



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DATING VIOLENCE

A TEEN'S HANDBOOK

LIZ CLAIBORNE INC



love is respect .org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474 1-866-331-5453 TTY

"I think dating violence is starting at a younger age. It happened to me when I was 14 and I didn't know what to do. We were friends, and then we started becoming closer. One day, he tried to push himself onto me physically. I didn't tell anyone for months. I was embarrassed. When I finally told people, the more I talked about it the better I felt. My friend said, 'You have to remember that you don't deserve people taking advantage of you.' A lot of my friends said stuff to him, and it made him feel really stupid about what he had done. The more I talked about it, the more I heard that this stuff happens but it's not your fault." — A. R., age 17

table of

contents

3	to our teenage friends
4	chapter one: summer's over
7	chapter two: risky business
10	chapter three: no exit?
14	chapter four: a friend in need
20	chapter five: taking a stand
25	for more information

"I'm sorry," he says, taking her hand.
"It's just that I miss you when you're not
around. I'm sorry I lost my temper."

Excerpted from chapter two.



Your teen years are some of the most exciting and challenging times in your life. You're meeting new people, forming special friendships and making lifelong decisions.

Some of these decisions may involve dating. And while dating can be one of the best things about being a teenager, it brings a host of new feelings and experiences — not all of them good.

In fact, you or your friends may be dating someone who is overly possessive, controlling or critical. These can be warning signs of potential abuse. A survey conducted this spring showed that 31% of teens ages 13–17 reported they or a friend experienced dating violence.

That's why we worked with teens around the country to write this handbook. Dating violence is a tough subject to talk about, and we want to offer you guidance on how to recognize it, how to talk about it and where to go for help. Dating violence is also often seen as a "women's" issue, so many young men may not feel comfortable dealing with it. We've tried to help change this by providing information for both young women and young men.

If you're in a violent dating relationship, or if you're worried about a friend, this handbook is a good place to start finding solutions. It tells the story of Angela and Joe, a fictional teenage couple in a violent relationship, and the friends who care about them. We hope it will raise awareness and help us all work together to create a society intolerant of abuse.

Paul R. Charron

Paul R. Charron is the chairman and CEO of Liz Claiborne Inc., a fashion apparel and accessories company that has been raising awareness and providing educational materials about domestic violence since 1991. This handbook is part of the company's effort to draw attention to the issue of dating violence among teens.

Jackson Katz

Jackson Katz founded the multiracial, mixed-gender Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society. He is also an author, speaker and filmmaker, and released the educational film in 1999.

Rosalind Wiseman

Rosalind Wiseman is a co-founder of the Empower Program, a non-profit organization that empowers youth to stop the culture of violence. Ms. Wiseman has written a book and several articles on both violence against women and girls' self-esteem. She speaks throughout the country and has been featured in national print and broadcast media.

It's funny how the first day of school always makes things feel so new, Angela thinks, as she climbs up the steps to the large front doors to start her junior year. And not just because of new clothes or new classes. This will be her first school year with a driver's license; her first with a part-time job; her first with a serious boyfriend.

"Angela!" Kayla calls out. Angela smiles with relief as she sees her two best friends, Kayla and Sara, already hanging out by the front doors. "Hey!" she says, walking up to them. "You look so cute!" Sara says, admiring Angela's new shirt. "So do you," Angela says.

Kayla scans the school building skeptically. "I can't believe we're back here," she says.

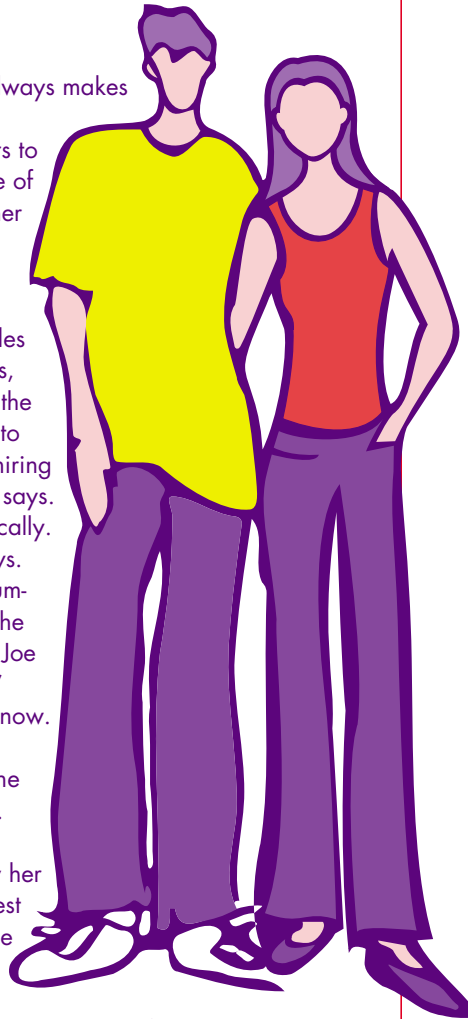
"I can't believe yesterday it was still summer and today it's all over," says Sara. She turns and smiles at Angela. "But you and Joe stayed together. That's pretty impressive."

"I know," says Angela. "Eight months now. We're like an old married couple!"

"Oh, come on," says Kayla. "You're the cutest couple in school. Everyone says so. You know it's true!"

Angela smiles. She thinks back to how her relationship with Joe started. It was the best time of her life. She was excited just to see him at school every day, and he would call her every night and they would talk for hours. Her parents loved him. Sometimes the whole family—Joe included — would have dinner and then watch a video. He was always welcome in their home.

She gets butterflies in her stomach, though, as she thinks about how intense things have gotten in the last couple of months. He still calls her every night, and now he gets annoyed when she can't talk to him for long. He's still really nice to her. But sometimes he can



The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that more than 90% of all domestic violence victims are female and most abusers are male. Because of this, this handbook uses “she” when referring to victims and “he” when referring to abusers. Whether the victim is male or female, violence of any kind in relationships is unacceptable.

snap at her with a meanness that catches her off guard. That’s what it must be like to be in love, she thinks — when emotions are just so strong.

Angela’s pager goes off. It’s Joe.

“Oh, I have to go meet Joe. He beeped our code,” she says.

“But class starts in five minutes,” says Kayla. “We have to go.”

“I’ll meet you guys later,” Angela says.

She walks over to the parking lot where she and Joe decided they would meet during school. He’s leaning against his car, looking cute as always, with his backpack at his feet. “Hi,” Angela says, and gives him a quick kiss. “What’s up?”

“Nothing’s up,” Joe says. “I just wanted to say hi before we head in for class.”

“Oh,” she answers, smiling. “That’s sweet. We have to go, though. The bell just rang.”

reality check

Nothing is quite as exciting as a first love. It’s the stuff of Romeo and Juliet — passion that sweeps you off your feet. What could be wrong with that? Usually, nothing. But sometimes what can seem like intense love and devotion at first, can really be signs of jealousy, possessiveness and control — characteristics that can be early red flags for relationship abuse.

**“IF YOU LEAVE ME
I’LL KILL MYSELF.”**
**“I CAN’T LIVE
WITHOUT YOU.”**
**“IF YOU GO
I DON’T KNOW WHAT
I MIGHT DO.”**

"What's your hurry? We have the whole year to sit in class."

"Joe, come on. I don't want to walk in late on the first day."

"Fine," he says. "You worry too much. Let's meet back here after school, though. I want to hear how your day was."

"Yeah, that would be great," Angela says. "Oh, wait a minute, I can't today. I have a meeting with the yearbook staff after school to divide up photography beats for the year."

"You're doing yearbook again?" asks Joe. "I thought you weren't going to do that because it took up so much time. When will we get to hang out if you're always taking pictures?"

"We'll hang out all the time. It doesn't take that long. And it's not every day."

"Maybe you just want to hang around football practice so you can flirt with all the guys while they work out," Joe says.

"Give me a break," Angela says. "I'll get to watch you while you practice. And I'll probably get assigned to the girls' soccer team or something anyway. Come on, we have to go to class."

"Alright, alright," Joe says, picking up his books. "Let's go."

survey says

Do you worry about violence in your or your friends' dating relationships? If you do, you're not the only one. In a recent survey, 26% of teenagers said they are very concerned about dating violence; 31% said they or a friend experienced dating violence. And almost half of all teens surveyed said they were interested in getting more information about abuse.

—Applied Research & Consulting LLC for Liz Claiborne Inc.

chapter two

risky business

That evening, Joe comes over to see Angela before dinner. Joe, Angela and Angela's mom chat in the kitchen for a few minutes, and her mom laughs as they tell her about their classes and how their first day went. "Can you stay for dinner, Joe?" Angela's mom asks.

"Not tonight, Mrs. Wood. My parents are expecting me home," Joe replies.

"I'll walk you out," says Angela.

They get in his car and fool around for a few minutes. Then Joe lets out a sigh.

"What's wrong?" Angela asks him.

"I just feel like I'm never going to see you if you have to take pictures for the yearbook," he says, looking at the steering wheel.

"I'm telling you, it's not going to take that much time," says Angela. "And it's really going to help me on my college applications. I need to start thinking about that. Brian said that admissions officers start looking at your extracurricular activities junior year."

"Brian?" he says, mimicking her tone of voice. "Is that why you joined yearbook this year? To be close to Brian?"

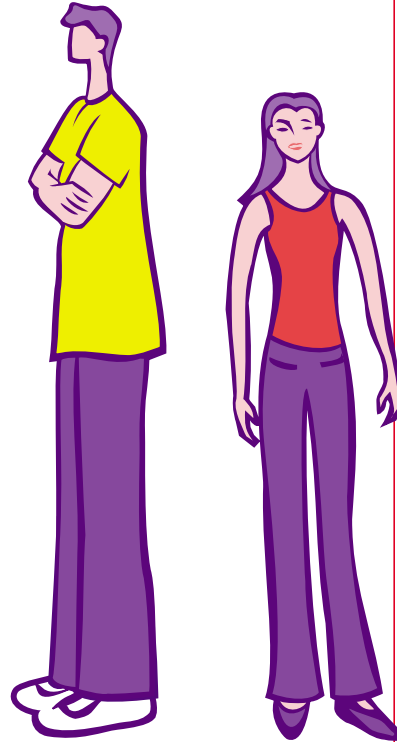
"Stop that," Angela says. "You know I hate it when you mock me. I have to work with Brian. He's the editor. I hardly even know him."

"Fine," says Joe. He leans over and unlocks Angela's door. "Bye. And oh, by the way, I wouldn't wear that shirt if you're worried about what Brian thinks of you. It's trashy."

"I thought you liked this shirt," says Angela. "You said I looked great in it when we bought it."

"Well, it doesn't look great. It looks trashy," says Joe. "There's classy, and there's trashy. And you look trashy. You don't even take care of yourself anymore."

"What are you talking about?" she asks him. "No, just forget it."



She opens her door and starts to get out of the car.

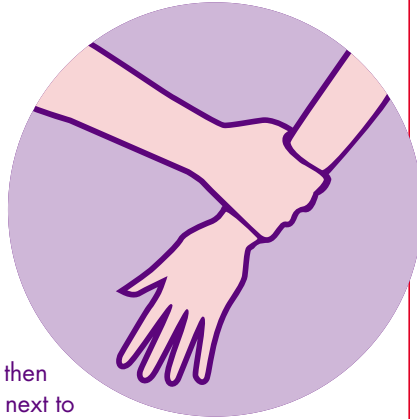
"Where are you going?" Joe says angrily, grabbing Angela's wrist and yanking her arm hard. "You just can't wait to get away when you're with me, can you?"

"Ow!" Angela says, wincing with pain. "You're hurting me!" He pulls her back into the car and glares at her, and then lets go of her arm in disgust. Angela sits next to him, rubbing her arm, crying quietly. They sit in silence for a minute.

"I'm sorry," he says, taking her hand. "It's just that I miss you when you're not around. I'm sorry I lost my temper."

Angela's shoulders fall. "Okay, just forget about it," she says. "Maybe I won't do the yearbook. I'll think about it." She leans over and kisses him goodbye.

She goes into the house and changes into a sweatshirt, throwing her new shirt into the trash can.



Danger Zone

What do we mean when we talk about dating violence? Dating violence isn't an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. Dating violence (or relationship abuse) is a **pattern of violent behavior** that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. Abuse can cause **injury** and even death, but it doesn't have to be physical. It can include **verbal and emotional abuse — constant insults isolation from friends and family name calling, controlling what someone wears** — and it can also include **sexual abuse**. It can happen to anyone, at any age, no matter what race or religion they are, no matter what their level of education or economic background. Dating violence also occurs in same-sex relationships.

Ten Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

What would you do if you thought your friend was in an abusive relationship? Most of the time, violence in a relationship takes place when the couple is alone. You might not see dramatic warning signs like black eyes and broken bones. So how can you tell for sure? For one thing, listen to your instincts. You probably wouldn't be worried without good reason. Here are some signs to look for that might mean your friend is in trouble and needs your help.

- 1** When your friend and her boyfriend are together, he calls her names or puts her down in front of other people.
- 2** He acts extremely jealous when she talks to other boys, even when it is completely innocent.
- 3** She apologizes for his behavior and makes excuses for him.
- 4** She frequently cancels plans at the last minute, for reasons that sound untrue.
- 5** He's always checking up on her, calling or paging her, and demanding to know where she has been and who she has been with.
- 6** You've seen him lose his temper, maybe even break or hit things when he's mad.
- 7** She seems worried about upsetting him or making him angry.
- 8** She is giving up things that used to be important to her, such as spending time with friends or other activities, and is becoming more and more isolated.
- 9** Her weight, appearance or grades have changed dramatically. These could be signs of depression, which could indicate abuse.
- 10** She has injuries she can't explain, or the explanations she gives don't make sense.

9

fast facts

Eighty-nine percent of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 say they have been in dating relationships.¹

Forty percent of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.¹

¹Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December 1995

chapter three

no exit?

It's almost winter break, and the weather is starting to turn. Angela stayed on the yearbook staff for a while, but Joe was right — it was impossible for her to see him and go to all the games to take pictures — so she dropped it in October. She hoped that freeing up more of her time would make the relationship better, back to the way it used to be.

The thing was, she felt like he was intense all the time now. It was so easy to set him off. She just wanted him to relax, to be the way he was in the beginning. But he lost his temper every few weeks, and he had been getting more and more aggressive, like that first time in the car. Once, when she was late to meet him to go to a party at Sara's house, he just lost it. He started yelling and screaming at her, and accusing her of cheating on him. She told him it wasn't true. But he was so mad, he reached over, wrapped his hands around her throat and started choking her. She couldn't believe it. He lifted her right up off the floor.

He was really sorry about it afterwards. He even started crying, which she had never seen him do. She wanted to figure out what she was doing wrong, what she was doing differently, to make him act this way. She didn't know what to do. If she left him, she knew he would just fall apart. And everybody loved him so much — all of their friends, their teachers, her parents. She felt like she was the only one who knew how he could get sometimes, and she had to stick with him. He needed her more than anything in the world.

what if it's you who's in danger?

Are you afraid to disagree with your partner? Does his temper scare you? Is he very jealous? Does he call you names or yell at you? Does he try to control the way you dress or who you see? Has he threatened to harm you or commit suicide if you leave? Does he throw or break things in anger? Does he hit, shove, slap or kick you, or force you to have sex when you don't want to?

No one deserves to be abused. If you are being hurt in your relationship, or are afraid that you might be at risk, call loveisrespect.org **The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474** for confidential advice and referrals. There are people nearby who can help you.

Why doesn't she just leave?

A guy doesn't usually start hitting his girlfriend out of the blue — it generally starts after a history of verbal and emotional abuse: cutting her down, telling her she's stupid or fat or ugly, chipping away at her sense of self-worth. Typically, by the time the physical violence begins, her self-esteem is seriously damaged. When she doesn't value herself, it is more likely that she'll accept and put up with the physical abuse. Once her self-esteem has been broken down, it can be even harder for her to leave the relationship.

There are lots of other reasons why it can be difficult to get out of a violent relationship. Usually, violence isn't constant but comes in cycles, with a "honeymoon" period after the violent episode when the batterer says that he's sorry and that it will never happen again. The victim might really love the guy — she probably just wants the violence to end, not the whole relationship. She may also think that she can change him.

And we all know what peer pressure feels like. What our friends think of us really does matter, and we want to feel accepted. Girls can gain a lot of social status for being in a relationship — and letting that go can be hard to do. Couples often share the same friends, and if they break up and let people know what's going on, what are their friends going to do? Choose one over the other? What if they don't believe her? What if they choose him? Boys who are violent in private can appear to be calm and caring in public.

There's still a lot of shame in this society around admitting you have been abused. It takes a lot of courage to end any relationship. If there's violence involved, it can take a whole lot more.



Why does he do it?

It's not easy being a guy these days.

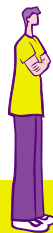
Society puts all kinds of pressure on boys, right from the day they're born. They are bombarded with messages from popular culture and sometimes from their families about how they should behave and what it means to be a man: real men don't cry; real men take charge; they must be tough, strong, breadwinners, know how to fight, never openly show affection for another male, play sports even when they are hurt... on and on and on. Some boys learn that being a real man means dominating or controlling their partner.

Sometimes guys don't learn how to express or manage their emotions, they only know how to be happy or angry. They certainly know it's not okay to feel sad, needy or powerless. Sometimes in relationships with girls, boys act out their feelings of insecurity or confusion with aggression. This lets them regain or maintain their power and control in the relationship. And sometimes, it's not about emotions at all, it's about being dominant.

So what might be going through Joe's mind when he becomes violent with Angela, whom he clearly cares about a great deal? Most often when they're violent, boys are using the violence as a tool to control a girl and get their way. They don't lash out in anger, but rather they've learned they can control a situation through violence. Recognizing the pressures he's under and taking responsibility for his feelings and actions are the only ways Joe will be able to break free from his violent behavior.

real teens talk

"My friend was in an abusive situation. I told her she should think about getting out. He made all the decisions for her, told her she couldn't go out with her friends anymore. It isn't healthy to have someone controlling you. If you know someone in a situation like that, instead of telling them what they *should* do, give them advice on what they *could* do. Give them a number for a hotline or agency. My friend got out when she realized it wasn't going to get any better. Power and control usually lead to physical violence." — William, age 18



BAD MESSAGES

"YOU'VE GOT TO BE TOUGH TO KEEP THE GIRL. MEN NEED TO BE STRONG AND HAVE MONEY. MEN HAVE POWER OVER WOMEN. MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THE DOMINANT SEX. HE'S SO STRONG SHE'S HOT...WHY HAVEN'T YOU HAD SEX WITH HER YET? A REAL MAN DOESN'T GET PUSHED AROUND BY A GIRL."

Adapted from MOVE: Men Overcoming Violence.

It's Wednesday night, and Kayla is sleeping over. Angela hasn't had a "sleepover" since junior high, but Kayla's parents are out of town and didn't want her to stay alone. The girls are talking as they lie in the dark, Angela in her bed and Kayla in a sleeping bag on the floor.

"So how's life, anyway?" asks Kayla. "I feel like I haven't seen you in a while."

"What do you mean?" says Angela. "I see you all the time, at school."

"Yeah, I know. I mean, I see you, but we don't hang out and talk like we used to. You're always with Joe. I just miss you is all."

"I'm sorry," says Angela. "He just... he likes to see me every weekend night. That's what we agreed."

"Okay, I understand," says Kayla. "I don't mean to put any pressure on you. I'm wondering though... I don't know. You haven't seemed very happy lately. Not like your old self. It's like you're tired all the time. Is everything okay?"

"Everything's fine," Angela says — but she thinks about what Joe said to her that afternoon. *"You embarrass me, Angela," he told her. "You might as well forget about getting into a good college, because every day you get dumber and dumber. I can't even listen to you anymore."*

"You know you could tell me if everything wasn't fine, right?" Kayla says, staring up at the dark ceiling.

"Of course. I'm just a little stressed out about school and getting my grades up to get into college. I don't know. It's hard to make time for everything — school, work, friends, Joe. But I'll figure it out."

"What about Joe?" asks Kayla.

"What about Joe?"

"Well, how are things going with him? It's just that... When we were all hanging out in the cafeteria and he started making fun of you, and saying that you're ugly when you don't have makeup on — I just didn't like it. I didn't like the way he was treating you."

"I'm sorry. It's really not a big deal," says Angela. "He loves me, he really does. That's just the way he talks." She remembered the conversation, though. He has started doing this thing where he tells her she looks ugly without makeup, and then he tells her she looks



like a slut when she puts too much on. It's gotten to the point where it takes her an hour just to put her makeup on in the morning, trying to get it right.

"Yeah," Kayla says, "but you shouldn't have to apologize for what he does. You shouldn't have to make excuses for him."

Angela blinks back tears as she remembers sleepovers she and Kayla used to have when they were little. Videos, junk food, talking all night — everything seemed so simple then.

"I know," she says. "You're right. Sometimes it does feel like it's gotten a little out of control. Sometimes... sometimes he doesn't treat me very well."

"What does that mean, he doesn't treat you well?" asks Kayla. "What do you mean, it's gotten out of control?"

Angela starts to cry. She feels the tears roll down her cheeks as she lies in bed. "It just gets out of control, that's all. Sometimes I screw up and he loses his temper and it gets a little crazy before I know what's happened. He's an emotional guy. He gets upset sometimes."

Kayla sits up in her sleeping bag. "What happens when he gets upset? Does he ever do more than yell?"

Angela sighs. "He doesn't mean to hurt me."

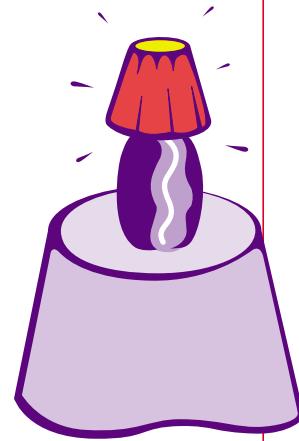
Kayla turns on the light on the bedside table. She looks at her oldest friend. "It doesn't matter what he means, Angela," she says. "You don't deserve to get hurt. It doesn't matter if he's mad or if you've done something. It's wrong." She hands Angela a tissue. "What do you want to do about it?"

Angela sits up in bed. "I don't know. I don't want to do anything. I just feel trapped. I can't break up with him. He'd drive off a cliff or something. And even if he didn't, I'd have to see him every day at school. Everyone thinks we're such a cute couple — all our friends, the teachers, my parents. You're the first person who has even asked me how it's going. Everyone just thinks it's going great. No one would understand."

"You shouldn't have to handle this all on your own," says Kayla. "Maybe we should talk to the school counselor, or talk to your parents. Isn't there a hotline we could call? I would go with you, you know."

Angela looks over at Kayla. "You would?"

"Of course I would, Angela." Kayla climbs up on the bed and gives Angela a hug. "You're my best friend."



real teens talk

"My mother left my father when I was three, after he was physically abusive to her. Now she works at a battered women's shelter. I feel that when my mom was my age, before she got into an abusive relationship with my dad, if she had heard a group of teens her age talking about abuse, maybe it would have prevented her from getting into that situation. She would have known some of the symptoms." —Alicia, age 16

Girl talk

Sometimes a long talk with a good friend can be just what the doctor ordered. Kayla might not realize how much talking and listening mean to Angela, and what a big difference they can make. But they mean a whole lot to someone who feels isolated by an unhealthy relationship.

"I was embarrassed to talk about it and no one asked!" remembers Rosalind Wiseman, whose boyfriend started abusing her during her freshman year of high school. "Now I understand how hard it was for them to know what to say or how to respond."

Wiseman, a co-founder of the Empower Program in Washington, DC, suggests ways that you can bring up dating violence if you are worried about a friend...

DO: Listen to what she has to say.

DO: Tell her that you are there for her whenever she wants to talk. Let her know you care about her, and that you are worried about her.

DO: Talk to her in private, and keep what she says confidential.

DO: Let her know why you are concerned. Be specific. Refer to certain incidents you have witnessed, and not to the relationship in general. Let her know what you saw and how it made you feel. Tell her how you see his behavior having an impact on her — "He put you down and he manipulated you and you made excuses for what he did. The way he treated you made me worried about your safety."

DO: Offer to get information for your friend.

DON'T: Be judgemental.

DON'T: Make her feel ashamed.

She probably feels bad enough already.

DON'T: Give ultimatums — "It's him or me!" "Leave him or I'm telling!" Wiseman says: "She'll end up apologizing for his behavior or lying to cover up for him, and she'll end up going back to him."

Guy talk

It's hard to talk to a friend when you think his behavior is out of control. You want to believe him when he says you've got nothing to worry about, that you're wrong. But if you have seen behavior that makes you think he may be hurting his girlfriend, you owe it to him, to her and to yourself to take a stand. It may be the hardest thing you've ever done... but it could make a real difference in all of your lives.

DO: Be specific about what you saw, and how it made you feel.

"I didn't like it when you told your girlfriend she was stupid in front of all of us, and I can only imagine how it made her feel."

DO: Take a stand. "I'm not going to sit here as your friend and watch this happen and not say anything about it."

DO: Give him a reality check. His violent actions will have consequences. "This is a crime, and you could be arrested."

DO: Urge him to seek help. He can talk to a counselor, a coach, a member of the clergy, any trusted adult—even an older brother or mentor.

DO: Offer to get information for your friend.

DON'T: Make him feel ashamed of himself. You care about your friend, and you want his behavior to change. If you didn't think he had it in him to be a decent person, you probably wouldn't be hanging out with him.

when to talk to an adult:

We all want to solve our problems on our own. And we don't want to get anyone in trouble, or betray a friend's confidence. But sometimes these things are too big to handle all by ourselves, and it can be a big relief to involve a trusted adult.

Who should you talk to? "It depends on the situation," says Wiseman. "Sit somewhere quietly with your friend and come up with the right person together. Write down what you need from the adult, what you want them to be like. Make sure they have your best interests at heart. It might be a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, a coach, or a friend's parent. Chart out all the adults you know and figure out who is your best ally."

If you think your friend is in physical danger, but she doesn't want to seek any help, go ahead and tell an adult you trust yourself. "If you think she's at serious risk," says Wiseman, "tell her you are going to go to an adult, and then do it."

If you are concerned that a friend is being abusive, it can also be helpful to talk to an adult, either with your friend or by yourself if he doesn't admit the problem or refuses to go with you. Go to an adult you trust, one who you think will get your friend the help he needs and stick by you and support you for talking to them.

eddie's got a fast car

eddie's got a fast car.
and he drives me to school.
my friends think he's cool.
and they wish they were me.
but they don't see when he hits me.
or screams and calls me names.
eddie's got a fast car.
today he picked me up for school.
and we had another fight.
and he pushed my face into the dash.
and I'm confused and I'm scared.
because tomorrow morning I'll wake up.
and he'll be sitting there.
and I'll have to get in.
eddie's got a fast car.

Used with permission from the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women
In Touch with Teens curriculum.

Kayla and Sara are at the library talking to their friends David and Ricky.

They hear Joe and Angela in the next row of books talking. "Now, *today* you look cute," says Joe. They hear them kissing.

"Let's surprise them," Sara whispers.

"No, wait, let's listen for a minute," says David. "I want to get some dirt on them. We can use it later," he says, laughing quietly.

"Where were you last night when I called?" asks Joe.

"I was studying," says Angela. "My dad won't let me talk on the phone until I finish my homework."

"Why didn't you just tell him you were finished?" he asks.

"He checks it to make sure I'm done," she answers.

"How does he know what your assignment is?"

"Look," says Angela, becoming impatient, "I just had to finish my homework. You know he won't let me talk on the phone after ten."

Joe's voice gets tense. "I think you were avoiding me."

"I wasn't avoiding you," she says. "You know I would never do that. Why do you have to be so insecure? Why can't you trust me?"

"I'm insecure? Who are you to call me insecure? You don't even blink unless I tell you to."

"This isn't right," says Kayla. "Let's go talk to them."

"No way," says David. "This is between the two of them." They continue to listen.

"I don't know what to do with you anymore, Angela," says Joe.

"You don't respect me. You don't listen to me. You hang around with your friends more than you do with me."

"I do not," Angela says. "I hardly ever see my friends anymore. We're always together."

"You say that like it's a drag for you," says Joe.

"No, no it's not," she says, trying to comfort him.

"You're such a liar. And you're a slut," he whispers.

"How can you say that? You know you're the only person I've been with."

"How do I know that?" he says. "You dress like one. You flirt with every guy you see."



real teens talk

"I've had friends that have had problems, more mental than physical. Like the guy will try to brainwash her, make her think she's not going to be anything without him, or if he's not in her life, she won't have anybody. He won't let her think of any other person, she can't talk to or barely look at other guys or he'll get mad. Manipulating. I tried to talk to my friend in this situation. She would just say it's not a big deal but she'd say, *We were fighting, messing around*, and she'd show me bruises. She laughs about it. She doesn't go out with us anymore, always with him. We get mad at her about it, but you know, she thinks if she has to have him or us be mad at her, she knows we'll forgive her more." — Kati, age 15

On the other side of the bookshelf, Kayla says, "This isn't cool. I'm going over there."

"What are you going to say?" asks Sara. "That's just the way he is."

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," they hear Angela say.

"Don't even touch me," Joe says sharply. "How do I know where those hands have been?"

They hear a loud crash as Joe shoves Angela into the bookcase. They all rush over to the other side and see Angela scrambling to get up, as Joe turns away in disgust.

"My God, are you okay?" asks Sara, as Ricky helps Angela up.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" David says, right in Joe's face.

"No, please, I'm fine," Angela says, fumbling to pull herself together. "It was my fault. I fell down."

"What's up with you, man?" says Ricky quietly to Joe. "You completely lose your cool over anything nowadays. You can't keep acting like this. You're going to get yourself in trouble. You know this isn't right."

"Oh, please," says Joe, laughing. "Lighten up! We got into an argument and Angela's a klutz. You know she's always walking into things, never looking where she's going."

"We heard the whole thing Joe," says Kayla. "Angela's our friend. And we're not going to let you treat her like this."

"Joe, let's get out of here. You need to cool down," says Ricky, as he takes Joe by the shoulder and leads him away.

"Thanks, thanks a lot you guys," Angela says tentatively, standing up and brushing herself off. She looks at her best friends as they gather around her.

"Thanks for sticking up for me." She starts to cry. "I can't believe it's gotten this bad. I don't know what to do."

"It's going to be okay," says Kayla, putting her arm around Angela's shoulder. "This is really scary. And I know how much you love him. But Joe needs help. And so do you right now."

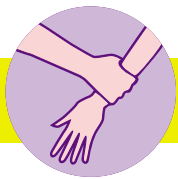
Angela takes a deep breath and wipes her eyes. "Well, I don't know what to think about Joe, but I do know that I don't want to be treated like this anymore," she says. "Kayla, will you still come with me if I go to talk to a counselor?"

"Absolutely. You don't have to make any decisions right now. Let's just talk to someone who can help you figure out what you want to do next. We can take this one step at a time."

"Angela, I'll call you tonight to see how you are," says Sara. "You know you can talk to me about this anytime. I mean it — anytime."

David hands Angela her books. "Me too, Angela. I'll be around if you want to talk," he says. "No one should ever be treated like that."

"Thanks... really. Maybe we can get together this weekend," says Angela. "I haven't seen much of any of you lately. I miss you guys. And I'd really like to talk about this some more. But first, I want to go see that counselor. C'mon, Kayla."



Hitting your girlfriend or boyfriend is a crime, just like robbery or rape — it's against the law.



WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP ENDS

Just because a violent relationship is over, doesn't mean the risk of violence is over. Here are some recommendations to stay safe and maintain peace of mind:

- Talk with your friends about what you are going through so they can support you and look out for you.
- If you can, tell your parents what's going on, especially if your ex might come by your home.
- Talk to your school counselor. Together you might alert security, adjust your class schedule or come up with other ways to make you feel safe.
- Avoid isolated areas at school and local hangouts, and don't walk home alone.
- Stick with a buddy at parties you think your ex might attend.

Call your local domestic violence hotline for other ways to stay safe.

Local Hotline: _____

Local Shelter: _____

if you are in danger, call 911 immediately.

real teens talk

"When I was in high school, I found out my best friend was mistreating his girlfriend. I was friends with them both. Once, we were at a party and he was insulting her, embarrassing her in front of other people. I let him know it wasn't the way to act. He was defensive, kind of aggressive. He didn't appreciate it. Later I talked to him one-on-one, and told him that he needed to be a better boyfriend. He denied everything his girlfriend had told me — accused her of being crazy and making things up. It was hard. I didn't know who to believe. Knowing what I know now, I just think that if you have an abuser and an abused person, rather than trying to decide who's telling the truth, just believe the abused person — and if you're wrong, so be it. Today, I'm still friends with her. And after all these years, she still remembers what I did and appreciates the support that I gave her, even though I wished that I had done more. I think the most important thing that I did was believe her." — John, age 31

for more
information

If you are in an abusive relationship and need help, call or visit online **loveisrespect.org: The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or TTY 1-866-311-8454** for the hearing impaired.

Other organizations that can provide help include:

Family Violence Prevention Fund
383 Rhode Island Street, Suite 304
San Francisco, CA 94103-5133
415-252-8900
Fax: 415-252-8991
www.fvpf.org
email: fund@fvpf.org

**Girls Incorporated
National Resource Center**
441 West Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-634-7546
Fax: 317-634-3024
www.girlsinc.org
email: girlsinc@girls-inc.org

**Los Angeles Commission on
Assaults Against Women
In Touch with Teens Program**
605 West Olympic Blvd., Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90015
213-955-9090 TTY: 213-955-9095
Fax: 213-955-9093
www.lacaaw.org
email: info@lacaaw.org

**National Coalition Against Domestic
Violence/Teen Dating Violence Project**
P.O. Box 18749
Denver, CO 80218
303-839-1852
Fax: 303-831-9251
www.ncadv.org

**Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic
Violence and National Resource Center**
6400 Flank Drive, Suite 1300
Harrisburg, PA 17112
1-800-932-4632
Fax: 717-671-8149
www.pcadv.org

**Also, visit these websites
for additional resources:**

www.menovercomingviolence.org
www.usda.gov/da/shmd/state.htm

We are grateful to our teen panelists across the country for the invaluable feedback they provided during the creation of this handbook. Thanks to teen participants at the following programs:

The Empower Program
(address above)

Legal Advocates for Abused Women
1027 South Vandeventer Ave., 6th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63110
1-800-527-1460
www.laawstl.org

Project YO/San Diego YWCA
1012 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101
619-239-0355

**Youth Development and Violence
Prevention Program/Safe Horizon**
189 Montague Street, 6th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-624-2111
Fax: 718-624-8111

**Additional thanks to:
Elizabeth Bernstein**

Marissa Ghez, Family Violence
Prevention Fund, San Francisco, CA

Bea Hanson, Safe Horizon,
New York, NY

Matt Herbst, Project YO/San Diego YWCA,
San Diego, CA

Vito Interrante and Michael Roberts,
Youth Development and Violence
Prevention Program/Safe Horizon,
Brooklyn, NY

Lynn Rothbarth, Legal Advocates for
Abused Women, St. Louis, MO

Kristie Wang, Family Violence Prevention
Fund, San Francisco, CA

To order additional copies, call 1-800-449-STOP.



love is not abuse

Liz Claiborne Inc.
1441 Broadway
New York, NY 10018