

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

## Start Talking!

Building a Drug-Free Future

# Know! What a Healthy “Dating” Relationship Is, and What It Is Not

February is **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**; a time to focus attention on abuse in young people’s relationships and provide information to help prevent it.

In the previous tip, *Know! The Not-So-Innocent Side of Teen Romance*, we discussed the prevalence of physical, emotional and verbal dating abuse that takes place among youth, as well as the long-lasting problems that can develop because of it, including substance abuse, eating disorders and risky sexual behaviors.

In this tip, we highlight the importance of regular and ongoing, positive communication with your child on the topic of *What a Healthy “Dating” Relationship Is, and What It Is Not*; teaching them early on that healthy relationships are based on equality and respect while abusive ones are based on power and control.

A HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIP includes a partner whom:

- Treats you with respect
- Listens to your ideas and is willing to compromise at times
- Shares some of your same interests such as movies, sports, reading, dancing or music
- Is able to share their thoughts and feelings with you
- Is comfortable around your friends and family
- Is proud of your accomplishments and successes
- Respects your privacy and your boundaries
- Is caring and honest
- Encourages you to do well in school and in your extracurricular activities

A healthy relationship is a two-way street, of course, so positive communication, kindness and mutual respect must come from both partners.

A HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIP does NOT include a partner whom:

- Checks your cell phone, social media or email without permission
- Requires you to “check in” or needs to know where you are all the time
- Constantly puts you down
- Is extremely jealous or insecure
- Has an explosive temper
- Tries to isolate you from family or friends
- Makes false accusations about you
- Has extreme mood swings
- Is possessive of you
- Tells you what to do
- Threatens you or makes you feel scared
- Physically hurts you in any way
- Tries to pressure you or force you into any type of high risk behavior, including sexual contact and/or drug and alcohol use



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at:  
[DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

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Drug Free Action Alliance  
6155 Huntley Road, Suite H  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
PH: (614) 540-9985  
FX: (614) 540-9990



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Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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It is especially important for both partners to always be clear and specific in communicating their sexual boundaries. One may wrongly take an "I'm not sure," comment to mean that with a little pressure or push, she/he might say, "Yes." Young ladies in particular, need to be firm in saying, "No," and boys in particular, need to know that if a girl says, "No," and he/she continues anyway, it is rape. NO MEANS NO! This is a reminder that should be shared with your child often.

Young people should also be taught to trust their gut and listen to their inner voice. If they find themselves feeling uncomfortable in a situation with their partner or with the relationship itself, they need to have an exit plan. Talking regularly with your child, ideally, before a teen "dating" issue has a chance to arise, will help to build their trust and confidence in you, increasing the likelihood of them coming to for support and guidance if or when needed.

You can refer your tweens/teens to [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) to access information and get help in an environment that is designed specifically for them. This is also an excellent resource for parents, educators and other caring adults, with trainings, toolkits and curriculum to promote healthy relationships and prevent future patterns of abuse.

Loveisrespect offers free and confidential phone, live chat and texting services 24/7/365. Chat at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org); text 'loveis' to 22522; or call 1-866-331-9474

Source: [Loveisrespect.org](http://Loveisrespect.org).

Visit [starttalking.ohio.gov](http://starttalking.ohio.gov) to get the conversation going !!!