



## Know! Love Is Respect

Dating relationships can be tricky at any age, but especially for young people navigating uncharted waters. Have you talked to your students about what positive, healthy dating relationships look like? There's no time like the present as **February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**.

We like to think of young love as innocent and sweet. But unfortunately, teen dating violence is much more common than most people realize. According to [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org), **one in three teens will experience physical abuse, sexual abuse, or both**. Therefore, it's critical to have ongoing conversations with students on the subject.

"Dating violence is preventable, especially if education about healthy relationships starts early," said William Wubbenhorst, Associate Commissioner for the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families. "This month and beyond we want educators, youth, and community leaders to join along with middle, high school and college students, to creatively promote messages about dating violence prevention, and raise awareness of the differences between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships."

**HEALTHY** relationships are based on respect, communication, trust, honesty, and equality.

**UNHEALTHY** relationships include breaks in communication, pressure, dishonesty, struggles for control, or inconsiderate behavior.

**ABUSIVE** relationships involve accusations, blame shifting, isolation, pressure, or manipulation.

As you talk to students about their romantic interests, whether present or future, we want to encourage them to...

### LOOK FOR SOMEONE WHO:

- Treats you with respect.
- Doesn't make fun of things you like or want to do.
- Never puts you down.
- Doesn't get angry if you spend time with your friends or family.
- Listens to your ideas and can compromise with you.
- Isn't excessively negative.
- Shares some of your interests and supports you in pursuing what you love.
- Shares their thoughts and feelings.
- Is comfortable around your friends and family.
- Is proud of your accomplishments and successes.
- Respects your boundaries and doesn't abuse technology to violate your boundaries.
- Doesn't require you to "check in" or need to know where you are all the time.
- Is caring and honest.
- Doesn't pressure you to do things that you don't want to do.
- Doesn't constantly accuse you of cheating or being unfaithful.
- Encourages you to do well in school.
- Doesn't threaten you or make you feel scared.
- Understands the importance of healthy relationships.

When it comes to any relationship, mutual respect is key—plain and simple—but relationships can be complex. While some things (like physical or sexual violence) are clearly wrong and unacceptable, others may fall into an unclear, gray area for the students in your life. You can help your students make sense of this gray area and help them understand the [relationship spectrum](#) from healthy to abusive.

Whether or not your students are presently in "dating" relationships, this topic is relevant. Your decision to have ongoing conversations with students in your classroom on the subject is monumental. Knowing what to look for in a dating partner, as well as having high expectations from him or her, will serve your students well in dating relationships during their youth and into their adulthood.

In the tip to follow, the focus on Teen Dating Violence Prevention will continue as we highlight the importance of [Setting Boundaries in a Relationship](#).

For more information, [visit loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org).

### Sources

- [loveisrespect.org: Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month](http://loveisrespect.org).

## About Know! Teachable Moments

Everyone has a role in prevention. By reading this Know! Teachable Moment today, you're doing your part to prevent substance misuse and create a healthier world for all.

We created these free tips to empower teachers and educators like you to protect your students from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. However, we rely on donations from people like you to provide these tips. If you found this tip interesting or helpful, [please consider donating at preventionactionalliance.org/donate](https://www.preventionactionalliance.org/donate).

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[Know! Parent Tips are also available in Spanish at the Know! archives.](#)

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