

No one deserves to be abused. Below are ways you can help yourself stop the violence, whether you're being abused or you're abusing someone else. If you need help, call 1-800-LifeNet and talk to someone. All calls are strictly confidential.



If you are being abused by someone else...

*It is not your fault and help is available.
If you are in danger now or are hurt, call 911.*

Talk to a friend. If you haven't already told a friend about what's happening in your relationship, try it. Ask your friend to listen without trying to solve the problem for you.

Try taking a break. If you're not happy with the way you're being treated, but you're not sure what to do, consider taking some time away from your boyfriend or girlfriend to think about it.

Consider talking to an adult. If you feel your situation is too big to handle alone, it may help to find an adult you trust. If it isn't a parent try a teacher, the parent of a friend, or even a school counselor.

If you don't feel safe, **try not to be alone** with your boyfriend/girlfriend. If you feel scared when you're alone together, try to avoid it. Spend time in groups and in public as much as possible.

If you are abusing someone else...

Take responsibility for your actions. Even if your girlfriend or boyfriend sometimes does things you don't like or that make you angry, no one deserves to be abused or controlled.

Change for yourself first. You may really want to stay in your current relationship, but even if you don't, stopping the abuse will help you in your next relationship.

Find a friend you can talk to honestly about your concerns and your plans to change. Ask them to hold you accountable if they see you being abusive.

Take a break. Try spending some time away from your girlfriend or boyfriend.

Decide now to **walk away from an argument** before it escalates. Let your girlfriend/boyfriend know your plan.

Look at the people around you. If your family or friends are also abusive in their relationships, you may want to find ways to spend less time with them. If that's not possible, at least pay attention to how you feel when you witness others being abused.

Be patient with yourself. Admitting you want to change your behavior is a huge step but don't expect things to change overnight.

For immediate assistance or referrals call 1-800- LifeNet. Another good resource is the National Teen Dating Abuse hotline. Trained peer advocates, teens just like you, can help you locate help and talk about your concerns. Call 24 hours a day 1.866.331.9474 or online chat from 4pm to 2am at www.loveisrespect.org

What you can do to support healthy relationships

How we act around our friends and family and how we react to things we see and hear can help support healthy relationships. If we stand by and say nothing when someone is abusive to another person or when someone tells a joke or story that supports abuse, we are sending a message to the abuser that this behavior is okay.

Below are things all of us can do:

- Don't put up with or use language that supports abusive behavior and attitudes. This is language like "wife-beaters" and "bitch-slap."
- Treat everyone in your life with the respect that we all deserve.
- Be an example for friends and sibling who are younger than you. Show that you care about this issue and they will care too.
- Think about how the movies and shows you watch, the games you play, and the websites you visit affect your attitudes about abusive behaviors.
- Don't laugh at jokes or stories that support abusive behavior and attitudes.