



### National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Month

**One in three**<sup>1</sup> young people experience dating violence. The Violence Against Women Act has highlighted the importance of addressing teen dating violence since 2005 and since 2010, Congress has annually declared February, "National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Month."

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is a national effort to raise awareness about dating violence, promote programs that support young people, and encourage communities to prevent dating violence. Take a look at the resources listed at the end of the document to learn more.

### Know the Stats!

- Nearly **1.5 million** high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.<sup>2</sup>
- **31%** of teens with dating experience have been checked up with on the internet or their cell phone by a partner asking where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.<sup>3</sup>
- Violent behavior exhibited by juveniles often begins between the ages of **12 and 18**.<sup>4</sup>
- LGBT youth have been found to be at a higher risk for experiencing dating abuse.<sup>5</sup>
- Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls **six times** more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to test positive for a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>6</sup>

### Why are Facilitated Youth-Adult Conversations Important?

Talking with young people about relationships can seem intimidating. Equally stressful is the idea of talking with adults about these topics when you're a young person! So, it's time for us to shift the approach from talking *to* young people to talking *with* young people.

We know that through open and honest conversations, adults and young people can:

- Reflect on relationships past and present and talk through their similarities and differences.
- Break down barriers to allow open, honest, and non-judgmental discussions about dating, healthy relationships, and abuse.
- Promote the importance of continued discussion and relationship building in their communities.

### **About the Consolidated Youth and Engaging Men Teen Dating Violence National Conversation & Film**

The Consolidated Youth and Engaging Men Program is celebrating National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month through a recorded conversation featuring a group of young people sharing their thoughts and observations on healthy relationships, modern dating, and the challenges and impact of interacting through social media. We invite you to join the National Conversation by organizing a viewing party and hosting a Teen Dating Violence conversation with youth in your communities.

### **How Should You Start?**

Great question! Once everyone is there and settled, it's a good idea to get everyone on the same page. Reiterate why you're there, and the purpose of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Take care of any "house-keeping" items such as sharing information on mandatory reporting requirements prior to beginning the conversation. Remind everyone that the event is a starting point - and that the conversations shouldn't end after the discussion is over. Another good strategy is to set what we call "Group Agreements." These are a list of guidelines that the group agrees to before starting the conversation to make the space as safe as possible for everyone involved. It's important everyone agrees to the list before the conversation starts. Here are a few of our favorites to get you started:

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at [http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008\\_focus\\_teen\\_dating\\_violence.pdf](http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008_focus_teen_dating_violence.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students—United States, 2003," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, May 19, 2006, Vol. 55, No. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center Teen Relationships Survey, Sep 25-Oct 9 2014, & Feb. 10 - March 16, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Rosado, Lourdes, *The Pathways to Youth Violence; How Child Maltreatment and Other Risk Factors Lead Children to Chronically Aggressive Behavior*. 2000. American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center

<sup>5</sup> Dank, M., Lachman, P., Zweig, J.M. & Yahner, J. Dating Violence Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. In Press: *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. On-line at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-013-9975-8>.

<sup>6</sup> Decker M, Silverman J, Raj A. 2005. Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. *Pediatrics*. 116: 272-276.

- One Person One Mic (One person speaks at a time. Give everyone their time to contribute!)
- Respect Everyone's Story (No judgment or devaluing others' experiences. Everyone's truth is their own and deserves respect.)
- Respect Names and Gender Pronouns
- What's Said Here Stays Here
- Feelings are OK
- Questions Are Ok
- Provide local and national resources so participants can seek support and/or become more involved (i.e.: For participants who want to learn or talk more [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org) provides 24/7/365 chat, text messaging (text Loveis to 22522), and a hotline (1-866-331-9474))

### **Check Your Assumptions**

We probably don't need to tell you this, but dating and language can look a lot different than it did ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago. The important thing to remember is that we've all been young, new to dating, and can relate to the idea of not being taken seriously by adults. It's vital to acknowledge that every person - youth and adult in the space - brings knowledge, experience, and expertise. Start from an equal playing field!

What are some of the ways that you can prepare to make the most out of the conversation?

- Ask yourself what assumptions you make about young people. Being aware of your preconceived notions is necessary in order to set them aside and have honest conversations.
- Try not to judge, blame, or make assumptions about their relationships.
- Be prepared to be open and honest. Young people can tell when you are guarding yourselves, but also make sure you don't overshare. It's not about you!
- Get acclimated with what young people are already saying.

## Discussion Questions

What are you going to talk about? Consider your participants' interests and comfort level with the topic. Draft a list of questions to get the conversation started, but be open to letting things flow in other directions. Here are a few questions inspired by the video as well as some other questions regarding Teen Dating Violence:

- What is a healthy relationship?
- What does dating mean to you?
- How do you identify Teen Dating Violence?
- In the film there was a difference of opinion about "play fighting." What are your thoughts?
- Are there any issues when dating through social media?
- What is the spectrum of "talking/dating"?
- Is it okay to be jealous?
- What are some of your boundaries in relationships?
- What's the best way to set boundaries with someone?
- What's the difference between flirting and harassment?
- What are qualities that you don't like in a dating partner?

## Anything Else I Should Know?

Yes! We want to hear from you! We want to hear about how amazing your event went and the continued community conversations. Gathering feedback is a great way to better inform future events - for you and for us!

What Makes Good Feedback?

- Inspiring quotes
- Lightbulb moments
- Pictures, video, or other media representation of your event (don't forget to get permission first!)

We ask that anyone hosting an event share their hosting experience with us by sending a few key pieces of information after your event is complete. Email us and include the following:

- Name of Organization/Host
- Number of participants (Adults and Youth)
- Reflection:
  - What did you enjoy the most about your event?
  - What would you improve or change?
  - What quote or short story can you share from your event?
  - What did the conversations in the community reveal?

Email: [consolidatedyouth@breakthecycle.org](mailto:consolidatedyouth@breakthecycle.org)

**Additional Resources:**

<https://www.breakthecycle.org/how-common-dating-abuse>

[http://also-chicago.org/also\\_site/](http://also-chicago.org/also_site/),

<http://www.mencanstoprape.org/>, [info@mencanstoprape.org](mailto:info@mencanstoprape.org)

<https://www.breakthecycle.org/shareteendvmonth>

<https://www.breakthecycle.org/host-real-talk>

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