

Dating and Violence Technology



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healthy relationships

In a healthy dating relationship both people show respect, trust, and consideration for the other person. Each person feels valued for who they are, and has their beliefs, their culture and their choices respected.

Healthy dating relationship means valuing each others feelings and opinions even when they are different from their own, and listening to the other person without making judgment. You should feel like you can talk to one another openly and even if you disagree you can discuss it without yelling or shouting.

Decision making is agreed upon together. Both people accept responsibility for their own actions, and acknowledge their mistakes admitting when they are wrong. Both should always feel completely safe with one another no matter what, and feel comfortable expressing their opinions and making their own decisions.

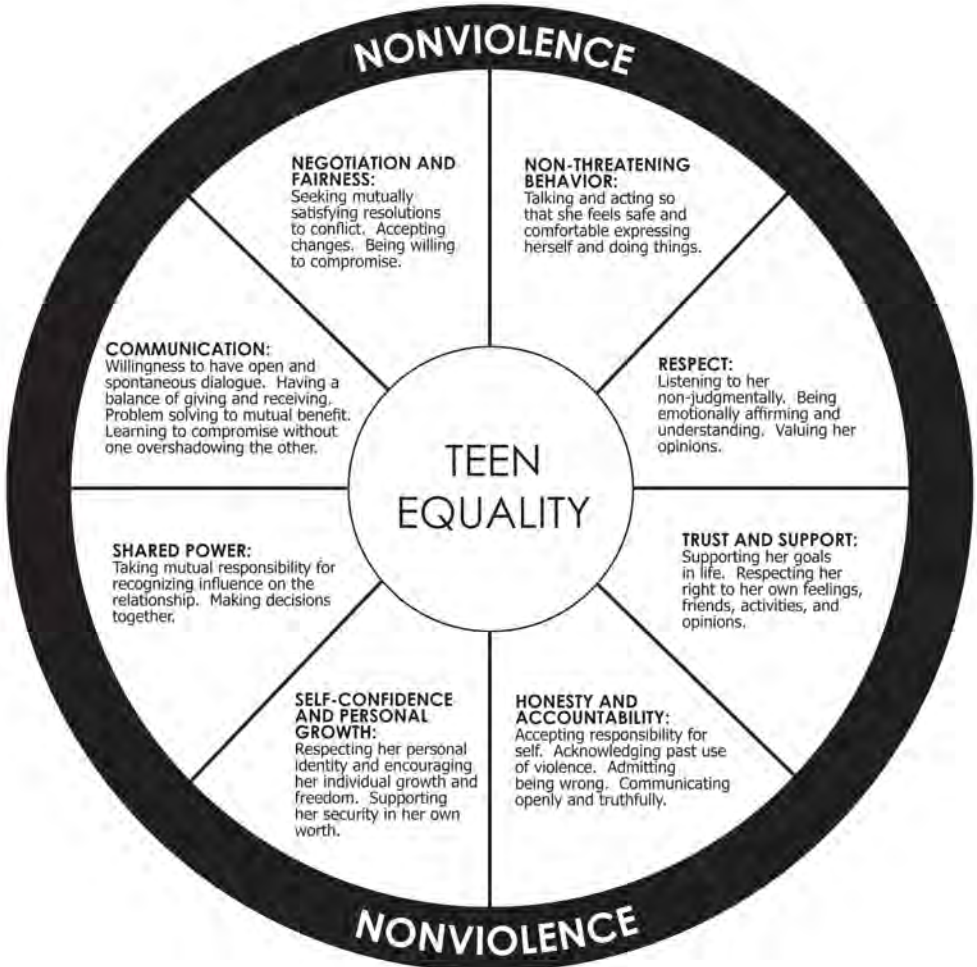
Honesty is an important element of a healthy relationship and you feel you can trust one another.

Respect for each others privacy and recognise that it's okay to keep certain things private about yourself. Each person decides where they go, what they do and who they are with. You both trust each other, and you both behave in ways that shows the other person you can be trusted.

Both of you maintain your friendships with others and your relationships with family, and you participate in activities outside of the relationship. You both enjoy spending time apart and respect when one of you wants some space.

You make consensual decisions about sex together respecting each other's opinions. You can talk about what's okay and what isn't. Each person feels comfortable to say no to any sexual activity they are not comfortable with, and their decisions are respected.

equality



Adapted from:
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dating violence

Dating violence refers to abusive behaviours used by one person in a dating relationship to try to gain power and control over another person. Dating violence is serious it can cause injury and even death.

It can happen to anyone at any age, and between different sex or same sex couples, any culture, race or religion, levels of education, or socio-economic background. Dating violence is confusing and frightening at any age, but for young people just starting to date it can be very difficult. Dating violence can include one or all of the following six types of abuse:

Emotional abuse is when person tries to control the other person's feelings and thoughts causing them to feel afraid and hurt. It can cause as much, if not more, pain than physical violence. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise because unlike physical violence it is not

always obvious when it is happening.

Verbal abuse is a way of controlling and hurting the other person with words. This can include teasing, bullying, humiliating making threats, using intimidation, and putdowns.

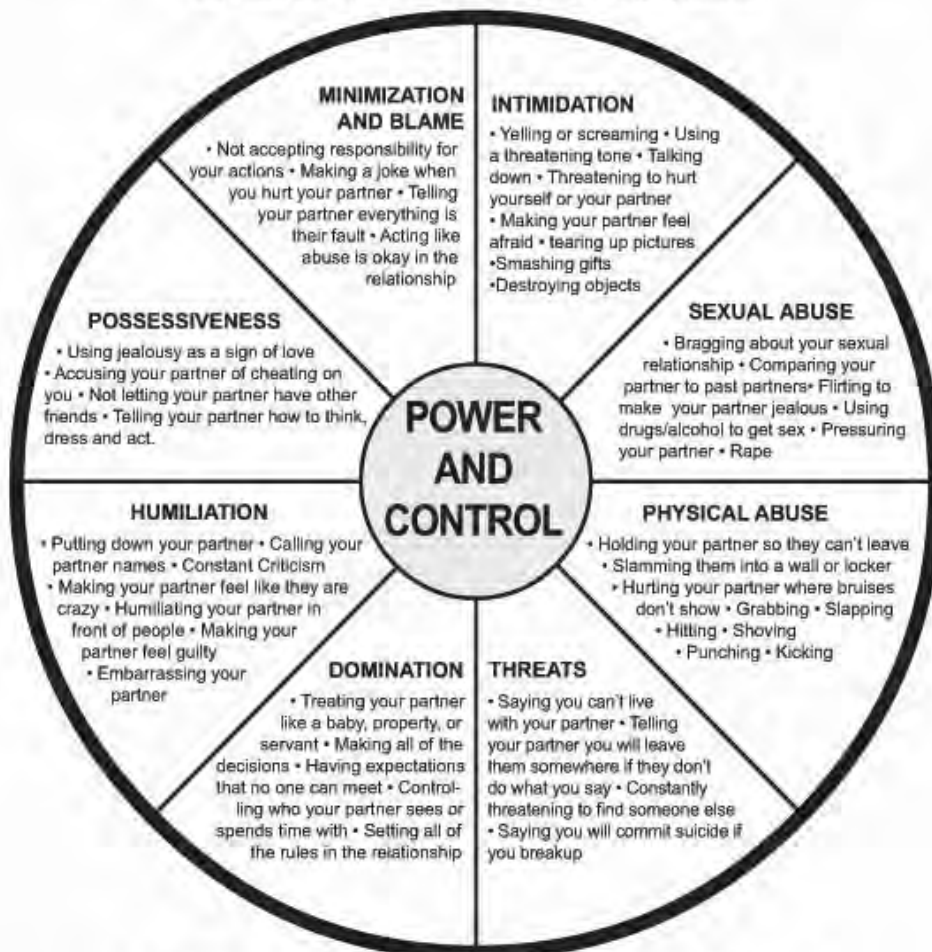
Physical abuse is any behavior meant to cause hurt to another person's body or to control the other person's physical freedom or movement. Physical abuse can cause serious injury and even death. If your dating partner is physically abusive to you, there is a very strong possibility it will happen again.

Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior that is forced or manipulated. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional. It is wrong to be forced into participating in any type of sexual experience that you don't want.

Financial abuse is a type of dating violence where money is used as a means of having power and control over a person in a relationship.

power and control

When one person in a relationship repeatedly scares, hurts or puts down the other person, it is abuse. The Power & Control Wheel lists examples of each form of abuse. Remember, abuse is much more than slapping or grabbing someone.



A relationship full of control is really out of control.

Adapted with permission from the "Power & Control and Equality Wheels," developed by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN

Provided by:



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technological abuse

Technological abuse is abusive behavior in relationship where technology such as a mobile phone or a computer is used as a tool to abuse the other person.

Technology has become the latest weapon used by abusers to harass, control and stalk their dating partner. This is a new form of dating violence and is becoming more common. Technology makes it easier for someone to abuse another person because it can be concealed from everybody else. Most often people don't read each others text messages so unless the victim tells someone about it or they overhear a phone conversation nobody else would ever know.

This form of abuse is serious and as harmful as other forms of dating violence. It can be very frightening and can cause a lot of harm to somebody emotionally, and psychologically and may also be a precursor to physical violence.

This booklet is about learning to recognise this type of abuse. Knowing what's okay or not okay can help you know what the risks are and to recognise if it is happening to you or a friend and also to learn ways to help protect yourself and keep yourself safe



abusive behaviours



facts

Technological abuse is a widespread social problem that targets young people between the ages 14-24 years.

It is estimated that a quarter of young people who are currently in some kind of relationship have experienced dating violence by way of technology. The Technology & Teen Dating Abuse Survey 2007* in the United States revealed the following:

- 1 in 4 young people stated that their dating partner checks up on them multiple times a day either through their mobile phone or online.
- More than 1 in 4 say their boyfriend or girlfriend has checked their text messages on their phone without permission.
- 12% have had a boyfriend or girlfriend call them names, put them down or say mean things to them over mobile phone or the internet.
- One in ten report they have been threatened physically by a boyfriend

or girlfriend over email, IM, or text message.

- One in three teens who have been in a relationship say they've been text messaged 10, 20, or 30 times an hour by a partner finding out where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.
- 25% of teens who have been in a relationship say they have been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner on a phone call or in a text message.
- 22% say they have been asked by their partner over the phone or internet to engage in sexual activity they did not want to.
- 17% say their partner has made them afraid not to respond to a cell phone call, email, IM or text message because of what he or she might do.
- 18% say their partner has used a networking site like Facebook or Myspace to harass or put them down.

**Study conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) for Liz Claiborne Inc.*

cyber-bullying

Dating abuse can look a bit like cyber-bullying especially if the abuser involves other people in the abuse.

Sometimes abusers create fake Facebook or Myspace pages to impersonate their ex-partner after a breakup.

They might send hurtful text messages, post embarrassing images or write nasty comments on their victims Facebook wall. Another example of this type of abuse is starting a snide poll which can be spread widely through instant messaging (IM) or phone texting. Sometimes they will forward on a private IM message, text or email to others without consent of the sender.

All of these behaviours are abusive and the worst thing about this type of abuse is that it can happen to the victim anywhere—at school or at home and can involve large groups of young people.



textual harassment

Harassment by text messages occurs in almost all abusive dating relationships.

These days sending a text is a common way of staying in touch. It's quick and its cheap, with many mobile phone providers offering unlimited texting plans it's become one of main forms of communication amongst young people.

The convenience of texting has made it all too easy for abusers to keep track of their dating partner. Texting is a common weapon of choice for dating violence abusers—they can harass their victim as many times as they choose to any time of the day or night, and no-one other than the victim knows what is going on. It not uncommon for abusers to text up to 100 or more times a day consisting of threats, rumours, questions—anything. Texts will arrive when the victim is at home, at the dining table, at school, even in the middle of the night.

This type of abuse is persistent, constant and doesn't let up. Since most people carry their phones with them at all times can be very difficult to ignore. The person



real stories

Megan

Megan is 19 she'd just broken up with her boyfriend but he kept on harassing her – his messages would arrive day and night sometimes 20 or 30 at once. He wanted her back and he refused to take no for an answer. He texted and called 627 times over the course of a couple of months.

Jane

Jane's boyfriend Zac started sending her loads of text messages at first it made her feel special but after a while they began to make her feel uncomfortable and became more and more scary. He was really possessive he would text Jane and say things like:

*U don't need nobody else but me
who r u with?*

Why didn't u answer me?

Where r u?

Y r u lying to me?

What's your problem? R u stupid ?

Watch out I'll finish you off

I know where you live....see you soon.

Poppy

Jason calls Poppy every night. At first it seemed sweet but now it's at the point where he's texting her constantly asking what she's doing. He made her have a special ring tone for him and if she doesn't answer he gets angry and accuses her of flirting or hiding things from him.



sexting

Many young people think sending or forwarding on nude or sexually explicit photos or video to someone either online or through a mobile phone is just a bit of harmless fun, or is flirting—but they are wrong, sexting can have serious consequences.

It's **against the law** to send explicit photos of yourself or someone else if you are under 16 years old. Even if you are willing and agree to the pics the legal consequences are serious as it is considered by the law to be child pornography.

Once you send the pic you will have no control over what happens to it. You won't know what other person chooses to do with your photos, you don't know how many people will see the photo. You might attract attention from people you don't really want to communicate with. You might consent to the pictures but they can be used against you if the relationship breaks up. Imagine how humiliating it would be if your whole class saw the pics.

These risks all increase significantly if you are in a relationship where there is dating abuse. It is not uncommon for one partner to willingly send pictures of themselves to their date and then to have them used against her—the partner threatening to send them out or post them on the internet if they don't do as she is told.



real stories

'I thought it would be okay because I've known Zac since primary school and I trusted him 100%. Now I really regret it, he showed the pic to most of my class and my mum and dad found out too. It was a year ago and I still don't know if people are sending it or looking at it.'

Hannah

'My bf sometimes tries to take a photo of me when I'm naked, and keeps asking me to send him a sexy photo of myself. I don't like the idea that he'll always have the pic and he could show it to someone or send it on to other people. But he's constantly going on at me about it and says all his mate's girlfriends send their boyfriends photos of themselves. He makes me feel like I'm being uptight about it, but it just doesn't feel right. I wish he'd stop asking.'

Kellie

'I was seeing a guy at school for a while and he started sending me flirty messages, at first I thought it was a bit of harmless fun but after a while the messages got a bit more serious. Last night he sent me a photo of himself with his top off and said he'd like to show me more, I feel really weird and I don't like it.'

Sally

Mark and Jessica

Mark and Jessica began dating at the end of grade 11. By the end of the school year they were together almost every day. When Jessica went to Sydney for the summer holidays with her family Mark texted her every day, saying how much he missed her and loved her, he was constantly asking what she was doing and who she was with. If she did not respond right away, he would send angrier texts, accusing her of forgetting about him or cheating on him. When she told him he was being unreasonable, he said he was only getting upset because he cared about her and didn't want her to leave him for someone else.

Mark said that he and Jessica should "sext" as a way to keep their relationship strong. Jessica felt uncomfortable but she wanted to keep Mark happy so she agreed. One day, Mark started asking Jessica to take a nude picture and send it to him. Jessica was initially unwilling, but Mark told her how much he missed her and how lost and depressed he felt without her. Jessica thought their relationship would go back to normal when she returned from Sydney, but Mark would still get upset whenever she spent time with her friends, especially other guys. He would also yell at her when she would be unable to spend time, so Jessica decided to break up with him. When she began to suggest they take a break, Mark threatened to send the nude picture to everyone they knew and post it on the Internet if she broke up with him.

cyber-stalking

Cyber-stalking sounds like something out of a high-tech Hollywood movie but in fact it is very common in abusive relationships and is a form of dating violence.

It can happen while they are still in a dating relationship or after it has ended. It can happen without the victim even knowing it.

Abusers who cyberstalk use technology to harass, threaten and frighten their dating partner. so they stay in the relationship and remain under the control of the abuser. Three main types of cyber stalking have been identified:

Email stalking— sending threatening or obscene emails. Sending viruses, sending junk email (spamming) sending long emails/images that use all the computers memory.

Internet stalking—impersonating the victim, revealing false or misleading information about the victim on the internet which may lead to unwanted attention to the victim.

Computer stalking involves taking unauthorised control of the victims computer. This can involve taking control of the operating system.

Cyber-stalking is dangerous and can very quickly escalate and have violent consequences.

If you think you may be being stalked or someone keeps contacting you online in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared you need to tell your parents.

Stalking is against the law and you should contact the police.

Source:

Hand, T., Chung, D. and Peters, M. (2009) The Use of Information and Communication Technologies to Coerce and Control in Domestic Violence Following Separation. Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse.

real stories

Jazz

'I thought something weird was going on, my friends started getting messages from me but I didn't send them. It turns out my ex-boyfriend was tapping into my Hotmail account and reading my messages before I did and then harassing the senders. I reported it to the police, and it turned out I my ex-boyfriend had been hacking into my Hotmail account for months and he'd followed my every online move. The police are still investigating.'

Eloise

'My boyfriend began showing up at places that I'd only told people about in private messages on Facebook. I couldn't work out how he found out where I was going to be. I felt like I was going crazy. He must have guessed my password. I told mum and we changed my password to something he couldn't guess. I broke up with him after this, how could I trust him again? Mum came with me and we reported it to the police. I still don't feel safe.'



location based services

Location based services are really popular, there are literally dozens to Applications to choose from. These Apps work by enabling you to let other people know where you are by checking in from a location, and you can also locate other people in the same way. Connecting is easy through a mobile phone and some Applications are also interconnected with Facebook or Twitter. You can collect points that you can redeem for free stuff or a discount or deals. Sounds good? Then read on.....

Whilst this sounds like an easy way of keeping in touch with friends or letting people know what you are up to, there are some serious risks associated with using these Apps.:

- Checking in gives other people a significant amount of information about you such as your social patterns which could place you in an unsafe situation if someone decides to track your movements.

- A lot of information is collected about you and may be stored on the internet indefinitely. This could create a problem for you in the future.
- Some social networking services have the location based functions turned automatically by default. This means you might not even be aware that you are checking in and letting others know where you are.
- Letting people know when you are out sets up potential risk to you and your property. For example your house could be robbed if people know you are not at home.



checking in? check this out first

Taking some precautions will reduce the risk:

- Check the privacy controls on the application you are using and make sure you understand who will have access to your information when you are checking in as it varies between applications.
- Adjust privacy settings to a level you feel comfortable with you can choose how much detail to go into.
- You can edit your account settings such as profile, password and privacy. It is a good idea to monitor and review settings and change passwords regularly.
- Block unwanted users or their posts by going into their user profile.
- Stop or delete your account if you start to feel uncomfortable or no longer want the service.
- Report any inappropriate activity either online or by contacting the service directly.
- Choose what notifications you want to receive. You can 'opt out' of receiving some or all notifications.
- 'Check-in' just before leaving a location. That way you can collect points or badges but you won't be found at the location you've just left. But remember that you are still providing information about your recent whereabouts.
- Don't provide a lot of details when you are checking in. If you're unsure about whether what your posting is too much information, then don't share it. The golden rule is 'if in doubt leave it out.'
- Be careful whom you give your number to and how you use GPS and other technologies that can pinpoint your physical location.

online friends

Social networking sites like Facebook, Myspace and Twitter are a quick, cheap and easy way to keep up to date with what's going on, stay in touch with friends , as well as helping you form new friendships.

It's not unusual for young people to have hundreds of friends signed up on their Facebook account or Myspace site. While this can seem harmless it can cause a few problems. While it's good to have a lot of friends, having hundreds of online friends makes it harder to control what happens to information you post online. So even if you don't interact with them regularly they will still be updated about what your doing, they'll get access to your photos and personal information.

Choose your friends. Don't accept friend requests if you're not sure about the person. It's important to make sure that the majority of your friends list are your real life friends. Remove people from your friends list that you don't know in person, especially if you haven't had contact with them for a while.



what to share

It's a good idea to apply the same rules to what you do in your online world and you do in everyday life. Think about how much personal information you are comfortable sharing with others and use that to guide your online behaviour.

One of the traps is forgetting who you're actually communicating with online. Although this might sound silly it's a common mistake. If you have hundreds of friends signed up but only hear from a few regularly or only a few update their posts it can be easy to forget that everybody on your friends list will be able to see your posts and your photos.

You'll never really know who is viewing your profile and personal information so making sure you only post what you'd be happy for your parents to see, or your future employer or even your own children one day. What you put online can be

copied and reposted by others even if you have removed it could have already been forwarded by others. Remember what is posted online could be there for a very long time.



recognise the risks

Be careful about talking to people you meet online because not everyone is who they say they are, some people tell lies. Beware of strangers online just the same as you would in real life.

There are risks with meeting people you don't know. You won't know if they are telling the truth or if they are lying to you. You'll have no way of knowing if they are who they say they are so never confide personal information in someone you don't really know all that well.

Meeting up with someone who you've met online can be risky as they could be dangerous. Remember an 'online friend' that you don't know in real life is a stranger.



apply the mum test

Don't send anything electronically that you don't want others to see. A good rule of thumb is to only post things you would be happy to share with everyone, including your mum!

The most important thing to remember is that anything posted on the internet including pictures could remain there indefinitely! Imagine how you might feel if your parents, teachers or your future employer was looking at your photos or posts, or perhaps a future partner or even your children one day!

Always think before you post—use the 7 second rule— that is wait 7 seconds before you post something online.

Never ever post sexy pictures of yourself online or send via mobile phone. Don't post anything that you would feel uncomfortable if someone who was making unwelcome advances towards you saw.

Even if you take something down yourself, others may have copied and saved it. If you've sent a photo and you're worried about what might happen ask the person you sent it to delete it from their phone or inbox. If the person you sent it to refuses to delete it consider asking an adult to talk to them about deleting it.



the word on passwords

Your password is your own online personal signature. It's the only way to protect your privacy, your bank accounts and your online identity.

Keep your passwords and usernames private, always keep them secret. Don't share them with anyone not even your best friend or your date. Your username and password should belong to you, and only you. A lot of damage can be done if someone gets into your Facebook account and then changes the password on you.

Remember to change your passwords regularly. Ideally passwords should be completely random and unique, but still memorable. A strong password would include numbers, letters and symbols. Choose passwords that others can't guess.....not your favourite food or pets name.

If you are ending a dating relationship – especially if it was abusive reset every single password on all of your bank accounts and social networking sites to something they cannot guess. Set up your account to receive notifications in your email or by text if an unknown computer has logged into your Facebook account. That way you'll know if someone else has been into your account.



top 10 online safety tips

1. Google yourself to check how much personal information about yourself is contained on various sites .
2. Set your Facebook privacy setting to only friends so only people you know face to face can see your profile.
3. Think about how much information you are comfortable with everyone knowing. Things like your class timetable, work schedules or extracurricular activities, social events or daily routines should be kept private.
4. Don't post personal details like your address or phone number, date of birth, credit card numbers or the name of your school or work to your Facebook or Myspace profile.
5. Don't choose a username that reveals anything about you. Stay clear from using your real name or age or sex.
6. Don't share provocative photos or intimate details online. Even your dating partner can use this info against you, especially if they are abusive.
7. Only accept friend requests from people you actually know – even if it is a friend of a friend it's not a good idea to add them unless you actually know them.
8. Don't talk about sex with strangers.
9. Avoid meeting with people you've only met online. The only way someone can physically harm you is if you're both in the same location. If you really have to get together with someone you "met" online, don't go alone. Have the meeting in a public place, tell a parent or some other solid backup, and bring some friends along.
10. If you have experienced abuse or harassment keep the evidence, even if you don't think you will pursue legal charges it's important that you keep a copy of any abusive calls, texts or messages. Consider reporting abuse or stalking to the police.

tips for parents

Many young people are concerned about their parents' reaction if they have done something online that they are embarrassed about, particularly if this has involved encouraging sexual contact or sexting.

Understandably you will be upset about this. Your first reaction might be to ban your teenager from using Facebook, Myspace or their mobile phone. This might seem like a quick solution to stopping what is happening. But this is likely to stop your teenager from telling you what's really going on which can make them more unsafe.

You are much better to help them deal with the abuse. Reassure them you won't ban them from internet and that you will always support them no matter what. Remember its not the technology that's causing the problem—it's the abuser.

Keep the communication lines open and make information about cyber-safety and dating violence available at home so they feel comfortable bringing the

subject up. Talk about 'sexting' and the social and legal consequences it can have.

Encourage your teenager to choose their screen name or online identity carefully. Ensure it does not indicate their gender, age, name or location. Provide assistance to adjust privacy settings to restrict their online information to viewing by known friends only. Sign up as their friend on Facebook and have other family members also sign up this will alert you if someone is posting things they shouldn't and you can intervene.



Remind your teenager that strangers online are the same as real life strangers. If they want to meet someone that they haven't met in person then they need to ask you or another trusted adult to go with them. Meeting should only ever take place in a public place and during the day.

Assist your teenager to review their social networking settings and to block or to limit who sees their location based information. Talk to you teenager about what they should do if they see anything on line that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Show them how to block people online who make them feel uncomfortable.

Ensure you have a filter on your computer to stop suspicious or illegal content from being downloaded. Assist them to report inappropriate contact to the website administrators. Be alert to changes in your teenagers behaviour or mood that are concerning including:

- Drop in academic performance
- Loss of confidence and indecision
- Mood changes
- Emotional outbursts
- Becoming isolated seeking more privacy
- Puts self down
- Makes excuses for the dating partners behaviour
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Spending a lot more time than usual on the computer or on the phone
- The dating partner is constantly texting, phoning or trying to communicate with your teenager.
- The dating partner shows signs of jealousy.

Discuss your concerns with them and if necessary seek support.

plan for safety

- If you are in immediate danger ring police on 000.
- Mobile phones are always able to dial 000 even if service has been cancelled, as long as the battery is charged.
- Carry your mobile phone with you at all times.
- Make sure you have your family and friends and other important phone numbers stored.
- Keep the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc. phone number (55329000) somewhere safe.
- Plan for how you could leave a situation quickly if you feel worried about your safety.
- Develop a code word or signal with your family and friends to alert them of when you are in danger and ask them to notify the police of your location if you use the code word.
- Although talking about your relationship can be difficult and uncomfortable, it is important that you tell as many people as you can—family, friends, school staff or your co-workers about the abuse, this will help to help keep you safe.
- If needed, you can apply for a domestic violence protection order, staff from the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre will be able to assist you with this.
- If you have a Domestic Violence Protection Order notify your school, university or your work, or other places that you spend time that the order exists.
- Keep a copy of your Domestic Violence Protection Order with you at all times in case the order is breached.

info for teachers

There are often several warning signs to alert you that a student may be experiencing dating violence.

Physical warning signs:

- A student has constant bruising or other injuries.
- A female student has a sudden and noticeable weight change
- A student seems nervous, and anxious

Academic warning signs:

- A previously good student has a noticeable worsening of her academic performance
- A student suddenly requests school schedule changes.
- Since two students started going out together, one is having consistent attendance problems.

Social warning signs:

- A student demonstrates behaviour changes, suddenly becoming more passive or quiet.
- A student suddenly seems isolated from her usual clique and appears sad.
- One person seems to be physically or socially controlling the other.
- A student suddenly stops hanging out with the group of students he or she generally spent time with and instead is hanging out with one particular person.
- There is a drastic shift in how a student usually dresses
- A student suddenly begins wearing clothes that cover up a lot of her body in ways that seems unusual such a high neck jumper on a warm day.

links

Domestic Violence Prevention Centre, Gold Coast

Phone: 55329000 (Cost of a local call from landline)

Website: <http://www.domesticviolence.com.au>

Cybersmart Online Helpline

Website: <http://cybersmart.gov.au>

Kids Helpline

Phone: 1800 55 1800 (free call from landline)

Website: <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>

Lifeline

Phone: 13 11 14 (cost of local call from landline)

Website: <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

Reachout

Website: <http://www.reachout.com.au>

Youth Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 224636

Website: <http://www.youthbeyondblue.com><http://lovegoodbadugly.com/>