Love Is Not Abuse:

a teen dating violence prevention curriculum

Liz Claiborne Inc

This curriculum was created by Liz Claiborne Inc. in conjunction with Education Development Center, Inc., an international, non-profit organization that focuses on education and health.

Select handouts were developed by Break the Cycle, a non-profit organization that works to prevent dating and domestic violence. For more information, visit www.breakthecycle.org.

Additional copies of this curriculum can be ordered by calling 1-800-449-STOP (7867). Handbooks for adults, teenagers, and parents on domestic and dating violence can also be ordered at this number or downloaded from our website at www.loveisnotabuse.com.

LIZ CLAIBORNE INC

introduction: the love is not abuse curriculum

Teenage dating violence

Teenagers—no longer children, but not yet adults—begin to form their first romantic relationships. Yet without an understanding of healthy and unhealthy behaviors in dating relationships, teens are especially susceptible to becoming trapped in a cycle of dating violence. Consider this: nearly one out of five teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm when presented with a break up[1], and one in three teenagers report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked, or physically hurt by a dating partner.[2]

Defined as a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive behavior in a dating relationship, dating violence takes many forms. It ranges from punching, slapping, pushing, and grabbing to rape and murder–from threats of violence, verbal attacks, and other forms of intimidation to extreme jealousy, possessiveness, and controlling behavior.

Dating violence and domestic violence are typically not one-time incidents, but a pattern of abusive behaviors over time that causes harm and/or fear. As the pattern continues, the abuser uses emotional manipulation and/or physical domination to gain control and power over his or her partner.

Teen dating violence does not discriminate. It affects young people of all races, religions, and cultures, regardless of how much money they have or what neighborhood they live in. While the vast majority of abusers are male and most targets (also known as victims or survivors) are female, females can be abusers and males can be targets of dating violence. Violence in relationships can be a difficult topic for anyone to talk about, especially boys. Because it has traditionally been considered a "women's issue," many boys feel as if they have no positive, proactive way to help stop it. However, it is important for both men and women to get involved in preventing violence.

Overview of the Love Is Not Abuse curriculum

The focus of this curriculum is on three critical goals:

> increase students' understanding of teen dating violence
> enable students to reach out to a friend or family member who may be experiencing dating violence
> increase help-seeking behavior among students involved in abusive dating relationships

[1] Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey, 2005.
[2] Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey, 2005.

Love Is Not Abuse blends literacy with health education. It draws on the motivating power of literature to build students' reading, interpretation, and writing skills, and introduce skills for preventing and responding to dating violence. The texts that are featured in this curriculum offer many opportunities for students to hone literacy skills for making meaning of texts and life skills for preventing and dealing with teen dating violence. The texts utilized represent a variety of genres, including poetry, autobiographical essay, and fiction.

Developed for English language arts and health education classrooms, *Love Is Not Abuse* is designed to meet both English language arts and health education standards. *Love Is Not Abuse* includes the following elements:

> high-quality literature
> small- and large-group discussions
> step-by-step, easy-to-follow procedures
> detailed background information for teachers

In the fall of 2005, a draft of *Love Is Not Abuse* was pilot tested in 20 high schools across the United States, representing a range of urban, suburban, and rural communities. Pilot teachers used the curriculum across a variety of subject areas, including health education, English language arts, family and consumer science, and life management skills classes. The experiences and recommendations of the pilot-test classrooms are reflected in this final version of the curriculum.

Collaborating to teach Love Is Not Abuse

We encourage language arts and health education teachers to collaborate with reading specialists, family and consumer sciences teachers, and/or teachers of other disciplines. Teaching the curriculum as a team becomes easier to manage and coordinate over time.

Many schools draw on staff from community-based domestic violence programs to facilitate lessons on teen dating violence. Domestic violence experts can participate in implementing *Love Is Not Abuse* in two ways: as the lead facilitator of the curriculum in the classroom or as a support to the classroom teacher, sharing information and community resources.

Either way, when bringing a domestic violence expert into the classroom, it is important to ensure that the individual:

> has a good rapport with teenagers
> is able to introduce students to local resources for information and referrals on dating violence issues
> is a good role model for youth, inspiring them to make health-promoting choices

It is also the teacher's responsibility to prepare the guest teacher and students and explain to the guest expert how this curriculum fits into what students are learning in the class. It may help to have students develop a list of questions related to teen dating violence that they would like the guest expert to respond to. Students should know why the visitor is coming to the classroom. Afterward, a follow-up thank-you note signed by all students allows students to reflect on what was most helpful or significant about the lessons.

Before implementing *Love Is Not Abuse*, educators should inform their school's guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, social workers, psychologists, and administrators. Students may disclose dating violence experiences to teachers and other school staff; professionals in the school should be prepared to respond.

Because this curriculum deals with sensitive issues related to teen dating violence, and students discuss these issues in small and large groups, it is critical that the teacher/expert facilitator create a safe environment by establishing guidelines for class discussion before beginning the lessons. Lesson 1 contains recommended guidelines for class discussion.

If possible, it can be beneficial to teach this curriculum in the context of a longer unit on healthy relationships so that students are clear about healthy dating behaviors. Teachers may also want to share the following information on "Creating a School-Wide Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program" with school administrators to raise their awareness of dating violence issues and enlist their support in creating a broader initiative to help stem the tide of teen dating violence.

Creating a school-wide teen dating violence prevention program

As part of a comprehensive approach to health and safety, *Love Is Not Abuse* can be a springboard to starting a school-wide teen dating violence prevention program.

The following are potential additional steps toward developing a school-wide program:

> **Raise awareness about teen dating violence in your school.** Educate the faculty, staff, and parents about the issue and how to respond to students seeking help. Encourage other teachers to address dating violence in the classroom. Conduct a presentation during a meeting of your school's parent-teacher association. Hold assemblies about the issue. Organize a student art exhibit or an essay or poetry contest on teen dating violence.

> **Review and revise school policies related to dating and domestic violence, focusing on keeping students safe.** School policies should address the safety and well-being of targets of dating violence, consequences for abusers, procedures in the event of a restraining order, procedures for students to ask for help and to report violence they witness or know about, and connecting students to community dating violence resources.

> **Make it clear that it is acceptable to talk about dating violence at school.** Put up posters and flyers around campus to educate students about the issue and publicize local resources. Invite staff from a local domestic violence organization to speak to students, staff, and/or parents.

> **Start a peer education group.** Teens who experience dating violence are more likely to tell their friends than anyone else. Peer educators can be trained to teach other students about the issue and/or to co-facilitate (with an adult) groups that focus on healthy relationships.

contact info: If you have questions about how to handle a dating violence-related situation with a student, or would like to speak to someone about starting a program at your school, please contact loveisrespect.org—the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1.866.331.9474 / 1.866.331.8453 (TTY) or Break the Cycle at 1.888.988.TEEN.

bibliography

There are many excellent resources on teen dating violence and domestic violence. Listed below are some recommended resources for educators.

Nonfiction

Anderson, Vera (1997). *A woman like you: The face of domestic violence.* Seattle: Seal Press.

Family Violence Prevention Fund and Warm2Kids (2005). *Coaching boys into men playbook.* San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Levy, Barrie, ed. (1998). *Dating violence: Young women in danger.* Seattle: Seal Press.

Lipper, Joanna (2003). *Growing up fast.* New York: Picador.

Liz Claiborne Inc. *A parent's guide to teen dating violence: Questions to start the conversation.* New York: Liz Claiborne Inc.

Liz Claiborne Inc. *A parent's handbook: How to talk to your children about developing healthy relationships.* New York: Liz Claiborne Inc.

Liz Claiborne Inc. *Tough talk: What boys need to know about relationship abuse.* New York: Liz Claiborne Inc.

Liz Claiborne Inc. *What you need to know about dating violence: A teen's handbook.* New York: Liz Claiborne Inc.

Miles, Al (2005). *Ending violence in teen dating relationships: A resource guide for parents and pastors.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Books.

Murray, Jill (2000). *But I love him: Protecting your teen daughter from controlling, abusive dating relationships.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Silverman, Jay G.; Raj, Anita; Mucci, Lorelei A.; Hathaway, Jeanne E. (2001). *Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and suicidality.* Journal of the American Medical Association 286 (5)572-579.

Stein, Nan and Capello, Dominic (1999). *Gender violence/gender justice: An interdisciplinary teaching guide for teachers of English, literature, social studies, psychology, health, peer counseling, and family and consumer sciences.* Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.

Weiss, Elaine (2004). *Surviving domestic violence: Voices of women who broke free.* Volcano, Calif.: Volcano Press.

Fiction

Dessen, Sarah (2000). *Dreamland.* New York: Puffin Books.

Flinn, Alex (2001). *Breathing Underwater.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Autobiography

Turner, Tina, with Kurt Loder (1986). *I, Tina.* New York: Avon Books.

Web Sites

loveisrespect.org A national teen dating abuse helpline providing 24/7 access to information and services. 1.866.331.9474 / 1.866.331.8453 (TTY)

www.tascorp.org The After-School Corporation provides grants, training, and assistance to community-based organizations in New York City that run after-school programs.

www.atask.org The Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Inc. is a coalition that aims to eliminate family violence and to strengthen Asian families and communities.

www.bbbs.org Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with measurable impact.

www.breakthecycle.org Break the Cycle, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and empower youth to build lives and communities free from dating and domestic violence.

www.childhelpusa.com Outlines ChildHelp USA's programs and services, supplies hotline numbers and local contacts, and provides information for children and teens about abuse.

www.childrennow.org Provides access to Children Now publications, poll results, policy papers, press materials, and updates on federal and state legislation.

www.darkness2light.org Darkness to Light works to shift responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse from children to adults, and to reduce child sexual abuse nationally through awareness and education.

www.deannasfund.org Deana's Fund is an arts-based organization that develops and produces educational theater and other programs to promote healthy relationships.**www.fvlc.org/rap** Family Violence Law Center Relationship Abuse Prevention Project educates middle and high school youth as well as parents, educators, adolescent health care providers, and youth service workers about the dynamics of domestic and dating violence.

www.fvpf.org The Family Violence Prevention Fund is a national non-profit organization that focuses on domestic violence education, prevention, and public policy reform.

www.girlsinc.org Girls Incorporated National Resource Center provides research, advocacy information, and tips on issues related to girls and young women.

www.dvinstitute.org Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community provides a forum for identifying appropriate and effective responses to prevent/reduce family violence in the African American community.

www.loveisnotabuse.com Love Is Not Abuse is a program of Liz Claiborne Inc. that provides information and tools that men, women, children, teens, and corporate executives can use to learn about domestic and dating violence and how they can help end the epidemic.

www.sportinsociety.org/mvp The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program is a leadership program that motivates student-athletes and student leaders to play a central role in addressing rape, battering, and sexual harassment.

www.ncvc.org/dvrc The National Center for Victims of Crime's Dating Violence Resource Center provides training, resources, and information to increase awareness of and commitment to addressing dating violence.

www.ncadv.org The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence website posts information on events, provides links and resources, and offers information and a 24-hour hotline on how to get help.

www.ndvh.org The 24-hour, toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline links individuals to help in their area using a nationwide database and offers information on local domestic violence shelters, other emergency shelters, legal advocacy and assistance programs, and social service programs.

www.neahin.org NEA Health Information Network, the non-profit health affiliate of the National Education Association, provides health information on topics of concern to educators and students.

www.nrcdv.org The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence provides technical assistance, training, and information on the response to and prevention of domestic violence.

www.safehorizon.org Safe Horizon works in New York City's five boroughs to provide support, prevent violence, and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families, and communities.

www.austin-safeplace.org Safe Place provides services for survivors of interpersonal violence in Austin/Travis County, Texas.

www.seeitandstopit.org A web site created by teens to help prevent relationship violence.

www.teensagainstabuse.org Teens Experiencing Abusive Relationships (TEAR) is a teen-run organization that works with schools and organizations to educate people about teen dating violence.

lesson one:
what is dating violence?

1

purpose: To understand what teen dating violence is and how young people are affected by it.

Student learning objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

> define vocabulary related to dating violence and apply it to the text and to their own experience

> identify the forms of dating violence

> understand the roles of abuser, target, and bystander in teen dating violence

> describe steps that a bystander can take to help someone who is a target of dating violence

Materials

- Read "Teacher Background Information: Teen Dating Violence" (appears later in this lesson) before teaching this lesson
- Photocopy "I Thought Things Would Change Excerpt" for all students
- Photocopy "What Is Teen Dating Violence?" for all students
- Prepare a transparency of "Roles in Dating Violence: Abuser, Target, and Bystander"
- Photocopy "Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused" for all students

teaching tips

(a) Because this curriculum deals with sensitive issues related to dating violence, it is critical to create a safe environment in the classroom. If you have not already established guidelines for class discussion, please do so before beginning this lesson. Here are some examples of recommended guidelines:

> Everyone is allowed to express his or her opinion without interruption.
> Respect each point of view, even if it is different from yours.
> No question or questioner is stupid or wrong; no put-downs are allowed.
> Treat other people in the class respectfully.
> What students say in the classroom should be kept confidential and not discussed outside the classroom or shared with others. (Be sure to explain that because teachers are mandated reporters, they must report to authorities when they hear about a student who is the victim of violence.)

(b) It is likely that there are one or more students in every high school classroom who are perpetrators of dating violence (i.e. abusers) and one or more who are targets of dating violence. This curriculum may be especially challenging for them as well as for students who have experienced child sexual abuse or rape. See "Teacher Background Information: Teen Dating Violence" at the end of this lesson for responding when students reach out for help. Also be aware that, before implementing this curriculum, you should review your state's mandatory reporting laws and your school's policy on mandatory reporting.

(c) Many students who are not abusers or targets of dating violence are bystanders to it. Bystanders play a critical role in preventing and reducing teenage dating violence. Mention to the class that this curriculum will provide everyone with helpful information and skills to apply now or in the future to reduce dating violence.

(d) This curriculum uses the term "target" to refer to individuals who experience violence at the hand of someone they are dating. We chose this term instead of "victim," which can have a connotation of passive suffering.

(e) If students become very engaged in discussing the issues that this curriculum raises, you may want to extend the unit from three class periods to four.

(f) In this curriculum, students write in their journals as part of some of the classroom activities and homework assignments. If your students are not familiar with journaling, be sure to introduce the use of journals by noting the following:

> Writing in a journal is a way to help students get started thinking.
> You will collect and read students' journals.

Let students know that if they reveal information about abuse to you, as a teacher, you have a legal responsibility to report suspected abuse. See "Teacher Background Information: Teen Dating Violence" at the end of this lesson for more information on this topic.

activities

step one (15 minutes)

Discuss dating violence and the many forms it takes.

> Tell students that you are going to read aloud an excerpt from an autobiographical essay. Explain that they will follow along as you read.

> Give each student a copy of "I Thought Things Would Change Excerpt."

> Read the handout aloud.

> Ask students what they think the excerpt is about.

> Mention that the class is starting a new unit on dating violence, which is a theme in this excerpt.

> Ask students what they think of when they hear the phrase "teen dating violence." As students brainstorm, record each response on the board.

> Offer a definition of teen dating violence that includes students' responses, for example, "Teen dating violence is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive behavior in a dating relationship."

> Ask students for examples of dating violence behaviors.

> Give each student a copy of "What Is Teen Dating Violence?" Review the handout.

> Explain that while many more adolescent females are physically abused by someone they are dating than males, teen males do experience dating violence. Mention that dating violence affects people of all races, religions, cultures or sexual orientation regardless of how much money they have or the neighborhood they live in.

> Explore with students how dating violence feels by asking:
  - What forms of dating violence did Adaliz experience?
  - How did Adaliz feel when Richard was being abusive to her?
  - How does being abused by Richard affect Adaliz's day-to-day life? What evidence of this can you find in the text?

> Emphasize that dating violence is *never* the fault of the person who is being abused. Nothing this person says, does, or wears caused the abuse or gives anyone the right to hurt her or him.

> If students question why abusers hurt their targets, explain that abusers use physical, sexual, and verbal/emotional abuse to control the target. Over time, the abuse typically occurs more frequently and becomes more severe, leaving the target to feel that he or she has no option but to stay in the relationship. Mention that some teenage abusers have been the target of (or bystanders to) domestic violence in their homes. Although this does not excuse the abuse, it can help to explain how some abusers come to believe that violence is acceptable in intimate relationships.

> Ask students what they think are some of the effects of dating violence on the person who experiences the violence or abuse. Then describe some of the effects that students do not mention, such as:
  - Feeling ashamed
  - Feeling anxious
  - Becoming depressed
  - Having thoughts of suicide

step two (3 minutes)

Define the roles of abuser, target, and bystander.

> Point out that in dating relationships that involve violence and/or abuse, people fall into one of three roles: abuser, target, or bystander. Display the "Roles in Dating Violence: Abuser, Target, and Bystander" transparency. Explain that bystanders don't have to be present when the abuser is hurting the target; they simply have to know about the abuse.

> Review the definitions on the transparency. Mention that although bystanders cannot "rescue" the target from the abuse, they can encourage him or her to talk to people who can provide help and guidance.

> Ask students who they think is the abuser in the "I Thought Things Would Change Excerpt." Who do they think is the target? Who do they think is a bystander? (Possible answers: Richard's friends who watched Adaliz and reported to Richard if they saw her talking to anyone. Anyone else in Adaliz's and Richard's life who was aware that he was abusing her.)

step three (25 minutes)

Explore how bystanders can help.

> Ask students who they think could possibly be a bystander to teen dating violence. (Possible answers: friends of the abuser or the target, family members, classmates, neighbors, teachers, other school staff, etc.)

> Ask students what they could do to help a friend or family member who was being abused by someone he or she was dating.

> Give each student a copy of "Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused."

> Review the top of the handout, which summarizes what a bystander to dating violence can do.

> Read the directions at the bottom of the handout. Explain that students will work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz.

> After 15 minutes, ask for two or three pairs of student volunteers to read aloud the letters they wrote. Have the rest of the class comment on how well the letter writers adhered to the suggestions in "Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused." Ask students to comment on whether they agree with what the letter writers said. If not, what would they say to Adaliz?

step four (1 minute)

Conclusion.

> Explain that dating violence is a serious problem that affects everyone involved, whether they are abusers, targets, or bystanders. Now that the class knows a little more about the forms that dating violence can take, in the next few lessons the class will explore how someone can become trapped in the pattern of abuse in a dating relationship and what to do to seek help.

assignment

Write the following question on the board:

What do you think makes it hard for Adaliz to end her relationship with Richard?

Tell students to copy the question in their journal. For homework, they should write their response to the question in their journal.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT: Explain to students that they will have a conversation with a family member or friend about Adaliz's situation. Tell students to read aloud "I Thought Things Would Change" to the family member or friend and to ask the person what he or she would do to offer help to Adaliz. Then, tell them to read aloud the letter that they and their partner wrote to Adaliz. Have students write a paragraph or two summarizing the issues they discussed with the family member or friend and how the discussion influenced their thinking.

teacher background information

Note: this information is not intended for distribution to students.

Teen dating violence

How Prevalent Is Teen Dating Violence?

> Girls and women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.[1]

> One in five high school girls is physically or sexually hurt by a dating partner.[2] As many as one-third of teens experience some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse.[3]

> One in three teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, or physically hurt by a partner. Forty-five percent of teen girls know someone who has been pressured or forced into having intercourse or oral sex.[4]

> The vast majority of teens consider verbal and physical abuse to be serious issues in their age group.[5]

> Only 33 percent of teens who have been in or known about an abusive dating relationship report having told anyone about it.[6]

> Adolescent males–as well as females–experience dating violence. For more information on males as targets and what males can do to end violence against females, see the bibliography at the front of this curriculum.

[1] Callie Marie Rennison (2001). Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
[2] Carolyn Tucker Halpern et al. (2001). Partner violence among adolescents in opposite-sex romantic relationships: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *American Journal of Public Health* 91: 1680
[3] Jay G. Silverman et al. (2001). Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance abuse, unhealthy weight control, sexual risky behavior, pregnancy and suicidality. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286: 572.
[4] Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey, 2005.
[5] Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey, 2005.
[6] Liz Claiborne Inc. Teen Dating Violence Survey, 2005.

> Depending on the school and community in which you work you may (or may not) choose to explain to students that teen dating violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships.

Warning Signs

There are some warning signs that an intimate relationship may become abusive. Not all of the signs appear in all abusive or potentially abusive relationships. The existence of one or several of these behaviors does not necessarily mean that a relationship is abusive, but it may signal that the relationship is not completely healthy. The warning signs include:

> Extreme jealousy
> Constant put-downs
> Telling the other person what to do
> Explosive temper
> Threats
> Possessiveness
> Preventing the other person from doing what he or she wants to do
> Severe mood swings
> Making false accusations about the other person
> History of violence
> Isolating the other person from family and friends
> Seeking financial control over the other person

Teenagers Seeking Help

Abuse in teenagers' intimate relationships is similar to adult domestic violence. Teens, however, face unique obstacles in recognizing and escaping abusive relationships. They often must overcome issues such as distrust of adults, lack of knowledge about available resources, and pressure from peers and parents to be in an intimate relationship.

Teenagers who do not have financial resources or transportation may face practical barriers to seeking help from community agencies. In addition, social service agencies that deal with domestic violence issues frequently do not provide services to minors because of concerns about legal liability. Confusion about their legal rights vis-à-vis dating violence adds another layer of difficulty for young people in need. They may also have fears about lack of confidentiality, mandated child abuse reporting, and parental consent laws.

It is tempting to assume that the easy "solution" to an abusive relationship is simply to end it. However, ending abusive relationships can be extremely difficult—even dangerous. It is important to be sensitive to why individuals may have trouble breaking free from abusive relationships, or even reaching out for help.

It is critical that the adults who surround teenagers in school—teachers, counselors, administrators—recognize the warning signs of teen dating violence, understand the dynamics of an abusive relationship, and know how to respond to a young person who is experiencing dating violence.

When Students Reach Out to a Teacher for Help

Some students may respond to this curriculum by asking for more information about dating violence and/or disclosing that they are involved in an abusive relationship. It is important to acknowledge to the student the courage that it takes to reach out for help. Be certain to tell the student that the abuse is not his or her fault.

Before implementing this curriculum, review your state's mandatory reporting laws as well as your school's policy on mandatory reporting. Most states have enacted mandated reporting laws that require those working in child-oriented professions to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse of a minor. In most states, teachers are mandated reporters. In some states, the definition of reportable abuse is narrowly limited to that inflicted by someone legally responsible for a child. In others, the definition of abuse is broader, including injury inflicted on a minor by any person. Under the more inclusive laws, abuse of a minor may include teen dating violence and statutory rape.

Teachers should tell students about their duty as mandated reporters. In addition, teachers should offer students a confidential alternative to seeking help, such as contacting loveisrespect.org—the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline (1.866.331.9474) or Break the Cycle. (Note that Helpline wallet cards with contact information are distributed to students in Lesson 3.)

handout

I Thought Things Would Change* Excerpt

by Adaliz Rodriguez

Adaliz describes her relationship with Richard.

Excerpt:

What hurt me the most were his mean words. I wasn't used to the kind of names he called me. My parents never allowed that kind of language. I cried a lot. I walked looking down. I'd ditch [skip] school a lot, and, although I made sure I passed, I was falling behind. I was miserable. I'd tell him he was hurting me verbally. I'd try to break up with him, then he'd cry and say, "I'm sorry, don't leave me. I'll stop hitting you." I'd believe him, because I didn't want to leave him; I wanted him to change.

...He had to make sure I wasn't doing anything. He'd find out from his friends if I was talking to someone, and we'd get in a big argument. He'd call me disgusting names, and make me cry. He'd hit me, push me, sock me in the stomach and in the head. He was smart. He knew not to leave me with bruises that showed.

He told me about the problems his parents had. He used to jump on his father to stop him from hitting his mother. He said he'd never hit me like his father did. Then when he hit me, he'd say he didn't mean to, and turn it around so that it was my fault: "If you just didn't do those things, I wouldn't hit you." In other words, I shouldn't get him so mad, or provoke him to hit me.

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handout

What is teen dating violence?

Teen dating violence is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive behavior in a dating relationship.

Physical Abuse

Any intentional unwanted contact with the other person's body. Physical abuse does not have to leave a mark or a bruise.

Examples:

> Scratching
> Kicking
> Pulling hair
> Pushing
> Shoving
> Punching
> Pinching
> Choking
> Using a weapon
> Biting
> Burning
> Strangling
> Slapping

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the other person's right to say "no" to sexual advances.

Examples:

> Unwanted kissing or touching
> Date rape
> Forcing someone to go further sexually than he or she wants to
> Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
> Not letting someone use birth control or protection against sexually transmitted infections

Verbal / Emotional Abuse

Saying or doing something to the other person that causes the person to be afraid, have lower self-esteem, or manipulates or controls the person's feelings or behaviors.

Examples:

> Name-calling and put-downs

> Insulting the person or his or her family or friends

> Yelling and screaming

> Threatening violence or harm

> Making racial slurs about the person

> Making unwanted comments of a sexual nature to the person

> Embarrassing the person in front of others

> Spreading negative rumors about the person

> Preventing the person from seeing or talking to friends and family

> Telling the person what to do

> Making the person feel responsible for the violence/abuse

> Stalking

> Harming (or threatening to harm) the person's pets

> Making the person feel guilty about leaving the relationship by talking about the abuser's hard life and how alone and abandoned the abuser will feel if left

> Threatening to commit suicide

> Threatening to expose personal information about the person (e.g., sexual orientation, immigration status)

> Threatening to take away the person's child or children

Source: Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. 1.888.988.TEEN or www.breakthecycle.org

transparency

Roles in dating violence: abuser, target, and bystander.

Abuser: A person who physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally hurts an intimate partner.

Target: A person who is hurt physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally by an intimate partner.

Bystander: A person who is aware that someone is being abused in a dating relationship. The bystander may become aware of the abuse through the abuser's or the target's actions or words.

handout

Helping a friend or family member who is being abused

> **Tell the person who is being abused that you are concerned for his or her safety.** Make it clear that you know about the abuse and that you are concerned. Tell your friend or relative that he or she does not deserve to be abused.

> **Acknowledge that the abuse is not this person's fault.** Remind the friend or relative that the abuser is responsible for the abuse. Tell the person that he or she is not alone.

> **Be supportive and patient.** It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let your friend or relative know that you are available to listen or help any time.

> **Avoid judging your friend or family member.** The person may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. Do not criticize your friend or relative for doing this, even if you disagree with the choices he or she makes.

> **Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance.** Offer to help the person talk to family, friends, a teacher or staff person at school, or a member of the clergy, or to help them find a counselor or support group. If your friend or relative decides to go to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to come along, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.

> **Help the person to develop a practical and specific safety plan that focuses on preventing future harm or abuse.** Safety plans will be discussed in detail in Lesson 3 of this unit.

> **Do not confront the abuser; it could be dangerous for you and your friend or relative.**

> **Remember that you cannot "rescue" the person. It is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt.** Your friend or relative must be the one to decide what to do. Your job is to be supportive.

Source: Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. 1.888.988.TEEN or www.breakthecycle.org

Directions: Imagine that you are a friend or relative of Adaliz and that you knew that Richard was abusing her. Work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz in which you reach out to help her. As you write, keep in mind the suggestions that are listed above.

lesson two:
the pattern of abuse in dating violence

purpose: To identify the pattern of abusive dating relationships as well as obstacles that make it difficult for someone who is targeted by dating violence to seek help.

Student learning objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

> define the typical stages of the pattern of abuse in dating violence.

> analyze a text to identify specific actions and words that exemplify each of the three typical stages in the pattern of dating violence

> identify five obstacles that teenagers often face when seeking help in dating violence situations

Materials

- Photocopy "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt" for all students
- Photocopy "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse" for all students
- Photocopy "Looking at Nick and Caitlin's Situation" for all students
- Photocopy "The Cycle of My Life" for all students

Teaching Tip: This lesson uses an excerpt from the novel *Breathing Underwater* by Alex Flinn. You may want to check your school or community library to see if they have the book. If they do, you can ask them to put it on hold for students who want to read the entire novel.

activities

step one (4 minutes)

Discuss the three repeating phases that typically occur in dating violence.

> Explain to students that in most abusive dating relationships, the physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse is not a one-time incident. It usually happens again and again, with the abuse becoming more severe and more frequent over time. Point out that even one incident of dating violence is too many.

> Give each student a copy of "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse." Review the handout.

> Explain that abusers are often extremely jealous of the target's friends and family, claiming to love their partner so much that they don't want anyone else around. This kind of excessive possessiveness and jealousy is not a sign of love, but an example of the extreme control that abusers seek to have over their partners.

> Mention that targets of dating violence often believe that the first incident of abuse is an isolated one that will not occur again. After the abuse, the abuser's apologies and promises that it will not happen again may convince the target to stay in the relationship. Unfortunately, we know that once an individual has demonstrated abusive behavior toward a dating partner, he or she is likely to abuse the partner again. As the violence and abuse become more severe and occur more frequently, the target is likely to become more isolated and fearful, afraid to reach out for help.

step two (30 minutes)

Analyze a text that illustrates the three typical phases in dating violence.

> Tell students that the class is going to read aloud an excerpt from a novel that illustrates the phases that make up a typical pattern of dating violence.

> Give each student a copy of "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt."

> Read aloud the first paragraph, then have student volunteers each read one or two paragraphs aloud.

> Explain to students that they are going to work in groups of three to identify how the three phases of tension building, explosion, and honeymoon play out in the excerpt from *Breathing Underwater*.

> Give each student a copy of "Looking at Nick and Caitlin's Situation." Tell students that as they work in their small groups to answer the questions, they must refer to "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt" and provide specific examples from the text that support their answers, rather than trying to remember the text and responding in a general fashion.

> After 10-12 minutes, review the questions on the handout, selecting one or two small groups per question to share their answers with the class.

step three (8 minutes)

Discuss the obstacles that teenagers face in seeking help for dating violence situations.

> Explain that it can be very difficult for teenagers like Caitlin (and Adaliz from Lesson 1) to seek help when they are experiencing dating violence.

> Remind students that for the previous homework assignment, they wrote about what they thought might make it hard for Adaliz to end her relationship with Richard. Ask for volunteers to share some of the ideas they came up with.

> Ask students if they can think of any additional obstacles that Caitlin—or any young person—could face in seeking help as the target of dating violence. Write students' ideas on the board. Sample answers may include:

- Bond with/love for the abuser
- Not sure what constitutes healthy and unhealthy behaviors in a relationship
- Being isolated and feeling they have no one to talk to/no one who cares
- Fear that friends or family members won't believe them
- Being turned away by friends or family members who don't believe them or tell them it's no big deal
- Not wanting to tell an adult the details of their private life
- Pressure from peers and/or family members to be in a relationship
- Fear of the abuse escalating if the abuser discovers they have sought help
- Specific threats from the abuser about what will happen if they seek help
- Denying, minimizing, or rationalizing the abuse
- Feeling vulnerable because of pregnancy, parenthood, sexual orientation, a disability, and/or immigration status

- Feeling ashamed of being in an abusive relationship
- Cultural and/or religious issues
- Substance abuse
- Feeling hopeless
- Low self-esteem, including feeling powerless to make changes in one's life
- Lack of knowledge of helping resources
- Not wanting the abuser to suffer negative consequences
- Not knowing teenagers' legal rights related to abuse
- Fear that information about their situation will not be kept confidential
- Lack of social and legal services targeted to teens in violent dating relationships
- Lack of access to services for teens
- Belief that the abuse will stop or that they can change the abuser

step four (3 minutes)

Discuss the role that beliefs and attitudes can play in supporting teen dating violence.

> Explain that there are many beliefs that people hold that reinforce dating violence and make preventing it challenging.

> Tell students to return to the "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt" handout to identify some of Nick's beliefs related to dating and dating violence. Sample answers:

- He cannot believe that Caitlin could break up with him. ("She could not leave me.")
- He believes that it's Caitlin's fault that he hit her. ("I had to stop her...She could have killed us.")
- He believes that it's okay for a boy to hit a girl. ("...you aren't used to guys. You don't know we play rough sometimes.")
- He believes that by buying Caitlin a ring, he can make up for hitting her. ("I wanted to buy you a ring. You know, like a symbol, since we're going together.")

> Ask students for example of other beliefs that some people hold that support dating violence. Sample answers:

- A boyfriend or girlfriend who calls all the time to "check up" on you is demonstrating his or her love.
- If one member of a couple spends money on the other person, the one who has spent the money is owed something in return.
- In order to be a man, guys have to be strong, so they have to be "in control" in dating relationships.

- Targets of dating violence must be doing something wrong; otherwise, they would not be abused.
- If someone is being abused but doesn't end the relationship, he or she must like the abuse.
- Women of certain ethnicities are more submissive/domestic than other women, and thus prefer to be controlled in a dating relationship.

> Explain that the only way to defeat these beliefs is for individuals, little by little, to replace them with beliefs that value nonviolent relationships that are based on respect.

step five (1 minute)

Conclusion.

> Explain that the experiences of many individuals who have experienced dating violence confirm that the abuse often occurs in a pattern. And, while there are obstacles facing teenagers who seek help when they experience dating violence, many young people—like Adaliz—do reach out and find the support they need to keep themselves safe.

assignment

Give each student a copy of "The Cycle of My Life." Read aloud the directions. Tell students that they will need to have the "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse" handout with them to complete the assignment.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT: Have students rewrite the scene on the bridge from "*Breathing Underwater*" from the perspective of Caitlin, Nick's girlfriend.

handout

Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse

Many people who are the target of dating violence find that the abuse occurs in a distinct pattern that is repeated over and over again: tension building, explosion, and honeymoon. Each phase can be as short as a few seconds or as long as several years.

Phase 1: Tension Building: Things start to get tense between the two people. In this phase:
- The two people argue a lot.
- The abuser yells at the target for no reason.
- The abuser makes false accusations about the target.
- The target feels that she or he can't do anything right.
- The atmosphere is tense, as if things could blow up at any moment.

Phase 2: Explosion: The tension is released in a burst of physical, sexual, and/or verbal/emotional abuse. The abuser may:
- Scream and yell in a way that is frightening and/or humiliating.
- Hit, grab, shove, kick, slam the other person against the wall, etc.
- Throw objects.
- Threaten to hurt the other person.
- Rape the other person or force him or her to go further sexually than he or she wants to.

Phase 3: Honeymoon: The abuser tries to make the target stay in the relationship by apologizing and/or trying to shift the blame for the abuse onto someone or something else. The abuser may:
- Apologize and promise that the abuse will never happen again.
- Say "I love you."
- Buy the other person flowers or gifts.
- Accuse the other person of doing something to cause the abuse.
- Blame the abuse on other things such as alcohol or other drug use or stress.

After the honeymoon phase, the tension starts to build again, leading to another explosion. Over time, the honeymoon phase may get shorter and gradually disappear, and the explosions may become more violent and dangerous. Some targets of dating violence never experience the honeymoon phase—just the tension building and explosion phases.

Source: Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. 1.888.988.TEEN or www.breakthecycle.org

handout

Breathing Underwater* Excerpt

In the novel *Breathing Underwater*, Nick, the sixteen-year-old narrator, recounts his relationship with Caitlin (also called Cat), whom he abused physically, verbally, and emotionally for most of their relationship. In this scene, Caitlin and Nick, who have been dating for a few months, are in Nick's car, driving over a long two-lane bridge. Caitlin has just told Nick that she feels they need to talk about the way he treats her. Nick fears that she is going to tell him that she wants to end the relationship.

Excerpt:

"I heard you. I'm deciding how to respond." She could not leave me. As I hit the word *respond,* I pulled to the left, veering into the southbound lane. Then, I floored it past three cars. A southbound Volvo station wagon slammed its brakes within yards of us. The driver was honking, yelling. I pulled back into the northbound lane and flipped him off. I looked at Caitlin. Her mouth hung in mid-scream. I laughed.

"Do you trust me, Cat?" She was silent. I leaned closer. "Did I ever tell you about my mother?" Caitlin recovered enough to shake her head no, and I said, "I was four, five, I'd lie awake nights, listening to her and my dad fighting, him hitting her." I looked at Caitlin. "You want to hear this?"

She nodded.

"I thought we'd pack up and leave someday, her and I. I lived for that day." On the wheel, my knuckles were white. "Then, one morning, I wake up, and she's gone, never came back. She ran from the monster and left me there with him."

Caitlin removed her sunglasses. "I'm sorry, Nick."

"So you talk about trust, it's pretty important. I mean, when the one person you trust just picks up and leaves..."

Caitlin's hand slipped across my shoulder. I tried to shrug her off, swerving left into traffic, then back. Terror filled Caitlin's eyes. Her nails ripped my flesh.

"Trust me, Cat?" She could not leave me. I swerved again. "'Cause if you haven't figured it out, life doesn't mean much to me. Without you, it's worthless."

A flock of seagulls headed across my windshield. She could not leave me. I swerved again, this time counting three before I veered back. She could not leave me. Caitlin screamed at me to stop.

"What's the matter?" When she didn't answer, I swerved again. "Oh—this. Maybe you're right."

I straightened the wheel, looking beyond her to the orange and green water east of the bridge. Silence. I didn't swerve. Nothing. We were halfway across. Caitlin relaxed.

Suddenly, I said, "Think I could make a right here?" Right was into water. I made like I'd do it, crash through the guardrail, then down. Caitlin screamed. She grabbed for the wheel. I shoved her away so her fingers clawed the air. She tried again, gripping both my hands. The car swerved left into the path of a Bronco towing a boat. I pulled it back. My mind knew what she was doing, but my eyes didn't.

I couldn't see her. She was shrieking. God, shut up! Her voice deafened me, and it was all around, in my ears, making me lose all control. She tried to grab the wheel. Blind and deaf, I drove, sun hot on my face. I had to get her off me. God, I just had to get her off me. Get her off me! Get off me! Get off!

Next thing I knew, I was driving on land. I couldn't tell you whether it was minutes or hours later. Caitlin hung across the seat, head cradled in her fingers. My hand throbbed, and I knew I'd hit her. I'd hit her. I was tired. She'd worn me out, but the anger inside me dissolved, replaced by that regret. But I'd had to stop her. She'd been irrational, overwrought, shouldn't have touched the wheel. She could have killed us. I looked at her. The seat was the length of a football field. Caitlin faced the window. She was so beautiful. Ahead was a red pickup with a Jesus fish. It was going at a good clip, but when we reached the next passing zone, I overtook it and a few other cars. Cat stiffened. I merged back into traffic and reached to stroke her hair.

She lifted her head, cautious as a runner stealing home, and stared.

"Are you all right, Caitlin?" I asked.

When she didn't answer, I repeated the question.

She shook her head. "You hit me."

I told her no. I hadn't. I mean, she was grabbing the wheel. We'd almost creamed the Bronco. I had to get her off me before we got killed.

"Because you were driving off the bridge," she said.

I laughed and said she knew me better. . . I'd never do it for real. Besides, we'd have crashed the guardrail, and I'd have gotten killed for wrecking the car.

"But you hit me, Nick." She leaned out the window toward the sideview mirror to see if her cheek was getting red.

And it was. I didn't expect it to be red, but it was—a little. I hadn't hit her hard, just enough to get her off me. I said, "Don't you know you shouldn't grab the wheel when someone's driving?"

"But I thought—"

She was pretty shaken. Mad maybe? I pulled her close. "Sorry I freaked you out, Kittycat. I forget you aren't used to guys. You don't know we play rough sometimes." She kept protesting, and I said, "You know what I was thinking? I wanted to buy you a ring. You know, like a symbol, since we're going together. What's your birthstone?"

Still, she stared like her life was flashing before her eyes. "You hit me, Nick."

I kissed her. She drew away, and I pulled her back. "Your birthday's in February, right? I'll ask the jeweler what the stone is."

I held her close until she stopped struggling. The sun was down, but it wasn't dark enough for a moon, and we crossed bridges connecting the islands, Big Pine Key, Plantation Key, Key Largo. Then we drove through mainland Miami a while. When we reached home, the sky above Rickenbacker Causeway was black, and Caitlin slept on my shoulder.

*From *Breathing Underwater* by Alex Flinn. Copyright © 2001 by Alexandra Flinn.
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handout: teacher copy

Looking at Nick and Caitlin's Situation (Sample Answers Filled in)

Directions: In your small group, respond to the following questions:

1. Cite at least two specific examples from "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt" that indicate that the tension is building between Nick and Caitlin (before the physical violence occurs).
   > *In the first paragraph, Nick intentionally steers the car into the path of oncoming traffic.*
   > *In the same paragraph, Caitlin's mouth "hung in mid-scream."*
   > *In the fourth paragraph, Nick's knuckles are white on the steering wheel.*
   > *Nick keeps repeating to himself, "She could not leave me."*

2. When Nick does explode, what types of abusive behaviors does he demonstrate? (Refer to "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse" handout.)
   > *Nick hits Caitlin.*
   > *He uses the threat of violence by repeatedly swerving into oncoming traffic.*

3. In the honeymoon phase after the abuse, what does Nick tell himself to try to shift the blame for the abuse onto Caitlin?
   > *"I just had to get her off me."*
   > *"I was tired."*
   > *"She'd worn me out. . ."*
   > *"I'd had to stop her. She'd been irrational, overwrought, shouldn't have touched the wheel. She could have killed us."*
   > *"I hadn't hit her hard, just enough to get her off me."*

4. What does he say to Caitlin to try to shift the blame onto her?
   > *He tells her that he didn't hit her.*
   > *He tells her he had to get her off him "before we got killed."*
   > *He tells her he would "never do it for real."*
   > *He says, "Don't you know you shouldn't grab the wheel when someone is driving?"*
   > *He says, "I forget you aren't used to guys. You don't know we play rough sometimes."*

5. After Nick is abusive to Caitlin, what does he do to try to convince her to stay with him?
   > *He strokes her hair.*
   > *He asks her, "Are you all right?"*
   > *He tells her he wants to buy her a ring "since we're going together."*
   > *He kisses her.*
   > *He holds her close until she stops struggling.*

handout

Looking at Nick and Caitlin's Situation

Directions: In your small group, respond to the following questions:

1. Cite at least two specific examples from "*Breathing Underwater* Excerpt" that indicate that the tension is building between Nick and Caitlin (before the physical violence occurs).

2. When Nick does explode, what types of abusive behaviors does he demonstrate? (Refer to "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse" handout.)

3. In the honeymoon phase after the abuse, what does Nick tell himself to try to shift the blame for the abuse onto Caitlin?

4. What does he say to Caitlin to try to shift the blame onto her?

5. After Nick is abusive to Caitlin, what does he do to try to convince her to stay with him?

handout

The Cycle of My Life*

by Pamela, age 16

It all starts out wonderful until he strikes
Constantly hearing I'm sorry
Until it doesn't matter anymore
Forgiving every time, forgetting never
Calling out for him to stop
Never stopping until it is almost too late
Never thinking about the consequences of his actions
Just making me think out every possible consequence of mine
Hearing I'm sorry all over again
Meeting him with open eyes
Awaiting the gifts I know will pour forward
Until it all stops—
And the cycle begins all over again

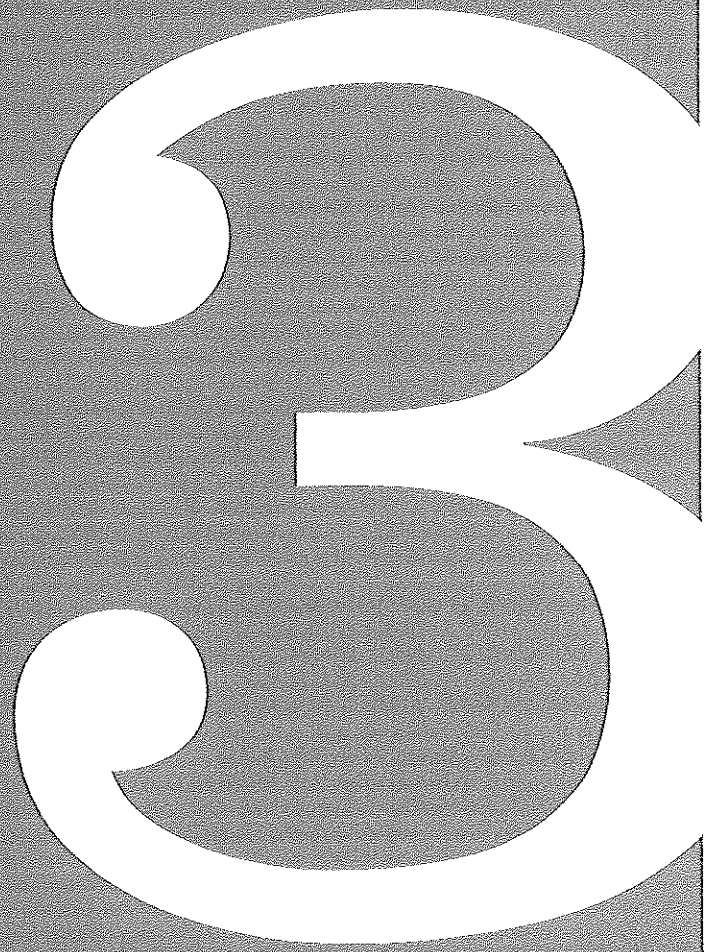
Directions: List below signs that Pamela is experiencing phases two and three of the typical pattern of abuse in dating violence. Refer to "Dating Violence: Patterns of Abuse" for examples of behaviors that occur in these phases.

Phase 2: Signs of Explosion:

Phase 3: Signs of Honeymoon:

*From www.teenrelationships.org/teenssay/teensay.htm.

lesson three:
ending teen dating violence



purpose: To learn strategies for getting help if one is the target of dating violence, as well as strategies that friends and family members of targets and abusers can employ.

Student learning objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

> identify three steps that an individual in an abusive dating relationship can take to increase his or her safety

> describe the excuses that abusers commonly use to rationalize their behaviors

> identify strategies for reaching out to a friend who is abusing someone

Materials

- Read "Teacher Background Information: Protecting the Safety of Young People in Abusive Dating Relationships" (appears later in this lesson) before teaching this lesson
- Photocopy "Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship" for all students
- Have Helpline wallet cards, one for each student
- Photocopy "Reaching Out to a Friend Who Is Abusing Someone" for all students
- Photocopy "Possible Warning Signs in Relationships" for all students

activities

step one (10 minutes)

Explore what teens in abusive dating relationships can do to increase their safety.

> Tell students that ending an abusive dating relationship can be very difficult. A young person may leave his or her partner several times, then get back together again, before leaving for the final time.

> Remind students about the characters Caitlin and Nick, whom the class read about it Lesson 2. Explain that even if Caitlin weren't ready to end her relationship with Nick, there are things she could do to increase her safety. Ask students what some of those things might be. (Sample answers include: Try not to be alone with Nick; talk to a friend, family member, teacher, counselor, or clergy member about her situation; create a teen dating safety plan; join a support group.)

> Give each student a copy of "Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship." Review the handout. Emphasize that even when someone is planning to end—or has already ended—an abusive relationship, he or she should continue use of these precautions in case the abuser attempts to commit additional violence.

> Distribute one Helpline wallet card to each student. Explain that the card is sized to fit in a wallet and that it contains a toll-free phone number for assistance with teen dating violence issues.

step two (25 minutes)

Identify strategies for reaching out to a friend or family member who is abusing a partner.

> Mention that students may not only know someone who is being abused, but also someone who is being abusive to a partner.

> Explain that abusers often use excuses to explain away—or rationalize—their abusive behavior. Ask students for examples of excuses that abusers might use to convince

themselves and others that the abuse is not happening or is not a problem. Sample answers may include:

- It's not really abuse.
- I didn't mean to hurt him (or her).
- It was a fluke. It'll never happen again.
- She (or he) got me so angry, I had to do it.
- She (or he) likes it.
- I can't control myself when I get mad.
- I only did it because I was stressed out/drunk/high.

> Give each student a copy of "Reaching Out to a Friend Who Is Abusing Someone."

> Review the top portion of the handout with the class, as well as the directions on the bottom. Have students work in groups of three to rewrite the dialogue.

> After 10 minutes, have one or two small groups share their rewritten dialogue with the class. Use the tips that appear on the top of the handout to assess the strategies that the group devised for Ethan to use in reaching out to Jimmy.

step three (9 minutes)

Identify strategies for reaching out to a friend or family member who is abusing a partner.

> Explain that students will now reflect on what young people can do to help stop the cycle of teen dating violence.

> Write the following question on the board:
What can teenagers do in their relationships with friends and family members, in the school, and in the community to help prevent teen dating violence?

> Tell students to copy the question in their journal and to write their responses.

> Some sample ideas for what teenagers can do:

- Don't use language that promotes abusive attitudes and behaviors.
- Don't support degrading or sexist jokes and put-downs by laughing at them—even if someone you like told the joke or made the put-down.
- Don't purchase or listen to music with degrading or sexist lyrics—even if you like the musician who perform it.

- Think about how your own attitudes and behaviors might contribute to violence and abuse.
- Be an example for your peers: treat your friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, and family members with respect.
- Talk about dating violence with (and be a role model for) children younger than you.
- Support other people who are working to end dating violence by attending a dating violence awareness event.
- Become active in teen dating violence prevention efforts in your school and community.

> Explain that bystanders to dating violence may be reluctant to speak up because they:
- Don't want to get involved in someone else's business.
- Feel powerless to help others to make change.
- Fear losing a friend (the target or the abuser).
- Are afraid the abuser will retaliate against them.

step four (1 minute)

Conclusion.

> Explain that abuse and violence are a part of many teen dating relationships. In this curriculum, the class has learned what dating violence is, as well as strategies for young people who are in abusive relationships and for those who have a friend or family member who's a target or an abuser. Mention that you're looking forward to seeing how students use their new skills and strategies to reduce dating violence in the community.

assignment

Give each student a copy of "Possible Warning Signs in Relationships."

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT: Have students work with a partner to create a script for a dialogue between Kaylie (the teenager whose boyfriend Jimmy grabbed and twisted her wrist in the handout "Reaching Out to a Friend Who Is Abusing Someone") and a friend of Kaylie's who knows about the abuse. If time allows, have a few students read aloud their script to the class.

handout

Increasing your safety in an abusive dating relationship

If you are in an abusive relationship, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave, you need to think about steps to take to increase your safety.

Talk with a trustworthy adult (e.g., parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, clergy member) about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you to feel less isolated.

Create a teen dating safety plan. A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating violence to think in advance about how to keep themselves safe. Safety plans enable individuals to think ahead about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. For more information, contact loveisrespect.org at 1.866.331.9474 or Break the Cycle (see the bottom of this handout).

Call the police. If someone is hurting you or you are in immediate danger, it may be best to call the police. Many acts of physical and sexual dating violence are crimes; the abuser can be arrested and go to jail for them.

With help from a trustworthy adult (e.g., parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, clergy member), get a restraining order or a protective order. A restraining order (also called a protective order) is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm you, come near you, or contact you in any way. When you have an order, you can call the police as soon as the abuser comes near you or contacts you.

If your home is not a safe place and/or you live with the abuser, consider going to a domestic violence shelter. A shelter is a safe place, usually a house or apartments in a secret location, where people experiencing dating or domestic violence and their children can live for a limited time. Staff at the shelter can help you find a more permanent place to live.

Source: Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. 1.888.988.TEEN or www.breakthecycle.org

handout

Reaching out to a friend who is abusing someone

If you have a friend who is an abuser and you feel safe talking to him or her about it, here are some tips to keep in mind:

> Explain that you are still the person's friend, but that you don't like it when he or she is abusive to someone.

> Do not accept the abuser's excuses for the abuse. Say clearly that abuse is never okay.

> Encourage the friend to find a counselor whom he or she can trust. Offer t go with him or her to meet the counselor.

> When you see your friend treat his or her partner with respect, acknowledge and praise it.

> Do not act as a "go-between" to help the couple work things out.

Jimmy and Ethan have been friends since elementary school. Everyone at school knows that Jimmy and his girlfriend Kaylie argue a lot and that things are often tense between them. This morning, Ethan got a ride to school with Jimmy and Kaylie. As Ethan got out of the car in the school parking lot, he heard Jimmy whisper fiercely to Kaylie, "Remember what I said." Then Jimmy grabbed Kaylie's wrist and twisted it hard. Ethan decides that it's time for him to speak up.

Directions: In your small group, complete the dialogue between Ethan and Jimmy, using the above tips for reaching out to a friend who is an abuser.

Ethan: Jim, man, what's up between you and Kaylie?

Jimmy: Nothing. What are you talking about?

Ethan: I saw you grab her wrist. What's that about?

Jimmy: Ah, c'mon. It's nothing. You know she never listens to me. I gotta do that to get her attention.

Ethan:

Jimmy: I was just playing. It was nothing.

Ethan:

Jimmy: You don't get it. You wouldn't believe how mad Kaylie makes me. Sometimes I just can't control myself.

Ethan:

Jimmy: You know, it was a one-time thing. It's not going to happen again.

Ethan:

Jimmy:

Ethan:

Jimmy:

homework

Possible Warning Signs in Relationships

If you are in an intimate relationship with someone, is it as healthy as you deserve? Put a check next to any of the responses below that apply to this relationship.

Does the person I am with:

___ Get extremely jealous or possessive?
___ Accuse me of flirting or cheating?
___ Constantly check up on me or make me check in?
___ Tell me how to dress or how much makeup to wear?
___ Try to control what I do and whom I see?
___ Try to keep me from seeing or talking to my family and friends?
___ Have big mood swings—getting angry and yelling at me one minute, and being sweet and apologetic the next?
___ Make me feel nervous or as if I'm walking on eggshells?
___ Put me down or criticize me?
___ Make me feel that I can't do anything right?
___ Make me feel that no one else would want me?
___ Threaten to hurt me?
___ Threaten to hurt my friends or family?
___ Threaten to commit suicide?
___ Threaten to hurt him- or herself because of me?
___ Threaten to hurt my pet(s)?
___ Threaten to destroy my things?
___ Hurt me physically? (includes yelling, grabbing, pushing shoving, shaking, punching, slapping, holding me down, etc.)
___ Break or throw things when we argue?
___ Pressure or force me into having sex or going further sexually than I want to?

If you checked any of these responses, you may be in an abusive relationship. loveisrespect.org—the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline or Break the Cycle can help. For more information, visit loveisrespect.org (1.866.331.9474) or breakthecycle.org (1.888.988.TEEN).

Source: Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. 1.888.988.TEEN or www.breakthecycle.org

teacher background information

Note: this information is not intended for distribution to students

Protecting the safety of young adults in abusive dating relationships

Teens in abusive relationships have options for increasing their safety. They may decide to stay with the abuser, exploring ways to keep themselves safe while still in the relationship. They may decide to end the relationship.

Making a Dating Safety Plan

A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating violence to think in advance about how to keep themselves safe. Safety plans enable individuals to think ahead about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. The plan should be practical and specific. Teenagers who are in the process of ending or have already ended an abusive relationship should create and use a safety plan. (Note that a sample dating safety plan appears immediately following this Teacher Background Information. You may want to share it with students who are in abusive dating relationships. We do not recommend giving the safety plan to all students because abusers might be able to use the plan to notice signs that the person he/she is abusing is planning to leave the relationship, which could potentially put that person in danger.)

A teenager who remains in an abusive relationship should consider the following strategies:

> Keep important phone numbers (e.g., police, domestic violence hotline, family, friends) nearby at all times. Always have a cell phone or change for a phone call.
> Keep a record of all incidents of violence. Save any threatening or harassing letters and email, text, or voicemail messages that the abuser sends.
> Explain to trustworthy friends and family that if they think she or he may be in danger for any reason, they should call 911.

> Plan escape routes from places like school, home, or the abuser's home.
> Try not to be alone in isolated areas in public. Try to get a ride to school, or ask someone to walk or ride the bus with him or her.
> Join a support group for teenagers who have experienced dating violence.
> Put the original and copies of important documents (e.g., identification, health insurance, immigration papers) in a location that cannot be easily found by the abuser.
> Choose an e-mail account password that the abuser will not be able to guess so that the abuser will not be able to read his or her incoming and outgoing mail.

In addition to the suggestions above, an individual who decides to leave a relationship with an abuser should consider the following:
> Go to court to get a restraining order. Keep at least one copy and give copies to the police, school administrators, people at work, etc.
> Tell close family and friends that she or he is no longer in the relationship.
> Change one's school schedule to avoid being in class with the abuser; avoid arriving at and leaving school at the same time as the abuser.
> Screen calls and/or change one's phone number to an unlisted number.
> Avoid going to locations where the abuser might look for him or her.
> Develop a teen dating safety plan.

Accessing Shelter, Counseling, and/or Other Domestic Violence Services

Many communities have resources for individuals experiencing domestic and dating violence, such as confidential emergency shelters, counseling services, and support groups. Some domestic violence organizations will serve teenagers as well as adults. For help in finding youth-friendly domestic violence resources in your area, contact **loveisrespect.org (1.866.331.9474).**

Accessing the Legal System

Teens who experience dating violence can seek help from the legal system, typically by using either the civil law, the criminal law, or both. These options are very different. All states provide some protection from domestic violence in both the criminal and civil law, but the details of the protections available vary greatly from state to state. For help understanding your state's civil and criminal laws, contact **loveisrespect.org (1.866.331.9474)** or **breakthecycle.org (1.888.988.TEEN).**

The Criminal Law: Calling the Police

Many acts of dating violence are crimes for which the abuser can be arrested and sent to jail. In order to use the criminal law, either the person who experienced the abuse or someone who witnessed it or heard about it must report what happened to the police.

Once the police are involved, they make sure everyone is safe, may arrest the abuser, and will begin a investigation to collect evidence. If the police believe they have enough evidence that a crime was committed, they turn the case over to a prosecutor, who determines whether the evidence is sufficient to proceed with a case against the defendant. Once the abuse has been reported to the police, the person who experienced the abuse may not have any control over whether the government prosecutes the abuser.

If the prosecutor decides to press charges, a judge or a jury will hear the evidence and the prosecutor's case against the defendant. If the defendant is a minor, he or she is typically tried in juvenile court, where a judge hears all the evidence and decides whether the defendant is guilty. If the defendant is found guilty, a judge determines the sentence (e.g., prison or jail time, probation, community service, counseling, a fine).

In most states, when a defendant is convicted of a crime related to domestic violence, the judge may also issue a criminal protective order requiring the abuser to stay away from the person he or she has harmed and not contact him or her in any way. Criminal protective orders are an important option for adolescents who live in a state that does not allow young people, people who are dating, or same sex-couples to obtain civil domestic violence restraining orders.

The Civil Law: Obtaining a Restraining Order

People who experience abuse can also use civil law for protection from the abuser. In this case, the person who was abused asks to be protected from the abuser by a restraining order. A restraining (also called protective) order is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm, come near, or contact the target in any way. Restraining orders often can also serve to protect a person's children or other people who live in his or her home. With a restraining order, the person who has experienced abuse can call the police as soon as the abuser comes too close or contacts him or her in any way. In most states, violation of a restraining order is a crime.

Restraining orders are not always available to teenagers. In order to qualify for a domestic violence restraining order, an individual must have a "domestic" relationship with the abuser. Many state laws do not include in their definition of domestic relationships the kind of relationships teenagers

typically have (such as people who are dating but not living together). Some state laws specify that their restraining orders are only available to adults.

In most states, a minor can apply to get an order, but the court papers must list an adult who is requesting the order on behalf of the minor. When a minor doesn't want to (or is afraid to) tell a parent about the abuse, he or she may be able to have another adult (e.g., a relative, friend, or teacher) go to court instead of a parent. Teenagers considering a restraining order need to find out if they qualify for one in their state and whether they need to have an adult involved. Contact **loveisrepect.org (1.866.331.9474)** or **help@breakthecycle.org (1.888.988.TEEN)** to learn more about the laws in your state or to identify local resources for legal assistance.

Sample Teen Dating Violence Safety Plan

If you are in an abusive dating relationship, filling in this dating safety plan gives you an opportunity to plan ahead how to protect yourself more effectively. If you decide to leave the relationship, you should continue to use the safety plan to keep you safe.

1. In an emergency, I can call the police (911), the statewide domestic violence hotline number _____, or the local domestic violence prevention program at _____. I will keep these numbers with me at all times. I will also always carry (insert name:) _____'s phone number with me (insert number here: _____) in case I need to call him or her because I am (or may be) in danger.

2. If I need immediate assistance, I will contact family or friends and will use the code word _____, which will alert them that I need help.

3. If I decide to leave, I can go to the following safe places:

4. I will keep the following items packed in a bag, ready to go (check those that apply):

___ a cell phone or change to make a phone call
___driver's license or other form of identification
___ resident card, immigration papers
___ small amount of cash
___ restraining/protective orders
___ my keys
___ Social Security card
___ health insurance information
___ spare clothes
___ prescriptions/medicines
___ other items (specify):

5. In case I cannot get to my bag before leaving, I will leave copies of these items with

_____
(insert name)