

## KNOW! TO PROMOTE HEALTHY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

### Prom Season and Healthy Relationships

April and May are peak prom season, a time when many teens are navigating relationships, social pressures, and big milestones. It's a key opportunity for caring adults to support safe, healthy relationships.

### Why It Matters

The impact of supporting young people in building safe, healthy relationships can be serious and long-lasting. Teens who experience dating violence are [at greater risk for substance misuse, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts](#).

### The Good News

Teen dating violence isn't inevitable, and most teens build safe, healthy relationships. These experiences help build social skills, strengthen emotional well-being, and develop them into confident and capable adults. They can also support academic success, reduce risky behaviors, and foster self-esteem.

### Start the Conversation

Teens may not be comfortable sharing their relationship experiences with adults. That's why it's so important to maintain open, judgment-free communication with the young people in your life. Talking regularly about trust, respect, and honesty in relationships makes it more likely your teen will seek support when needed.

#### Stay Calm

Conversations about relationships can be challenging. Strong reactions can shut down communication. Focus on listening and asking open-ended, non-judgmental questions that keep the door open for future conversations.

#### Focus on Health and Safety

No matter your perspective on dating and sex, keep the focus on safety. Talk about [practicing safe sex](#), recognizing the [warning signs of relationship violence](#), and understanding [what makes a relationship healthy](#).

## CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING TIPS TO START TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEEN TODAY.

### Lead with Empathy

Teens may worry that you won't understand their experiences or social pressures. Reassure them that you are a safe, supportive person to talk to by listening with empathy and acknowledging their challenges.

Reflect on your own past relationships. What was healthy? What was unhealthy? Share age-appropriate lessons you've learned about respect, communication, and boundaries.

#### TALKING TIP

### Use Media as a Jumping-Off Point

Books, movies, and TV can spark natural conversations about relationships. Ask your teen what they think about the relationships and situations they see portrayed and what stands out to them.

Discuss examples of couples or situations in the media. Which relationships seem healthy? Which seem harmful? Why?

#### TALKING TIP

## Discuss and Model Consent

Remind your teen that they never have to engage in sexual activity they don't want. Consent must be clear, enthusiastic, and mutual. Ignoring boundaries is unhealthy. Model consent by respecting your teen's boundaries and asking before hugging or kissing them. Remember, a conversation about consent matters to everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

### TALKING TIP

Help your teen define their personal boundaries. Encourage them to ask themselves: "Do I feel safe and respected?" "Is this something I truly want?" "Am I feeling pressured?" Emphasize that it is always okay to say no or leave a situation.

## Take a Clear Stand

State clearly that disrespect, abusive language, controlling behavior, or any form of violence is unacceptable. Remind your teen that you expect them to treat others with respect and to expect the same in return.

### TALKING TIP

Practice ways your teen can check in with a partner about boundaries. Brainstorm phrases they can use to communicate clearly and confidently.

## Encourage Openness

Invite your teen to share their values and expectations for healthy relationships. Rather than dismissing ideas, encourage thoughtful discussion. This helps young people build their own understanding.

### TALKING TIP

Explore the differences between attraction, infatuation, and love. Talk about the healthy and unhealthy reasons that someone might be attracted to someone else.

## AND REMEMBER TO

### Highlight the Positives

Conversations about relationships don't need to focus only on risks. Discuss qualities like empathy, honesty, kindness, and mutual respect, and emphasize how empowering strong relationships can be.

### Continue the Conversation

There isn't just one 'sex talk' or 'dating talk'. You or your teen may not be comfortable talking about these topics for more than a few minutes, and that's okay. Short, ongoing conversations feel less overwhelming and give your teen space to reflect and grow.

### Sources:

- [Consequences of Teen Dating Violence | Youth.gov](#)
- [Healthy Relationships | love is respect](#)
- [How to Talk To Your Kids about Sex and Sexuality | American Sexual Health Association](#)

### Resources:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) | Text START to 88788
- [Information by Age - Parents | Teaching Sexual Health](#)
- [Sexual & Reproductive Health Resources For Parents of Adolescents and Young Adults | SAHM](#)
- [Healthy relationships for young adults | love is respect](#)
- [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#)

Scan for additional Know!  
Prevention Tips for  
Everyone:

