

# IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE CLASSROOM

## A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



### TEEN DATING ABUSE STATISTICS

**1 IN 3 CHILDREN** will be exposed to family violence by age 17

**1 IN 3 TEENS** will experience physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse

**MOST PEOPLE** won't tell anyone about the abuse

**GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN** between ages 16-24 experience dating abuse at higher rates

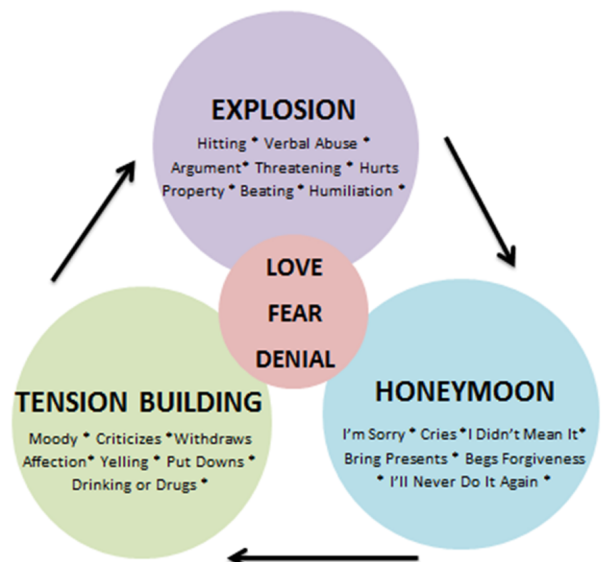
Teachers and Educators play an important role in establishing moral and ethical values for youth, teens, and young adults. Ending domestic abuse is a key part of that role.

## WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE

A deliberate pattern of behaviors used to gain and maintain **power** and **control** in a familial or intimate partner relationship.

Domestic Abuse is a conscious choice! Abusers may use the following tactics to exert power and control over their victims:

Physical Violence  
Harmful Language  
Social Standing  
Technology  
Minimizing, Denying or Blaming  
Financial Control  
Intimidation  
Stalking  
Threats  
Exclusion or Isolation  
Manipulation  
Sexual Coercion  
Harassment, Assault



# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

- **Listen without judgment**
- **Believe them** – validate their feelings and let them know that you believe them. Showing skepticism could make the victim hesitant to tell you when things are wrong or may drive them closer to their abuser.
- Help them understand that **the abuse is not their fault**
- **Be clear** – explain that domestic abuse is a crime and that you are concerned about their safety



- **Talk about the behaviors, not the person** – speak about the behaviors that you don't like (eg: "I don't like when your partner yells at you"). Remember, there still may be love in the relationship and speaking negatively may discourage the victim from asking for help in the future
- **Help develop a safety plan** – ultimately the decision to leave a relationship is up to the person, but encourage them to think about their own safety.
- **Get help from an expert**
- **Be prepared** -- be aware of mandatory reporting requirements and follow school protocol

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN HELPING A STUDENT

- How do the abuser's behaviors put the student at risk? In school? At home?
- Is the student fearful of speaking out due to their perceived awareness of your limitations in protecting them?
- Does the abuser isolate the student from safe friends, family or a supportive community?
- Have you encouraged the student to develop a safety plan? Have you asked: "Will you be safe when you leave?" "What do you normally do when things get out of hand?"
- Does student live in a household with abuse before engaging with the student's parents?
- Are there existing policies & procedures for domestic abuse at your school? How can the school protect the student from violence/ their abuser?
- What other support staff do you need to notify?

**PA ChildLine Report: 1-800-932-0313**  
**Laurel House Hotline: 1-800-642-3150**

# CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Talking to students about dating abuse doesn't have to be difficult. Check out some easy ways to incorporate ongoing conversations into your classroom:

- **Stereotype Collage:** have students make collages of images from magazines/newspapers/websites. Discuss how the images of people reinforce stereotypes. Ask: How do the people compare in size/build/looks to the teens at your school? Do regular people look like this? How many minorities and people with disabilities are represented?
- **Music Lyrics:** Encourage students to think about what they hear every day about healthy relationships. Play 3-5 popular songs for students. Ask: How do the lyrics to those songs support healthy relationships?
- **Safety Plan:** Have students complete a safety plan (available in teacher folder) as a homework assignment to prepare for any crisis situation.
- **Examples in movies or literature:** Have students discuss the relationships between characters in movies or readings presented in classroom. Ask: Are these relationships reflective of healthy/unhealthy relationships? What relationship would you want?
- **Love is Respect.org:** Have students explore *loveisrespect.org* and conduct an assignment on what they find.

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STUDENTS LOOK UP TO THEIR TEACHERS AS MENTORS. YOU HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE AND EMBODY HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

- **Love is Respect:** materials focused on teen dating abuse, providing services for teens, parents, educators, advocates to access information to prevent and end abusive relationships [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)
- **Futures Without Violence:** provides materials focused on ending violence against women and children, including Coaching Boys Into Men and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month [www.futureswithoutviolence.org/](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/)
- **Break the Cycle:** provides resources for youth leadership and education, as well as training and printable materials for advocates [www.breakthecycle.org/](http://www.breakthecycle.org/)
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** provides interactive online modules for teens and hotline information for teens with questions [www.thehotline.org/](http://www.thehotline.org/)
- **Laurel House:** A comprehensive domestic violence agency in Montgomery County, PA, providing free, private, and confidential services. [www.laurel-house.org](http://www.laurel-house.org)





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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION IN ENDING DOMESTIC ABUSE!

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As a comprehensive domestic violence agency in Montgomery County, PA, Laurel House provides **free**, **private**, and **confidential** services including:

- \*24-hour Confidential Hotline
- \*Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing
- \*Individual Counseling and Support Groups
- \*Crisis Counseling (DART)
- \*Legal and Medical Advocacy
- \*Children's Program
- \*Community Education
- \*Thrift Shops: Marian's Attic (King of Prussia)  
& Laurel's Loft (Lansdale)



For more information on training and presentation opportunities, please contact:  
Lydia Lynes at [llynes@laurel-house.org](mailto:llynes@laurel-house.org) or (610) 277-1860 ext. 121

24/7 Confidential Hotline: 1 (800) 642-3150  
Visit Us at [www.laurel-house.org](http://www.laurel-house.org)