Let’s Talk Teens
Promoting Healthy Relationships & Preventing Exploitation

For Parents and Caregivers of Teens & Young Adults

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Let's Talk About It

Being the parent of a teen is a challenging experience, especially in today's high tech world. Online and offline, teens face complicated issues, and parents don't have first-hand experience with many of them.

- Seventeen percent of teens reported being cyberbullied two or more times over the course of the previous 30 days. (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2010)
- 39% of all teens sent/reposted sexually suggestive messages; 20% of teens have sent/reposted nude or semi-nude images of themselves. (See and Think Study, 2009)
- One in 11 teens report being hit/physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend/girlfriend at least once in the past 12 months. (Choose Respect, 2009)

The most effective strategies for protecting today's high tech teens are surprisingly low tech: open communication, vigilance, and trust. Most teens look to their parents for direction on important issues and listen to their advice.

By providing teens with guidance about personal boundaries and healthy relationships, parents can help keep teens safe.

Healthy Relationships

Setting Boundaries

To ensure teens develop and maintain healthy, respectful relationships, model and discuss them at home. People in healthy relationships show each other respect. They are free to talk openly and honestly. They are comfortable making decisions both together and independently. They trust and support each other. They build each other up. They respect each other. They are equals.

Unhealthy relationships are unbalanced. In an attempt to control the other person, one person may be verbally abusive or insulting, say or text cruel or belittling things, or use physical violence. Examples of red flags in an unhealthy relationship include one partner deciding how the other dresses, with whom they can be friends or excessive texting/calling. By ensuring teens understand what healthy relationships look like and how to set personal boundaries, parents can help teens live safe and happy lives.

You Are A Marvel!

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. ...And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France.

When will we also teach them what they are?
We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. I in all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michaelangelo, a Beethoven.

You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel.

And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel?

You must work - we must all work - to make the world worthy of its children.

~Pablo Casals

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, parents and caregivers can work on the following skills with teens to help them develop and maintain healthy relationships:

- Respect: showing consideration for the feelings and well being of the other person.
- Anger Management: dealing with anger in positive, non-violent ways.
- Problem Solving: knowing how to break problems down, find possible solutions, and consider the likely outcomes for each solution.
- Negotiation and Compromise: turning problems into “win-win” situations in which each partner gets some of what he or she wants.
- Assertiveness — Not Aggression: asking for what one wants clearly and respectfully, without threats, intimidation, or physical force. Assertive communication means respecting the rights of others, and standing up for your own rights.

Historically, relational and sexual violence have flourished under a veil of secrecy. With parent support and understanding, this generation of teens is poised to change that. Parents can help maintain teen safety by staying informed, modeling healthy relationships and openly discussing these related topics:

- Teen Lures, Disclosing & Reporting Crimes: Authority Lure ............... pgs 4-5
- Dating Violence, Date Rape, Drugs & Alcohol: Affection Lure .............. pgs 6-7
- Stewardship, Instincts, Asking for Assistance: Assistance Lure .............. pgs 8-9
- Cell Phones, Sexting, Peer Exploitation: E-Fame Lure .................. pgs 10-11
- Cyber Solicitations, Risk-Takers, Extreme Social Networking: E-Lure .................. pgs 12-13
- Social Networking & Privacy,Over-sharing Online: Name Lure .............. pgs 14-15
- Electronic Aggression, Teens & Internet Pornography: Games Lure .............. pgs 16-17
- School Violence, Teen Suicide Prevention: Emergency Lure ............ pgs 18-19
Staying Informed

Dating Violence
Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination. Both males and females can be victims of this type of relational aggression.

Dating violence is not a teen victim’s fault. Nothing a teen says, wears, or does gives another person the right to hurt or scare them. If a teen thinks she/he is in an abusive relationship, it’s best to call a help hotline or tell someone they trust. (See Disclosing and Reporting Crimes, page 4.)

Safety Tips for Teens:
• When going out, let someone know where you are going and when you’ll return.
• Until you get to know someone, go out in a group, or with other couples.
• Bring your own money, in case you need to pay a bill, or pay to get yourself home.
• Keep an escape plan in mind, in case a date becomes abusive.

Acquaintance & Date Rape
Acquaintance rape is when someone a teen knows uses pressure (including drugs/alcohol, violence, deception, or threats to force unwanted sexual activities). If committed in a dating relationship, it is referred to as Date Rape.

A sexual act is considered rape if it takes place without consent being freely given—no matter what the circumstances, what clothes were worn, where it happened, or any other factor. Rape can happen to both males and females by trusted friends, family members, or complete strangers. Sexual crimes are never a teen victim’s fault.

Drugs/Alcohol used in Rape
Abstinence from drugs and alcohol can help protect a teen’s personal safety. Drinking or drugs reduces one’s ability to think and communicate clearly, putting teens at risk of being unable to physically resist sexual advances and/or remember what happened.

Sometimes acquaintance and date rape includes “Date Rape Drugs” such as Rohypnol (roflusal), GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate), or Ketamine (SPECIAL K). The drugs are slipped into a teen’s drink as an effort to incapacitate them or cause blackouts.

Safety Tips for Teens:
• Keep a clear head by avoiding drugs and alcohol.
• Pour your own beverage & keep it with you at all times, including visits to the restroom.
• Have a trusted friend keep an eye on you, do the same for your friend.
• Trust your instincts about people, behaviors and situations.
• If you suspect you’ve been drugged, call 911.

Ask Your Teen: “Did you know that…”
• 1 in 4 teens in a relationship report being called names, harassed or put down by their partner via cell phones and texting.[1]
• One in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.[2]
• 1 in 10 high school girls - and one in 20 boys - reported being forced into sex at some point in their lives.[3]


Most people who show interest in your teen genuinely care about them. But some people cross the line from affection to exploitation. He/she is usually someone the family knows and trusts, such as the teen’s boyfriend/girlfriend, a peer, family friend, relative, or single mother’s boyfriend. Relational violence, including acquaintance rape and date rape, is the most common crime against teens—and the least reported.

Teenagers stung for attention, lacking adequate supervision, or facing difficult situations at home (i.e. divorce, substance abuse, neglect) are especially vulnerable to the Affection Lure.

The Con
A partner in a romantic relationship with a teen may appear to sincerely care, but is actually manipulating the situation to control the other. When angry, the usually loving partner becomes verbally and physically abusive.

In online relationships, deepest, darkest feelings are shared, causing teens to feel a close connection. But do they really know the person?

Grooming is an attempt to befriend and establish an emotional connection to a teen. The teen may be showered with attention and gifts, taken to special places, introduced to adult-oriented experiences, told dirty or inappropriate jokes, allowed cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, and encouraged to keep secrets.

Preventing the Con
• Talk openly with teens about relational violence.
• Tell your teen to expect respect: unfriend people who don’t show respect.
• Encourage teens to clearly communicate their personal limits and boundaries to others.
• Discuss Grooming behaviors (above) with your teen.
• Strongly communicate an expectation that your teen will not use drugs and alcohol. Sober = Safe.
• Let your teen know that help is always available.

Evan’s Story
After a Championship win, coach Tom, 37 and father of two, gives beer to his favorite high school basketball player. Evan. Coach Tom tells Evan it’s his choice whether or not to drink the beer. Once Evan has had several beers, the coach he has long admired begins making sexual advances.

Evan leaves, but feels partly responsible because he “chose” to drink the beer. Once Evan has had several beers, the coach he has long admired begins making sexual advances.

For parents: ncv.org - National Center for Victims of Crime
For teens: loveisrespect.org/get-help - Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

Affection Lure
As featured in the

TEEN LURES™ TV NEWSCAST

In this newscast, a convicted sexual criminal tells viewers how he conned his way to his victims.
Teens Talking About Tough Issues
The student-led Teen Lures TV Newscast facilitates peer teaching through scripted student broadcasts. The goals are to give middle & high school students the opportunity to openly address relational and sexual violence, facilitate discussions with peers & parents, and help prevent these crimes.

Let’s Talk Teens is the parent complement to the Teen Lures TV Newscast, designed to help parents communicate with teens about healthy relationships and relational & sexual violence. Read and study this guide, share it with your teen, and use it to prompt regular discussions at home.

By talking candidly with teens, we show support and respect for their growing independence, provide invaluable input on their safety, and let them know their parents/caregivers are available to help.

For more information, visit teenluresprevention.com

“To teach is to learn twice.”
– Joseph Joubert

Teens can change the world with the Teen Lures TV Newscast:
• Promote Healthy Relationships
• Talk openly about relational & sexual violence
• Eliminate secrecy surrounding these issues
• Stop the cycle of teen exploitation!