

Parents and Caregivers' Information Sheet

Grade 10 - 2024-25

UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

MY TEEN DOES NOT HAVE A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP, DOES THIS SHEET CONCERN ME?

It's never too early to talk to your teen about healthy relationships or dating violence prevention. Starting conversations - even if you don't think your teen is dating - is an important step in preventing relationship violence. Here are some conversation points:

- Ask them for their opinion on what makes a relationship harmonious?
- You can start the conversation by talking to your teen about the qualities you look for in the relationships you build with others (eg. honesty, respect, humour).
- What do you think of your friends' relationships?
- Can you identify an unhealthy relationship? What would you do if you witnessed it?

STATISTICS FROM THE BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY (2023)

- 40% of young people have been the victim of verbal harassment of a sexual nature
- 25% had experienced physical sexual harassment
- 13% of young people had experienced sexual abuse
- 15% of young people admit to having been in a physically abusive relationship

HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY TEEN TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

To protect young people, it is essential that the adults in their lives recognize the seriousness of violence, as well as the distinction between healthy and unhealthy interpersonal relationships. We also encourage parents to become familiar with the early signs of abuse as well as the behaviours present in the abuse cycle (see resources below for more information). Ultimately, it's important to proactively and regularly communicate with teens about healthy relationships.

Consider the following avenues:

- **Safe environment:** Encourage your teenager to ask you questions by reminding them that they are not alone and that you are judgement-free.
- **Open discussion:** Discuss the messages and stereotypes conveyed in the media as well as the portrayal of unhealthy relationships.
- **Discuss online relationship building:** It is important to talk about online safety, in order to avoid unhealthy relationships on the internet. Remind your teen to tell you if they're having problems online. Set boundaries with your teen about their use of social media.
- **Talk about the cycle of abuse:** By normalizing the conversation to the typical progression of an abusive relationship, you are providing your teenager with the facts before they even risk ending up in an unhealthy relationship. This is essential to avoid the cycle of abuse in romantic relationships!



THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The dynamics of a violent relationship are highly unstable. This is known as the cycle of violence. The stages of the cycle enable the abuser to keep the victim in the relationship. Each stage enables him to gain power over the other person.

The more the relationship progresses, the shorter the honeymoon phases and the longer the periods of tension and aggression.

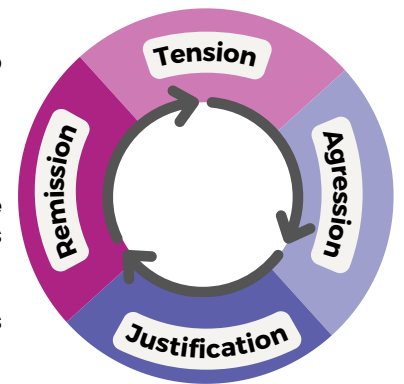
Knowing the cycle and the possible signs can help you assess your teenager's relationships to help him or her conclude that his or her relationships may be unhealthy and/or abusive.

1- Tension: Tension levels rise, but the victim doesn't really know how to react. She'll be anxious and walk on eggshells to avoid the worst.

2- Aggression: Physical, psychological, verbal or sexual violence.

3- Justification: The aggressor will justify his behavior by blaming the victim. He may acknowledge some of his actions, but he will always have a reason to explain himself.

4- Remission: The honeymoon phase. The person will make promises that he or she will change and that it won't happen again.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE A SUSPICION ABOUT YOUR TEEN'S RELATIONSHIP?


- Discuss with your teen how they're feeling, how the relationship is going, without judgment.
- Explain, gently and without judgment, that you care about their safety and well-being. Emphasize that you're there for them;
- Tell your teenager often that he or she is precious and that this kind of relationship is unacceptable;
- Say things like: "I know it's complicated", "It's not your fault", "You don't deserve this";
- Realize your support limitations and help your teen access resources;
- Discuss options and procedures to consider consult a counselor and/or psychologist, address medical needs, etc.
- Discuss legal options if your teen is close, such as going to the authorities, filing a complaint.
- Support your teen and let him or her know you'll be there for him or her.

WHAT BEHAVIOUR SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

- Moralizing and making your teen feel guilty.
- Prevent your teen from seeing his/her partner. However, make sure your teen is safe by establishing a safety plan.
- Avoid speaking out against your partner (e.g.: He's crazy, he's not a good person, etc.). Instead, talk about behaviors that are unacceptable.
- Remember that people in unhealthy/abusive relationships generally don't respond well to interventions in which you try to "lead" them: even if the intentions are good, this type of intervention can give the impression that you're trying to control them, like their abusive partner ;

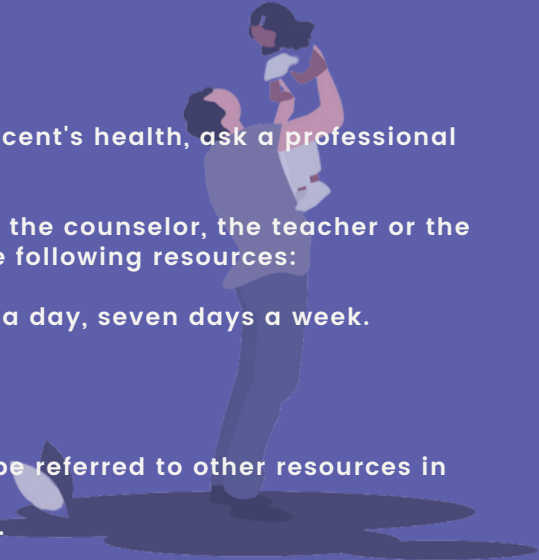
It's not easy to simply leave an abusive relationship. Your teenager may be defensive and withdrawn. Reiterate that you're there for them, and stay calm and thoughtful during these conversations.

Resources

 **Important!** If you are concerned about your adolescent's health, ask a professional for help, or call the helplines mentioned below.

Do not hesitate to communicate with the school staff: the counselor, the teacher or the principal. Your family doctor can also help, as can the following resources:

- **Kids Help Phone:** to confide in somebody, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anonymous and bilingual. Toll-free number: 1-800-668-6868. kidshelpphone.ca
- **Ending Violence Association BC:** to confide in and be referred to other resources in British Columbia. Toll-free number (VictimLink BC): 1-800-563-0808.



RESOURCES IN FRENCH

- Site web [Violence Info](#): apprenez plus sur chaque phase du cycle de la violence, les comportements communs de l'agresseur et de la victime et les indicateurs de violence.
- Fiche de ressources [UnePorteGrandeOuverte](#) pour plus d'information sur les relations malsaines chez les jeunes.



RESOURCES IN ENGLISH

- Information sheets [TheDoorThatsNotLocked](#) - to better understand indicators of abuse
- Website: [Love is Respect](#)

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