Take Action

- Educate your community. Start a peer education program on teen dating violence.
- Encourage your school or a community organization to start a program to help abusers conquer their behavior. Teaching how to be in a relationship without resorting to violence will help break the cycle.
- Read up on healthy relationships and dating violence. Ask your school library to purchase books about living without violence and the cycle of domestic violence.
- Inquire about having health, social studies, and other classes incorporate discussions of teen dating violence and its prevention.

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How To Be a Friend to a Victim of Dating Violence

Most teens talk to other teens about their problems, if a friend tells you things that sound like his or her relationship is abusive, these suggestions can help:

- Don’t ignore signs of abuse. Talk to your friend.
- Express your concerns. Tell your friend you’re worried. Support, don’t judge.
- Point out your friend’s strengths—many people in abusive relationships are no longer capable of seeing their own abilities and gifts.
- Encourage your friend to confide in a trusted adult. Offer to go with your friend for professional help.
- Find out what laws in your state may protect your friend from the abuser.
- Never put yourself in a dangerous situation with the victim’s partner. Don’t try to mediate or otherwise get involved directly.
- Call the police if you witness an assault. Tell an adult—school principal, parent, guidance counselor, or school resource officer—if you suspect the abuse but don’t witness it.
Dating violence or abuse affects one in four teens. Abuse isn’t just hitting. It’s yelling, threatening, name calling, saying “I’ll kill myself if you leave me,” obsessive phone calling or paging, and extreme possessiveness.

Are You Going Out With Someone Who
◗ is jealous and possessive, won’t let you have friends, checks up on you, or won’t accept you just because he or she is angry.
◗ believes that he or she should be in control of the relationship?
◗ makes your family and friends uneasy and questions your safety?
◗ is violent? Has a history of fighting, loses his or her temper quickly, brags about mistreating others? Grabs, pushes, shoves, or hits you?
◗ pressures you for sex or is forceful or scary about sex?
◗ has a history of failed relationships and always believes that he or she should be in control of the relationship?
◗ abuses alcohol or other drugs and pressures you to use them?
◗ is possessive? Uses or owns weapons?
◗ is controlling in peer sexual and homosexual relationships and always pressure you for sex or is forceful or scary about sex?
◗ is violent? Has a history of fighting, loses his or her temper quickly, brags about mistreating others? Grabs, pushes, shoves, or hits you?
◗ talks with your parents, a friend, a counselor, a school counselor or security officer.

What if Your Partner Is Abusing You and You Want Out?
◗ Don’t put up with abuse. You deserve better.
◗ Know that you are not alone. Teens from all different backgrounds across the country are involved in or have been involved in a violent relationship.
◗ Know that you have done nothing wrong. It is not your fault.
◗ Understand that you have done nothing wrong. It is not your fault.
◗ Report the abuse. The more serious the violence, the more serious the abuse.

You and Your Partner Want Out?
◗ Plan and rehearse what you will do if he or she forces you to do something you don’t want to do.
◗ Always tell someone where you are going and the way to get there.
◗ Avoid being alone at school, your job, or on the way home or after school. Do not meet him or her alone. Do not let him or her know where you are going.
◗ Keep a daily log of the abuse for evidence.

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If you answered yes to any of these questions:

What if Your Partner Is Abusing You and You Want Out?
◗ Make a plan.
◗ Look out for signals your partner is getting upset.
◗ Plan and rehearse what you will do if he or she becomes abusive.