Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month 2026 Toolkit

center *for*
prevention
of abuse.

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Introduction

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

The Center for Prevention of Abuse *(CFPA)*, in collaboration with organizations such as Love Is Respect, Let's Be Real, and Break the Cycle, are uniting communities around the world to educate and raise awareness about teen dating violence, the warning signs of abusive relationships, and what we can do to protect ourselves. Statistics show many teens are impacted by toxic relationships each year.

For example, did you know:

- One in five girls and one in ten boys experience physical or sexual violence in their intimate relationships.

  Source: https://futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Teen-Dating-Violence-Fact-sheet-3.pdf

With this statistic in mind, CFPA has created a packet of resources to help you incorporate teen dating violence awareness in your school/organization and encourage your staff and students to join the movement to end abuse.

In this packet you will find:

- Information to educate your students and staff about teen dating violence prevention.
- Activities to engage your students and staff to raise awareness.

This year's theme is **"Turn Up the Volume, Turn Down the Violence!"** February is the month of love, and the goal of this toolkit is to educate and inform students about how love should heal and never hurt. Music makes us feel safe, empowered, and heard. Our relationships should make us feel this way, too. This month, we hope you communicate, educate, and invest in healthy dating relationships. We hope you will participate in some, if not all, of the activities. We look forward to hearing what you choose to do.

Be sure to "like" CFPA on Facebook and follow us on Instagram. You can also get involved by tagging @cfpapeoria when posting pictures and/or comments on how your school chose to draw awareness to this very important issue.

If you have any questions or would like more information about Teen Dating Violence programming, please feel free to contact us at 309.691.0551 or at PreventEd@centerforpreventionofabuse.org

CURRICULUM

Meeting State Mandates

The Center for Prevention of Abuse's PreventEd: Relationship Abuse curriculum helps schools meet the **"Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act,"** which is outlined below. Our programming is ideal for freshman health classes but is appropriate for all high school students.

Illinois Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act
105 ILCS 110/3.10
Effective July 1, 2013
Sec. 3.10. Policy on teen dating violence

The school board of each public school district in this State shall adopt a policy that does all of the following:

- States that teen dating violence is unacceptable and is prohibited and that each student has the right to a safe learning environment.
- Incorporates age-appropriate education about teen dating violence into new or existing training programs for students in grades 7 through 12 and school employees.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse's **PreventEd: Relationship Abuse** curriculum consists of 4–8, 45-minute lessons, covering a variety of topics related to Teen Dating Violence. These topics include but are not limited to: dating abuse, healthy characteristics in a relationship, boundaries, how to be an active bystander to teen dating violence, and resources available for survivors. **PreventEd: Relationship Abuse - ID** is a developmentally appropriate curriculum offered for individuals with disabilities.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse's **PreventEd: Healthy Relationships** is available for 7th & 8th grade, once weekly for 6 weeks in 30–45 minute sessions with a focus on social and emotional learning and developing healthy relationships with all people. This is done by exploring boundary-setting, characteristics of healthy relationships, safety planning, emotion management, and effective communication.

To schedule these programs and look at past Center for Prevention of Abuse Toolkits, please visit [Prevention Education – Center for Prevention of Abuse] or scan the QR code below.

PRAISE FOR CFPA

PreventED: Relationship Abuse

Teacher Feedback:

"I think this program has done a great job of educating and engaging students."

"This program is great, I feel like my students learned a lot. This program really made a difference for them and we continued to have great conversations when our sessions were up."

"This program is fantastic for the students; it has a lot of valuable information that keeps the students entertained."

"Love this program! The presenter was very knowledgeable and had such a positive presence with the students it made it easier for them to open up and talk about a difficult topic."

Student Feedback:

"Learning that we can help them get out of an abusive relationship."

"...I went through things like this with someone I thought cared for me. It got very bad to where she took it too far. I'm just happy we got to speak about it."

"Learning new things and how to get help for yourself or others if you are being abused."

"Learning that there are lots of resources for help so that if I or any of my friends are ever in an abusive relationship, I can help myself and others."

PreventED: Relationship Abuse for Individuals with Disabilities

"The students really responded to role playing in different situations. They did an excellent job keeping material at the student's level as well as connecting with a majority of the students."

"[The] Educator was able to interact with all of our students, who have a various range of disabilities and communication methods. She was able to adjust activities to meet the students' needs and developed positive rapport with all students!"

"Presenter did a great job working with the students and presenting information. We have a lot of learning levels in our group and they worked to include all. Thanks so much!"

"Activities are engaging and student interactions/lessons include all students. Educator did a wonderful job involving all students – even the students who tend to be very quiet."

PreventED: Healthy Relationships

Teacher Feedback:

"Healthy relationships are life long and the students will have a more solid foundation after this class."

"Every topic was super relative to their current lives and allowed them to relate the topics to real examples from their lives."

"Content is very relevant to middle school students."

"The topics covered are topics that our students can/will use in their current lives."

Student Feedback:

"They helped me realize that sticking up for myself isn't being mean, it's just communicating."

"I learned that it's ok to have boundaries."

"I learned how to respectfully communicate your boundaries to others."

"I learned to stand up for myself and be kinder to other people."

VOCABULARY

Refer to the terms and definitions below when speaking with adolescents about teen dating violence.

Boundaries: Limits we set with each other

Boyfriending: Partner uses their relationship to traffic their significant other

Coercion: Tricking, pressuring, or guilting someone into sexual activity

Compliment: Something said that is nice, genuine, and meaningful

Compromise: A solution to a problem in which both people feel their needs and feelings have been considered in coming to an agreement

Consent: Willing, verbal, coherent, and continuous permission

Cycle of Violence: A cycle of behavior within a relationship that involves three phases: tension-building, violent explosion, and the honeymoon/calm phase. When one partner uses power in order to control their partner. *(see graphic below)*

stage I: tension building
- blaming, put-downs
- name-calling, threats
- questioning their partner's every move
- "I told you not to wear that shirt."

stage II: violent explosion
- forced sexual activity
- put-downs, name-calling
- intimidation, threats, isolation
- "Give me all your passwords and car keys. I decide what you can do."

stage III: honeymoon/calm
- gift-giving, making promises
- consensual sexual activity
- romantic, sweet
- "I'm sorry, I was just upset. Let me make it up to you."

Empathy: Noticing and understanding how someone else is feeling. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes.

Flirting: Two sided; makes both partners feel good

Minor: An individual under the age of 18

Respect: Treating others the way they want to be treated

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted sexual pressure

Sextortion: Blackmail by using nude and/or sexually explicit photos/videos

LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION

Break the Cycle *(breakthecycle.org)*
Break the Cycle has fun, inclusive, and informative campaigns designed for all ages. With infographics, curriculum, and guides for friends and parents, this website provides necessary information about encouraging healthy relationships.

Day One *(dayoneny.org)*
Day One partners with youth to end dating abuse and domestic violence through community education, supportive services, legal advocacy and leadership development.

Love Is Respect *(loveisrespect.org)*
Love Is Respect offers information and resources for young people about healthy and unhealthy dating relationships. They focus on inclusivity and awareness with the goal of advocating healthy relationships and preventing abuse. A live chat service for questions is also available 24/7.

One Love *(joinonelove.org)*
One Love is a foundation that educates communities and individuals on the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They have workshops, resources, videos, and activities aimed at creating awareness and spurring change.

Prevent IPV *(preventipv.org)*
Prevention IPV provides information and resources, including online toolkits, on teen dating violence.

Trevor Project *(thetrevorproject.org)*
The Trevor Project is an organization that provides services for crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ individuals under the age of 25. Inclusive community resources are available for both young people and educators, including information on healthy relationships and dating for teens. There is also an option to chat, call, or text with advocates 24/7.

School Wide Initiatives

Wear Orange for Love Day
Orange is the official color of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month! Wear orange for love on Wednesday, February 11. Participate in Break the Cycle and Love is Respect's national movements to support healthy relationships by wearing orange. Snap a picture and share your school's participation on your social media accounts. Be sure to tag Center for Prevention of Abuse on Facebook and @cfpapeoria on Instagram.

Healthy Partner Pledge
To promote the importance of being a healthy dating partner, create a "Healthy Partner Pledge." Lay out a banner that says "I pledge to be a healthy dating partner" in a common area *(such as a library or cafeteria)*. Have markers readily available so that students can sign their names, pledging to be a healthy dating partner.

Healthy Relationships Playlist
To bring awareness of what a healthy relationship should look like, attached below is a list of songs that provide examples of how our dating partners should treat us. If your school utilizes music as bells to transition from class to class, feel free to use this playlist.

Healthy Relationships Playlist

Lean on Me – Bill Withers
Love Is Like a Butterfly – Dolly Parton
Perfect – Ed Sheeran
Tiny Love – Mika
Just the Way you Are – Bruno Mars
Best of My Love – The Emotions

Classroom Activities

Activity: Healthy Relationship Playlist

Grade: 9–12th

Time Needed: 30–45 minutes

Supplies Needed: Provided worksheet and writing utensils

Objective: To give awareness to healthy relationship characteristics

Directions: Read the lyrics provided for each song. Answer the questions listed below.

Debrief questions:

- What are some healthy characteristics of a relationship that you heard in the songs?
- Are there any lines from these songs that could be considered an unhealthy or abusive characteristic in a relationship? For example, one of the songs contains the phrase "And I am only happy when you are by my side."

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PLAYLIST ACTIVITY

Instructions: Read the lyrics provided for each song, then answer the questions listed below.

LEAN ON ME - BILL WITHERS

Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on

JUST THE WAY YOU ARE - BRUNO MARS

When I see your face
There's not a thing that I would change
'Cause you're amazing
Just the way you are
And when you smile
The whole world stops and stares for a while
'Cause, girl, you're amazing
Just the way you are

PERFECT - ED SHEERAN

Well, I found a woman, stronger than anyone I know
She shares my dreams, I hope that someday I'll share her home
I found a love to carry more than just my secrets
To carry love, to carry children of our own

LOVE IS LIKE A BUTTERFLY - DOLLY PARTON

Love is like a butterfly (soft and gentle as a sigh)
The multicolored moods of love are like its satin wings
Love makes your heart feel strange inside
It flutters like soft wings in flight
Love is like a butterfly, a rare and gentle thing
Your laughter brings me sunshine
Every day is springtime
And I am only happy when you are by my side
How precious is this love we share
How very precious, sweet and rare
Together, we belong like daffodils and butterflies

TINY LOVE - MIKA

It's not a sunrise over canyons shaped like hearts
It isn't bursting into song in Central Park
It's not the outline of your face drawn in the stars
It's a "still-there-Monday-morning" kind of love
There's no dramatic declarations in the rain
It's not a love that finds its pleasure after pain
I couldn't train a bunch of doves to spell your name
It's a "don't-know-what-they're-missing" kind of love

BEST OF MY LOVE - THE EMOTIONS

Never never will I feel discouraged
'Cause our love's no mystery
Demonstrating love and affection

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are some healthy characteristics of relationships that you noticed in the songs?

One of the songs contains the phrase "And I am only happy when you are by my side." How could this potentially be unhealthy or even abusive?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activity: Take the Quiz to Learn More

Grade: 9–12th

Time Needed: 10–15 minutes

Supplies Needed: Phone or computer

Objective: To help students understand healthy relationship characteristics

Directions: Take some time to take these quick "quizzes" to get some more information about your relationships, and how you can support others. Scan the QR code to take each "quiz".

Debrief questions and information:
After each quiz, take a look through the information on the Love is Respect website.

◀ How would you help someone in an abusive relationship?

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/how-would-you-help-someone-in-an-abusive-relationship/?%3E

Is my relationship healthy? ▶

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/is-your-relationship-healthy/?%3E

◀ Is your abusive partner actually changing?

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/is-your-abusive-partner-actually-changing/?%3E

Am I a good partner? ▶

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/am-i-a-good-partner/?%3E

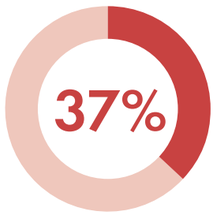
FAST FACTS

Research shows that about
9.4% of high school students
report being **hit, slapped, or physically hurt intentionally** by their partner in the **previous 12 months.**

1 in 3 women &
1 in 4 men
in the US have experienced **rape, physical violence, and/or stalking** by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

More than
71% of women &
55% of men
first experienced **intimate partner violence** (sexual or physical violence, and/or stalking) **under the age of 25.**

1 in 4 women
first experienced intimate partner violence **prior to the age of 18.**



More than
37% of LGBTQ+ youth
did not tell anyone about their experience of physical dating violence.

Sources:

https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10775637/

https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/domestic-violence-statistics/

https://www.nsvrc.org/blog_post/teen-dating-violence-prevention-resources-2025-update/

https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/physical-dating-violence-and-suicide-risk-among-lgbtq-youth/

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

The Center for Prevention of Abuse
Offering Services to help all people live free from violence and abuse
https://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org/

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Call, text, and chat lines available 24/7
https://www.thehotline.org/

Love is Respect
Information and support for all relationships
https://www.loveisrespect.org/

County Courthouses
Information on Orders of Protection, Civil No Contact Orders, and Stalking No Contact Orders
https://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Ordersof-Protection.pdf

The Trevor Project
Information and support specifically for individuals that identify with LGBTQ+ community. Call, text, and chat lines available 24/7
thetrevorproject.org/resources/

Teacher Feedback Form

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month Toolkit 2026 Feedback Form

Sources Cited

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/am-i-a-good-partner/?%3E

https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/is-your-relationship-healthy/?%3ER

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https://www.loveisrespect.org/quiz/is-your-abusive-partner-actually-changing/?%3E

https://www.joinonelove.org/

https://www.breakthecycle.org/

https://dayoneny.org/

https://preventipv.org/materials/

https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS

https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html?CDC_AAref_Val=

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html

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https://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org/

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thetrevorproject.org/resources/

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