

STEPS TO SAFETY

Healthy Relationships

For a relationship to be healthy, there should be a balance of power. When one person takes control or manipulates the other person, the relationship may not be healthy. Help your teen understand the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Their knowledge of these characteristics will enable your teen to recognize characteristics of an unsafe situation. Encourage discussion with your teen to reassure them that you are always available to help them with their relationships.

Healthy Relationships

- ✈ Thoughts are rational, positive, productive, supportive, or optimistic
- ✈ Feelings may include being happy, content, respected, encouraged, joyous, loved, safe, and cared for
- ✈ Actions are productive, result in growth, are your choice, and are not motivated by fear

Unhealthy Relationships

- ✈ Thoughts are irrational, destructive, and negative
- ✈ Feelings may include sadness, isolation, depression, fatigue, fear, shame, and guilt
- ✈ Actions are controlled by others, stagnate, are destructive, and may be motivated by fear

It is important for your teen to remember that relationships should be about equality, not control. If your teen finds themselves or notices someone else in an unhealthy relationship, they should seek help from a trusted adult.

Helping Your Teen Develop Healthy Relationships

✈ Step 1

Help your teen understand that an abuser violates the boundaries of another and seeks to control the actions of another. Your teen should become aware of the signs of an abuser, the signs of someone being abused, or the signs of someone being in an unhealthy relationship.

✈ Step 2

Signs of an abuser may include:

- Being overly jealous
- Checking on you constantly or demanding constant contact to confirm where you are and what you are doing
- Getting overly upset or blowing things out of proportion
- Insulting and putting you down
- Threatening to break up if you don't do what they want
- Throwing things, hitting walls, explosive anger
- Secrets (pressure to keep them)

 Step 3

Signs of someone being abused or in an unhealthy relationship may include:

- Always worrying that you are making your partner upset or mad
- Giving up friendships and activities that were important to you
- Constantly making excuses for your partner's behavior
- Getting pressured for sex
- Bruises or cuts
- Becoming withdrawn and isolated

 Step 4

Discuss these signs with your teen. Keep the lines of communication open so that your teen feels comfortable confiding in you if they need your help because they are in an unhealthy relationship.

