

Engaging Diverse Partners to Prevent Dating Abuse

You have the right
to a safe and
healthy relationship...
free from violence
and free from fear



About Break the Cycle

Abuse doesn't wait. It starts when dating starts.

Break the Cycle is the leading, national nonprofit organization working exclusively on teen dating violence.

Break the Cycle works with youth and adults in communities nationwide to prevent and end dating violence.

Break the Cycle provides innovative prevention education and services to address dating violence.

Break the Cycle advocates for changes in laws and systems to better protect the rights and promote the health of teens nationwide.

Break the Cycle believes everyone has the right to safe and healthy relationships.

What were you like when you were 15?

Friends?
Girlfriend?

Clothing?

Boyfriend?

Music?

Classes? School? Teachers?
Parents? Siblings? Family?



Where We're Going

1

- The power of collaboration.

2

- Define and understand the dynamics of teen dating abuse.

3

- Identify the connections between teen pregnancy and dating abuse.

4

- How to address teen dating abuse in the context of pregnancy prevention.

1

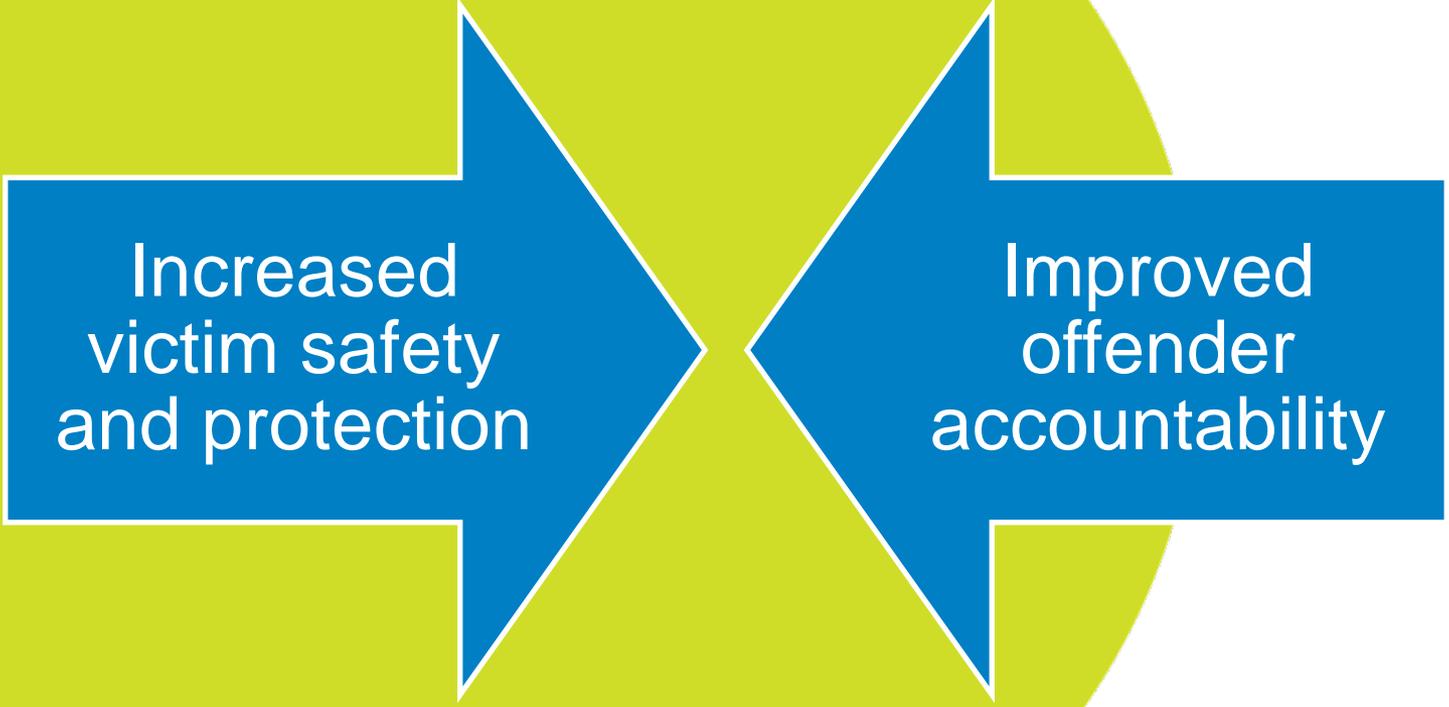
The power of collaboration.

What is Coordinated Community Response?

An approach to domestic violence intervention developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN (aka “The Duluth Model”)

A “system of networks, agreements, processes and applied principles created by the local shelter movement, criminal justice agencies, and human service programs...”

Why Collaborate?



Increased
victim safety
and protection

Improved
offender
accountability

Guiding Principles

1. Respond to the needs of victims
2. Focus on changing the offender's behavior and the system's response
3. Recognize different impacts on different people
4. Address the context of violence
5. Avoid responses that further endanger victims
6. Link with others
7. Involve advocates and victims in monitoring systems

Teen Intervention Points



2

Define and understand the dynamics of dating abuse.

What is Dating Abuse?

A *pattern* of *abusive behaviors* used to exert *power and control* over a *dating partner*.

"A pattern ..."



" ... of abusive behaviors..."

Physical Abuse

Any intentional unwanted contact with the victim's body by either the abuser or an object within the abuser's control.

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the victim's right to control the circumstances of sexual activity.

Emotional/Verbal Abuse

Anything the abuser says or does to the victim that causes the victim to be afraid, lowers the victim's self esteem, or manipulates or controls the victim's feelings or behavior.

“ ...used to exert **power** and control...”



" ...over a dating partner."



Dating Abuse is Prevalent

- **One in three** teen girls experience some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse.
- During the 12 months before taking the YRBSS survey, **9.4% of middle and high school students** surveyed “had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend”.
- Young women between the ages of **16 and 24** experience the highest per capita rates of dating abuse.



... and Disproportionately Impacts Some Communities

- Dating violence is more prevalent among American Indian (13.4%), black (12.2%), and Hispanic (11.4%) than white (7.6%) students.
- Lesbian and gay students were nearly **3 times more likely** (27.5%) to report abuse than their heterosexual peers (10.2%).

Teen vs. Adult Experiences of Partner Abuse

- Same patterns and cycles of abuse.
- Same acts of abuse (by different methods).
- Same intensity.
- Same difficulty leaving a relationship.



Key Relationship Influencers



3

Identify the connections between teen pregnancy and dating abuse.

Dating Abuse Can Lead to Unintended Pregnancy...

- Adolescent girls in physically abusive relationships were **3 times more likely to become pregnant** than non-abused girls
- **1 in 5** young women experienced pregnancy coercion.
- **1 in 7** experienced birth control sabotage.



KNOW MORE. SAY MORE.

“Carollee started dating a 32-year-old man when she was 19. She noticed that whole rows of pills would disappear. When Carollee called her boyfriend on the disappearing birth control, he responded that he ‘knew’ she wanted to have his child.”

Carollee

...and the Link Goes Both Ways

- Pregnancy can act as a catalyst for abuse – abuse often begins or is intensified during pregnancy
- **20 to 25 percent** of pregnant teens reported physical or sexual abuse during pregnancy.



KNOW MORE. SAY MORE.

“He threatened me when I asked to use birth control, and always refused to use condoms after we became exclusive. When we decided to continue the pregnancy and marry, the overt abuse started within days of our wedding.”

Jessica

Role of Reproductive Health Services

- More than **one-half (53%)** of women seen at family planning clinics reported physical or sexual IPV.
- Warning sign of abuse may be repeated requests for testing.
- Other warning signs?



Dating Abuse and Sexual Behavior

Youth in one study with a history of dating violence:

- **2.8 times** more likely to have an STD
- Half as likely to use condoms consistently.
- More likely to fear consequences of negotiating condom use and pregnancy prevention
- Perceive less control over their sexuality
- Have peer norms non supportive of using condoms or of having a healthy relationship

KNOW MORE. SAY MORE.

“What’s the big deal?” “Libby’s”
boyfriend once retorted after
raping her. ‘It’s not like you
couldn’t get your hands on the
morning after pill if you actually
cared.’”

Libby

Reproductive Coercion

Pregnancy Pressure and Coercion

- Threatening to hurt a partner who does not agree to become pregnant
- Injuring a female partner in a way that she may have a miscarriage

Sexual Coercion

- Threatening to end a relationship if a person does not have sex
- Intentionally exposing a partner to a STI or HIV
- Threatening retaliation if notified of a positive STI result

Birth Control Sabotage

- Hiding, withholding, or destroying a partner's birth control pills
- Breaking or poking holes in condoms on purpose or removing a condom during sex in an explicit attempt to promote pregnancy

Most Private



Least Private

Depo-Provera
Implanon

Oral
Contraception
Condoms



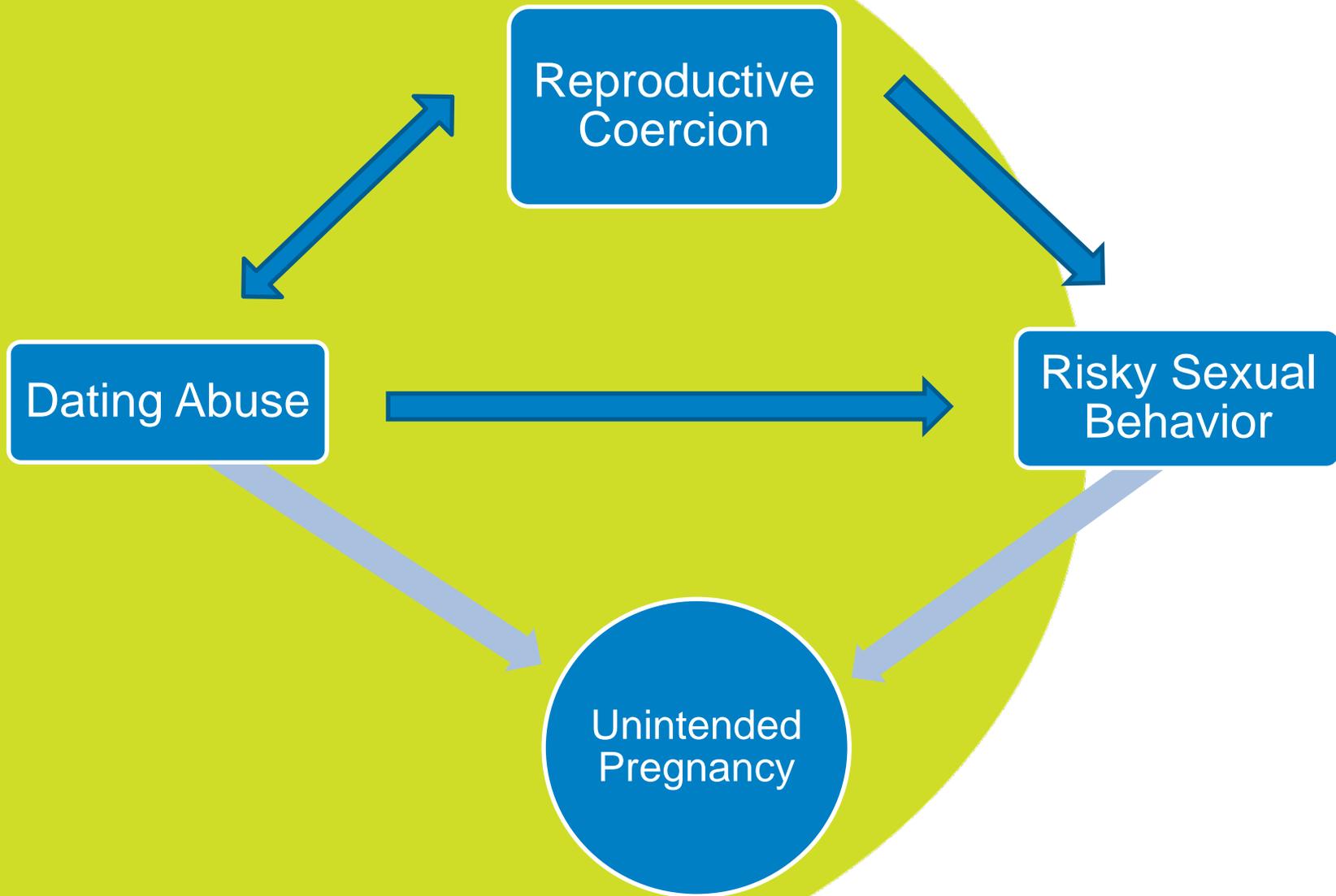
IUD's
NuvaRing

Secure



Vulnerable

Connecting It All



4

**How to address teen dating
abuse in the context of
pregnancy prevention.**

Knowledge into Action

Knowledge

- Dating abuse and unintended pregnancy are connected.
- Pregnant teens may be at greater risk of TDV.
- Reproductive health services may be a vital intervention point for TDV.
- A history of dating abuse is strongly tied to risky sexual behavior.
- Reproductive coercion is at the crux of dating abuse and pregnancy prevention.



Action

- Engage in dating abuse prevention as part of pregnancy prevention.
- Screen and safety plan with pregnant teens.
- Encourage reproductive health services involvement in screening and prevention.
- Talk about dating violence with teens engaged in risky sexual behavior.
- Understand what reproductive coercion may look like and how to talk about it.

...How?

Organizational
Preparedness

Individual
Preparedness

Engaging
Young People

Understanding
Disclosure

Engaging Young People

Frame the conversation in terms of feelings

- How does it make you feel when someone abuses your trust?
- How does it make you feel when your partner is controlling?

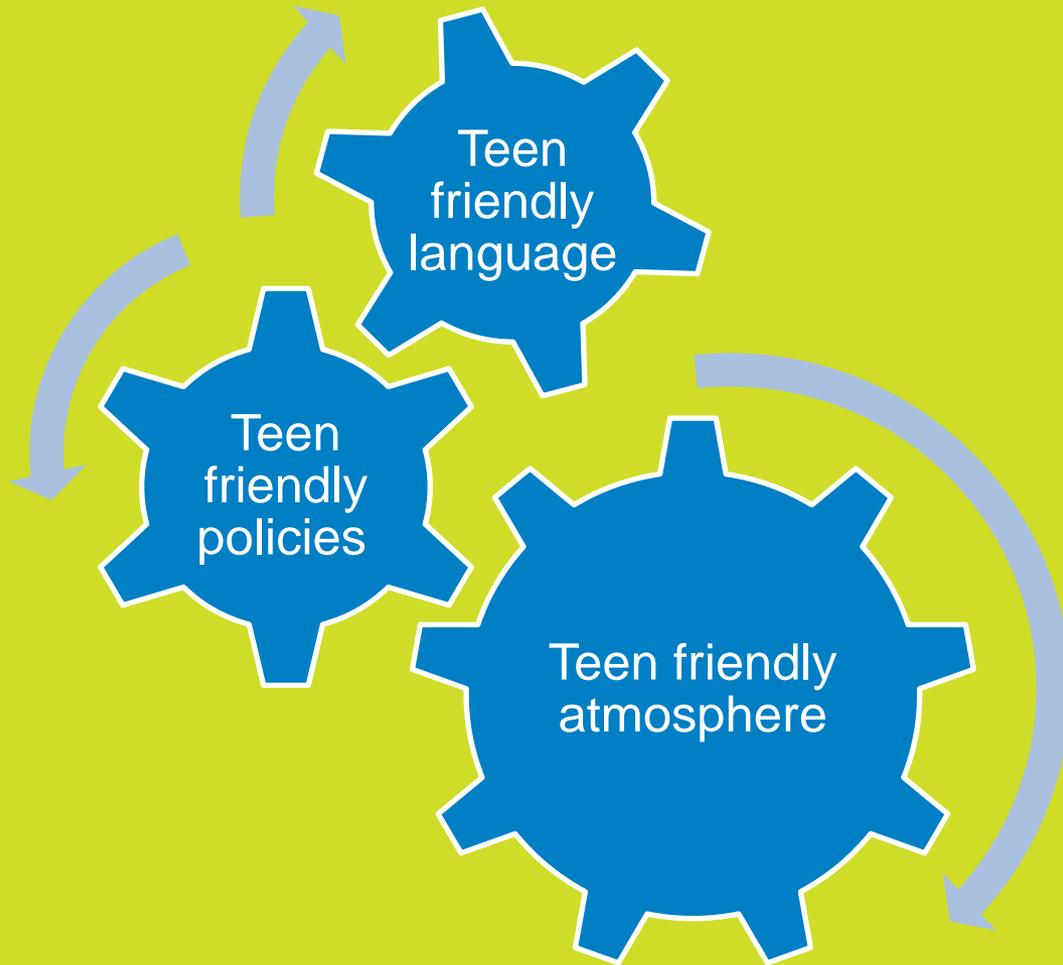
Frame it in terms of rights

- You have the right to privacy, which includes your body, thoughts, feelings, and identity.
- You have the right to a safe, healthy relationship.

Frame it around long-term impact

Making strong choices today will have an impact on your life for years to come.

Organizational Preparedness



For example:

- Accessibility
- Text and email
- Bring a friend
- Updated website
- After school hours

Individual Preparedness

Know the
teen's options

Know the
words

Know your
preconceptions

Obstacles to Reporting

- Low-self esteem, caused by abusive partner
- Wanting to keep relationship a secret
- Fear, shame, or embarrassment
- Self-blame or minimizing
- Wanting to protect the abuser
- Pregnancy and parenting
- Distrust of the police
- Fear of not being believed
- Isolation
- Love



Responding to Disclosure

- “I’m glad that you told me about this.”
- “This is important.”
- “I want you to be safe.”
- “Let’s make sure you get the help you need right now.”
- “It’s not your fault.”
- “You deserve to be treated with respect in your relationship.”
- “I am here if you ever need help or want to talk.”



Do

- ✓ Disclose reporting duties and confidentiality up front.
- ✓ Practice explaining your role/what you can offer.
- ✓ Acknowledge the importance of teen relationships.
- ✓ Ask teen how they want to handle the situation.
- ✓ Approach teen without judging sexual or relationship choice and without assuming sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ✓ Know great teen-friendly resources to share.

Take-Away Tips

- ✓ Referral network of providers ready and able to work with teen survivors (shelter, therapeutic support, legal support).
- ✓ Staff training on working with teen survivors.
- ✓ Develop collaborative relationships/cross-training with dating/sexual abuse providers .
- ✓ Prepare!

Resources



**Live Chat
ON!**



"loveis" to 77054



1-866-331-9474 or
1-866-331-8453 TTY

Contact Information

Erin Clark
Program Specialist
eclark@breakthecycle.org

P.O. Box 21034
Washington, DC 20009
202.824.0707

Kelley Hampton
Program Manager
khampton@breakthecycle.org

www.loveisrespect.org
A partnership between Break the Cycle and the National Dating Abuse Helpline, loveisrespect is the ultimate resource for information on dating abuse and healthy relationships. Includes resources for youth and parents.

- [Video 1](#)
- [Video 2](#)