

**Know your RIGHTS!**

- I have the right to set boundaries
- I have the right not to engage in sexual activity without feeling guilty or pressure.
- I have the right to express my opinions.
- I have the right to change my mind.
- I have the right to be respected.
- I have the right to feel safe.
- I have the right to privacy.
- I have the right to develop and grow in my own unique gifts and talents.
- I have the right to hang out with my friends.
- I have the right to break up without being threatened emotionally.
- I have the right TO BE ME!
- I have the right to "MAKE A STATEMENT!"

There is NEVER an excuse for ABUSE!

You have the RIGHT to a safe and healthy relationship... a relationship free from violence.

ESTABLISH A SAFETY PLAN:

No matter what your abuser says, the abuse is NOT your fault. If any of your rights are being violated or compromised a safety plan is important to have in place.

The decision to leave your boyfriend/girlfriend is a tough one. Often times, the break up is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship. When the abuser feels as if they are losing control over the relationship they may become angry and violent. It is important that you are prepared.

- If the abuse is just beginning to develop in the relationship- **STAND UP FOR YOURSELF!** Tell the abuser that you will not allow anyone to treat you with disrespect.
- Tell someone you trust that the abuse is happening. What people at school can you tell in order to stay safe? (teachers, principal, counselor, security)
- Consider changing your locker location. Walk with friends to and from classes and after school activities.
- Keep a journal of the abusive behavior and/or messages that imply power and control/abuse.
- If the abuse has been on-going and you feel intimidated or fearful for your safety do not stand up for yourself on your own. **BE CAREFUL!** Sometimes taking a stand with an abuser can only set them off to more aggressive or violent behavior.
- If you plan on ending the relationship with a conversation do so in a public place. Be sure to let a trusted person know that you are having this conversation. Be prepared to take the step of leaving in order to escape the abuse.
- This conversation should be straight forth and key points should be made. Example: "I am ending this relationship because I am not happy". "I will not allow anyone to treat me with disrespect or make me feel unsafe". "I enjoy social activity and hanging out with my friends". "Please do not call or contact me as I am no longer interested in dating". Often the abuser may try and convince you that they will change or get anger management classes to keep you from ending the relationship. Keep in mind that you are not responsible to wait and see if this happens. Encourage them to get the help they need if they bring it up, but do not leave the expectation that you will go back with them if they get the help. It is important to have your clear boundaries in place and focus on your own healing and happiness. You have a great future ahead of you!
- If you are scared to have a conversation regarding ending the relationship, or scared that if you leave your life would be in danger, then it is time to fill out your Safety Plan with a trusted person. (fill out the attached "A Teen's Guide To Safety Planning"- "My Safety Workbook" by Love Is Respect)
- If you feel that your life is in jeopardy, a conversation with your abuser is not necessary. It is time to **TAKE ACTION!** Put your Safety Plan to use.



- Call the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 866-331-9474 and talk someone trained to help you plan ahead and stay safe after you have ended your relationship.
- Keep your daily routine consistent. This will help you leave without drawing extra attention to yourself.
- Have dating abuse hotlines or safety resources programmed in your phone under "code" words that only you know.
- Establish a code word with a couple of trusted adults or friends alarming them that you are in danger and need immediate help.
- Always have a full tank of gas and spare money. It is important to have a "Go Now" bag ready. This bag should have your ID, any important documents such as checkbook, birth certificate, social security card, restraining order etc., change of clothes, phone and charger, any necessary medications and personal keys.
- Know the bus routes and forms of public transportation to get you to a safe place.
- Establish a safe and secret location where a friend or family member can pick you up.
- Block all forms of social media with the abuser.
- Block the abusers number from your cell phone, or establish a new private phone number.
- Abusers can often try and communicate with you through a 3rd party or a mutual friend. Inform the 3rd party that you have no interest in the conversation, Remember to keep a record of all attempts of communication as this may be key if a court case is established.
- If your abuser continues to try and communicate or threaten you, consider filing for a restraining order. Keep in mind that many abusers feel that they are above the law and may violate the order. Be aware of your surroundings and notify neighbors, co-workers, friends and family that an order is in place. It is helpful to show a picture of the abuser and describe the car they drive.

HEALING FROM THE RELATIONSHIP:

An abusive relationship can be emotionally draining and effect your mental and physical well-being. Your partner has most likely become a big part of your life. After ending the relationship you may began to regret your decision and may even miss him/her. You may begin to feel sad and lonely after the break-up. It can be easy to remember all of the good times in the relationship. Remind yourself of why you left. Later, you may become angry toward the abusive partner. Don't give them any more of your time. Keep in mind the best revenge to an abusive relationship is living a joyful healthy life. CHOOSE JOY!

- Talk to an individual you trust. You may want to consider counseling to understand how this abusive relationship occurred and escalated.
- Get involved with a support group. It can be helpful to connect with others who have experienced what you have.
- Get back to the activities you used to enjoy.
- Try something new.
- SMILE!
- Take time to heal and just be YOU! Be mindful not to jump back into another relationship. It is ok to focus on you and your growth. Get to know yourself again and remind yourself of the amazing person you are. You have your own unique gifts and talents. Set your goals and succeed!

MAKE YOUR STATEMENT!
ACTION! Put your Safety Plan to use.