



According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 96% of teens report that they are emotionally or psychologically abused by their partner.

While teens won't necessarily speak up, there are warning signs to watch for:

- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend pressures them, soon after they begin dating, to make the relationship very serious, or presses them to have sex.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend becomes extremely jealous and possessive, and thinks these destructive displays of emotion are signs of love.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend tries to control them and to forcefully make all decisions where the two of them are concerned, refusing to take their views or desires seriously. He/she may also try to keep them from spending time with close friends or family.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend verbally and emotionally abuses them by doing such things as yelling, swearing, manipulating, and/or spreading false and degrading rumors about them, and trying to make them feel guilty.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend drinks too much or uses drugs and then later blames the alcohol and drugs for his/her behavior.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend threatens physical violence.**
- **Their boyfriend or girlfriend has abused a previous boyfriend or girlfriend or accepts and defends the use of violence by others.**

Other teen friends can also be on the lookout. Do any of your friends' relationships show the warning signs listed above? Do your friends show signs that they have been physically abused or injured in some way?

Friends in abusive relationships may also:

- Change their style of clothing or makeup
- Seem to lose confidence in themselves and begin to have difficulty making decisions
- Stop spending time with you and other friends
- Begin to receive failing grades or quit school activities
- Turn to using alcohol or drugs

If you suspect a friend is in a violent relationship, you might try to find out for sure by saying something like, "You don't seem as happy as usual" or asking in general terms, "Is there anything

you want to talk about?" This non-confrontational and indirect approach may prompt your friend to reveal what's wrong. Listen without judging, condemning, or giving unwanted advice. If a friend wants help, suggest that he or she take the steps listed above in order to be safe and find help.

If you believe your friend is in serious danger, talk with an adult you trust immediately about your friend's situation so that you aren't carrying the burden by yourself. Do not try to "rescue" your friend or be a hero and try to handle the situation on your own.

Information taken from the website of the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center at <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/dating.asp>.

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