

Your sister.
Your cousin.
Your classmate.
Your dad.
Your colleague.
Your grandma.
Your student.
Domestic abuse.
Sexual violence.
They can affect anyone.

How to Talk to Young People about Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence The Toolkit

Written from a Young Person's Perspective

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit was written by young people and is designed to be a guide for adults, specifically parents, on how to talk to teenagers about healthy relationships and topics such as sex, consent, and abuse.

The aim is to explain how best to approach these types of conversations with young people from a teenager's perspective.

ABOUT UK SAYS NO MORE

UK SAYS NO MORE is a national campaign, facilitated by London charity Hestia. The campaign launched in early 2016 with the aim to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence across the UK.

UK SAYS NO MORE unites and strengthens a diverse community of members under one powerful, visual symbol, and provides open-source tools, information and resources for individuals and organisation to get involved.

Together, we are challenging the myths and misconceptions around domestic abuse and sexual violence, sharing resources and information and ultimately working together to make real positive social change.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse and sexual violence within young people's relationships are more common than most people think:

On average, in the UK two women a week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner.

94% of young people experiencing intimate partner violence are female.

59% of girls aged 13–21, in 2014, reported some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year.

In March 2015, 6.6% of men and 12.6% of women aged 16 to 19 had experienced domestic abuse in the past year.

Additionally one in three girls (31%) and 6% of boys reported some form of sexual abuse within their relationships.

There is no age limit on abuse, it can be experienced by anyone, anywhere, and young people's cases should not be taken any less seriously because of their age.

Healthy relationships and sexual education is now compulsory learning in schools which helps to ensure that young people are well prepared for their future life.

By teaching teenagers how to be open about their feelings on these matters, you help to ensure that they experience healthy relationships all throughout life as they know the characteristics of an unhealthy one as well as who to contact in that situation.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

To educate young people on healthy relationships, adults must also have a clear idea on what one is. It is important to remember that abuse can arise in a variety of forms, not only physical but also emotional, psychological, sexual and financial. Therefore, just because there is no physical violence involved doesn't mean that it is a healthy relationship.

Some of the main characteristics that people look for in a healthy relationship are things such as:

SAFETY

Can experience the relationship without fear

HONESTY

Open to communicating freely and equally

INDIVIDUALITY

Accepts the limitation of themselves and their partner

COMMUNICATION

It's okay to argue but not okay to feel afraid during the argument

TRUST

It's okay to disagree and hold different opinions

COMPASSION

Welcomes affection and closeness

RESPECT

Shared decision making

SUPPORT

Passing on key characteristics to young people so that they practice these healthy ideals as well as detecting and experiencing them.



HOW TO TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Parents should be keen to educate themselves and be aware of ways to talk to young people, you don't have to be a victim of domestic abuse or sexual violence to be educated on it.

- Practice open conversations from a young age, it's never too early to teach young people about consent and healthy relationships.
- Teach them what makes a healthy relationship so they can spot the signs if they feel they are not in one.
- Explain all types of abuse and the variations, just because it doesn't leave a mark doesn't mean it's not abuse, abuse can be physical, emotional, financial, psychological, or sexual.
- Take an interest in what they are watching or seeing in everyday life, such as TV shows.

The dating show Love Island is hugely popular with young people and has been quoted as **"...the best educational tool we have right now about healthy and unhealthy relationships Schools need to take clips from #loveisland and teach kids what gaslighting and emotional abuse is because these examples are absolutely spot on."** - Twitter @ChantayJayy

Teenagers have such wide access nowadays to a range of media and it is so hard to stop them seeing potentially harmful things.

Monitor and talk openly about what they have seen and what they think of it. Avoiding uncomfortable situations can ultimately make them worse.

4



PARENTAL DO'S

TALK OPENLY

Keep nothing off limits. Don't be afraid to talk about certain taboo subjects, cover everything they want to know as it will be best to hear things from you rather than fake sources.

BE OPEN MINDED

Always try to see things from their perspective. Let them express themselves without fear of judgement. Use personal experiences to relate and remember that things are different at a younger age and their reactions and feelings will be different.

ALLOW PRIVACY

Your teen will only tell you as much as they want to. Understand and respect them and allow them their privacy. Give them time to open up to you voluntarily.

HAVE MUTUAL RESPECT

Treat them as your equal. Show them respect for their opinions and feelings as they will be more willing to open up. Don't put them down as showing respect teaches it.

SUPPORT THEM

Be there for them however they need you to be and how they want you to be. Show them that you are there for them. Help them to figure out what to do next and explore support options together.

...PARENTAL DON'TS

PUSH THEM

Young people can find it hard to articulate their feelings and problems especially to an adult. Give them their own time to open up to you. Don't try to force things out of them. Guiding them to talk to you is always okay. Don't pressure them into telling you things they don't want to.

PATRONISE THEM

Treat them as your equal and speak to them on your same level. Allow them to feel a level of maturity. Younger age doesn't always equate to lower maturity.

BE JUDGEMENTAL

Try to not make the situation overly negative, don't make them feel bad or blame them if they are in an unhealthy situation. Allow them to express themselves freely despite personal differences in opinion.

TURN A BLIND EYE

If your teenager comes to you with a serious issue, listen to them seriously and take the time to help them. Don't assume they are lying or attention-seeking.

NORMALISE TOXIC BEHAVIOUR

Enforce the idea of a healthy relationship and be sure that they know what the characteristics of one are. Don't assume they already know.

ASKING QUESTIONS

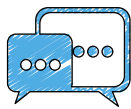
Asking young people questions and getting their opinions will make them feel valued as well as allowing parents to find out what their young people think on certain important topics.

- 1. What are the characteristics of a healthy/unhealthy relationship?**
- 2. How do you spot if you or someone you know are in an unhealthy relationship?**
- 3. What should you do if you believe you are in an unhealthy relationship/a victim of domestic abuse?**
- 4. “They didn’t hit me so it can’t be domestic abuse” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**
- 5. “I’m too young to be a victim of domestic abuse” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

WHO TO CONTACT

Making teens open to such resources is important so they have the abilities to understand healthy relationships. It also teaches them what to do if they are in an unhealthy or toxic situation or know someone else who is.

There are many organisations to visit or contact for general information, advice, or specific help:



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE

A 24-hour freephone service which can be contacted by **0808 2000 247**



UK SAYS NO MORE

See the campaign goals, previous projects and current activities and get involved at

<https://uksaysnomore.org/campaign/>



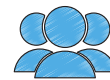
BRIGHT SKY:

Bright Sky is a new app providing free advice and help to those who are victims or those who feel like someone they know if a victim of domestic abuse. It includes a private journal as well as instant help contacts and links to further resources.



CHILDLINE

Their helpline can be called at **0800 1111** or visit their website at <https://www.childline.org.uk/>



THE MIX

Offers essential support for those under 25

Call **0808 808 4994** or visit <https://www.themix.org.uk/>



DISCOVER MORE

INTERESTING LINKS TO FOLLOW

<https://inews.co.uk/opinion/comment/love-island-adam-rosie-eyal-megan-relationship/>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/sex/healthy-relationships/>

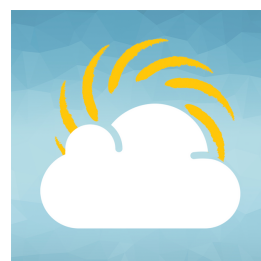
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raxPKkIDF2k>

<https://www.themix.org.uk/sex-and-relationships>

<https://www.breakthecycle.org/blog/what-makes-dating-relationship-healthy-young-people>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ>

<https://stayteen.org/videos/what-makes-healthy-relationship>



Bright Sky

DOWNLOAD THE APP



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