



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

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Healthy Relationship Education for Teens

A Note from the Director

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Adolescents aren't always aware of the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship that may escalate to violence. As a result, it's important for parents and adults who work with teens to educate youth on healthy relationship behaviors and to be observant and recognize the warning signs of an unhealthy or potentially dangerous relationship. Although changes in behavior can be normal in adolescents, sudden and unexplained changes might mean something more. For example, he no longer hangs out with the team after practice, not because he doesn't want to anymore, but because his girlfriend doesn't like it. It's important to open dialogue and ask questions without being critical. The following tips and resources can help you and the families you serve better support youth as they navigate the excitement and challenges that come with couple relationships.

Best regards,

Robyn Cenizal, Project Director

Tips of the Month

Use the following questions to help you spot some of the common warning signs:

- Does the individual's boyfriend or girlfriend check up on their partner's behavior and act jealous, possessive or controlling? This can include asking about texts from others, monitoring Facebook or Instagram activities and questioning posts.
- Has the individual casually mentioned their partner's temper or aggressive behavior, then laughed it off as a joke?
- Does the individual act or dress different since they started dating this person? Are they less social or more withdrawn from close friends, or dressing more or less provocatively than usual?

For more tips like these, see the [Children and Youth: Education](#) page which includes some of the resources below including a Dating Violence Protocol for Educators.

Featured Resources

The Resource Center's [Virtual Library](#) has collected more than 1,000 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

Select the links below to view our featured February resources:

- **Healthy Dating Leads to Healthy Marriage (Fact Sheet)**
Since healthy dating is a precursor to healthy marriage, promoting healthy dating among youth can have benefits for eventual marriages. This Resource Center fact sheet discusses premarital predictors of a healthy marriage and describes what healthy dating looks like so practitioners can help lead youth to successful marriages.
- **Jennifer Ann's Group - Preventing Teen Dating Violence through Video Games since 2008 (webpage)**
Jennifer Ann was a high school student killed by an ex-boyfriend the day after Valentine's Day in 2006. This group, created in her memory, has sponsored the

Life. Love. Game Design Challenge to challenge video game designers and developers to create video games about teen dating violence since 2008. Their goal is to increase awareness about teen dating violence as well as provide educational information to help teens, tweens, and young adults identify and avoid abusive relationships.

- **Promoting Healthy Relationship Development in Teens, Part I: How Dating Smart in Youth Can Foster Better Relationships in Adulthood (Fact Sheet)**

This fact sheet gives providers who work with teens some basic knowledge about relationship factors that can influence future marriages. It also discusses the nature of adolescent relationships and includes checklists that can be used with a teen couple to identify how they line up on healthy relationship criteria.

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:

- **Webinar *Integrating Healthy Relationship Education in High School and College* February 11, 2016, at 2:00 PM Eastern**

Research shows that providing youth-focused relationship education increases the likelihood that adolescents will be prepared to make wise relationship decisions and to handle relationship challenges effectively. Join the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families for a new webinar that discusses the benefits of integrating healthy relationship education in high school and college. The webinar, with presentations from leaders in research and field work, will help service providers understand the impacts of healthy relationship education for youth and young adults, and highlight successfully integrated programs. The presentation will also feature free Resource Center resources that provide general information and raises awareness about the importance of addressing healthy relationships at an early age.

- **National Families & Fathers 17th Annual Conference in Los Angeles, CA February 16th – 19th**

The conference provides a place of solace for receiving educational enrichment and social activities; a place where attendees feel warmth and networking to increase their foundation and capacity to serve children, mothers, fathers & building healthy communities.

- **4th Annual National Teen and Young Fatherhood Conference in Orlando, FL February 25th – 26th**

The National Teen and Young Fatherhood Conference addresses issues facing 14 -24 year old young fathers. Powerful speakers and life-changing workshops focus on innovative teen fathers' programming, proven parenting techniques, unique obstacles teen fathers face in education, legal issues, mental health and identifying employment resources.

Feedback and Technical Assistance

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. If you would like to request technical assistance, please submit a [Training and Technical Assistance Request Form](#) and our Technical Assistance Coordinator will contact you.

To learn more about the Resource Center visit us at <http://lists.icfwebservices.com/t/161070/2087837/10936/39/>

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports safety-net 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.

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