

## What Teens **DO** and **DON'T** need from Adults and Peers

- **DO** listen and believe
- **DO** offer to go with the victim to get help or talk to a professional
- **DO** make a firm statement that violence under any circumstances is unacceptable
- **DO** be a role-model for healthy relationships
- **DO** seek help for the teen's nuclear family so that the teen does not see the relationship as a way out
- **DO** assist the teen in getting legal and other protection (protection order, file charges, change phone numbers)
- **DON'T** be critical of the teen or the teen's partner
- **DON'T** ask blaming questions (Why don't you just break up with him?-or- What did you do or say to provoke them?)
- **DON'T** pressure decisions
- **DON'T** forbid the teens to see each other
- **DON'T** talk to both teens together (the victim will feel inhibited as to what he/she can say)
- **DON'T** assume that the victim wants to leave or that you know what's best for him/her

We believe all people have a right to a life free of physical violence, sexual assault, verbal/emotional abuse, and restriction of personal liberties.

We believe that violence is a societal problem, a learned behavior, and with intervention and education, the cycle of violence can be broken.

We believe in the worth, dignity, and uniqueness of the individual, and we support these values through education, personal growth, self-reliance, and self-determination.

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*This pamphlet is sponsored in part by the Office of the Attorney General: Division of Victim Services.*

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## Ending Teen Dating Violence

**Toll Free 24-Hour Crisis Line**  
**1-877-864-9688**

Cody Office  
1220 13th St.  
Cody, WY  
307-272-4754

Powell Office\*  
335 N. Gilbert Street  
Powell, WY  
307-754-7959  
Fax: 307-754-4448

\*Powell office is ADA accessible



As adolescents, boys and girls are forming their first conclusions about what to expect and accept in intimate relationships. Teenagers may be predisposed to accept physical violence because of their exposure to it in homes (either as victims or witnesses) or in the media. Given this early learning, it is critical for parents, caregivers and/or school personnel to recognize and respond to the early warning signs.

### **Common signs that a teen is experiencing dating violence or rape:**

#### **Physical bruises or other signs of injury**

Bear in mind that victims will often attempt to hide their injuries due to embarrassment. Be alert to sudden changes in dress, make-up and/or explanation of injuries which seem out of character.

#### **Truancy, failing, withdrawal from activities, dropping out of school**

An abusive relationship drains the victim of energy. The energy he/she still has is spent trying to make things right for the abuser.

#### **Sudden or increased social isolation**

Due to shame or jealous accusations on the part of the abuser, the victim will withdraw

from friends and become increasingly isolated.

#### **Difficulty making decisions**

Victims may appear anxious about making independent decisions because they must continuously “get permission” from their abuser.

#### **Sudden changes in mood or personality**

These changes may include depression, withdrawal, acting out, secretiveness, increased insecurity or feelings of inadequacy, anxiousness, preoccupation with their dating partner.

#### **Use of alcohol or drugs**

This may be in response to direct pressure from his/her abuser or an attempt to numb the pain or emotional ambivalence about the relationship.

#### **Pregnancy**

Many teenage girls feel pregnancy will help them get out of a bad situation. Over 70% of pregnant or parenting teens are beaten by their partners. Pregnancy significantly increases the risk of violence in teenage relationships.

#### **Crying easily; getting “hysterical” or overreacting to minor incidents**

The victim who lives in fear of another incident is living under extreme tension. Reacting to this stress, he/she may explode or become hysterical in response to something minor (i.e., screaming when asked why she is late for class.)

## **The Teen’s Dating Bill of Rights**

- 1) *I have the right to trust myself above all others.*
- 2) *I have the right to decent treatment by anyone I date.*
- 3) *I have the right to refuse to date anyone.*
- 4) *I have the right to be safe on a date.*
- 5) *I have the right to be assertive on a date.*
- 6) *I have the right to pay my own way on a date.*
- 7) *I have the right to disagree with my date.*
- 8) *I have the right to refuse sex or any other kind of physical intimacy with my date.*
- 9) *I have the right to say “no.”*
- 10) *I have the right to be happy with myself, with or without a partner in my life.*
- 11) *I have the right to know who I am.*
- 12) *I have the right to know who I’m dating.*
- 13) *I have the right to use my own transportation on a date.*
- 14) *I have the right to leave any dating situation when my instincts tell me to leave.*
- 15) *I have the right to protect myself against battery and sexual assault.*
- 16) *I have the right to a healthy dating relationship.*
- 17) *I have the right to be loved.*
- 18) *I have the right to be cared about.*
- 19) *I have the right to high self esteem.*
- 20) *I have the right to get angry when my rights are being violated.*