagers Take on Race, Sex, and Identity*. New York: Putnam, 1993.

Levy, Barrie. *In Love and in Danger: A Teen's Guide to Breaking Free of Abusive Relationships*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1993.

Tune into Your Rights: A Guide for Teenagers about Turning off Sexual Harassment. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1985. (734) 763-9910.



Protection Through the Legal System

In cases of dating violence, a judge may issue a restraining order (or protective order), requiring that a past or present abusive dating partner stop abusing the other partner. The order may also state that the violent person may not see or contact the other partner. Restraining orders differ by state, and not all states allow young people under the age of 18 to get restraining orders.

To find out your state's laws regarding restraining orders for adolescents, visit www.womenslaw.org. This Web site includes state-specific information and resources.

As a caring adult, you should become familiar with the laws in your state. Be prepared to offer advice and make referrals if a young person comes to you for help regarding a violent relationship.



