

Parents and Caregivers' Information Sheet

Grade 10 - Workshop 7 - 2022

UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

MY TEEN DOES NOT HAVE A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP, DOES THIS SHEET CONCERN ME?

It's never too early to talk to your teen about healthy relationships or dating violence prevention. Starting conversations - even if you don't think your teen is dating - is an important step in preventing relationship violence. Here are some conversation points:

- Ask them for their opinion on what makes a relationship harmonious? You can start the conversation by talking to your teen about the qualities you look for in the relationships you build with others (eg. honesty, respect, humour).
- What do you think of your friends' relationships?
- Can you identify an unhealthy relationship? What would you do if you witnessed it?



STATISTICS FROM THE BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY (2018)

- 41% of girls have been the victim of verbal harassment of a sexual nature
- 27% of boys have experienced verbal sexual harassment
- 13% of young people admit to having been in a physically abusive relationship
- 13% of boys, and 31% of girls, have experienced physical harassment of a sexual nature

HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY TEEN TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

To protect young people, it is essential that the adults in their lives recognize the seriousness of violence, as well as the distinction between healthy and unhealthy interpersonal relationships. We also encourage parents to become familiar with the early signs of abuse as well as the behaviours present in the abuse cycle (see resources below for more information). Ultimately, it's important to proactively and regularly communicate with teens about healthy relationships. Consider the following avenues:

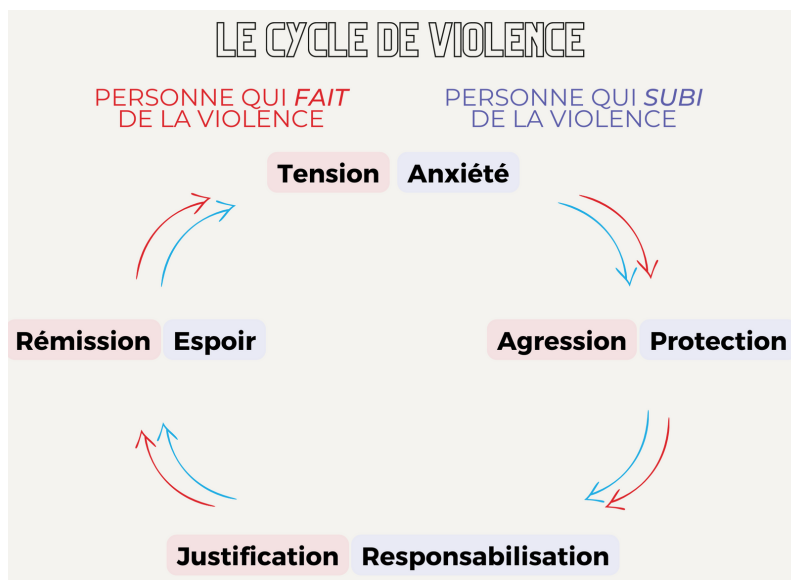
- **Safe environment:** Encourage your teenager to ask you questions by reminding them that they are not alone and that you are judgement-free.
- **Open discussion:** Discuss the messages and stereotypes conveyed in the media as well as the portrayal of unhealthy relationships.
- **Discuss online relationship building:** It is important to talk about online safety, in order to avoid unhealthy relationships on the internet. Remind your teen to tell you if they're having problems online. Set boundaries with your teen about their use of social media.
- **Talk about the cycle of abuse:** By normalizing the conversation to the typical progression of an abusive relationship, you are providing your teenager with the facts before they even risk ending up in an unhealthy relationship. This is essential to avoid the cycle of abuse in romantic relationships!



Watch on  YouTube

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The cycle of violence is just that: a cycle. At each phase, there are different unhealthy warning signs that can indicate that the person is ending up in an unhealthy relationship. Knowing the cycle and possible signs can help you assess your teen's relationships to help them come to the conclusion that their relationships may be unhealthy and/or abusive.



WHAT TO DO IF MY CHILD MAKES A VIOLENT DISCLOSURE?

- Listen without judging and believe your teen;
- Remember that people in unhealthy/abusive relationships usually do not respond well to interventions in which you try to 'lead' them: even if the intentions are good, this type of intervention can make you appear as if you are trying to control them, like their abusive partner;
- Give them control in their break-up and exit plan, and support them in their decisions. It is essential not to force and take control.
- Explain, gently and without judgment, that you care about their safety and well-being. Emphasize that you are there for them;
- Tell your teen often that they are precious and that this kind of relationship is unacceptable;
- Say things like: "I know it's complicated," "It's not your fault," "You don't deserve this";
- Realize your support limits and help your teen access resources;
- Discuss options and procedures to consider: report to the appropriate authorities, consult a counselor and/or psychologist, prosecute/lay charges, respond to medical needs, etc.

It's not easy to just get out of an abusive relationship. Your teen may be defensive and withdrawn. Repeat that you are there for them, stay calm and thoughtful during these conversations.

HOW TO SUPPORT MY TEEN

- List your concerns about their relationship.
- To help them see things objectively, ask them if they would mind seeing another person treated like them in a relationship.
- Breaking up is not easy. Be there for your teen and give them all the support and advice they need.
- Advise your teen to end all contact after the break-up. Support them in their efforts.
- If your teenager's ex-partner continues to contact them, whether by text, email, letter or phone, and you fear for their safety, seek help from the police (restraining order) and mental health specialists.

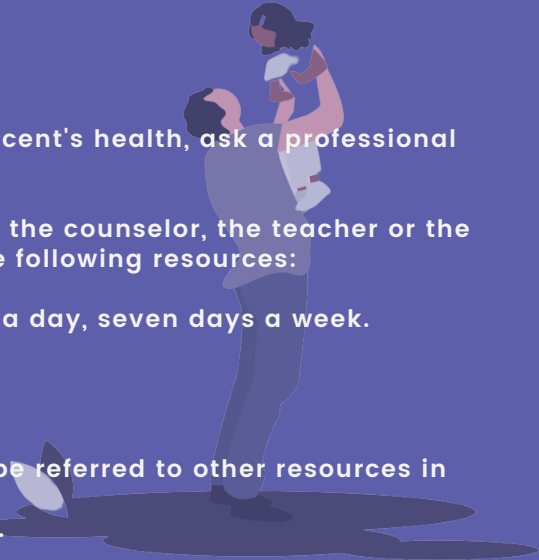


Resources

⚠ Important! If you are concerned about your adolescent's health, ask a professional for help, or call the helplines mentioned below.

Do not hesitate to communicate with the school staff: the counselor, the teacher or the principal. Your family doctor can also help, as can the following resources:

- **Kids Help Phone:** to confide in somebody, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anonymous and bilingual. Toll-free number: 1-800-668-6868. kidshelpphone.ca
- **Ending Violence Association BC:** to confide in and be referred to other resources in British Columbia. Toll-free number (VictimLink BC): 1-800-563-0808.



RESOURCES IN FRENCH

- Site web [Violence Info](#): apprenez plus sur chaque phase du cycle de la violence, les comportements communs de l'agresseur et de la victime et les indicateurs de violence.
- Fiche de ressources [UnePorteGrandeOuverte](#) pour plus d'information sur les relations malsaines chez les jeunes.



RESOURCES IN ENGLISH

- Information sheets [TheDoorThatsNotLocked](#) - to better understand indicators of abuse
- Website: [Love is Respect](#)

Contact us:

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