



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE

## **Toolkit for Teens**

### **Tip Sheet #8: Understanding Teen Dating Violence**

Happy, healthy, and safe relationships have no room for any form of abuse or violence. Teen dating violence, similar to intimate partner violence (aka domestic violence), happens when there is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, and/or financial abuse between current or former partners in an intimate relationship, including a dating relationship. Abusive partners use these forms of abuse in an attempt to control or hold power over their partners.

Intimate partner violence can occur in all types of relationships, and it crosses all demographic groups. It truly can happen to anyone, so it is important for everyone to understand the dynamics of abusive relationships and what to do if a relationship partner become abusive. An abusive partner often shows some of the following warning signs:

- Is extremely jealous
- Constantly monitors where you are, what you are doing, and who you are with
- Keeps you from spending time with your friends and family members
- Prevents you from pursuing or reaching your educational or career goals
- Controls your money and financial decisions
- Makes you feel afraid
- Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions that are hurtful toward you
- Manipulates or threatens you
- Attempts to control you in different areas of your life
- Puts you down

Although these signs are a good start for recognizing an abusive partner, every situation is unique, and relationships in which abuse is present can look very different from one another.

If you think your partner may be abusing you, or if something just doesn't feel right in your relationship, there are some great resources in our community where you can turn for help. These include the following:

- The Guilford County Family Justice Center offers a “one stop shop” for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse. <http://www.myguilford.com/family-justice-center/>; (336) 641-SAFE (7233)
- Family Service of the Piedmont offers a 24-hour confidential crisis line for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. <http://www.familyservice-piedmont.org/> (336) 273-7273
- If you prefer a national resource, the National Domestic Violence Hotline also offers free, confidential, 24-hour support. <http://www.thehotline.org/>; 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Specifically for teenagers, LoveisRespect.org offers specialized support services for teenagers who may be experiencing abuse in their relationship. <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>; Call 1-866-331-9474; Text “LOVEIS” to 22522

Professionals at the organizations above can help you understand your safety risks, develop a safety plan, and connect you to local resources to help you move toward safety.

***Remember, everybody deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued in their relationships. If you are concerned that your own or a loved one's relationship is unsafe, seek help from a trained professional to learn about options and resources available to support people impacted by abuse. Be smart in your dating decisions, especially with the rise of social media and technology in today's society, to ensure your safety in pursuing safe, healthy, happy relationships!***