

# STEPS TO SAFETY

## S.A.F.E.

Your teen must understand that there is not just one description of a victim or an abuser. Anyone can be a victim — even your teen. And anyone can be an abuser. Therefore, it is essential for your teen to understand that they have the power to be S.A.F.E. Adolescents are more likely to confide in peers rather than adults about being in an unsafe situation. Whether a teen discloses abuse to a peer or to a trusted adult, it is critical that teens understand that they must tell if they are in an abusive situation or if they feel uneasy about a relationship with a possible abuser.

### How to Use S.A.F.E. with Your Teen

#### Step 1

Help your teen to understand each part of S.A.F.E. **The S stands for Seek help.** Victims of abuse are empowered to seek help. Help your teen to understand that they have a responsibility to seek help any time they are in an unsafe situation or if they feel like they might be in a potentially unsafe situation. Abuse is never their fault. Communicate to your teen that, no matter what an abuser says, they will be believed and helped. When a teen reaches out for help, they will get help. Your teen should know that if they are not helped, they should continue to tell until they are heard and helped.

#### Step 2

**The A stands for trusted Adults,** those adults your teen can turn to for help. Most adolescents tend to disclose unsafe situations to peers, so it's important to communicate to your teen that a trusted adult must be involved in the reporting process ... such as a trusted parent, a teacher, or a pastor. If your teen discloses to a friend that they are in an unsafe situation or if a friend discloses to them, your teen needs to understand that an adult must be informed.

#### Step 3

**The F stands for Face your fears.** Situations of abuse may involve coercion and threats to ensure that the relationship continues. This can be a scary and difficult situation. It is not easy to speak up and get help. Because a victim of abuse does have the personal power to stop the abuse by telling, teens in that situation must find the courage to face their fears and know that it is OK to tell!

#### Step 4

**The E stands for Enact your personal power,** a reminder that your teen has the personal power to face their fears and take action.