

Relationship First Aid

Understanding Domestic Violence, Teen Dating Abuse and Sexual Assault

Domestic violence is when a family member or intimate partner uses violence or threats to hurt or control another person. That person can be a current or former husband, wife, brother, partner, sister, boyfriend, girlfriend, father, mother, son, daughter, uncle or other family/household member. Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, education, religion, or sexual orientation. People with disabilities or who are Deaf are at increased risk for domestic violence. **Teen dating abuse** refers to hurtful and controlling behavior toward a young person in a dating relationship.

Sexual Assault is any nonconsensual physical contact of a sexual nature including touching, sexual intercourse, rape, attempted rape, and child molestation. Most victims are assaulted by someone they know. Legally, a person cannot consent to sex if they are drunk, drugged, unconscious or have a mental disability. A person cannot legally consent to sex if they are under 14 years old. In Texas, if a person is 16 or younger, they cannot legally engage in sexual activity with someone who is more than 3 years older.

Recognizing Warning Signs

- Repeated or unexplained physical injuries
- Isolation from friends, family, co-workers
- Symptoms of anxiety, depression or substance abuse
- Talks about partner's anger or temper
- Fear of partner or their reaction to something
- Mentions stress at home
- Limited access to resources such as car or money
- Abuse of children or pets in the home

Say something, share your concern about the person's safety.

- Describe what you have seen that concerns you.
- Ask if they want to talk about it.

Responding Effectively

Validate and believe the survivor's experience

"I believe you." "You are not alone."

Acknowledge the injustice that she/he is experiencing

"No one has the right to hurt you." "It's not your fault."

Listen

"Would you like to tell me more about it?"

Avoid judgmental or blaming questions i.e. "What were you wearing?" or "What did you do to make him mad?"

Understand the survivor's unique safety needs

"What do you need to feel safe?" "Who can you call in an emergency?"

"SafePlace or (another local victim service agency) can help you create a safety plan."

Explore resources and options

"Is there someone else you can talk to about this situation?"

"Would you like me to give you numbers for local services?"

Support the survivor's right to make her/his own decisions

"Is there anything I can do to help or support you?"

"I respect your decision."

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If the person is a minor, age 65 or older, or has a disability, explain your legal obligation to report abuse. Invite the person to assist you in making necessary reports to CPS, APS or local law enforcement and help the person

Providing Resources

Help the person identify who they can call in an emergency. Encourage them to talk to their health care provider. Offer them a private phone to call for help.

- For immediate danger call 911.
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline, 800-273-8255.
- Hope Alliance, Williamson County
800-460-SAFE (24-hour Crisis Line)
hopealliancetx.org
- Hays Caldwell Women's Center
512-396-HELP (24-hour HELPlne)
hcwc.org
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-SAFE (24-hour Hotline)
ndvh.org
- Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN)
800-656-HOPE (24-hour Hotline)
rainn.org
- Love is Respect (for teens)
National Dating Abuse Helpline
866-331-9474
866-331-8453 TTY
Online chat: [.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

SAFE | stop abuse for everyone

512.267.SAFE (7233)

For Deaf people of all identities, please use relay/VRS

P.O. Box 19454 | Austin, TX 78760

expectrespectaustin.org

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Helping a Survivor of Sexual Assault

- Call 911 if the person is in immediate danger.
- Ask the survivor if he/she would like you to stay with them or call a friend or loved one.
- Help them get medical assistance from a hospital or local clinic. Even with no apparent physical injuries, it is important to determine the risks for STI's and pregnancy.
- If the survivor chooses to make a police report, encourage him/her to report as soon as possible and not to shower, bathe, or destroy the clothes they are wearing.
- Offer to request a SafePlace advocate (by calling the Hotline) to meet the survivor at the hospital. The advocate can provide support through a SANE exam when specially trained nurses collect evidence of the crime, should they choose to pursue a police investigation now or in the future.

Physical Violence

Pushing
Biting
Grabbing
Restraining
Breaking objects
Locking out of house
Pulling out of car
Driving recklessly
Punching walls or doors

Emotional Abuse

Threats
Accusations of unfaithfulness
Leaving hostile messages
Insulting family or friends
Keeping partner from sleeping
Threats to hurt or take children
Threats to hurt pets
Extreme jealousy or controlling behavior
Stalking

Sexual Violence /Abuse

Unwanted touching
Hurtful sex
Forced sex
Refusal to protect against pregnancy or STI
Deliberately exposing to STI
Forced exposure to pornography