



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES



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## **Do You Know the Signs? Preventing Teen Dating Violence** **A Note from the Director**

Greetings,

February is [Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month](#)! Dating violence is characterized as a pattern of abusive behaviors typically involving the assertion of power and control over an intimate partner. Nearly one third of teenagers in the United States will experience some form of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with. Teens may not recognize the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship until the situation escalates. Victims of teen dating violence are more likely to develop anxiety and depression, struggle with substance abuse, and experience intimate partner abuse later in life.

As parents, educators and social service providers, it's important for us to recognize the signs of potential abuse and provide a safe space for disclosure. Additionally, we can help by educating youth on the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors. The Resource Center has an entire Special Collection focused on youth and young adults called [Healthy Dating Leads to Healthy Marriage](#). Follow us on Twitter [@MarriageResCtr](#) for more ideas. I hope you'll take advantage of the tips and resources listed below for you and the families you serve.

Best Regards,

*Robyn Cenizal*

Robyn Cenizal, CFLE  
Project Director

## Tip of the Month

Your monthly tips to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. Share it - Post it - Pass it on!

Through promoting healthy relationship education and encouraging an open dialogue, parents, schools, and community-based organizations can all play a role in raising awareness, protecting teens, and supporting victims. Below are some important tips on recognizing and preventing teen dating violence.

- **Be aware of common warning signs.** Although no two relationships are the same, a victim of teen dating violence may lose confidence in themselves, have difficulty making decisions, stop spending time with family and friends, and become increasingly secretive.
- **Start a conversation.** If you suspect a teen you know is in an abusive relationship, start by expressing concern for their safety and offering your unconditional support. Recognize that you can't force a teen to leave a relationship, only they can make that decision. Offer to connect them to resources and know when it's time to involve emergency services by calling 911.
- **Promote healthy relationship education.** There are a number of free [curricula](#) and [toolkits](#) available online to help you advocate relationship education. These address what a healthy vs. abusive relationship looks like,

how to utilize communication skills, and tips for developing and maintaining personal goals and values.

If you're interested in learning more about Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and promoting it within your organization, check out [loveisrespect](#), [Teen Dating Violence](#), and [Break the Cycle](#).

## Featured Resources

The Resource Center's **Virtual Library** has collected more than 3,000 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

- **Student Health Services: Dating Abuse Screening and Response Protocol**

This protocol is a guide for identifying youth who are experiencing unhealthy or abusive relationships and for assisting them in increasing their personal safety. The resource includes sample statements and questions.

- **DatingMatters: Online Course**

Dating Matters is a free, online course available to educators, school personnel, youth mentors, and others dedicated to improving teen health. The course follows a school administrator through his day as he highlights what teen dating violence is and how to prevent it through graphic novel scenarios, interactive exercises, and information from leading experts.

- **Teen Dating and Healthy Relationships in the Digital Age Webinar**

This free recorded webinar from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families discusses how technology influences teen relationships, including relationship quality, communication, documenting and displaying of relationships, and external perceptions of relationships online.

- **Evidence for Understanding How Healthy Relationship Programs May Influence Intimate Partner Violence**

This brief, developed for organizations implementing healthy relationship programming, provides a summary of research/theory on how participation in healthy relationship programs can decrease intimate partner and teen dating violence.

Newly Released Resource Center Product

## · **Foundations for Healthy Relationships with Foster Youth**

This new tip sheet from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families provides caregivers with ways to be the support system that a child in foster care needs to help them develop the critical relationship skills necessary for future stability, healthy decision making, and overall growth.

## Events

The Resource Center's **Events Calendar** offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- **Choose Respect Healthy Teen Dating Conference, April 7, 2019, Rockville, MD.**

This conference, aimed at students, parents, and youth-serving providers, will educate participants on healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to help a friend who might be experiencing dating violence.

- **Child Welfare League of America 2019 National Conference, April 9-13, 2019, Washington, D.C.**

This conference will highlight successful strategies and practices that organizations and communities are using to meet the challenges and opportunities of the Family First Prevention Services Act and help ensure that children and families flourish.

## Feedback and Technical Assistance

To learn more about the Resource Center, visit us at [www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org).

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports human service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. To learn more about free training and technical assistance available to human service agencies, visit our [Training and Technical Assistance page](#).

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