

Teen Relationship Abuse: School Staff Development

Safety Plan for Teens

If my partner and I have an argument at school and I feel unsafe , I can:

Talk with the school guidance counselor or social worker, my home room teacher or my parents.

If my partner threatens me on the way home from school and I feel unsafe, I can:

Call the police on my cell phone or go to the police station house and call my parents to pick me up from there.

If my partner and I get into an argument at my house, I can:

Go to a place where others will hear the arguing and/or to a place where there is less risk of injury.

If I am on a date and feel uncomfortable about being pressured for sex, I can:

Take a taxi or public transportation home or call a family member to pick me up.

If I decide not to date a partner and s/he begins to stalk me, I can:

Go to a populated area, notify the school authorities, notify the police and/or my parents.

If my partner comes over to my house when I am alone, and I feel unsafe, I can:

Call the police immediately, family member and/or notify the school authorities at the earliest opportunity.



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If I begin to get threatening telephone calls and feel unsafe, I can:

Call the telephone company, dial *57 to trace and register the calls and call the police department.

This is the code word that I will use to let people know I am in danger and need help: _____

These are the people that I will rely upon to be a part of my safety plan:

Names

How they will help

At home: _____

At school: _____

At work: _____

Around the neighborhood _____

Other: _____

If I need a safe place where my partner cannot find me, I can go: _____

If I need an Order of Protection, I can get help from: _____

These are the people that I will give a copy of the Order of Protection:

At school: _____

At work: _____

At the daycare: _____



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Teen Relationship Abuse Important Legal Facts

- In general, teen victims of abuse in relationships have the same rights as adult victims.

For Actions Which Constitute a Crime

- Teen victims can file a complaint with the police by calling 911 in an emergency or by contacting their local precinct. The police must have probable cause to make an arrest and the prosecutor must determine if there is sufficient evidence to file a criminal complaint or a delinquency petition. An arrest will be referred to the local prosecutor if the offender is an adult (over 16) or to the Family Court if the offender is a juvenile (under 16 at the time of the offense). Orders of Protection can be issued by either Criminal Court or Family Court on behalf of the victim. However, no orders can be issued without a prosecution. The victim must be willing to file the complaint with NYPD and cooperate with a prosecution.
- While police cannot make an arrest on violations, a remedy is available. Harassment cases (violations) are usually referred to the Court Dispute Referral Centers in each borough if the offender is over 16. Cases are then screened by the CDRC staff and eligible cases are sent to the DA's office for prosecution. Orders of Protection may be issued in harassment cases.

Family Offense Proceedings in Family Court

- Victims must be related to (through marriage or blood), married to, or have a child in common with the offender to file a Family Offense petition seeking an Order of Protection.
- The Family Court Act is silent regarding the minimum age of a petitioner to file a Family Offense petition. In general, the court will require that a parent or guardian file on behalf of a minor. If the child is making a complaint against a parent or guardian, or if the parent is refusing to file a petition when a family member has abused a child, the matter may be referred to the State Central Register.



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The Historical Context of Gender Bias

- 735 BC** Women are defined as the possessions of their husbands, and men have the right to kill or beat their wives.
- 1200 AD** Wife beating is endorsed by the Church as the loving husband's means of correcting his wife's faults.
- 1300-1400** English law allows men to beat their wives for the purpose of "lawful and reasonable correction"
- 1500-1600** In England, a woman who behaves "unfeminine" can be punished by being tied to a stool, suspended from a beam, and dunked into the nearest body of water.
- 1972** Women's Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota, start the first hotline for battered women. Women's Advocates and Haven House in Pasadena, California, establish the first recognized shelter for battered women in the United States.
- 1975** In the U.S., assaulting a spouse becomes a felony the same as assaulting a stranger.
- 1976** The Center Against Domestic Violence opens the first domestic violence shelter for women and their children in New York.
- 1978** For the first time in the U.S., a man is charged with raping his wife. He is acquitted. At least 14% of U.S. women are raped by their husbands.
- 1981** Duluth, Minnesota becomes the first city to require police to arrest a person who they have witnessed beating his spouse.
- 1982** Controversy erupts in Brazil after a woman is sentenced to 14 years for killing her husband, while a man who killed his wife is given a two-year suspended sentence on the grounds that he was "defending his honor." Such unequal sentencing is common in the United States.
- TODAY** In the U.S., more women are injured from abuse by a male partner than by car accidents, muggings and stranger rapes combined. Four women are killed every day by their male partners. About 1 out of every 4 teenaged girls are abused by a boyfriend, and 1 out of 3 adult women is abused at some point in her life. While females can also abuse males and abuse happens in gay and lesbian relationships as well, 95% of the time it is a female who is injured by a male. Women often stay in abusive relationships because they feel that have no choice in a society which condones violence against women and where men hold more power than women.



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Teens at Risk

1. Many teens, both females and males report being victims of violence from dating partners at least once.
2. Young women ages 16 to 24 years experience the highest rates of relationship violence.
3. Girls are much more likely to be punched or forced to engage in sexual activity against their will. Boys are more likely to be pinched, slapped, scratched or kicked.
4. Forty seven percent of teenagers have inflicted some form of emotional and/or physical abuse upon a dating partner.
5. Teens in all ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, and geographic regions experience relationship violence. Relationship abuse can also happen in same-sex relationships.
6. In a study of 635 high school students, less than 3% of students suffering violence reported it to an authority figure; only 6% reported it to a family member. Boys were less likely to report than girls.
7. Nearly 80% of teens that have been physically abused in their intimate relationships continue to date their abuser.
8. Each year in the United States, nearly 3 to 4 million women are beaten in their homes by their husbands, ex-husbands, boyfriends or lovers. A woman is beaten every 15 seconds.
9. Domestic violence is the major cause of injury to women, resulting in more injuries to women than auto accidents, muggings and rapes combined.
10. 23% of pregnant women seeking prenatal care are battered.



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WHY TEENS ABUSE? WHY TEENS STAY? WHY TEENS LEAVE?

WHY TEENS ABUSE?

- Fear of losing partner
- Insecurity
- "Love"
- Low self-esteem
- Belief that men should control women
- Belief that violence works as a tool to control a person
- Belief that they can get away with violence
- Confusing, jealousy and possessiveness with romance
- Belief that his/her problems are caused by a partner
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WHY TEENS STAY?

- Fear of losing partner
- Insecurity
- "Love"
- Low self-esteem
- Fear of being hurt more
- Belief that the abusers will change
- Belief that they are not truly women without men
- Belief that violence is inevitable
- Confusing, jealousy and possessiveness with romance
- Shame
- Belief that he/she is to blame for the abuse
- Increased danger upon leaving
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WHY TEENS LEAVE?

- Recognition that the abuser will not change
- Recognition that the abuse will get worse
- Recognition that they are not in control of the abuser
- Recognition that they want a healthy relationship



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What is Teen Relationship Abuse?

A pattern of controlling behavior that one partner uses to get power over the other. Most abusive relationships include more than one type of abuse.

<u>Type of Abuse</u>	<u>How it works</u>	<u>What it is</u>
Verbal Abuse	Using words	Name calling Insults Put-downs
Emotional Abuse	Controlling a Person's feelings or thoughts	Threats Jealousy Isolation Mind-games
Physical Abuse	Using physical force	Hits Kicks Spits Slashes
Sexual Abuse	Coercing or forcing someone to have sex	Rape Unwanted touching Refusal to have protected sex
Economic Abuse	Taking control of partner's money	Steals Withholds Does not allow partner to work

- Dating violence may start as occasional outbursts, easily dismissed by the victim.
- In some relationships, the abuse may never move beyond emotional and verbal abuse, while in others it escalates to include physical and sexual abuse.
- Generally the abuse gets more serious, more frequent and more frightening over time.
- Most of the time there is a pattern, including a period of calm where everything seems alright.



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Why Stay?

The answers to these questions are extremely complicated. There are many reasons why people do the things they do and since everybody is different the reasons vary. There is not a "type" of person that gets abused or that becomes abusive. It can happen to anyone. Following is a list of some of the reasons why people abuse, stay in, and leave abusive relationships...

WHY ABUSE?

- ▶ Insecurity
- ▶ Fear of losing his/her partner
- ▶ Low self esteem
- ▶ Possessiveness
- ▶ Desire for control
- ▶ Belief that violence is the way to express your feelings
- ▶ Sexist beliefs
- ▶ Belief that his/her problems are caused by a partner
- ▶ Because he/she can get away with it

WHY STAY?

- ▶ Insecurity
- ▶ Confusing jealousy and possessiveness with romance
- ▶ Confusion about the violence and his/her relationship with the abuser
- ▶ Fear about what will happen if he/she leaves
- ▶ Shame
- ▶ Hope that partner will change
- ▶ Belief that he/she is to blame for the abuse
- ▶ "Love"
- ▶ Fear of being alone or pressure to have a boy/girlfriend
- ▶ Lack of experience with healthy, non-abusive relationships
- ▶ Belief that he/she can't get anyone better
- ▶ Low self esteem
- ▶ Depression, despair, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- ▶ Feelings of loneliness or isolation from friends/family
- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Increased danger upon leaving
- ▶ Limited resources (i.e.: money, lack of shelters)
- ▶ Children
- ▶ Family pressure (i.e.: religion, culture, status)
- ▶ Lack of support - Isolation

WHY LEAVE?

- ▶ Realization that the abuser will not change
- ▶ Realization that things are getting worse and will continue to do so
- ▶ Support and help from friends and family
- ▶ Realization that this is not what he/she wants in a relationship
- ▶ Support and help from professionals



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Adolescent Development and the Effects of Teen Relationship Abuse (TRA)

According to psychological theory, teenagers will experience certain emotional "tasks" throughout their adolescent development in addition to various physical changes. The following chart explores the basics of these developmental shifts, their impact on teen relationship abuse, and the impact of teen relationship abuse on this development.

Features of Adolescent Development	Relevance to TRA	Tactics of Abuse
Struggle with Sense of Identity	May look to others to define self; may stay in abusive relationship for status reasons.	Victim is told what to think, what to do, who to talk to; victims may be forced to conform to the abuser's lifestyle or may be told that her/his "purpose" is to care for their partner.
Observe Changes in and Work Toward Acceptance of Body	May be more likely to believe insults, may be more dependent on a partner who makes them feel attractive or desirable; May engage in sexual behavior that is not pleasurable because someone tells them it is "supposed" to feel good.	May be insulted on the basis of physical appearance, criticized for how she/he eats, dresses, talks, etc; may be forced to diet, workout, take diet pills etc. Abuser may force sexual activity; victim may be raped.
Struggle to Become Less Dependent on Caregiver	May shift dependence from caregiver to partner thus developing an unhealthy dependence on partner.	Abuser may require total dependence on him/her, isolating victim from friends & family; abuser may use tensions between caregiver and victim to further isolate victim.
Rule and Limit Testing	May take greater risks and engage in unsafe behaviors, sexual & otherwise; May be impulsive, rebellious, and/or resistant to caregiver-created limits.	Abuser may be reckless with victim's life/safety (reckless and/or drunk driving); abuser may pressure victim to engage in risky and harmful behaviors (turning victim on to drugs and/or alcohol).
Mostly Interested In Present; Limited Thoughts of Future	May not consider effects of present behavior on future.	May be told that things will never change, that she/he will never be able to leave the relationship and will always be dependent on the abuser.
Increased Capability For Setting Goals	May be afraid to "do better" than partner; may underachieve to call less attention to self; may be afraid to pursue interests outside relationship.	May be told she/he is stupid and will never achieve anything; may be perceived as a threat to the abuser's success.
Increased Sexual Drive and Curiosity	May lead to engagement in risky, sexual behavior, especially if combined with low self-esteem & pressure from partner.	Abuser may force victim to perform and be the recipient of unwanted sexual acts.



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Signs of Dating Partner Abuse

1. Signs of Extreme Jealousy and Possessiveness: A teen might report that his/her partner doesn't like it when s/he talks to other people. A partner who keeps constant tabs on a teen is potentially abusive.
2. Changes in Appearance: A teen who starts dressing in a more revealing manner may be experiencing pressure to be sexier. S/he may begin to dress more conservatively at the insistence of a jealous partner, or cover up to hide bruises. S/he may appear disheveled or pay less attention to personal hygiene due to stress or lowered self-esteem.
3. Quick Involvement: Although teenagers often fall in love quickly, an abuser usually comes on strong, claiming pre-destined and eternal love, pressuring the partner for a long-term commitment.
4. Signs of Controlling Behavior: An abused teen often can't make a move without checking with his/her partner first.
5. Physical Injuries: When bruises or marks are common and s/he can't explain them or the story doesn't make sense, they may be covering up abuse. Bruises or cuts in various stages of healing also indicate multiple injuries rather than one incident.
6. Changes in School Performance: A sudden drop in grades may be the result of stress, depression or having to spend all of his/her time with the partner. Frequent lateness or absence from school is also common.
7. Substance Abuse: Many victims of abuse turn to drugs and/or alcohol as a coping mechanism.
8. Eating Disorders: Young women who are in abusive relationships may develop eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia; these are a product of damaged self-image or a need for control.
9. Isolation: A student who is being abused may begin to drop out of extracurricular activities, quit his/her job, separate from friends and become less social and more withdrawn. This is part of a pattern of isolation.
10. Anxiety or Jumpiness: A student who is being abused may seem very jumpy, easily scared, nervous or anxious, especially when his/her partner is in the room. S/he may be especially nervous about being late to meet his/her partner.
11. Signs of Decreased Feelings of Self-Worth and Depression: An abusive relationship lowers self-esteem; as the relationship goes on, the teen may display less confidence and be very self-critical.
12. Complacency Toward Goals: The student who once had great plans for college and a career may suddenly seem not to care about these things. This teen may be focusing more on being with and supporting the partner.



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Teen Relationship Abuse

Some Examples:

"I was insulted, accused of crazy things, humiliated and had my mind twisted. I was constantly criticized and called names. I was put down, no, verbally attacked for things that were not a problem the day before. I was blamed for everything that went wrong. Often, I had no idea what was wrong."

"We spent all of our time together. It was wonderful at first, but it became obsessive. I was either with him or talking to him on the phone. He became more and more jealous. At one point, I even had to be on the phone with him when I went to sleep so that he knew I was at home at night. I was allowed to talk to only two people at school- both were girls, and he had his friends watch me to make sure I was obedient."

"He often showed it through his extreme jealousy and possessiveness. I couldn't talk to another boy... He resented my girlfriends and my family. He said, 'all we need is each other'. If he chose to go out with his friends or not bother to call me, I was supposed to sit at home and wait for him to call. If I wasn't there, I was interrogated over and over about where I was, who I talked to, even what I wore. The hassle wasn't worth it. I became more and more isolated, more dependent on David, and afraid of David's temper if I didn't do what he wanted".

Levy, Barrie. In Love and In Danger. 1993. Pages 31-33.



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What to Look for

Behavioral and Physical Manifestations of Teenage Relationship Abuse

These characteristics are often symptoms of teen relationship abuse. It is important to remember that they may also indicate other forms of abuse, parental domestic violence or other problems.

Behavioral Manifestations:

- poor concentration
- declining school performance
- truancy/not keeping appointments
- running away from home
- sudden change in attitude, dress, behavior
- general acting-out behavior or withdrawal
- dropping friends or activities
- loss of interest in previously meaningful activities
- substance abuse
- secrecy
- anger, rage, explosive behavior
- depression, hopelessness
- eating disorders
- suicidal ideation
- homicidal ideation

Physical Manifestations:

- bruises
- self mutilation
- pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases
- headaches, sleeplessness, vague complaints or pains
- actual physical ailments either spurred or exacerbated by the psychological impact of the abuse, stress reactions to abuse (migraines, ulcers, back pain, etc.)
- weight loss or gain
- dramatic change in appearance



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Where to Go for Help

1. RAPP Program at: _____
2. Coordinator's Name: _____
3. Telephone Number: _____
4. Room Number: _____
5. Office Hours: _____
6. Center Against Domestic Violence Phone Number: 1-718-254-9134
7. Local Police Department Number: _____
8. Domestic Violence Hotline Number: _____
9. Youthline: 1-800-246-4646 or
Covenant House Nineline: 1-800-999-9999
10. Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-212-673-3000 or
1-212-532-2400
11. Runaway/Homeless Helpline: 1-800-621-4000
12. Lifenet Hotline Network: 1-800-543-3638
Lifenet (Spanish Line): 1-877-298-3373
13. Rape Crisis Helpline: 1-718-780-1459 or
1-212-267-7273
14. Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-3720



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Obtaining a Family Court Order of Protection

Orders of Protection can be obtained in either (and possibly both) Family Court or Criminal Court, depending on the relationship between the parties and the situation involved.

Who can use Family Court?

- Those related by **BLOOD**-including foster kids/adoption
- Those related by **MARRIAGE**-including formerly married
- Those with **CHILDREN IN COMMON**

Who can't use Family Court?

- Common-law/living together without children in common
- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Same sex couples

Does the victim need to Press Charges for a Family Court Order of Protection?

- No! In fact, Family Court is the best option for victims choosing not to press charges against the abuser. However, any police report or documentation should be brought to court as it supports the case, *but it is not required.*

How exactly does the victim go about getting a Family Court Order of Protection?

- Victim should report to court as early as possible (8:30-9:00 AM). If is often all day event.
- Victim may choose to first go to the Safe Horizon Office. A counselor will explain the Order of Protection process, offer housing assistance and referral services.
- Next, go to the Petition Room, and tell the clerk the victim wants to file for an Order of Protection. The victim will fill out necessary forms, turn them in, and then wait for a clerk to call them.
- At that time, a court clerk will officially type up the allegations.
- The victim will then wait to go before a judge who will decide whether to grant the order. If s/he does, this order is **TEMPORARY**. At that time, another court date is set concerning the **FINAL** Order of Protection.
- The temporary Order of Protection must be served on the abuser (to inform him/her of its existence and upcoming court date). **Upon serving**, the order becomes valid.
- Both victim and abuser will appear at the next court date. The judge will decide whether a permanent order is warranted at the time.



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How is an Order of Protection served against the abuser?

1. Court can send it directly to the precinct where the abuser lives. Police must attempt to serve up to 6 times (if unable to serve it will be sent back to court).
Advantage: the victim need not be involved in this process.
Disadvantage: the victim is not informed when or if the order has been served.
2. Victim may also take the order directly to the police precinct where the abuser resides and/or works.
Advantage: S/he will know immediately if it was served.
Disadvantage: S/he must wait for an available police officer to attempt to serve, which, can take a long time.
Disadvantage: Police can require victim to accompany them when serving Order.
3. The Order may also be served by anyone over 18 years of age (other than the victim); this person must fill out and notarize the accompanying " Statement of Personal Service."
4. Finally, the victim may choose to hire a process server, an individual paid to serve court paperwork.

Manhattan Family Court
60 Lafayette St. Rm 1C2
NY, NY 10013
212/577-1270

Brooklyn Family Court
283 Adams St., Rm 573
Bklyn, NY 11201
718/834-7440

Queens Family Court
89-14 Parsons Blvd
Jamaica, NY 11432
718/262-0202

Bronx Family
900 Sheridan
Bronx, NY 10451
718-590-2374

Staten Island Family Court
120 Stuyvesant Pl. Rm. 242
Staten Island, NY 10301
718/727-6500 Ext.302



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Obtaining a Criminal Order of Protection

Who can use Criminal Court?

- Anyone who will PRESS CHARGES against the abuser.
- Couples (including same sex) not related by marriage with no children in common (whether living together or not) MUST USE CRIMINAL COURT (such persons may not use Family Court).

How do you get a Criminal Court Order of Protection?

In New York State, *Criminal Court Orders of Protection* are issued by a judge as part of the prosecution of a case that is before the court. Thus, the victim must be willing to press charges. There are two ways to get a case to criminal court:

1. **By arrest.** If the abuser is arrested on a domestic violence offense, *the victim will, in most cases, AUTOMATICALLY receive a Temporary Order of Protection*, which is issued at the abuser's arraignment and mailed to the victim (if the victim does not receive it, contact the District Attorney handling the case or the Victim Advocate in the appropriate borough). The victim does not need to petition or necessarily appear in the criminal court. The order will be renewed each time the case goes to court, and subsequently mailed to the victim. The abuser is served each time s/he appears in court. Felony cases must be handled in this matter.
2. **Civilian Initiated Complaint Process.** Other cases are started at a Court Dispute Referral Center (CDRC). The victim must go to the CDRC to begin this process.

What does the CDRC require?

- Criminal Sufficiency (A or B misdemeanor)
- A credible complaint
- Police report(s), evidence and/or witnesses

What happens next with a civilian-initiated complaint?

The case will be sent to the District Attorney to see if they are going to assume prosecution. If the case is taken, the DAs office will request that a temporary Order of Protection be granted until the defendant is arraigned on the case.

Note: regarding cases open to Detective Unit:

If the police refer a case to the detective unit (i.e. a possible arrest/investigation is pending), the victim cannot apply for an Order of Protection through the criminal court, since an investigation must be completed to see if an arrest is warranted.



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