

**TOXIC  
RELATIONSHIPS:**  
The Next Generation Speaks  
Out About Dating Violence

# CREDITS

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# INTRODUCTION

What qualities are necessary for a good relationship? It's not an easy question for anyone to answer. For teens it can be nearly impossible. Their inexperience and their reliance on gender stereotypes- instead of personal experience-make it challenging for young people to define the aspects of a healthy, loving relationship.

How, then, do young people learn the best way to pursue healthy, life-enhancing relationships? Television shows, movies, and popular magazines typically glorify romantic relationships but rarely offer insights that can be used effectively by teens. Copying their peers' behavior is just as unlikely to be helpful for confused adolescents. Casual chats in cyberspace are certainly not an adequate alternative to direct interpersonal connections. Even at home, many teens cannot count their parents to be successful role models for healthy relationships.

As human beings, we all yearn for attention and intimacy. These are basic needs which deserve to be met. Yet intimate relationships are often the place where we work out our personal demons. Many relationships are marred by issues of jealousy, possessiveness, and other forms of control. Unhealthy relationships may not be apparent at first. What starts out as an endearing display of jealousy may soon turn into a suffocating struggle for power. Early stages include verbal abuse, name calling, and put-downs. For young people, being in a controlling relationship can lead to long-standing emotional damage.

Too often, young men have the idea that it's a "guy thing" to act tough and to treat girls like property. Adolescent males often try to get their friends' approval by acting like they don't care about anything or anyone. Similarly, many young girls accept the idea that dominance is a "guy thing." They may assume that their role is to be submissive and do whatever will keep their boyfriends happy. Unfortunately, these stereotypes may set the stage for teens to find themselves ensnared in unequal, and potentially toxic, relationships. The reality is that when it comes to relationships, there is no "guy thing" or "girl thing," but there is always a right thing and a wrong thing. Being abused is always the wrong thing.

Toxic Relationships offers young people an opportunity to hear many young voices, loud and clear, as they relate one important lesson: being in a relationship is never important enough to be worth accepting emotional or physical abuse.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the videotape *Toxic Relationships* and participating in the class activities described in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- recognize the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship
- distinguish between healthy and unhealthy patterns of behavior
- appreciate that abuse can be emotional and verbal as well as physical or sexual
- understand how important good communication skills are in a relationship
- evaluate their own potential for getting involved in a toxic relationship
- recognize that mutual respect is a key component of any good relationship
- assert themselves and their needs with greater conviction
- realize that being part of a couple is never important enough to be worth accepting emotional or physical abuse
- understand that setting limits-and expecting others to respect those limits-is an appropriate part of any healthy relationship

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The video begins with candid remarks from Linda, an Asian teen who describes a recent toxic relationship. “He was the jealous and possessive type. It didn’t start that way, it just ended up like that.” He resented her friends’ intrusion into their relationship. “He hates how my best friend tries to help me. He says that it’s none of her business.”

An on-screen graphic announces, THE NEXT GENERATION SPEAKS OUT. The scene changes to a young woman giving a presentation about the cycle of abuse, which she describes as “an ongoing pattern that escalates until it is finally broken when someone either decides to intervene, or one of the two people in the relationship ends up dead.” The speaker, Katy, is one of the teen CAT members of the Transforming Communities group in Novato, California. She identifies some of the early stages of toxic relationships. These signs include “verbal abuse, name calling, possessiveness, controlling behavior, asking who you’re with, what time you’ll be home.”

Laurel, another CAT speaker, explains that “having teens talk to teens is a good way because they can relate.” Fellow CAT speaker Poorva admits that when she started working in the program, “I didn’t understand the cycle of abuse. Why would someone want to be beat up or abused?” She describes the mental process behind the cycle of abuse: tension building leads to abuse, which in turn leads to making up. “People have misconceptions that the relationships will be better” after the abuse, Poorva states.

Susan Hernand, a youth trainer for the Transforming Communities program, praises the young speakers for their efforts to get the word out. “The teens really own this program. They have created an internet chat room, written and produced a movie, organized a rally.” On-screen graphics let viewers know that they can chat with the teens online at [www.steponline.com](http://www.steponline.com) or [www.theinsight.com](http://www.theinsight.com).

In the next segment, which is introduced with the graphic, ABUSE = VIOLENCE, teen counselors talk about why they hope to educate their peers. Katy says, “We’re hoping to get them before they enter into a relationship, so that way when they do enter a relationship they will know what a safe, healthy relationship is.” A young man named Kyle explains, “Young people join these programs because they are looking to be themselves. People aren’t naturally violent. It’s a conditioned thing.”

Another young man, Ian, offers his view of toxic relationships. “There are so many types of abuse. The one that seems most common right now is emotional abuse. Being jealous, poking and prodding... From my experience, that’s abuse too. I don’t think that people see that.”

As the next segment begins, the words TALKING IT OUT appear on screen. Viewers are introduced to a group of peer counselors at Kearny High School in San Diego, CA. One counselor claims, “Most girls today don’t let guys run over them,” but another teen points out, “Some girls still have those quiet personalities, they get taken advantage of.” A third counselor adds, “Everybody’s got expectations from what they see on TV and the movies. Nobody’s asking anything. They don’t ever talk, they’re just assuming. That’s why there are a lot of these conflicts when guys and girls get together.”

## PROGRAM SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

Next, Karen Oster, MTF Life Skills Teacher in the San Diego City Schools is seen talking with the peer counselors about their own experiences with toxic relationships. She explains to viewers how she aims to help teens. “I ask kids, ‘What do you want?’ Most of the time kids just want somebody to listen. They have so much to say, so much wonderful intuition. I think our job is to keep quiet and really listen.” The graphic reads, LISTENING SHOWS LOVE.

CAT member Katy says, “The person you’re with should be supportive. They should understand that you have other people in your life. If they can’t respect your friends, they’re not respecting you. Then there isn’t a lot of equality in the relationship. She gives a list of warning signs. These include: a partner who controls all decisions, takes over aspects of your life, has possessive demands upon you, is verbally degrading, and limits your choices. Katy describes it this way: “You feel like a caged animal, and the other person has got the key.”

Laurel offers her views on how teens get caught up in toxic relationships. “It starts off as cute, but a lot of times it escalates into something they don’t recognize,” she explains. “It happens a lot in high school: freshmen girls who start dating seniors, they get taken advantage of, they feel inferior.” Peer counselor Stacie describes the mindset of some girls: “He treats me nice, he buys me things... That’s where a lot of kids go wrong. You’re all brainwashed, and soon he starts to control the relationship.” Ian remarks, “That’s a leash. She’s not a dog, she’s not an animal to be told what to do, where to go.” The graphic states, LOVE IS NOT A LEASH.

Youth trainer Susan Hernand appears next. “I think what happens in a toxic relationship is that you start seeing signs early on. They say things that make you feel unsafe, or you have a little feeling in your stomach that it wasn’t right. Kids don’t trust themselves very much. If you don’t have very much experience with relationships in general, it’s hard to tell where those boundaries are.” Hernand offers her own definition for a toxic relationship: “A relationship is toxic when it crosses your personal boundary. When you feel your boundaries are being violated.”

The video moves onto the subject of sexual pressure as a form of abuse. One of the San Diego peer counselors describes a friend of hers who was physically abused by her boyfriend because he wanted to have sex. “I feel hurt because I can’t make her do anything to change her situation. She wants to be loved.” As the graphic PERSONAL BOUNDARIES appears, Linda gives her own examples of how her boyfriend started to infringe on her physical boundaries. Stacie describes how young girls tend to assume that they will be popular or accepted if they acquiesce to sexual demands.

Other counselors agree: if you have to be sexually active in order to stay in relationship, you are being used. The graphic BE YOURSELF reinforces this message. You don’t need anyone else to tell you what to do. “I wish a lot of girls knew that a guy does not complete you. He should not make you feel whole. He should make you feel better about yourself, but because you’re with him doesn’t mean that you are complete.”

## PROGRAM SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

At this point, the video addresses the topic of BREAKING THE CYCLE. One of the San Diego peer counselors explains, “We are telling them about the cycle, but we need to point out how to break it. Communication: that’s how you break it. Communication to the abuser, to a friend, a counselor, a support group...that’s really the key. If you are being abused, you need to take it upon yourself, empower yourself to end it.”

Poorva adds to this idea. “Lots of people aren’t aware of the fact that violence is a learned behavior; you pick it up from your family, from society, the media, the things you read, the things you see on TV. You’re not born with violent behaviors. You can unlearn those behaviors.”

The word UNLEARN appears on-screen. “There is such a spectrum of violence,” Karen Oster states—a catalog of hurtful behaviors that includes muttering under the breath, ignoring someone, being intimidating. “Sometimes kids don’t know to say, ‘this hurts.’ We need to work on words. Sometimes people think they need to hurt this much—till you’re almost dead—before they can say that it hurts. But no, it starts much earlier on, way back here.”

Teen counselor Ian tells viewers, “You can break the cycle. Nobody asks to become a part of the statistics. Nobody asks to become part of the 49 percent of American men that abuse their partners.” Katie adds, “I encourage teens to speak up in a loud, loud voice. That’s the only way we will solve this, if people stand up and say, ‘No, I’ve had enough’.”

Oster offers these words on how to help those caught in a toxic relationship: “One of the best things to do with a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship is to guarantee that your friendship is there. You can say, ‘If you need help, I’m here for you. I have resources.’ One of the worst things you can do is to be judgmental. That does nothing but back people right back up into the closet. A true friend is someone who will listen. But all bets are off if the person is in imminent danger.”

As the video draws to a close, viewers hear from several of the peer counselors. They encourage teens to have self-respect and a strong sense of personal worth. “Love yourself enough to have your confidence way up there. So you’ll be able to say, ‘You’re not talking to me, because I’m not like that.’ You need self-respect.” Poorva agrees. “First comes respect,” she says. “Then you get honesty. Communication allows us to understand where the other person is coming from. When two people really respect each other, everything else falls into place.” Another peer counselor ends the program with these words: “Respect yourself, carry your head high. You don’t have to take it.”

**CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**TEACHING SUGGESTIONS**

The following questions will help you conduct a class discussion on the topic of toxic relationships. You may want to remind students to answer the questions without identifying any people in their class, family, or community.

- Have you ever known a couple-at school or in your neighborhood-who were involved in what you might describe as a “toxic relationship?”
- What were the signs that made you think it was an unhealthy relationship?
- What does a healthy relationship look like? What does it feel like?
- What behaviors do you expect in a healthy relationship? How do you make your expectations clear to your dating partner?
- What behaviors are you unwilling to accept in a relationship? How do you make your needs clear to your dating partner?
- Think about a dating relationship that you have known. Was there ever any behavior that you can now recognize as being “toxic” or dangerous?
- Did you ever question whether your dating partner was treating you with respect? Describe the behaviors. What was your response to those behaviors? Is there anything you wish you had done differently?
- What does jealousy feel like? Have you ever felt jealous of a dating partner? How do you deal with jealousy?

# **STUDENT WORKSHEETS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## RESEARCH PROJECT

ACTIVITY  
**1A**

Choose one of the topics below and write a brief research paper in which you explore the topic. You may gather information at your school or local library, as well as on the Internet. Use a *Resource Tracker* (Student Activity Sheet 1B) to organize your resources.

### **Self-Esteem**

Investigate the psychology of self-esteem. Why is self-esteem so important to a person's mental and physical health? Can a lack of self-esteem lead a person to get involved in unhealthy relationships? Explain.

### **Love**

What is love? Some scientists have tried to explain this human phenomenon. What other emotions are evoked when a person feels love? How does the emotion of love affect the body?

### **Anger**

Many believe that males and females typically express their anger differently. Investigate the subject and determine whether or not you believe this is true. How do you explain the differences in how males and females cope with anger?

### **Anger Management**

In recent years there have been many self-help books written on anger management. Choose a book and summarize its main points. Why do people get angry? What techniques can help individuals control their anger?

### **Relationships and the Law**

Investigate various laws that have been proposed (or passed) in your state to protect the rights of individuals in a romantic relationship. For instance, does your state have a law against stalking, verbal abuse, or emotional battery? How are these terms defined?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## DEFINITIONS

ACTIVITY  
**2**

Look up the word “relationship” in a dictionary. You will probably find a definition like this:

Re - la - tion - ship (ri la' shun ship), n.  
1. a connection, association, or involvement. 2. connection by blood or marriage. 3. an emotional connection between people.

Write down the dictionary definition of “relationship.”

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Now invent your own definition of a relationship. Use your own words to describe what a relationship is.

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How would you define a healthy relationship?

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How would you define an unhealthy (or toxic) relationship?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## LIKING YOURSELF

ACTIVITY  
**3**

This is a private exercise. You do not have to show it to anyone.

It's natural to want to be attractive to other people. We all want to be accepted. For this exercise, write down at least seven attributes that you think make you attractive to others. They might be aspects of your physical appearance or they might be personality traits. For instance, do you have a great smile? Tell hilarious jokes? Are you a fantastic dancer? Don't be embarrassed; this exercise is for your eyes only.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have written down your most attractive qualities, proceed to Part 2 below.

### Part 2:

Hopefully you listed above some genuine qualities that you like about yourself. Take a moment to wonder what might happen to those qualities if you let someone bully you or tell you how to behave all the time. Would you really want to be in a relationship with someone who didn't notice your best qualities? Would you really want to be in a relationship with someone who kept trying to change your best qualities?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL PLEDGE

ACTIVITY  
**4A**

This is a private exercise. You do not have to show it to anyone.

This is your chance to clearly describe your own expectations about dating relationships-now and in the future. Use this worksheet to set your own boundaries, and identify the behaviors you consider acceptable and unacceptable in a relationship. When you have clarified your ideas, fill in the Personal Pledge on the next page.

List three important characteristics of your ideal boyfriend or girlfriend.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

On a date, what are three activities that you most enjoy?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Who would pay for your date? How much money would you bring with you, in case of emergency?

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you get home from your date? What alternate plan would you have for getting back home by yourself, if necessary?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How well would you have to know someone before you...

- ...kiss? \_\_\_\_\_
- ...make out? \_\_\_\_\_
- ...have sexual intercourse? \_\_\_\_\_

What are three things that would be unacceptable on a date?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

This worksheet is continued on the next page.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL PLEDGE (CONTINUED)**

ACTIVITY  
**4B**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to never endure the following behaviors in my dating relationships:

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I also pledge to include the following behaviors in my dating relationships:

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In my opinion, this is what a healthy dating relationship should be like:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## TOP TEN LIST

ACTIVITY  
**5**

Being in a romantic relationship means sharing your experiences and feelings with a partner. In the space below, create your own Top Ten list of things you expect from your relationships. You can choose one of the following themes for your list:

- Top Ten Ways to Show Me You Care
- Top Ten Ways to Make Me Happy
- Top Ten Ways to Feel Good About Myself
- Top Ten Ways to Spend Time Together

10. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT**ACTIVITY  
**6**

When you first begin to date someone, you have so many new and unfamiliar experiences. You are trying to figure out how to impress someone who is special to you, but you also want to be yourself in a relationship. You see all kinds of images of what relationships are supposed to be like-but how do you know which ones are the right ones to follow? It's hard to ignore other people's examples of relationships-for example, if your mother and father don't show respect for each other. But you can decide for yourself what sort of relationships you want to have with your friends and with your dating partners. You can learn to have a healthy relationship and be loved and treated well by someone you care about. Violence is not the way to do it. Respect is.

This mock contract is meant to help you better understand what you want in your close relationships. Two people in a relationship can use this contract to learn what each person wants and where they disagree. Write your answers down on a separate sheet of paper. If you wish, you can compare and discuss answers with your friends, boyfriend(s), girlfriend(s).

**Dating**

- Should every weekend and evening be spent with your girl/boyfriend?
- Who decides what to do and where to go on a date?
- What about expenses? Should the boy always pay?
- If your date always pays for expenses, are you obligated to go along with his or her sexual advances?
- How much do you want you or your date to use alcohol or drugs?
- Is there any situation in which it would be okay for your date to push you around? Hit you?

**Sexual Rights**

- Is either person free to say that they do or don't want to go any further sexually?
- At what point may a person refuse to have sex?

**Other Relationships**

- Are you or your boy/girlfriend free to make friendships with other people? If so, how will you deal with jealousy?
- Is it all right for you or your boy/girlfriend to make friends with those of the opposite sex?
- Do you include each other in these relationships?

**Priorities**

- What qualities are most important to you in a boy/girlfriend?
- What do you consider the most important ingredient in a relationship?

Adapted from Preventing Teen Dating Violence: A Three Session Curriculum for Teaching Adolescents, Dating Violence Intervention Project, P.O. Box 530, Cambridge, MA 02238.

# **FACT SHEETS**

# TYPES OF RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

FACT  
SHEET  
1

## VERBAL ABUSE

What it means: behavior that causes harm with words

How it works: name calling, insults, public humiliation, yelling

Early warning signs: teasing that includes insults

## PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE

What it means: behavior intended to cause psychological or emotional distress

How it works: threats, intimidation, put-downs, telling a person's secrets, jealousy, possessiveness, isolating a person from friends, family, destroying gifts, clothing, letters, damaging a car, home, or other prized possessions

Early warning signs: pouting when you spend time with your friends, threatening to leave you in an unsafe location, trying to control what you do

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

What it means: behaviors that inflict harm on a person

How it works: slapping, hitting, shoving, grabbing, hair pulling, biting, throwing objects at a person

Early warning signs: going into a rage when disappointed or frustrated, teasing, tripping, or pushing, threatening to injure

## SEXUAL ABUSE

What it means: sexual advances that make a person feel uncomfortable; sexual behavior that is unwanted

How it works: insisting, physically or verbally, that a person who said “no” have sex anyway, forcing another person to have sex

Early warning signs: using emotional blackmail to talk you into having sex (“If you loved me, you would...”)

## ABUSE OF MALE PRIVILEGE

What it means: behavior that assumes that boys have more power than girls and that boys have special privileges in relationships with girls

How it works: the guy makes all decisions for the couple, he expects his girlfriend to wait on and pamper him, he treats his girlfriend as if she is property he owns

Early warning signs: expecting you to be available to him at all times; he is available to you when he feels like it, acting macho with friends: “This is my woman!”

Adapted from <http://www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen/teen6.html>  
American Psychological Association

## ARE YOU IN A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP?

FACT  
SHEET  
**2**

How do you know if you are in a toxic relationship? Answer the following questions for yourself. They describe some of the warning signs that can help you decide if your relationship is turning toward abuse and possibly violence.

Are you going out with someone who ...

- Is jealous and possessive, won't let you have friends, checks up on you, won't accept breaking up?
- Tries to control you by being bossy, giving orders, making all the decisions, not taking your opinions seriously?
- Puts you down in front of friends, tells you that you would be nothing without him or her?
- Scares you? Makes you worry about his or her reactions to things you say or do?
- Threatens you?
- Says things that make you feel terrible about yourself?
- Uses or owns weapons?
- Is violent? Has a history of fighting, loses temper quickly, brags about mistreating others?
- Grabs, pushes, shoves, or hits you?
- Pressures you for sex or is forceful or scary about sex?
- Attempts to manipulate you by saying, "If you really loved me, you would...."
- Gets too serious about the relationship too fast?
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs? Pressures you to drink alcohol or take drugs?
- Has a history of failed relationships? Blames the other person for all the problems?
- Believes that men should be in control and powerful and that women should be passive and submissive?
- Makes your family and friends uneasy and concerned for your safety?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you could be the victim of dating abuse. Abuse isn't just hitting. It's yelling, threatening, name-calling, saying, 'I'll kill myself if you leave me,' obsessive phone calling, and extreme possessiveness. Dating violence or abuse affects one in ten teen couples.

An abusive situation isn't good for you, and it's not good for your partner either. An abuser needs to get help and support to stop abusive behavior and to understand something called “the cycle of violence.” For victims of abuse (and also abusers who want help conquering their pattern of violence) there are many places to go and to get support.

- Tell your parents, a friend, a counselor, a clergyman, or someone else whom you trust and who can help. The more isolated you are from friends and family, the more control the abuser has over you.
- Alert the school counselor or security officer.
- Keep a daily log of the abuse.
- Do not meet your partner alone. Do not let him or her in your home when you are alone.
- Call the Women's Services number in your phone book.
- Avoid being alone at school, your job, on the way to and from places.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.
- YWCA usually has groups for victims of Abuse (and the YMCA).
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hot line at (800) 799-SAFE. This number is toll-free and will not appear on your phone bill if you live in the U.S.
- Plan and rehearse what you would do if your partner became physically abusive.

### **Remember...**

It is never okay for anyone to hurt you, or for you to hurt anyone else.  
This pattern must be broken.

Adapted from:  
The Boulder Police Department website on Teen Dating Violence  
[http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen\\_dating.htm](http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen_dating.htm)

The Insight Conflict Resolution Toolkit  
[http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict\\_resolution\\_text.html](http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict_resolution_text.html)

Though it's normal to disagree from time to time, when you have a major conflict with your boyfriend or girlfriend, it can be very difficult. Still, that doesn't mean it's impossible to straighten things out!

## **Step 1: Cool off.**

You can't work out a conflict when you are angry, or charged up. So cool off so and you'll be able to think more clearly. If necessary, do some serious breathing and centering exercises. Close your eyes and concentrate on your breath as it enters and leaves your body. Do this for at least sixty seconds or until you feel calmer and more relaxed. Are you ready to listen now? If you are, go on to Step 2. If not, breathe some more and r-e-l-a-x.

## **Step 2: Listen to each other.**

Ask your boyfriend or girlfriend to explain what happened from his/her point of view. Listen to what is said. Don't interrupt, question, judge, or interpret. Just listen. Next, it is your turn. Your boyfriend or girlfriend must listen to you! Without interrupting, questioning, judging, etc. They just get to listen.

## **Step 3: Use “I feel” statements.**

Talk about the feelings underlying the situation. If your feelings have been hurt by what happened, tell this to your boyfriend or girlfriend. Start your sentence with “I feel \_\_\_\_\_,” instead of “You always \_\_\_\_\_.” This takes away the blaming that goes on in most conflicts.

## **Step 4: What part did each of you play in the conflict?**

Figure out what each of you could have done differently. How did each of you contribute to the situation? Think how it must have felt from your boyfriend's or girlfriend's point of view. Ask your boyfriend or girlfriend to imagine how it felt from your point of view.

NOTE: You might want to have another person there to help conduct the discussion and make sure everyone follows the ground rules. Is there someone you both trust who could help with this?

Adapted from the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Conflict Resolution Toolkit  
[http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict\\_resolution\\_text.html](http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict_resolution_text.html)

Most teens talk to other teens about their problems. If a friend tells you he or she is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, here are some suggestions on how you can help.

- If you notice a friend is in an abusive relationship, 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 them to confide in a trusted adult. Talk to a trusted adult if you believe the situation is getting worse. Offer to go with them for help.
- Never put yourself in a dangerous situation with the victim's partner. Don't be a mediator.
- Call the police if you witness an assault. Tell an adult—a school principal, parent, guidance counselor.

Reprinted from Boulder Police Department website on Teen Dating Violence  
[http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen\\_dating.htm](http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen_dating.htm)

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## INTERNET RESOURCES

American Medical Association page on Adolescent Health

<http://www.ama-assn.org/adolhlth/adolhlth.htm>

American Psychological Association: Love Doesn't Have to Hurt for Teens

<http://www.apa.org/pi/pii/teen/>

Boulder Police Department: Teen Dating Violence

[http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen\\_dating.htm](http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/prevention/teen_dating.htm)

Insight's Conflict Resolution Toolkit

[http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict\\_resolution\\_text.html](http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/conflict_resolution_text.html)

Promoting Non-Violence and Cultural Harmony Among Teens

<http://www.shine365.com/>

Relationships: Boyfriends and Girlfriends

<http://www.talkcity.com/theinsite/relationships/relationships.html>

Resources on Teen Dating Violence

[http://www.easystreet.com/~bah/For\\_Teens/teen\\_dating\\_violence.htm](http://www.easystreet.com/~bah/For_Teens/teen_dating_violence.htm)

SafePlace Teen Center: Against Dating Violence

<http://www.austin-safeplace.org/teens/index.htm>