



You Can Make A Difference

**Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
2026 Toolkit**

For Parents

1 in 3 teenagers will experience dating abuse before turning 18. If you are concerned that your teen may be in an abusive relationship, **you can make a difference.**

81%

of parents admit that they do not think dating violence is an issue

53%

of parents could not identify all the warning signs of abuse, even though 81% felt they could identify abuse if it were happening

Frequently Asked Questions:

My teen isn't spending time with their friends since starting their new relationship. What can I say or do?

Bring up the behavior that you're noticing but don't accuse your teen of anything. It's important to acknowledge your concern for your teen but avoid criticizing them. It's important to get the teenager engaged in conversation with you and avoid them getting defensive.

Example: "I noticed you're not spending time with your friends lately, did something happen?"

Should I force my teenager to break up with their partner who isn't treating them well?

While breaking up may seem like an obvious solution to avoid abusive behavior, forcing them to end the relationship could actually put your child at an increased risk of harm. The most dangerous time is when a victim of abuse chooses to leave the relationship because the controlling behavior and abusive tactics tend to escalate. On average, it takes a person 7 times to leave their abusive partner for good.

Forcing a break up could push your teen closer to their partner. Your teen may continue to see their partner behind your back and then feel unable to tell you if the abuse continues. Avoid downplaying the importance of the relationship. If you're dismissive of the intensity of the relationship, it could prevent them from discussing it with you. Respect that this is a big part of their identity right now and connect with them.

I notice my teen is on their phone late into the night. They seem afraid to not answer their partner right away. What do I do?

It's a great idea to set up boundaries around the phone as early as possible. However, these boundaries won't work unless it applies to the entire family. For instance, at night we all charge our phones in the kitchen. It's important to model healthy behavior for your teenager instead of just telling them what to do.

If your teen is afraid to not answer their partner, allow yourself to be the bad guy. Encourage your teen to blame yourself for not being able to have your phone at night. You are helping them to set that difficult boundary.

For Schools:

It is imperative to involve schools in the prevention of dating abuse because teenagers spend such a significant amount of their time at school. **Since 1 in 3 teenagers will experience dating abuse before turning 18**, your education and prevention efforts can help to save and change lives.

Ways to Participate in TDVAM:

Go Orange: Decorate the halls in the color orange, put up posters, encourage students, teachers, and administrators to wear orange throughout February in support of TDVAM.

Social Media: can be a powerful tool in raising awareness about Teen Dating Violence. Consider posting about this issue on Facebook, TikTok, X, Instagram, and any other school social media platforms. When posting, consider using the hashtag #TDVAM so everyone can follow what is being done at your school.

Awareness: Put flyers about the prevalence of dating abuse in your bathrooms along with resources for assistance. Invite JBWS to speak about teen dating violence by emailing dapp@jbws.org

Morning Announcements:

These can be a great way to remind your fellow students about Teen Dating Violence Awareness month!

Sample Morning Announcements:

- ▶ *Did you know that 1 in 3 teens will experience an incident of dating abuse while in high school? If you or someone you know is experiencing an abusive relationship please reach out to a guidance counselor (or insert names of counselors at your school), a trusted teacher or adult or, JBWS, the domestic violence prevention agency of Morris and Passaic Counties.*
- ▶ *There's no excuse for abuse. 1 in 3 teens will experience dating abuse while in high school. Dating violence can affect anyone, regardless of race, religion, sex or economic status. Shine a light on this growing problem in our society. Know the signs and respect all accordingly. Remember, there's no excuse for abuse.*
- ▶ *February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, seek out a counselor, teacher or an adult you trust. Because everyone deserves to be in a relationship where they feel happy, healthy and respected and where everything that is important to them is respected and valued.*

For Teens

Abuse can happen at any age. If you are in a relationship or even just casually seeing someone, they can still be abusing you. It's important to learn about dating abuse so you're able to recognize it in yourself or others and seek help.

Frequently Asked Questions:

My friend is dating someone new and suddenly stopped texting or calling me.

Abusive relationships can be isolating, and people frequently lose contact with their friends and family. Reach out to your friend. Mention that you haven't heard from them and ask if they're okay. If your friend isn't receptive to the conversation, let them know that you won't continue to pressure them to respond but that you're always there if they need to talk.

I've seen my friend's partner hurt them and I'm concerned. What do I do?

If you witness physical abuse, don't try and get in the middle of it. This could harm yourself and intensify the abusive situation. Try and find a trusted adult you can get involved. After the incident, bring up the behavior you saw to your friend. Say, "I saw your partner hurt you, do you feel safe in your relationship?" Reassure your friend that no one deserves to be abused, no matter what. Express your concern for their safety and refer them to JBWS' confidential 24/7 helpline: 1.877.782.2873 (Morris County) and 1.973.881.1450 (Passaic County) or Text (973) 314-4192

I feel like I can't talk to anyone about what's happening in my relationship. What do I do?

If you feel like you cannot talk to anyone about what's happening in your relationship, then that's a strong indication that it's not healthy. It's important that you talk to someone about what's happening. If you need support, call JBWS' helpline. It's anonymous and confidential and there is no judgment toward the relationship. 24/7 Helpline: 1.877.782.2873 (Morris County) and 1.973.881.1450 (Passaic County). Text (973) 314-4192

"Before learning about dating abuse from JBWS, *I didn't realize that abuse could be that bad.* I also didn't know how to help someone I if they were in an abusive relationship."



Resources and Information

If you are in an unhealthy relationship, then help is available. Contact JBWS' 24-Hour Helpline at 1.877.782.2873 (Morris County) and 1.973.881.1450 (Passaic County)

For more educational information visit:

- ▶ No2DatingAbuse.org
- ▶ JoinOneLove.org
- ▶ FuturesWithoutViolence.org
- ▶ LovelsRespect.org

About JBWS:

JBWS is a private, confidential service welcoming ALL survivors of dating, domestic, or partner abuse (and their family members) regardless of severity of the abuse, marital status, income, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity.



Teen Ambassador Program

JBWS is rebuilding our teen ambassador program. This is a coalition of student leaders from high schools and community groups across the county. The mission of this group is to raise awareness and connect their community to resources. If you're interested in being a beacon for healthy relationships email training@jbws.org



Wear Orange:

Wednesday, February 11 is wear orange day! Consider adding the color orange into your wardrobe this day to show your support for healthy relationships! If you wear orange, please take photos and share them with us on social media by tagging [@DAPPofJBWS](https://www.instagram.com/DAPPofJBWS).



Teen Dating Violence Awareness

February 17, 2026 | 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM

Join JBWS at the Morris County Library to learn more about dating abuse and how we can help our teens navigate the dating world.