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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & DATING VIOLENCE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



WHY AM I READING THIS?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET IS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP IS AND WHAT DATING VIOLENCE OR ABUSE COULD LOOK LIKE.

Some of the different things we will share in the next pages are:

- * WHAT DOES ABUSE LOOK LIKE?
- * WHAT DO I DO IF I AM BEING ABUSED?
- * STORIES FROM YOUTH
- * WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?
- * WHAT DO I DO IF I KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS BEING ABUSED?
- * SURPRISING FACTS AND STATISTICS

What Is Abuse?

Any behavior or action that is used to scare, harm, threaten, control, intimidate, or injure another person.

What Is Dating Violence?

Dating violence happens when your partner tries to dominate and control you. Dating violence is used for one purpose: to gain and maintain power and control over you. The person may use physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, etc. to hurt you. Or they may use emotional abuse such as fear, guilt, shame, intimidation to wear you down. Dating violence can also involve sexual abuse, stalking, and harassment. This can include threats, insults, isolation from friends and family, controlling what you wear or who you socialize with, constantly texting to checkup on you, and unwanted touching.

Dating Violence is most common between the ages of 15-24
(Statistics Canada, Police-Reported Dating Violence in Canada, 2008)



PHYSICAL ABUSE

* BITING, CHOKING, SHAKING * USING A WEAPON OR AN OBJECT * THROWING THINGS OR SPITTING * HOLDING ONTO YOU, PINNING YOU DOWN, TYING YOU UP, LOCKING YOU IN A ROOM * PUSHING, PULLING, DRAGGING, GRABBING * SLAPPING, PUNCHING, KICKING

Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, sexual identity, age, ethnic background, and economic level. It is never okay for someone to physically injure you. If someone cares about you they don't hurt you.



It is still abuse if... the incidents of physical abuse have occurred one or two times in the relationship. Studies indicate that if your partner has injured you once, it is likely to happen again.

Women between the ages of 15-19 experience 10 times more violence in relationships than men. (Statistics Canada, Police-Reported Dating Violence in Canada, 2008)



My best friend, Sonja, has been in a very controlling relationship with her girlfriend for a couple of years now. Sonja isn't even allowed to hang out with me as often anymore. And when she is allowed to get together with me, her girlfriend constantly texts to see what she is doing or who she's with. A few months ago, Sonja told me that her girlfriend hit her a few times, but insisted that she really didn't mean to and it was just in the heat of the moment. Sonja refuses to leave because she says it would break her girlfriend's heart. She's also afraid that if she does leave, no one will believe her story.

If you ever don't want to have sex for any reason, even if you have before, you can say NO!

David and I have been going out for about 6 months now and we are great together! Recently, David said he wants to have sex with me. I love him a lot, but I'm just not ready to take our relationship to the next level. When I explained this to him, he seemed okay with it, but now when we are kissing and cuddling, he always tries to push past my personal boundaries and gets really mad when I stop him. Now he has started to threaten that he will leave me if I don't sleep with him. I don't want to lose him, so I am starting to think that even though it makes me feel uncomfortable, maybe I should just sleep with him so that he stays.

Quantifying sexual assault continues to be a challenge, since the large majority (91%) of these crimes are not reported to police. (Sexual Assault in Canada 2004, Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008)

SEXUAL ABUSE

- * TELLING YOU HOW TO DRESS
- * FORCING YOU TO BE NAKED
- * UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS
- * CALLING YOU DEGRADING NAMES
- * UNWANTED TOUCHING
- * PRESSURING YOU TO GO FARTHER THAN YOU ARE COMFORTABLE

You should never have sex with someone because you feel like you owe it to them or because you think it will make them stay with you or love you more. If your partner cares about you, they will respect your wishes and reasons to wait.

Consent is a mutual verbal, physical, and emotional agreement that happens without manipulation, threats, or head games. This is a whole body experience that requires paying attention to the other person's physical and emotional cues, as well as their words. Yes means yes! Enthusiastic consent means that you are just as excited about someone else's enjoyment as you are about your own enjoyment. This consent is continuous, meaning you can stop and change your mind at any time. Saying yes to one thing does not mean you have consented to anything else.

It is important to remember that a nice gesture means no strings attached. You should not feel like you owe that person anything and that person should not imply later that you owe them something, monetary, sexual, or otherwise.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE



Emotional abuse is anything that someone says or does on purpose to make you feel badly about yourself. This can include but is not limited to:

- * IGNORING YOUR FEELINGS
- * EMBARRASSING YOU
- * PUTTING YOU DOWN
- * THREATENING YOU
- * MANIPULATING YOU
- * CRITICIZING OR YELLING AT YOU
- * ACTING EXTREMELY JEALOUS OR POSSESSIVE

Calling someone degrading names is a form of emotional abuse. If your partner is calling you degrading names, they are not giving you the respect that you deserve. Even if they say it in a joking way or tell you they don't actually mean it, it is NOT okay.

If you think you are possibly being abused, remember, it is NOT your fault; put the blame where it belongs, **ON THE ABUSER.**



"I have been dating Matt for about a year and a half now. I think I really love him, but sometimes he calls me names and mean things like "stupid" or "slut". I've been telling him that it makes me feel bad but he keeps insisting that he is only joking and I need to learn to lighten up. Now it's just easier to put up with it than to argue. And anyways, maybe he *is* kidding. It just hurts my feelings and makes me feel like he doesn't really care about me."

CYBER ABUSE

Cyber abuse is the use of technology to harass, threaten, harm, or embarrass you. Someone may use email, websites, text messaging, GPS tracking, videos, blogs, or any other type of technology to:

- * POST DEMEANING MESSAGES ABOUT YOU ONLINE
- * UPLOAD OR REPOST EMBARRASSING PHOTOS WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION
- * SPREAD GOSSIP OR RUMORS ABOUT YOU
- * TRACK YOUR WHEREABOUTS

*Over 80% of teens use a cell phone regularly, making it the most common medium for cyber bullying.

While others have the right to post online, they should not be doing so in ways that are hateful, hurtful, or that infringe on your rights.



"My boyfriend and I dated for almost two years. A year into our relationship, I sexted him a naked picture of myself. A few months after that we started fighting. I told him I wasn't happy anymore and I was breaking up with him. He wasn't happy, but he seemed to understand. A few days later I went to school and was met by a group of girls laughing and pointing at me. This "greeting" continued as I made my way to class. One guy even yelled "slut" at me; I didn't even know him! It turns out that my ex boyfriend had sent the photo to everyone in the school as payback. I told my principal what was going on, but she responded with a look that said "maybe you wouldn't be in this position if you didn't send that naked photo". It's not like I sent naked photos to anyone - he was my boyfriend! I have no idea what to do."

81% of young people think bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person.
(www.dosomething.org)

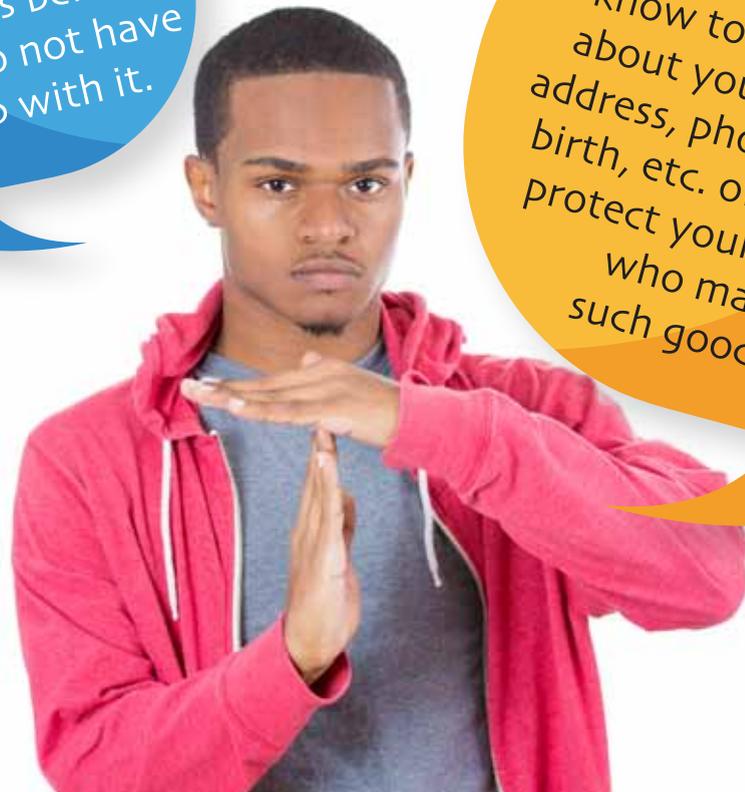
*Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.
(*www.dosomething.org)

STALKING

Stalking is unwanted or obsessive attention by an individual or group toward you that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Stalking behaviors are related to harassment and intimidation and may include:

- * **CONSTANTLY SENDING TEXT MESSAGES OR CALLING YOU**
- * **FOLLOWING YOU**
- * **OBSESSIVELY EMAILING YOU**

If you feel scared, worried, or angered by someone's behavior then you do not have to put up with it.



Social media sites make it easy for people you don't know to access information about you! Try to keep your address, phone number, date of birth, etc. off of these sites to protect yourself from people who may not have such good intentions.

Jim and I dated for a few months, but never really hit it off so we broke up. I started dating Tom a few months later and we have been together for a while now. Lately I have noticed that Jim is always around the places I am – the movies, the mall; I even caught him creeping in my backyard one night while I was watching a movie. I called Jim on it, but he just came up with some lame excuses about why he was always where I was. What's worse, though, is that Jim has started texting me like 100 times a day, saying he still loves me and wants to be with me again. Although he hasn't actually done anything to me, it really creeps me out.

Young victims and perpetrators of dating violence may be at increased risk of continuing this cycle in their intimate and family relationships.
(Mahoney, 2010)

SOCIAL ABUSE

Any behavior or action directed at you that makes you feel embarrassed, scared, sad, degraded, neglected, 'less than', etc. in front of other people. Social abuse controls a situation in a way that makes you feel isolated or alienated from the people around you, including your friends and family. You begin to believe that your partner is the only person who supports you and this increases your dependency on your partner.



* Only 1 in 10 victims will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse.

Jealousy doesn't equal love or caring. It is usually due to insecurities or someone trying to have power or control over you.

* Bullying victims are 2 to 9 times more likely to consider committing suicide.
*(www.dosomething.org)

ECONOMIC ABUSE

When someone is controlling your finances, not allowing you to work, making you hand over your pay cheques, or stealing/hiding your credit cards, that is called Economic Abuse.

It is still abuse if... there has not been any physical violence. Many individuals are emotionally and verbally assaulted. This can be as equally frightening and is often more confusing to try to understand.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual Abuse refers to using someone's religious beliefs as a means of abuse. If someone is making fun of your religion, belittling your religion, not allowing you to practice your religion, or using religion to justify hurting you it is not okay.

WARNING SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

DOES YOUR
PARTNER...

Have a bad temper?

Accuse you of lying?

Say "If you really loved me you would...?"

Make fun of other people and enjoy humor that embarrasses you or others?

Disapprove of how you spend your money or how you dress?

Refuse to discuss their feelings and then blow up when you push the subject?

Call you offensive or derogatory names (words like bitch, whore, slut) or insult your intelligence?

Blame you for their actions or mistakes?

Find it hard to say sorry?

Consider sex and affection to be the same?

Constantly find fault in others?

Pressure you into having any sexual contact you do not want?

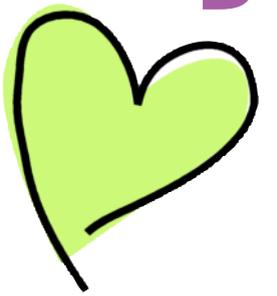
Show violence towards other people or animals?

Express excessive jealousy about friends, family or any time spent away from them?

Threaten you with physical violence, abandonment, or harm to you or others you love?

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THESE, IT IS POSSIBLE
THAT YOU ARE IN AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP.

What Is a Healthy Relationship?



IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP...

...You feel good about yourself. No one has the right to make you feel less than or unworthy. A healthy relationship should give your self-esteem a boost, not lessen it.

...You are treated with respect and dignity and you show your partner the same. Mutual respect means you and your partner value each other for who you are and you respect one another's boundaries. **...You trust your partner and your partner trusts you.** Mutual trust means that you are honest with one another. If dishonesty occurs, trust is broken and can take time to rebuild. **...You feel supported and you support your partner in return.** Mutual support happens both when things are going badly as well as when things are going well. Your partner should support you when you need a shoulder to cry on as well as be happy for you when you are celebrating a great achievement. **...You are treated as an equal.** Relationships take a lot of cooperation. If one person is constantly giving in to the wishes of another, resentment builds and will eventually break down the relationship or result in an unhealthy relationship dynamic. **...You retain your individuality.** You are your own person with your own interests, friends, hobbies, activities and so on. You do not have to give up your identity to be part of a relationship. In a healthy relationship, you encourage one another's personal growth. **...You can speak your mind and you feel heard.** Good communication is imperative in healthy relationships. Miscommunication or lack of communication can destroy any relationship. Speak honestly and openly. Good communication helps to build and foster the other elements of a healthy relationship such as **respect, trust, support, equality** and **individuality.**

www.yellowbrickhouse.org

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IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED ASK FOR HELP!

Make sure you are safe (both immediately and long term).

Find someone you trust and tell them what is happening. Friends are great to confide in but it's important to talk to someone who can help you access the resources you need, e.g. a parent, teacher, guidance counselor, coach, etc.

If you have been physically attacked, don't wait to get medical attention or to call the police.

Don't isolate yourself from your friends and family even if you feel you have nowhere to turn or you are embarrassed.

Don't rely on yourself alone to get out of the situation.

DEAL BREAKERS

Deal breakers are something that you absolutely would not put up with in a relationship. Deal breakers could be small things or big things. It may be something that is important to you but not important to your best friend. While lots of things influence your personal choices – family, friends, religion, media – you have the right to decide what's important to you. YOU are the only one who lives with the results.

WHAT ARE YOUR DEAL BREAKERS?

eg. I would leave my partner if... he/she ever called me 'stupid'.

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY?

It can be hard for someone to leave an abusive relationship and they may have many reasons that they want to stay or feel that they should stay. It is important not to judge friends or family who are in an abusive relationship.

Remember... it's not their fault and that something as simple as a friendship could help them get out.

THEY THINK THEY CAN'T DO ANY BETTER

THEY THINK THEY'LL NEVER FIND ANYONE ELSE

THEY DON'T RECOGNIZE IT'S ABUSE

THEY THINK IT'S GOING TO GET BETTER

THEY FEEL LUCKY TO BE WITH THEIR PARTNER

OTHERS DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THE ABUSE

THEY FEAR THEIR PARTNER

THEY CAN'T SUPPORT THEMSELVES FINANCIALLY

THEY BLAME THEMSELVES

THEY ARE EXPERIENCING LOW SELF-ESTEEM

THEY ARE ISOLATED FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, SUPPORT SYSTEM

SIGNS A FRIEND IS BEING ABUSED

- Avoidance of school or social events with excuses that don't seem to make sense.
- Their partner is constantly checking in on them, calling them or texting them.
- Unexplained bruises, broken bones, sprains, or marks.
- Excessive guilt or shame for no apparent reason.
- Secrecy or withdrawal from friends and family.
- They aren't allowed to go out without their partner.

YOU CAN HELP

If you know someone being abused...

- Tell them it is NOT their fault.
- Respect their privacy – don't gossip about what they have told you.
- Tell them they don't deserve to be hurt.
- Don't insult their partner – they may still love them. Badmouthing their partner or their relationship may stop them from confiding in you further.
- Tell them where to get help and offer to go with them.
- Don't try to deal with the abuser yourself.
- Don't place ultimatums on the victim – i.e. I won't be your friend if you stay with your partner. Your friend is reaching out to ask you for help by talking about it.
- Listen to your friend without judging them.
- Help them recognize the abuse and tell them it is not okay.

Remember... Show patience, love, and understanding if you suspect your friend is being abused.

IS THIS ABUSE?

TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE RIGHT, FLIP THE PAGE..

1 Tim was unimpressed when he saw his girlfriend talking to other guys at a party. He demanded that they leave and when she refused, he grabbed her by the wrist and pulled her out anyways. This is an example of:

- A) Physical Abuse
- B) Emotional Abuse
- C) Sexual Abuse
- D) Physical and Social Abuse

4 Sandra gets extremely jealous when her partner talks to other girls. When he does so, she forbids him to do so and threatens to leave him if he continues to socialize with others. This is an example of:

- A) Physical Abuse
- B) Emotional and Social Abuse
- C) Emotional Abuse
- D) Cyber Abuse

2 Lauren makes fun of her partner for going to church on Sundays and special occasions. Sometimes Lauren forces her partner to stay home to hang out with her instead. This is an example of:

- A) Emotional Abuse
- B) Cyber and Social Abuse
- C) Social Abuse
- D) Emotional and Spiritual Abuse

5 Tony found out that his friend had posted a story about his traumatic childhood experience on Facebook without his knowing or consent. This is an example of:

- A) Cyber Abuse and Social Abuse
- B) Emotional Abuse
- C) Cyber Abuse
- D) Social Abuse

3 Corey and Tina have been living together for a year and they are saving for a house. Tina gets a monthly allowance, an amount that is established and controlled by Corey. She also needs to keep all of her receipts to account for how her allowance is being spent. This is an example of:

- A) Economic Abuse
- B) Social Abuse
- C) Economic and Social Abuse
- D) Emotional and Spiritual Abuse

6 Kristy and Mike are in a committed relationship. Often times Mike forces Kristy to have sex with him, even if she says she's tired or not in the mood. This is an example of:

- A) Emotional Abuse
- B) Social Abuse
- C) Sexual Abuse
- D) Emotional and Sexual Abuse

CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

YOU MAY NEED THIS INFORMATION FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND – IT'S ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO STAY SAFE.

It is important to tell someone who you can trust and who can help you be safe. That could be a parent, teacher, coach, guidance counselor, group leader.

Create a list of important phone numbers to have with you at all times (police, hotline, friend, physician, shelter).

Have a place to go if you can't return home.

Leave extra money, car keys, and copies of documents with someone you trust.

If you are ever in a situation where you fear for your immediate safety or the safety of a friend, call **911**.



IF YOU THINK YOU MAY BE DISPLAYING ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS, IT IS BETTER TO RECOGNIZE THAT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM AND TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST THAN IT IS TO GO ON HURTING PEOPLE.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1-D 2-D 3-A 4-B 5-C 6-C

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868	www.kidshelpphone.ca
Sandgate Women's Shelter	www.sandgate.ca
Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres	www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/
Canadian Mental Health Association	www.cmha.ca
Love is Respect	www.loveisrespect.org
Department of Justice Family Violence Youth Initiative: Youth Site	www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/fvy-vfj/index.html
Love is Not Abuse	www.loveisnotabuse.com
Break the Cycle	www.breakthecycle.org
Love: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly	www.lovegoodbadugly.com/about-2
Teens Health	www.kidshealth.org/teen
The Faythe Project	www.thefaytheproject.wordpress.com
Victim Services of York Region	www.victimservices-york.org/resources/links
That's Not Cool	www.thatsnotcool.com
Native Youth Sexual Health Network	www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/resources.html
Gay York Region	gayyorkregion.com
Vitanova Foundation	www.vitanova.ca

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are several ways you can support the work of Yellow Brick House:

Donate

Your financial contribution will directly impact the work of Yellow Brick House. Please consider making a tax deductible donation.

 www.yellowbrickhouse.org

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Volunteer

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do at Yellow Brick House. We rely heavily on community members to support our program delivery, participate in fundraising initiatives and raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence.

For additional information, please contact us at

volunteer@yellowbrickhouse.org or 905.709.0900

Take Action

Visit our website to learn more about what we do and how you can make a difference. Visit us online at www.yellowbrickhouse.org