



Abusive Relationships

October is [National Domestic Violence Awareness month](#), and a reminder that abusive relationships and dating violence can happen with teens as well as with adults. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in three women and one in four men in their lifetimes will experience some form of physical violence in a relationship.

Young women are especially at risk. Statistics show that teens and young women between the ages of 16 - 24 experience the [highest rates](#) of intimate partner violence.

Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

What can parents do to help their teens spot the warning signs and avoid dating violence and abusive relationships? Keep the lines of communication open and let your teen know that abuse isn't just physical violence. It's any controlling behavior such as yelling, threatening, name-calling, keeping tabs on the person at all times, or pressuring for sex. It can happen in casual and serious relationships, and with both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

Some of the red flags of an abusive relationship include:

- Jealousy and possessiveness
- Isolating the person
- Insults and put-downs
- Emotional manipulation and verbal abuse
- Threats of violence or actual physical or sexual violence

Healthy Boundaries

Helping teens understand healthy boundaries can help them avoid unhealthy relationships. In a healthy relationship, each person respects the other's privacy and right to make choices. It's not being afraid of the other person's temper or worried about emotional or physical abuse.

Unhealthy relationships often have blurry boundaries.

There may be a sense of "walking on eggshells" and fear that disagreements may escalate to violence. Being in a healthy relationship doesn't mean that people won't have disagreements or even loud arguments, but there is never emotional or physical abuse.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in addiction recovery services, primary care, or mental health care for children or adults, contact InterCommunity. To receive services at any of our Hartford or East Hartford locations, please call 860-569-5900.



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