

LOVE IS NOT ABUSE

A DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE PREVENTION CURRICULUM

COLLEGE EDITION

LIZ CLAIBORNE INC
A PORTFOLIO OF BRANDS

LOVE
IS NOT
ABUSE

SINCE 1991 LIZ CLAIBORNE INC.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	
INTRODUCTION	01 - 03
WHAT IS DATING ABUSE ?	04 - 20
THE PATTERN OF ABUSE IN DATING VIOLENCE & ABUSE	21 - 35
TECHNOLOGY AND DATING ABUSE	36 - 57
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	58 - 61

This curriculum was created by Liz Claiborne Inc. in conjunction with Education Development Center, Inc., an international, non-profit organization that focuses on education and health; Break the Cycle, a non-profit organization that works to prevent domestic and dating violence; WiredSafety.org, the world’s largest and oldest non-profit cyber safety organization; and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their advocates.

Additional copies of this curriculum can be ordered online from our website, along with handbooks and videos for adults, teenagers, and caregivers on domestic violence and dating abuse, by visiting, loveisnotabuse.com.

FORWARD

This curriculum was adapted for the college audience with the help and guidance of Liz Claiborne Inc.'s College Coalition, which is comprised of educators and administrators from Columbia University, George Mason University, The University of Kansas, Virginia Community Colleges and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

Each section of this curriculum can be addressed on its own, depending on the time frame available to you, or the curriculum can be addressed in one session by selecting different pieces of information from each of the three sections. You are free to facilitate the curriculum's material in a manner that best fits your college or university.

Dating violence and abuse can be a very difficult subject to discuss, let alone discuss with a group of students. However, it is an important topic that should be addressed. The more it is discussed, the more we can ensure students have the potentially life-saving information they need to be aware of the warning signs and know where to get help. As part of your preparation to teach the Love Is Not Abuse curriculum, please ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who is the most appropriate person to address students or discuss this sensitive information?** Ideally, the presenter and/or co-facilitator should be knowledgeable about dating violence and have experience in dealing with abusive relationships.
- **Have I been trained to teach about dating violence and abuse? If not, how can I be trained to educate students about this important topic?** Liz Claiborne Inc. and the Centers for Disease Control's *Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence* is a free online training designed to help educators, youth-serving organizations and others working with students understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with dating violence. To learn more about *Dating Matters* or to take the training, visit [cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters.html). Once the training is completed, users become officially certified to teach on this topic. You may also want to reach out to local experts who can take you through the lessons and help you navigate this topic with confidence.

- **Do I have a support system in place?** A support system can include an on-campus counseling center or the campus health office. If you are planning on addressing this material but do not have a support system in place, you can reach out to a local non-profit or domestic violence organization and request their assistance. This is a critical element to have in place prior to addressing this material. The lessons may trigger a response from students in relation to their own experiences with violence and abuse.

- **Am I knowledgeable about on and off campus student resources?**

We strongly encourage you to prepare a handout in advance for students who may want to seek outside help after the session. The handout should list locations on campus that can provide assistance, help lines and local resources for immediate attention as well as any trained counselors who can be contacted directly if a student expresses the need or desire to do so.

It is recommended that presenters give their classes, workshops, etc. advance notice that dating violence and abuse is a topic which will be discussed the next time they meet. It is important to give audience members control over the decision to attend a presentation on this topic. This information will help students make an informed decision regarding their attendance and level of participation.

**INTRODUCTION:
THE LOVE
IS NOT ABUSE
CURRICULUM**

COLLEGE EDITION

DATING ABUSE

It is during their college years that young adults begin to form serious romantic relationships and/or continue to grow the romantic relationships they may have started in their teenage years. Yet with a limited understanding of healthy and unhealthy behaviors in dating relationships, college students are susceptible to becoming targets of dating abuse. Consider this:

- Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) college students report dating violence by a previous partner, and 21% report violence by a current partner.¹
- More than half (60%) of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.²
- Ninety percent of college women who are victims of rape or attempted rape know their assailant.³
- The attacker is usually a classmate, friend, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend or other acquaintance (in that order).⁴

Defined as a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive behavior or privacy intrusions in a dating relationship, dating abuse takes many forms. It ranges from punching, slapping, pushing, and grabbing to rape and murder; from threats of violence, verbal attacks, and other forms of intimidation to extreme jealousy, possessiveness, and controlling behavior. Dating abuse is designed to be isolating and controlling, taking different forms at different times and limited only by the energy, imagination and desperation of the abuser.

In the online environment, it can be anonymous, with the abusers hiding behind fake, stolen, or impersonated accounts and screen names. It can involve spying and digital tracking of communications and online activities. It can mean using technology (cell phones, social networking sites, etc.) to stay in constant contact.

No matter what form abuse takes, the effect on victims is that no place feels private. No place feels safe.

Dating and domestic abuse are typically not one-time incidents, but a pattern of abusive behaviors over time that cause fear and/or harm. As the pattern continues, the abuser uses emotional manipulation and/or physical domination to gain control and power over his or her partner.

Dating abuse does not discriminate. It affects people of all races, religions, ages, sexual orientations, genders, and cultures. It affects people regardless of how much money they have or what neighborhood they live in. While the vast majority of abusers are male and most targets (also known as victims or survivors) are female, females can also be abusers and males can be targets of dating abuse.

1 C. Sellers and M. Bromley, "Violent Behavior in College Student Dating Relationships," Journal of Contemporary Justice, (1996).

2 I. Johnson and R. Sigler, "Forced Sexual Intercourse on Campus," Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, (1996).

3 Fisher, B., F. Cullen and M. Turner (2000). The Sexual Victimization of College Women. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

4 Fisher, B., F. Cullen and M. Turner (2000). The Sexual Victimization of College Women. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Abuse in relationships can be a difficult topic for anyone to talk about, especially young men. Because dating abuse has traditionally been considered a “woman’s issue,” many young men feel as if they have no positive, proactive way to help stop it – let alone ask for the help they might need as either the target or the abuser.

The bottom line is this: Everyone must get involved in preventing dating abuse and have a better understanding of the resources available to those who are involved in such abuse in order to help and support them.

OVERVIEW OF “THE LOVE IS NOT ABUSE” CURRICULUM

This curriculum focuses on four critical goals:

1. Increasing students’ understanding of dating abuse
2. Enabling students to reach out to provide support and help to a friend or family member who may be involved in an abusive relationship
3. Increasing help-seeking behavior among students involved in abusive dating relationships
4. Promoting healthier approaches to dating relationships and conflicts

COLLABORATING TO TEACH LOVE IS NOT ABUSE

We encourage students, faculty and staff at the college or university to collaborate to teach the curriculum. This curriculum could be used in collaboration with a variety of groups such as residence life staff, Deans of Students and their staffs, Counseling Center staff, student health services, Health Education staff, Women’s Center staff, law enforcement, athletics staff, faculty members, student leaders and local community based sexual assault and domestic violence agencies. These issues span a number of disciplines and teaching the curriculum as a team can be an effective way to approaching these topics in a holistic manner.

Many schools draw on staff from community-based domestic violence programs to facilitate lessons on dating abuse. These and other experts (law enforcement, attorneys, cyber safety experts, etc.) can participate in implementing Love Is Not Abuse in two ways: as the lead facilitator of the curriculum or as a guest speaker sharing information and community resources.

It is important for facilitators of the material to be prepared for some students to disclose experiences of dating abuse after learning about and discussing this issue. Before implementing Love Is Not Abuse, facilitators should also inform their institution’s psychological services and advocacy offices. Additionally, those requesting programming should think about whom on their campus might be a stakeholder or identify a staff/office member that might need to respond to concerns students raise after being taught this information (e.g. if a lesson aimed at student athletes is happening, coaches might need to know, or if such a program is happening in a certain dorm, then housing staff and RAs should be informed).

CREATING AN INSTITUTIONAL DATING ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

As part of a comprehensive approach to health and safety, Love Is Not Abuse can be a springboard to starting dating abuse prevention programs. The following are possible additional steps toward developing a campus-wide initiative:

- **Review and revise college and university policies related to dating abuse, focusing on keeping students safe.** College/university policies should address the safety and well-being of targets of dating abuse, consequences for abusers, procedures in the event of a restraining order, procedures for students to ask for help and to report abuse they witness or know about, and ways for students to connect to community dating/partner abuse resources. Consider instituting a policy addressing inappropriate use of technology (e.g. cell phones, e-mail, text-messaging, social networking web sites) to control, intimidate or bully other people. For information about creating a dating/partner abuse response policy for your college or university, contact Break the Cycle by visiting breakthecycle.org.
- **Raise awareness about dating abuse at your college or university.** Educate students, faculty, staff and other campus stakeholders, including administrators, about the issue and how to respond to students seeking help. Encourage faculty and facilitators to address dating abuse in appropriate classes. Conduct a presentation during a parent orientation. Organize a student art exhibit or an essay or poetry contest on dating abuse. Include articles in newsletters and on the campus website. Point stakeholders to the loveisnotabuse.com website and other resources for ideas and information.
- **Make it clear that your campus is a safe place and students are allowed – and encouraged – to talk about dating abuse.** Put up posters and flyers around campus to educate students about the issue and publicize local resources. Invite staff from a local domestic violence organization to speak to students, staff, and other stakeholders. Facilitate students' production of peer-to-peer awareness materials, sharing the message and promoting awareness.
- **Start a peer education group.** Students experiencing dating abuse are more likely to tell their friends than anyone else. Peer educators can be trained to teach other students about the issue and/or to co-facilitate groups that focus on healthy relationships. Peer education groups can be a great source of support, while also being a positive, powerful influence. However, **it is not the peer educators' role to counsel and "rescue" targets from abuse.** Instead, they can encourage targets to talk to experts who can provide help and guidance.
- **Make students aware of the anonymous, secure, and easily-accessible National Domestic Violence Hotline.** Resources and services are available 24/7 online at thehotline.org or by calling 1-800-799-7233 and 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).
- **Host A MOST club on your campus.** Men Can Stop Rape trains male facilitators to host Men Of Strength Clubs that encourage young men to learn about healthy masculinity and re-defining male strength. As most abusers are male, reaching out to the men in your school is a great violence prevention tool. Visit mencanstoprape.org for more info.

WHAT IS DATING ABUSE?

PURPOSE: To understand what dating abuse is and how college students are affected by it.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to do the following

- define vocabulary related to dating abuse and apply it to their own experiences
- identify the forms of dating abuse
- understand the roles of abuser, target, and bystander in dating abuse
- describe steps that a bystander can take to help someone who is a target of dating abuse

MATERIALS

- Read “**Facilitator Background Information: Teen Dating Abuse**” (appears later in this lesson) before teaching this lesson
- Photocopy “**I Thought Things Would Change**” excerpt for all students
- Photocopy “**What Is Teen Dating Abuse?**” for all students
- Prepare a transparency of “**Roles in Dating Abuse: Abuser, Target, and Bystander**”
- Photocopy “**Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused**” for all students
- Photocopy “**Possible Warning Signs in Dating Relationships**” as needed
- Photocopy “**Decreasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship**” as needed

TEACHING TIPS

- (A)** Because this curriculum deals with sensitive issues related to dating abuse, it is critical to create a safe environment in the room. If you have not already established guidelines for discussion, please do so before beginning this lesson. Here are some examples of recommended guidelines:
- Everyone is allowed to express his or her opinion without interruption.
 - Respect each point of view, even if it is different from yours.
 - No question or questioner is stupid or wrong; no put-downs are allowed. Treat other people in the class/group respectfully.
 - What students say should be kept confidential and not discussed or shared with others.
- (B)** It is likely that there are one or more students in every college classroom or group who are perpetrators of dating abuse (i.e., abusers) or targets. This curriculum may be especially challenging for them, as well as for students who have experienced child sexual abuse or rape, or who are bystanders to physical or sexual violence in their homes. See “Facilitator Background Information: Dating Abuse” at the end of this lesson for responding when students reach out for help.
- (C)** Many students who are not abusers or targets of dating abuse are bystanders to it. Bystanders play a critical role in preventing and reducing dating abuse. Friends may be used by an abuser to further harm or gain access to a target, often without the friend’s full knowledge of the situation.
- (D)** Mention to the group/class that this curriculum will provide everyone with helpful information and skills to reduce dating abuse now or in the future. Emphasize that dating abuse is an issue for us all, and that working together, we can make an impact.
- (E)** This curriculum uses the term “target” to refer to individuals who experience abuse or violence at the hand of someone they are dating. We chose this term instead of “victim,” which can have a connotation of passive suffering.
- (F)** Depending on the school and community in which you work, you may (or may not) choose to explain to students that dating abuse occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered students are just as much at risk for abuse in their relationships as anyone else.

ACTIVITIES

STEP ONE (15 minutes)

Discuss dating abuse and the many forms it takes.

- Give each student a copy of the “I Thought Things Would Change” excerpt.
- Have student volunteers take turns reading the excerpt aloud.
- Ask students what they think the excerpt is about.
- Ask students what they think of when they hear the phrase “dating abuse.” As students brainstorm, record each response on the board.
- Offer a definition of dating abuse that includes students’ responses, for example, “Dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship.”
- Ask students for examples of dating abuse behaviors. Prompt them to consider the different ways this abuse can occur (face-to-face, through technology like cell phones, instant messages or web sites, using another person to convey messages or carry out actions, intimidation, pressure to engage in sexual activities they may not be ready for/want to participate in).
- Give each student a copy of “What Is Dating Abuse?” Review the handout.
- Explain that while many more females than males are physically abused by someone they are dating, males do experience dating abuse (especially via technology). Men and women may also be involved in relationships that are abusive or unhealthy for both partners. Mention that dating abuse affects people of all races, religions, cultures, genders and sexual orientations regardless of how much money they have or the neighborhood they live in.
- Explore with students how dating abuse feels by asking:
 - What forms of dating abuse did Adaliz experience?
 - How did Adaliz feel when Richard was being abusive to her? How does Richard’s abuse affect Adaliz’s day-to-day life? What evidence of this can you find in the text?
- Emphasize that dating abuse is never the fault of the person who is being abused. Nothing this person says, does, believes or wears caused the abuse or gives anyone the right to hurt her or him.
- If students question why abusers hurt their targets, explain that abusers use physical, sexual, verbal/emotional, and digital abuse to control the target. Violence is a learned behavior that is shaped by observation, experience, culture, family and community. There is never an excuse for violent behavior. Abusers may believe that abusive behavior is “normal.” They may lack positive role models for their relationships.

- Ask students what they think are some of the effects of dating abuse on the person who experiences the violence or abuse. Then describe some of the effects that students do not mention, such as:

- Feeling ashamed
- Feeling anxious
- Becoming depressed
- Having thoughts of suicide
- Doing poorly in school
- Losing interest in friends or favorite activities
- Dressing differently, changing hairstyles
- Engaging in self-harm, such as eating disorders or cutting
- Isolation
- Discarding or changing friends

STEP TWO (3 minutes)

Define the roles of abuser, target and bystander.

- Point out that in abusive dating relationships, people may fall into one of three roles: abuser, target or bystander. Pass out a photocopy of the “Roles in Dating Abuse: Abuser, Target and Bystander” handout. Explain that bystanders don’t have to be present when the abuser is hurting the target; they simply have to know about the abuse. Many young adults report that abusive behavior goes both ways and men and women can be both victims and abusers. That’s why it is important for everyone to learn how to have safe and healthy relationships and how to identify abusive and controlling behavior.

- Review the definitions on the transparency or handout. Mention that although bystanders cannot “rescue” the target from the abuse, they can encourage him or her to talk to people who can provide help and guidance and offer support. Bystanders may also be able to talk to friends who are behaving abusively and express their disapproval or ask them to stop if it is safe for the bystander to do so.

- Ask students who they think the abuser is in the “I Thought Things Would Change” excerpt. Who do they think is the target? Who do they think is a bystander? (Possible answers: Richard’s friends who watched Adaliz and reported to Richard if they saw her talking to anyone. Anyone else in Adaliz’s and Richard’s life who was aware or strongly suspected that he was abusing her.)

STEP THREE (25 minutes)

Explore how bystanders can help.

- Ask students who they think could be a bystander to dating abuse. (Possible answers: friends of the abuser or the target, family members, classmates, neighbors, professors, faculty, etc.)
- Ask students what they could do to help a friend or family member who was being abused by someone he or she was dating.
- Give each student a copy of “Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused.”
- Review the top of the handout, which summarizes what a bystander to dating abuse can do.
- Read the directions at the bottom of the handout. Explain that students will work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz.
- After 15 minutes, ask for two or three pairs of student volunteers to read aloud the letters they wrote. Have the rest of the class comment on what the letter-writers did well in adhering to the suggestions in “Helping a Friend or Family Member Who Is Being Abused.”

STEP FOUR (25 minutes)

Identify strategies for reaching out to a friend or family member who is abusing a partner.

- Mention that students may not only know someone who is being abused, but also someone who is being abusive to a partner.
- Explain that abusers often use excuses to explain away—or rationalize—their abusive behavior. Ask students for examples of excuses that abusers might use to convince themselves and others that the abuse is not happening or is not a problem. Sample answers may include:
 - It’s not really abuse.
 - I didn’t mean to hurt him (or her).
 - It was a fluke. It’ll never happen again.
 - She (or he) got me so angry, I had to do it.
 - She (or he) likes it.
 - I can’t control myself when I get mad.
 - I only did it because I was stressed out/drunk/high.

STEP Five (5 minutes)

Conclusion

- Give each student a copy of “Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship.” Review the handout. Emphasize that even when someone is planning to end—or has already ended—an abusive relationship, he or she should continue use of these precautions in case the abuser attempts to commit additional violence. Consider stressing that the most dangerous time for the target is when he or she has left the relationship.
- Distribute one National Domestic Violence Hotline wallet card to each student. Explain that the card is sized to fit in a wallet and that it contains a toll-free phone number and web site for assistance with dating abuse issues.

ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL):

To Understand What Dating Abuse Is And How People Are Affected By It. Write the following question on the board:

WHY IS IT HARD FOR ADALIZ TO END HER RELATIONSHIP WITH RICHARD?

Tell students to take a few moments to write a response and ask if anyone wants to share.

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

WARNING SIGNS

There are some warning signs that an intimate relationship may become abusive. Not all of the signs appear in all abusive or potentially abusive relationships, and sometimes there are no signs that an intimate relationship may become abusive. The existence of one or several of these behaviors does not necessarily mean that a relationship is abusive, but it may signal that the relationship is not completely healthy.

Abusive behaviors can occur in all spheres of a person's life: class, work, home, and online. Although older adults tend to think of online behavior and email as a separate sphere of their lives, for college students, these spheres are all very much interconnected and intertwined. For college students, learning and school activities may also be taking place outside of the classroom, and particularly online and via email.

COMMON WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE:

- Extreme jealousy
- Constant put-downs, in person or online
- Making fun of the other person in front of friends or online
- Telling the other person what to do
- Explosive temper
- Verbal threats in person or via email or text message
- Possessiveness
- Preventing the other person from doing what he or she wants to do
- Severe mood swings
- Making false accusations about the other person, including others whom the person spends time with in real life and online
- History of violence
- Isolating the other person from family and friends, both in real life and online
- Encouraging the target to "block" friends and family from "buddy" and "friends" lists online
- Seeking financial control over the other person
- Calling/emailing/texting the other person every few minutes or at unreasonable hours to "check up" on the target's whereabouts, and becoming angry if the target does not immediately respond
- Checking the target's cell phone/computer to see who the target has been communicating with (missed calls, emails, voicemail, and text messages)
- Deleting messages and "friends" on social networks
- Altering the target's online profiles without consent
- Using the target's passwords without permission
- Nasty status changes and deletion of files or pictures the abuser doesn't approve of

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

COLLEGE STUDENTS SEEKING HELP

It is critical that everyone is able to recognize the warning signs of dating abuse, understand the dynamics of an abusive relationship, and know how to respond to a person who is experiencing dating abuse.

Though similar to adult domestic violence, college students face unique obstacles in recognizing and escaping abusive relationships. They often must overcome issues, such as distrust of adults, lack of knowledge about available resources, mixed messages from the media about healthy relationships and constant pressure from peers to be in an intimate relationship.

Students who do not have financial resources or transportation may face practical barriers to seeking help from community agencies. Confusion about their legal rights adds another layer of difficulty for young people in need. Students, especially those under 18, may also have fears about lack of confidentiality, mandated child abuse reporting and parental consent laws.

It is tempting to assume that the easy “solution” to an abusive relationship is simply to end it. However, ending abusive relationships can be extremely difficult—even dangerous. It is important to be sensitive to why individuals may have trouble breaking free from abusive relationships or even reaching out for help.

WHEN STUDENTS REACH OUT FOR HELP

Being on a college or university campus gives students a variety of options when seeking help. Depending on their comfort level, students can get assistance from and report dating abuse to their Resident Assistant or Hall Director, as well as their academic adviser or counselor. Students can also visit Health Services or their on-campus Women’s Center for more information or for immediate help.

Some students may respond to this curriculum by asking for more information about dating abuse and/or disclosing that they are involved in an abusive relationship. It is important to acknowledge to the student the courage that it takes to reach out for help. Be certain to tell the student that he/she is not alone and the abuse is not his or her fault.

Facilitators should tell students about the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which provides free resources to victims of dating abuse, as well as to others interested in learning more. All communication is confidential and anonymous.

DATING ABUSE - HOW PREVALENT IS DATING ABUSE?

- Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) college students report dating abuse by a previous partner, and 21% report violence by a current partner.¹
- More than half (60%) of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.²
- In one year, more than 13% of college women indicated they had been stalked, 42% by a boyfriend or ex-boyfriend.³
- Almost 1 in 4 (22%) of all rape victims are between the usual college ages of 18-24⁴
- Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence – 16 per 1,000 women. The average rate of intimate violence against women as a whole is only 6 per 1,000 women.⁵

Depending on the school and community in which you work, you may (or may not) choose to explain to students that dating abuse occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered students are just as much at risk for abuse in their relationships as anyone else.

PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIPS

People in abusive relationships have options for increasing their safety. They may decide to stay with the abuser, exploring ways to keep themselves safe while still in the relationship. They may decide to end the relationship.

MAKING A DATING SAFETY PLAN

A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. The plan should be practical and specific. People who are experiencing dating abuse and/or are in the process of ending or have already ended an abusive relationship should create and use a dating safety plan. This allows them to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm rather than trying to figure it out when they are in immediate danger. The plan should be practical and specific. NOTE: We do not recommend sharing many details about what a safety plan might look like with all students because this might enable abusers to notice signs that the person he or she is abusing is planning to leave the relationship, which could potentially put the target in danger.

Anyone who remains in an abusive relationship should consider the following strategies:

- Keep important phone numbers (e.g., police, dating abuse helpline, domestic violence shelter, family, friends) nearby at all times. Always have a cell phone or change for a phone call. If you usually store these numbers in your phone, keep them on paper, too, in case your battery goes dead or you can't access your phone.
- Keep a record of all incidents of the abuse and violence. Save any threatening or harassing letters and email, text, or voicemail messages that the abuser sends.
- Explain to trustworthy friends and family that if they think you may be in danger for any reason, they should call 911.
- Plan escape routes from places like your dorm, apartment, house, lecture halls or the

1 C. Sellers and M. Bromley, "Violent Behavior in College Student Dating Relationships," *Journal of Contemporary Justice*, (1996).

2 I. Johnson and R. Sigler, "Forced Sexual Intercourse on Campus," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, (1996).

3 B. Fisher and F. Cullen, "Extent and Nature of the Sexual Victimization of College Women," (Washington: NIJ, 2000).

4 Kilpatrick, DJ, Edmunds, CN, Seymour, A. 1992. *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*, Arlington VA: National Victim Center.

5 Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Special Report Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (2001).

abuser's home.

- Keep phone card/money for a phone card with you at all times.
- Keep subway/bus/taxi fare with you at all times.
- Be aware of the closest emergency room. An emergency room can act as a brief safe haven, enabling you to sit in the waiting area to consider your next steps.
- Try not to be alone in isolated areas in public. Try to get a ride to class, or ask someone to walk or ride the bus with you.
- Join a support group for individuals who have experienced dating abuse.
- Put the original and copies of important documents (e.g., identification, health insurance, immigration papers) in a location that cannot be easily found by the abuser.
- Create a new email account and use a password that the abuser will not be able to guess so that the abuser will not be able to read your incoming and outgoing mail.

In addition to the suggestions above, an individual who decides to leave a relationship with an abuser should consider the following:

- Go to court to get a restraining order. Keep at least one copy and give copies to the police, school administrators, people at work, etc.
- Tell close family and friends that you are no longer in the relationship.
- Change your class schedule to avoid being in class with or running into the abuser; avoid arriving at and leaving class at the same time as the abuser.
- Screen calls and texts and/or change one's phone number.
- Avoid going to locations where the abuser might look for you.

ACCESSING SHELTER, COUNSELING, AND/OR OTHER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Many communities have resources for individuals experiencing domestic and dating abuse, such as confidential emergency shelters, counseling services, and support groups. Some domestic violence organizations will serve teenagers as well as adults. To find help in your area, contact National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org or call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

ACCESSING THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Students who experience dating abuse can seek help from the legal system, typically via civil law, criminal law, or both. Students may also be able to seek help from their campus judicial systems. These options are very different. All states provide some protection from domestic violence in both the criminal and civil law, but the details of the 56 protections available vary greatly from state to state. For help understanding your state's civil and criminal laws, contact Break the Cycle at breakthecycle.org. For more information specifically about cyberlaw, contact WiredSafety (WiredSafety.org) or the technology safety project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV.org). You can also find helpful information from Women's Law at womenslaw.org.

THE CRIMINAL LAW: CALLING THE POLICE

Many acts of dating abuse are crimes for which the abuser can be arrested and sent to jail. In order to use the criminal justice system with regard to abuse, either the person who experienced the abuse or someone who witnessed it or heard about it must report what happened to the police. Sometimes social networks or websites/services will discover abusive behavior or digital images and report it themselves.

If the prosecutor decides to press charges, a judge or a jury will hear the evidence and the prosecutor's case against the defendant. If the defendant is a minor, he or she is typically tried in juvenile court. If the defendant is found guilty, a judge determines the sentence (e.g., prison or jail time, probation, community service, counseling, fine).

In most states, when a defendant is convicted of a crime related to domestic violence, the judge may also issue a criminal protective order requiring the abuser to stay away from the person he or she has harmed and not contact him or her in any way. Criminal protective orders are an important option for adolescents who live in a state that does not allow young people, people who are dating, or same sex-couples to obtain civil domestic violence restraining orders. Protective orders can also include restrictions on digital communications and activities.

THE CIVIL LAW: OBTAINING A RESTRAINING ORDER

People who experience abuse can also use civil law for protection from the abuser. In this case, the person who was abused asks to be protected from the abuser by a restraining order. A restraining (also called protective) order is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm, come near, or contact the target in any way. Often restraining orders can also help protect a person's children or other people who live in his or her home. With a restraining order, the person who has experienced abuse can call the police as soon as the abuser comes too close or contacts him or her in any way. In most states, violation of a restraining order is a crime.

In order to qualify for a domestic violence restraining order, an individual must have a "domestic" relationship with the abuser. Many state laws do not include the kind of relationships college students typically have (such as people who are dating but not living together) in their definition of domestic relationships and, thus, may not be eligible for protective orders. Contact Break the Cycle (help@breakthecycle.org) to learn more about the laws in your state or to identify local resources for legal assistance.

HANDOUT

I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD CHANGE* Excerpt By Adaliz Rodriguez

Adaliz describes her relationship with Richard.

EXCERPT:

What hurt me the most were his mean words. I wasn't used to the kind of names he called me. My parents never allowed that kind of language. I cried a lot. I walked looking down. I'd ditch [skip] class a lot, and, although I made sure I passed, I was falling behind. I was miserable. I'd tell him he was hurting me verbally. I'd try to break up with him, then he'd cry and say, "I'm sorry, don't leave me. I'll stop hitting you." I'd believe him, because I didn't want to leave him; I wanted him to change.

...He had to make sure I wasn't doing anything. He'd find out from his friends if I was talking to someone, and we'd get in a big argument. He'd call me disgusting names, and make me cry. He'd hit me, push me, sock me in the stomach and in the head. He was smart. He knew not to leave me with bruises that showed.

He told me about the problems his parents had. He used to jump on his father to stop him from hitting his mother. He said he'd never hit me like his father did. Then when he hit me, he'd say he didn't mean to, and turn it around so that it was my fault: "If you just didn't do those things, I wouldn't hit you." In other words, I shouldn't get him so mad, or provoke him to hit me.

*Copyright © 1997 from *In Love & In Danger*, Edited by Barrie Levy. Performed by permission of Seal Press.

HANDOUT

WHAT IS DATING ABUSE?

Dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship. It can involve digital communications and technologies or real world communications and physical interactions.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Any unwanted contact with the other person's body. Physical abuse does not have to leave a mark or a bruise.

Examples:

- Scratching
- Pinching
- Strangling
- Shoving
- Punching
- Burning
- Pushing
- Physical restraint
- Biting
- Pulling hair
- Using a weapon
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Choking
- Slapping

SEXUAL ABUSE

Any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the other person's right to say "no" to sexual advances.

Examples:

- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Date rape
- Forcing someone to go further sexually than he or she wants to
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
- Not letting someone use birth control or protection against sexually transmitted infections
- Forcing someone to pose for still or video images while partially or fully nude or while performing sexual acts
- Forcing someone to watch others engaging in sexual acts in real life or in still or video images
- Coercing someone to take nude or sexual images of him/herself and share them
- Forcing someone to expose him/herself sexually to others or in public
- Forcing someone to wear or not wear items of clothing (such as underwear)
- Videotaping or recording a sexual act or nude image of someone without their knowledge or consent
- Sending someone unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual images
- Altering an image of a person to make it appear that they were posing in the nude or engaging in sexual activities

HANDOUT

VERBAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Saying or doing something to the other person that causes the person to be afraid and/or have lower self-esteem. Trying to manipulate or control the person's feelings or behaviors. This can include online posts or digital communications designed to threaten, harass, or embarrass someone.

These can take place in real life or through the use of digital technologies, such as social networks, online games, email, text-messages, videos, photo-sharing and video-sharing sites, webcams, digital gaming devices, and instant messaging.

Examples:

- Name-calling and put-downs
- Insulting the person or his/her family or friends
- Yelling and screaming
- Harming (or threatening to harm) the person or his/her family, friends, pets or property
- Making racial, ethnic or religious slurs about the person or those he/she cares for
- Making unwanted comments/sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature to the person
- Signing the person up for unwanted websites or services
- Sending the person pornographic videos, images or media
- Embarrassing the person in front of others
- Intimidating the person
- Spreading negative rumors about the person
- Preventing the person from seeing or talking to friends and family
- Telling the person what to do
- Making the person feel responsible for the violence/abuse
- Stalking
- Making the person feel guilty about wanting to leave the relationship by talking about the abuser's hard life and how alone and abandoned the abuser will feel if left
- Threatening to commit suicide
- Threatening to kill the target or a friend/family member of the target
- Threatening to expose personal information about the person (e.g., sexual orientation, immigration status, embarrassing secrets)
- Threatening to take away the person's child or children
- Sharing sexual or nude pictures of the person that were given in confidence
- Excessive or unwanted text-messaging, instant messaging, phone calls or emails to check up on someone
- Posting fake or altered images of someone or "photoshopping" a person's images to add or remove others from pictures
- Creating an abusive group or profile about someone, such as the "Katy is a slut" group or setting the person up for attacks by others online
- Posting nasty, false or abusive comments on the person's profile or other accounts or in their guestbook
- Accessing someone's accounts and changing the passwords so he or she no longer has access to them and/or posing as the person and altering his or her accounts and profiles

ROLES IN DATING ABUSE: ABUSER, TARGET, AND BYSTANDER.

ABUSER: A person who physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally hurts or attempts to control an intimate partner.

TARGET: A person who is subjected to controlling behavior or hurt physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally by an intimate partner.

BYSTANDER: A person who is aware or suspects that someone is being abused in a dating relationship. The bystander may become aware of the abuse through the abuser's or the target's actions or words.

HANDOUT

HELPING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS BEING ABUSED

- Tell the person who is being abused that you know about the abuse and are concerned for his or her safety. Tell your friend or relative that he or she does not deserve to be abused.
- Acknowledge that the abuse is not this person's fault. Remind the friend or relative that the abuser is responsible for the abuse. Tell the person that he or she is not alone.
- Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let your friend or relative know that you are available to listen or help any time.
- Avoid judging your friend or family member. The person may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. Do not criticize your friend or relative for doing this, even if you disagree with the choices he or she makes.
- Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help the person talk to family, friends, a teacher, faculty member or staff person on campus, or a member of the clergy; or to help them find a counselor or support group. If your friend or relative decides to go to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to come along, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.
- Help the person to develop a practical and specific safety plan that focuses on preventing future harm or abuse. Visit National Coalition Against Domestic Violence or the American Bar Association Domestic Violence Safety Plan for safety planning tips and guides.
- Do not confront the abuser during an act of violence; it could be dangerous for you and your friend or relative. It is best to call the police or get help from an adult in this situation. However, if it feels safe to do so, you can let a friend know if you think his or her words or behavior is hurtful or controlling and encourage that person to get help.
- Remember that you cannot "rescue" the person who is the target of abuse. It is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt. Your friend or relative must be the one to decide what to do. Your job is to be supportive.

DIRECTIONS: Imagine that you are a friend or relative of Adaliz and that you knew that Richard was abusing her. Work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz in which you reach out to help her. As you write, keep in mind the suggestions that are listed above.

HANDOUT

INCREASING YOUR SAFETY IN AN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIP

If you are in an abusive relationship, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave, you need to think about steps to take to increase your safety.

Talk with a trustworthy person (e.g., parent, resident assistant or hall director, adviser, professor, counselor, clergy member) about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you to feel less isolated.

Create a dating safety plan. A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think ahead about steps to take that may help keep them safer during a dangerous incident. Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org, for information about dating abuse.

Call the police. If someone is hurting you or you are in immediate danger, it may be best to call the police. Many acts of physical and sexual violence are crimes; the abuser can be arrested and go to jail for them.

Get a restraining order or a protective order. A restraining order (also called a protective order) is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm you, come near you, or contact you in any way. When you have an order, you can call the police as soon as the abuser comes near you or contacts you. To find out about the laws in your state, visit thesafespace.org.

If your home is not a safe place and/or you live with the abuser, consider going to a domestic violence shelter.

A shelter is a safe place. It's usually a house or apartment in a secret location, where people experiencing dating or domestic violence and their children can live for a limited time. Staff at the shelter can help you find a more permanent place to live.

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a national 24-hour resource that can be accessed by calling 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) or visiting thehotline.org.

HANDOUT

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

If you are in an intimate relationship with someone, is it the healthy situation that you deserve? Put a check next to any of the responses below that apply to this relationship.

Note: It is important to remember that sometimes there are no signs that an intimate partner may become abusive.

Does the person I am with

- Get extremely jealous or possessive?
- Accuse me of flirting or cheating?
- Constantly check up on me via calls or texts or make me check in?
- Tell me how to dress or how much makeup to wear?
- Try to control what I do and whom I see?
- Try to keep me from seeing or talking to my family and friends?
- Have big mood swings—getting angry and yelling at me one minute, and being sweet and apologetic the next?
- Make me feel nervous, or like I'm walking on eggshells?
- Put me down or criticize me or post things online to embarrass or humiliate me?
- Force me to send nude or otherwise “inappropriate” photos of myself?
- Make me feel that I can't do anything right?
- Make me feel that no one else would want me?
- Threaten to hurt me?
- Threaten to hurt my friends or family?
- Threaten to commit suicide?
- Threaten to hurt him - or herself - because of me?
- Threaten to hurt my pet(s)?
- Threaten to destroy my things?
- Hurt me physically? (includes yelling, grabbing, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, slapping, holding me down, etc.)
- Break or throw things when we argue?
- Pressure or force me into having sex or going further sexually than I want to?

If you checked any of these responses, you may be in an abusive relationship. There are resources out there. The National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle can help. For more information, visit thehotline.org or thesafespace.org.

**THE PATTERN
OF ABUSE
IN DATING
VIOLENCE
& ABUSE**

PURPOSE: To identify the pattern of abusive dating relationships, as well as obstacles, that make it difficult for someone who is targeted by dating abuse to seek help.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to

- define the typical stages of the pattern of abuse in dating abuse
- identify five obstacles that young adults often face when seeking help in dating abuse situations

MATERIALS

- Read “Facilitator Background Information” before teaching this lesson
- Photocopy the “Breathing Underwater” excerpt for all students
- Photocopy “Patterns of Dating Abuse” for all students
- Photocopy “Looking at Nick and Caitlin’s Situation” for all students
- Photocopy “The Cycle of My Life” for all students
- Photocopy the “Possible Warning Signs in Dating Relationships” as needed
- Photocopy “Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Relationship” as needed

ACTIVITIES

STEP ONE (4 minutes)

Discuss the repeating phases that typically (but do not always) occur in abusive dating relationships.

- Explain to students that in many abusive dating relationships, the physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse is not a one-time thing. It usually happens again and again, and the abuse may become more severe and more frequent over time. Point out that even one incident of dating abuse is too many.
- Give each student a copy of “Patterns of Dating Abuse.” Review the handout. Make sure students understand that every relationship is different and that the phases may occur infrequently, briefly, or over long stretches of time. Some targets, for example, never experience a “honeymoon” phase.
- Explain that abusers are often extremely jealous of the target’s friends and family, claiming to love their partner so much that they don’t want anyone else around. This kind of excessive possessiveness and jealousy is not a sign of love, but an example of the extreme control that abusers seek to have over their partners. Abusers often work actively to create an “us vs. them” situation between the target and his/her family, thereby making it much harder for the target to reach out to his or her family for help when he or she may need it.
- Mention that targets of dating abuse often believe that the first incident of abuse is an isolated one that will not occur again. After the abuse, the abuser’s apologies and promises that it will not happen again may convince the target to stay in the relationship. Unfortunately, we know that once an individual has demonstrated abusive behavior toward a dating partner, he or she is likely to abuse the partner again. As the violence and abuse become more severe and occur more frequently, the target is likely to become more isolated and fearful, afraid to reach out for help.

STEP TWO (30 minutes)

Analyze a text that illustrates an example of phases in dating abuse.

- Tell students that the class is going to read aloud an excerpt from a novel that illustrates the phases that make up a typical pattern of dating abuse.
- Give each student a copy of the “Breathing Underwater” excerpt.
- Read aloud the first paragraph. Then have student volunteers each read one or two paragraphs aloud.
- Explain to students that they are going to work in groups of three to identify how the three phases of tension-building, explosion, and honeymoon play out in the excerpt from “Breathing Underwater.”
- Give each student a copy of “Looking at Nick and Caitlin’s Situation.” Tell students that as they work in their small groups to answer the questions, they must refer to the “Breathing Underwater” excerpt and provide specific examples from the text that support their answers, rather than trying to remember the text and responding in a general fashion.
- After 10-12 minutes, review the questions on the handout, selecting one or two small groups per question to share their answers with the class.

STEP THREE (8 minutes)

Discuss the obstacles that young adults/college students face in seeking help for dating abuse.

• Ask students if they can think of any additional obstacles that Caitlin—or any college student—could face in seeking help as the target of dating abuse. Write students' ideas on the board. Sample answers may include

- Bond with/love for the abuser
- Not sure what constitutes healthy and unhealthy behaviors in a relationship
- Being isolated and feeling they have no one to talk to/no one who cares
- Fear that friends or family members won't believe them
- Fear that friends will side with the abuser
- Fear of being hurt/killed
- Fear of friend/family member being hurt/killed
- Fear of losing children
- Being turned away by friends or family members who don't believe them or tell them it's no big deal
- Not wanting to tell someone the details of their private life
- Pressure from peers and/or family members to be in a relationship
- Not wanting to lose the social status that might come with the relationship
- Fear of the abuse escalating if the abuser discovers they have sought help
- Specific threats from the abuser about what will happen if they seek help
- Denying, minimizing, or rationalizing the abuse
- Feeling vulnerable because of pregnancy, parenthood, sexual orientation, a disability, and/or immigration status
- Feeling ashamed of being in an abusive relationship
- Cultural and/or religious issues
- Idealization of relationship
- Substance abuse
- Feeling hopeless
- Low self-esteem, including feeling powerless to make changes in one's life
- Lack of knowledge of resources
- Not wanting the abuser to suffer negative consequences
- Not knowing their legal rights related to abuse
- Fear that information about their situation will not be kept confidential
- Lack of local social and legal services targeted in violent dating relationships
- Lack of access to services
- Belief that the abuse will stop or that they can change the abuser
- Financial dependence on the abuser
- Feeling they can't escape the abuser because he or she lives in the same religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural community or attends the same school

STEP FOUR (1 minute)

Conclusion.

- Explain that many individuals who have experienced dating abuse confirm that the abuse often occurs in a pattern. And, while there are obstacles facing college students who seek help when they experience dating abuse, many students—like Adaliz—do reach out and find the support they need to keep themselves safe.

STEP FIVE (5 minutes)

- Give each student a copy of “Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship.” Review the handout. Emphasize that even when someone is planning to end—or has already ended—an abusive relationship, he or she should continue to use these precautions in case the abuser attempts to commit additional violence. Consider stressing that the most dangerous time for the target is when he or she has left the relationship.
- Distribute one National Domestic Violence Hotline wallet card to each student. Explain that the card is sized to fit in a wallet and that it contains a toll-free phone number and website for assistance with dating abuse issues.

FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIPS

People in abusive relationships have options for increasing their safety. They may decide to stay with the abuser, exploring ways to keep themselves safe while still in the relationship. They may decide to end the relationship.

MAKING A DATING SAFETY PLAN

A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. The plan should be practical and specific. People who experiencing dating abuse and/or are in the process of ending or have already ended an abusive relationship should create and use a dating safety plan. This allows them to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm rather than trying to figure it out when they are in immediate danger. The plan should be practical and specific. NOTE: We do not recommend sharing many details about what a safety plan might look like with all students because this might enable abusers to notice signs that the person he or she is abusing is planning to leave the relationship, which could potentially put the target in danger.

Anyone who remains in an abusive relationship should consider the following strategies:

- Keep important phone numbers (e.g., police, dating abuse helpline, domestic violence shelter, family, friends) nearby at all times. Always have a cell phone or change for a phone call. If you usually store these numbers in your phone, keep them on paper, too, in case your battery goes dead or you can't access your phone.
- Keep a record of all incidents of the abuse and violence. Save any threatening or harassing letters and email, text, or voicemail messages that the abuser sends.
- Explain to trustworthy friends and family that if they think you may be in danger for any reason, they should call 911.
- Plan escape routes from places like your dorm, apartment, house, lecture halls or the abuser's home.
- Keep phone card/money for a phone card with you at all times.
- Keep subway/bus/taxi fare with you at all times.
- Be aware of the closest emergency room. An emergency room can act as a brief safe haven, enabling you to sit in the waiting area to consider your next steps.
- Try not to be alone in isolated areas in public. Try to get a ride to class, or ask someone to walk or ride the bus with you.
- Join a support group for individuals who have experienced dating abuse.
- Put the original and copies of important documents (e.g., identification, health insurance, immigration papers) in a location that cannot be easily found by the abuser.
- Create a new email account and use a password that the abuser will not be able to guess so that the abuser will not be able to read your incoming and outgoing mail.

FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

In addition to the suggestions above, an individual who decides to leave a relationship with an abuser should consider the following:

- Go to court to get a restraining order. Keep at least one copy and give copies to the police, school administrators, people at work, etc.
- Tell close family and friends that you are no longer in the relationship.
- Change your class schedule to avoid being in class with or running into the abuser; avoid arriving at and leaving class at the same time as the abuser.
- Screen calls and texts and/or change one's phone number.
- Avoid going to locations where the abuser might look for you.

ACCESSING SHELTER, COUNSELING, AND/OR OTHER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Many communities have resources for individuals experiencing domestic and dating abuse, such as confidential emergency shelters, counseling services, and support groups. Some domestic violence organizations will serve teenagers as well as adults. To find help in your area, contact National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org or call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

ACCESSING THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Students who experience dating abuse can seek help from the legal system, typically by using civil law, criminal law, or both. Students may also be able to seek help from their campus judicial systems. These options are very different. All states provide some protection from domestic violence in both the criminal and civil law, but the details of the 56 protections available vary greatly from state to state. For help understanding your state's civil and criminal laws, contact Break the Cycle at breakthecycle.org. For more information specifically about cyberlaw, contact WiredSafety (WiredSafety.org) or the technology safety project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV.org). You can also find helpful information from Women's Law at womenslaw.org.

THE CRIMINAL LAW: CALLING THE POLICE

Many acts of dating abuse are crimes for which the abuser can be arrested and sent to jail. In order to use the criminal justice system with regard to abuse, either the person who experienced the abuse or someone who witnessed it or heard about it must report what happened to the police. Sometimes social networks or websites/services will discover abusive behavior or digital images and report it themselves.

If the prosecutor decides to press charges, a judge or a jury will hear the evidence and the prosecutor's case against the defendant. If the defendant is a minor, he or she is typically tried in juvenile court. If the defendant is found guilty, a judge determines the sentence (e.g., prison or jail time, probation, community service, counseling, fine).

FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

In most states, when a defendant is convicted of a crime related to domestic violence, the judge may also issue a criminal protective order requiring the abuser to stay away from the person he or she has harmed and not contact him or her in any way. Criminal protective orders are an important option for adolescents who live in a state that does not allow young people, people who are dating, or same sex-couples to obtain civil domestic violence restraining orders. Protective orders can also include restrictions on digital communications and activities.

People who experience abuse can also use civil law for protection from the abuser. In this case, the person who was abused asks to be protected from the abuser by a restraining order. A restraining (also called protective) order is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm, come near, or contact the target in any way. Restraining orders often can also serve to protect a person's children or other people who live in his or her home. With a restraining order, the person who has experienced abuse can call the police as soon as the abuser comes too close or contacts him or her in any way. In most states, violation of a restraining order is a crime.

In order to qualify for a domestic violence restraining order, an individual must have a "domestic" relationship with the abuser. Many state laws do not include the kind of relationships college students typically have (such as people who are dating but not living together) in their definition of domestic relationships and, thus, may not be eligible for protective orders. Contact Break the Cycle (help@breakthecycle.org) to learn more about the laws in your state or to identify local resources for legal assistance.

HANDOUT

PATTERNS OF DATING ABUSE

Every relationship is unique, however, many people who are the target of dating abuse find the abuse occurs in a distinct pattern with three phases: tension building, explosion, and honeymoon. Each phase can be as short as a few seconds or as long as several years.

PHASE 1:

Tension Building: Things start to get tense between the two people. In this phase

- The two people argue a lot.
- The abuser yells at the target for no reason.
- The abuser makes false accusations about the target.
- The target feels that she or he can't do anything right.
- The atmosphere is tense, as if things could blow up at any moment.

PHASE 2:

Explosion: The tension is released in a burst of physical, sexual and/or verbal/emotional abuse. The abuser may

- Scream and yell in a way that is frightening and/or humiliating.
- Hit, grab, shove, kick, slam the other person against the wall, etc.
- Throw objects.
- Threaten to hurt the other person or someone he or she cares about.
- Rape the other person or force him or her to go further sexually than he or she wants to.

PHASE 3:

Honeymoon: The abuser tries to make the target stay in the relationship by apologizing and/or shifting the blame for the abuse onto someone or something else. The abuser may

- Apologize and promise that the abuse will never happen again.
- Say "I love you."
- Buy the other person flowers or gifts.
- Accuse the other person of doing something to cause the abuse.
- Blame the abuse on other things such as alcohol, drugs or stress.

After the honeymoon phase, the tension starts to build again, leading to another explosion. Over time, the honeymoon phase may get shorter or even disappear, and the explosions may become more violent and dangerous. Some targets of dating abuse never experience the honeymoon phase—just the tension building and explosion phases. These phases do not happen in every abusive relationship. Someone may be experiencing dating abuse even if this pattern is not present.

HANDOUT

BREATHING UNDERWATER* EXCERPT

In the novel “Breathing Underwater,” Nick, the sixteen-year-old narrator, recounts his relationship with Caitlin (also called Cat), whom he abused physically, verbally, and emotionally for most of their relationship. In this scene, Caitlin and Nick, who have been dating for a few months, are in Nick’s car, driving over a long two-lane bridge. Caitlin has just told Nick that she feels they need to talk about the way he treats her. Nick fears that she is going to tell him that she wants to end the relationship.

EXCERPT:

“I heard you. I’m deciding how to respond.” She could not leave me. As I hit the word respond, I pulled to the left, veering into the southbound lane. Then I floored it past three cars. A southbound Volvo station wagon slammed its brakes within yards of us. The driver was honking, yelling. I pulled back into the northbound lane and flipped him off. I looked at Caitlin. Her mouth hung in mid-scream. I laughed.

“Do you trust me, Cat?” She was silent. I leaned closer. “Did I ever tell you about my mother?” Caitlin recovered enough to shake her head no, and I said, “I was four, five, I’d lie awake nights, listening to her and my dad fighting, him hitting her.” I looked at Caitlin. “You want to hear this?”

She nodded.

“I thought we’d pack up and leave someday, her and I. I lived for that day.” On the wheel, my knuckles were white. “Then, one morning, I wake up, and she’s gone, never came back. She ran from the monster and left me there with him.”

Caitlin removed her sunglasses. “I’m sorry, Nick.”

“So you talk about trust, it’s pretty important. I mean, when the one person you trust just picks up and leaves...”

Caitlin’s hand slipped across my shoulder. I tried to shrug her off, swerving left into traffic, then back. Terror filled Caitlin’s eyes. Her nails ripped my flesh.

“Trust me, Cat?” She could not leave me. I swerved again. “’Cause if you haven’t figured it out, life doesn’t mean much to me. Without you, it’s worthless.”

A flock of seagulls headed across my windshield. She could not leave me. I swerved again, this time counting three before I veered back. She could not leave me. Caitlin screamed at me to stop.

“What’s the matter?” When she didn’t answer, I swerved again. “Oh—this. Maybe you’re right.” I straightened the wheel, looking beyond her to the orange and green water east of the bridge. Silence. I didn’t swerve. Nothing. We were halfway across. Caitlin relaxed.

Suddenly, I said, “Think I could make a right here?” Right was into water. I made like I’d do it, crash through the guardrail, then down. Caitlin screamed. She grabbed for the wheel. I shoved her away so her fingers clawed the air. She tried again, gripping both my hands. The car swerved left into the path of a Bronco towing a boat. I pulled it back. My mind knew what she was doing, but my eyes didn’t. I couldn’t see her. She was shrieking. God, shut up! Her voice deafened me, and it was all around, in my ears,

HANDOUT

making me lose all control. She tried to grab the wheel. Blind and deaf, I drove, sun hot on my face. I had to get her off me. God, I just had to get her off me. Get her off me! Get off me! Get off!

Next thing I knew, I was driving on land. I couldn't tell you whether it was minutes or hours later. Caitlin hung across the seat, head cradled in her fingers. My hand throbbed, and I knew I'd hit her. I'd hit her. I was tired. She'd worn me out, but the anger inside me dissolved, replaced by that regret. But I'd had to stop her. She'd been irrational, overwrought, shouldn't have touched the wheel. She could have killed us. I looked at her. The seat was the length of a football field. Caitlin faced the window. She was so beautiful. Ahead was a red pickup with a Jesus fish. It was going at a good clip, but when we reached the next passing zone, I overtook it and a few other cars. Cat stiffened. I merged back into traffic and reached to stroke her hair.

She lifted her head, cautious as a runner stealing home, and stared.

"Are you all right, Caitlin?" I asked.

When she didn't answer, I repeated the question.

She shook her head. "You hit me."

I told her no. I hadn't. I mean, she was grabbing the wheel. We'd almost creamed the Bronco. I had to get her off me before we got killed.

"Because you were driving off the bridge," she said.

I laughed and said she knew me better. . . I'd never do it for real. Besides, we'd have crashed the guardrail, and I'd have gotten killed for wrecking the car.

"But you hit me, Nick." She leaned out the window toward the sideview mirror to see if her cheek was getting red.

And it was. I didn't expect it to be red, but it was—a little. I hadn't hit her hard, just enough to get her off me. I said, "Don't you know you shouldn't grab the wheel when someone's driving?"

"But I thought—"

She was pretty shaken. Mad maybe? I pulled her close. "Sorry I freaked you out, Kittykat. I forget you aren't used to guys. You don't know we play rough sometimes." She kept protesting, and I said, "You know what I was thinking? I wanted to buy you a ring. You know, like a symbol, since we're going together. What's your birthstone?"

Still, she stared like her life was flashing before her eyes. "You hit me, Nick."

I kissed her. She drew away, and I pulled her back. "Your birthday's in February, right? I'll ask the jeweler what the stone is."

I held her close until she stopped struggling. The sun was down, but it wasn't dark enough for a moon, and we crossed bridges connecting the islands, Big Pine Key, Plantation Key, Key Largo. Then we drove through mainland Miami a while. When we reached home, the sky above Rickenbacker Causeway was black, and Caitlin slept on my shoulder.

*From "Breathing Underwater" by Alex Flinn. Copyright © 2001 by Alexandra Flinn. Used by permission of HaperCollins Publishers.

HANDOUT

FACILITATOR'S COPY

LOOKING AT NICK AND CAITLIN'S SITUATION (Sample Answers Filled In)

DIRECTIONS: In your small group, respond to the following questions:

- 1.** Cite at least two specific examples from the “Breathing Underwater” excerpt that indicate that the tension is building between Nick and Caitlin (before the physical violence occurs).
 - In the first paragraph, Nick intentionally steers the car into the path of oncoming traffic.
 - In the same paragraph, Caitlin’s mouth “hung in mid-scream.”
 - In the fourth paragraph, Nick’s knuckles are white on the steering wheel.
 - Nick keeps repeating to himself, “She could not leave me.”

- 2.** When Nick does explode, what types of abusive behaviors does he demonstrate? (Refer to the “Patterns of Dating Abuse” handout.)
 - Nick hits Caitlin.
 - He uses the threat of violence by repeatedly swerving into oncoming traffic.

- 3.** In the honeymoon phase after the abuse, what does Nick tell himself to try to shift the blame for the abuse onto Caitlin?
 - “I just had to get her off me.”
 - “I was tired.”
 - “She’d worn me out. . .”
 - “I’d had to stop her. She’d been irrational, overwrought, shouldn’t have touched the wheel. She could have killed us.”
 - “I hadn’t hit her hard, just enough to get her off me.”

- 4.** What does he say to Caitlin to try to shift the blame onto her?
 - He tells her that he didn’t hit her.
 - He tells her he had to get her off him “before we got killed.”
 - He tells her he would “never do it for real.”
 - He says, “Don’t you know you shouldn’t grab the wheel when someone is driving?”
 - He says, “I forget you aren’t used to guys. You don’t know we play rough sometimes.”

- 5.** After Nick is abusive to Caitlin, what does he do to try to convince her to stay with him?
 - He strokes her hair.
 - He asks her, “Are you all right?”
 - He tells her he wants to buy her a ring “since we’re going together.”
 - He kisses her.
 - He holds her close until she stops struggling.

HANDOUT

LOOKING AT NICK AND CAITLIN'S SITUATION

DIRECTIONS: In your small group, respond to the following questions:

- 1.** Cite at least two specific examples from the “Breathing Underwater” excerpt that indicate that the tension is building between Nick and Caitlin (before the physical violence occurs).
- 2.** When Nick does explode, what types of abusive behaviors does he demonstrate? (Refer to the “Patterns of Dating Abuse” handout.)
- 3.** In the honeymoon phase after the abuse, what does Nick tell himself to try to shift the blame for the abuse onto Caitlin?
- 4.** What does he say to Caitlin to try to shift the blame onto her?
- 5.** After Nick is abusive to Caitlin, what does he do to try to convince her to stay with him?

HANDOUT

THE CYCLE OF MY LIFE*

by Pamela

It all starts out wonderful until he strikes
Constantly hearing I'm sorry
Until it doesn't matter anymore
Forgiving every time, forgetting never
Calling out for him to stop
Never stopping until it is almost too late
Never thinking about the consequences of his actions
Just making me think out every possible consequence of mine
Hearing I'm sorry all over again
Meeting him with open eyes
Awaiting the gifts I know will pour forward
Until it all stops—
And the cycle begins all over again

Directions: List below signs that Pamela is experiencing phases two and three of the typical pattern of abuse in dating violence. Refer to “Patterns of Dating Abuse” for examples of behaviors that occur in these phases.

PHASE 2: SIGNS OF EXPLOSION:

PHASE 3: SIGNS OF HONEYMOON:

*From www.teenrelationships.org/teenssay/teensay.htm.

HANDOUT

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

If you are in an intimate relationship with someone, is it the healthy situation that you deserve? Put a check next to any of the responses below that apply to this relationship.

Note: It is important to remember that sometimes there are no signs that an intimate partner may become abusive.

Does the person I am with

- Get extremely jealous or possessive?
- Accuse me of flirting or cheating?
- Constantly check up on me via calls or texts or make me check in?
- Tell me how to dress or how much makeup to wear?
- Try to control what I do and whom I see?
- Try to keep me from seeing or talking to my family and friends?
- Have big mood swings—getting angry and yelling at me one minute, and being sweet and apologetic the next?
- Make me feel nervous, or like I'm walking on eggshells?
- Put me down or criticize me or post things online to embarrass or humiliate me?
- Force me to send nude or otherwise “inappropriate” photos of myself?
- Make me feel that I can't do anything right?
- Make me feel that no one else would want me?
- Threaten to hurt me?
- Threaten to hurt my friends or family?
- Threaten to commit suicide?
- Threaten to hurt him - or herself - because of me?
- Threaten to hurt my pet(s)?
- Threaten to destroy my things?
- Hurt me physically? (includes yelling, grabbing, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, slapping, holding me down, etc.)
- Break or throw things when we argue?
- Pressure or force me into having sex or going further sexually than I want to?

If you checked any of these responses, you may be in an abusive relationship. There are resources out there. The National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle can help. For more information, visit thehotline.org or thesafespace.org.

HANDOUT

INCREASING YOUR SAFETY IN AN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIP

If you are in an abusive relationship, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave, you need to think about steps to take to increase your safety.

Talk with a trustworthy person (e.g., parent, resident assistant or hall director, adviser, professor, counselor, clergy member) about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you to feel less isolated.

Create a dating safety plan. A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think about safety strategies. Safety plans enable individuals to think ahead about steps to take that may help keep them safer during a dangerous incident. Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org, for information about dating abuse.

Call the police. If someone is hurting you or you are in immediate danger, it may be best to call the police. Many acts of physical and sexual violence are crimes; the abuser can be arrested and go to jail for them.

Get a restraining order or a protective order. A restraining order (also called a protective order) is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm you, come near you, or contact you in any way. When you have an order, you can call the police as soon as the abuser comes near you or contacts you. To find out about the laws in your state, visit thesafespace.org.

If your home is not a safe place and/or you live with the abuser, consider going to a domestic violence shelter. A shelter is a safe place. It's usually a house or apartment in a secret location, where people experiencing dating or domestic violence and their children can live for a limited time. Staff at the shelter can help you find a more permanent place to live.

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a national 24-hour resource that can be accessed by calling 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) or visiting thehotline.org.

**TECHNOLOGY
AND
DATING
ABUSE**

PURPOSE: To understand the role of digital technologies in dating abuse.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to

- recognize the role digital technologies may play in dating violence
- define vocabulary related to digital dating abuse and apply it to the text and to their own experiences
- understand what to do if they witness digital dating abuse
- understand the risks and legal consequences of digital abuse and sexting

MATERIALS

- Read “Facilitator Background Information: Digital Dating Abuse”
(appears later in this lesson) before teaching this lesson
- Read “Looking at Shannon and Greg’s Situation” Facilitator copy
- Photocopy “Shannon’s Story” for all students
- Photocopy “Looking at Shannon and Greg’s Situation” for all students
- Photocopy “The 20 Questions” for all students
- Photocopy “Reporting Digital Abuse” for all students
- Photocopy “Possible Warning Signs in Dating Relationships” as needed
- Photocopy “Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship” as needed

Additionally, as you teach this you may find that your students’ reaction warrants an extension from one class period to two.

ACTIVITIES

STEP ONE (4 minutes)

Create a framework for the tech abuse discussions.

Define dating abuse for the students. Dating abuse is defined as a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship. Based on that definition, ask the class to define “tech abuse” and share ways an abusive partner may use technology against the target. Tech abuse is when someone uses digital technology as a weapon to hurt someone else in a dating situation. Using technology to spy on, harass or embarrass a partner in social communities can be a powerful abuse tactic in any relationship.

- Answers will vary, and may include
 - Calling/emailing/texting the target to “check up” on him or her.
 - Checking the target’s missed calls, emails, voicemail and text messages to see who he or she has been communicating with.
 - Deleting “friends” on social networks.
 - Accessing the target’s Facebook/MySpace page and posing as or altering his or her online profile.
 - Calling or sending unwanted emails or texts that are threatening in tone.
 - Sending unwanted emails or texts that are sexual in nature (sexual harassment).
 - Stealing or breaking digital devices (laptops, phones, etc.) with the intent to harass or intimidate.
 - Directing threatening calls, emails, or texts to any friends or family members of the target.
 - “Ganging up” on the target by having friends send threatening calls, emails, or texts to the target.
 - Using camera phones to take unwanted pictures of the target and then using those photos as a form of blackmail/intimidation, sharing these photos on social networking sites, etc.
- As the conversation continues, discuss things the abuser can do specifically on the internet. Do they have other accounts online where they interact with friends, like gaming or photo-sharing sites? Could an abuser harass a target through a video game system (Wii, Playstation, etc.) that is connected to the internet? Does anyone use Skype or Vonage? How could that be misused?
- If time allows, summarize this discussion of technologies by asking the students to help categorize the examples they listed above as one of the following:
 - **Direct Attacks** by the abuser against the target (where he or she is called names, harassed, or has his or her property destroyed, or has friends and family threatened).
 - **Public Attacks** by the abuser about the target (posts or communications broadcast to others designed to embarrass or damage the reputation of the target).
 - **Cyberbullying-by-Proxy** where the abuser manipulates others to commit direct attacks,

public attacks, privacy invasions, or posed attacks designed to hurt the target.

- **Privacy Invasions** by the abuser spying on the target without permission, and monitoring the target’s communications or activities.
- **Posed Attacks** by the abuser using the anonymity offered by digital technologies to steal someone’s ID, hide his or her real identity, or pose as someone else (even the target, in some situations).

Some examples students give will fit into more than one category. For example, a post on the target’s Facebook page can be both a direct attack and a public attack.

STEP TWO (30 minutes)

Analyze a text that illustrates how digital technologies can be involved in the three phases of dating abuse.

- Tell students that the class is going to read aloud a short story that illustrates how digital technologies are used in dating abuse and how the three phases of dating abuse play out online.
- Give each student a copy of the “Shannon’s Story” handout.
- Read the story aloud or assign one student to read the entire story aloud or ask students to read it to themselves, silently.
- Explain to students that they are going to work in small groups to identify how digital technologies can be used in dating abuse and that they will be asked to identify how the three phases of tension building, explosion and honeymoon play out in “Shannon’s Story.”
- Give each student a copy of “Looking at Shannon & Greg’s Situation.” Tell students that as they work in their small groups to answer the questions, they should refer to “Shannon’s Story” and provide specific examples from the text that support their answers, rather than trying to remember the text and responding in a general fashion.
- After 10 minutes, review the questions on the handout, selecting one group per question to share their answers with the class. (10 minutes of discussion.)

STEP THREE (8 minutes)

Explore the trends of password-sharing and sexting as ways students use to show intimacy and trust in a relationship.

PASSWORD-SHARING

Ask the students if sharing passwords is common in dating relationships and friendships, and ask how many of them have voluntarily shared their passwords with a boyfriend or girlfriend or close friend. Ask students to brainstorm ways to handle situations where a friend or significant other asks for your password. If there’s time, consider having them role-play an effective discussion.

- Ask students how someone may be able to access your account, even if they don’t know the password. Students will likely say “hacking” or “jacking.” Ask them to expand upon that. Some possible answers include:
 - Clicking the “forgot password” button, guessing the answer to your secret question.
 - Asking a mutual friend or sibling that knows your password.
 - Using a computer or phone that you’ve asked to “remember” your password.

IMPORTANT: Remind students that even if they have shared their password with someone, they are NOT to blame for the abuse, especially considering the additional

ways an abuser could have accessed their account.

- Give each student a copy of “The 20 Questions” handout. Point out that most teens and adults tend to choose an easily guessed password. Ask them to review this list of the 20 most-commonly used password sources. Ask them how many of their passwords could be guessed by anyone who knew enough about them to answer these questions accurately. Suggest that they change their passwords to something that is both easy to remember and hard to guess.

Additional activities for cyber safety:

- Put together a list of 20 questions that you think are used most often by other students for their passwords.
- Do a survey of how many students know the answers to these 20 questions for their best friends.
- Ask your parents if you could have guessed their passwords by using these 20 questions as a guide.

SEXTING

“Sexting” is sending nude, seminude or provocative pictures or video of yourself or others via cell phone. Ask the students about sexting in relationships. We know that some teens do send “sexy” photos. At what point in a relationship do these teens share these intimate photos? Why do they send them? (For a broader discussion on “sexting,” visit athinline.org and wiredsafety.org.)

- If needed, prompt students by asking
 - Before? (to try to attract someone)
 - During a relationship? (to show how much they love and trust each other, as an alternative to sexual contact, or as a way to try to keep a boyfriend or girlfriend)
 - After? (to ruin someone’s reputation or just get revenge for being dumped)
- Ask the students: How does sexting relate to digital dating abuse?
Possible answers include
 - An abuser may send them to embarrass the target.
 - An abuser may use sexting pictures as blackmail, threatening to share them with the whole school or post them online unless the target does exactly what the abuser wants him/her to.
 - An abuser may threaten the target to coerce him/her into posing for sexy photos.

STEP FOUR (3 MINUTES) Conclusion.

- Review the steps to take to help a friend dealing with digital dating abuse.

STEP FIVE (3 MINUTES)

- Give each student a copy of “Increasing Your Safety in an Abusive Dating Relationship.” Review the handout. Emphasize that even when someone is planning to end—or has already ended—an abusive relationship, he or she should continue use of these precautions in case the abuser attempts to commit additional violence. Consider stressing that the most dangerous time for the target is when he or she has left the relationship.
- Distribute one National Domestic Violence Hotline wallet card to each student. Explain that the card is sized to fit in a wallet and that it contains a toll-free phone number and website for assistance with dating abuse issues.

FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

TECH ABUSE OVERVIEW

When dating abuse impacts young adults and college students, it impacts all parts of their lives. It affects them in school, at home, in their dorm or apartment, among their peers, at work, and in their social lives. With digital technology playing such an important role in their lives, it shouldn't be a surprise that dating abuse has gone digital. A 2009 MTV and Associated Press digital abuse survey found that 52% of people age 18-24 have experienced digitally abusive behavior.

The same tactics of power and control that are generally the hallmark of abusive relationships extend to these new technologies. One partner may try to coerce the other to take and share a sexual or nude image. Unsolicited nude or sexual images may be sent to dating partners to remind them of what they are "missing" at that moment (or sent during the flirtation or "pre-dating" phase that is common especially in dating, to give a sample of what they can look forward to). There is also a growing expectation that partners will always be available and respond immediately to any digital communication, from instant messages and wall posts to cell phone calls and text messages. Many partners expect a response 24/7.

This "ever-on" reality makes it easier for partners to textually-harass with repeated text messages and cell phone calls, expecting an immediate reply. They demand to know what their partner is doing, how much they are loved, and require updates every few minutes. Texts may be used for middle of the night "booty texts" or calls, expecting their target to wake up and accommodate their needs.

Cell phones and social networks are the two most commonly abused digital technologies when college students are involved. And new cell phone applications that connect the two are the way digital abuse images make their way to a broad audience of the couple's peers to do the greatest damage in the shortest amount of time.

Spying, hacking, and monitoring, with or without a partner's knowledge, are frequent tech abuse tactics. Activating GPS devices, reviewing call logs and keystroke loggers that use spyware technology to report every word and activity to the abuser are the newest tools to join video surveillance and phone tapping technology in attempts to control a partner. Jealous and suspicious partners are not limited to parking around the corner any longer. Their technology can do their spying for them. And to complicate matters further, it changes each and every day with the digital abuses limited only by the bandwidth, creativity, and energy of the abuser.

WHAT IS DIGITAL DATING ABUSE?

Digital dating abuse is when someone uses digital technology as a weapon to hurt someone else in a dating situation. Using technology to spy on, harass, or embarrass a partner in social communities can be a powerful abuse tactic in any relationship.

Abusers can start online and move offline or vice versa. They can be anonymous, use stolen identities, or pretend to be the target. Tactics include spying, hacking and invasions of privacy, sexting-related harassment, extortion, posing, and set-ups. Any digital device can be used to hurt someone if the abuser is creative enough.

FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

Typically, there are five approaches to tech abuse that are used as weapons in dating relationships:

1. Direct Attacks by the abuser against the target (where they are called names, harassed, or have their property destroyed or their friends and family threatened). “You are stupid!” “If you refuse to listen to me you will be sorry!”
2. Public Attacks by the abuser about the target (posts or communications broadcast to others designed to embarrass or damage the reputation of the target). “Sarah is such a slut!” “Jeff is a wimp!”
3. Cyberbullying-by-Proxy where the abuser manipulates others to commit direct attacks, public attacks, privacy invasions, or posed attacks designed to hurt the target. “Jenny said such mean things about you. I can’t believe you’d stand for it!” “Jamie is cheating on you!” or malicious messages sent to the target’s friends from another account pretending to be the target.
4. Privacy Invasions by the abuser spying on the target or monitoring their communications or activities – with or without permission.
5. Posed Attacks by the abuser using the anonymity offered by digital technologies to steal someone’s ID or pose as someone else (even the target, in some situations).

Tech abuse can be conducted using any digital device from cell phones to computers to webcams. In cases of sexting, the target’s image can be taken without his or her knowledge or consent and sent selectively to those with whom it can do the most damage (such as parents, schools, police or bosses). Or it can involve a privately-entrusted nude or sexually provocative image that is released to the entire community upon break-up or after a fight.

Xbox 360, PSP, Playstation and even DSi can be used to threaten, harass or target someone for harassment by others using typed chat, voice-over-IP (internet voice communications), ID theft and posing, as well as stolen accounts and points. Social networks (like Facebook), video-sharing networks (like YouTube), and photo-sharing networks (like Flickr) are all fertile ground for tech abuse with devastating results to the target.

Hacking software, monitoring and GPS tools, video surveillance cameras, Trojan Horses (a technology that gives others access to your computer by remote control), and other “malware” can be easily installed in person or sent online to the computer, car, or home of the target to report back to the abuser, destroy devices, data and content, or set the target up to be investigated for or charged with crimes. Text messages, instant messages, cache and history files, cell phone logs, and telephone calls can be tapped, checked, and recorded. Passwords can be guessed, saved on devices controlled by the abuser, or used without authorization. Text messages, instant messages and cell phone calls can arrive day and night by the hundreds and even thousands.

Abusive messages can be conveyed using popular social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace and myYearbook. And the abuser can ask friends and classmates to vote for the target as the ugliest, fattest, sluttiest, [fill in the blank] person and pass it on. Rude and hateful comments can be added to network walls, videos, and pictures, and targets can be reported falsely for violating terms of service at their favorite sites.

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

The list goes on and on, with every new digital technology adding a new tactic and opportunity for the abuser. Teaching students to recognize tech abuse when they encounter it and what to do to stop it is crucial, as is helping them understand tech self-defense strategies.

SEXTING

“Sexting” is sending nude, seminude, or provocative pictures or video of yourself or others via cell phone. A 2009 digital abuse survey conducted by MTV and the Associated Press found that 33% of young adults age 18-24 report having been involved in some type of naked sexting. The truth is that no one knows how often it happens. What we do know, based upon the research and work of WiredSafety, is that

- These images are often taken when under the influence of peer pressure, or in response to threats or coercion by a partner.
- Once people are sexually intimate, it is common that the one partner is asked to share at least one nude or sexual image or video with their partner.
- Some people will share a nude image with the person they are seeing instead of being sexually intimate or to delay intimacy.
- Even if the image is never voluntarily shared with anyone else, friends and roommates may stumble across it when using or searching you or your partner’s devices.
- Some people have used knowledge of their partner having posed for a sexting or sexing image to extort them into taking more sexual pictures or engage in sex acts with them,

THE ROLE OF BYSTANDERS IN TECH ABUSE

In typical dating abuse situations, the bystanders generally know the target and/or the abuser. They may be mere witnesses to the abuse, or knowingly or unknowingly help facilitate it. These same types of bystanders exist in a digital environment but might also be joined by strangers who witness the abuse and know neither the target nor the abuser.

Abusers typically try to avoid witnesses to their abuse (especially when the abuser is seeking to hide the abusive activity or blame it on the target). Even when the abuse is designed to ruin the reputation of someone, it is staged so as not to appear as abuse. As a result, offline abuse is often a secret to everyone except perhaps the target’s closest friends and family.

Because of the nature of online social communities with 350 million+ users, it is highly likely that strangers will witness tech abuse that is posted online or sent in viral messages. For example, sexting-related harassment can result in tens of thousands of strangers viewing the nude photo. As a young student explained to Diane Sawyer on Good Morning America in April 2009, “In the beginning it’s a shocking picture of someone you know. You have a stake in protecting her or sharing it with others because of who she is. But as it continues to move outside of your school and community, it eventually just becomes a picture of some naked girl.”

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

STRANGERS WHO WITNESS ABUSE

Strangers who receive or view a picture “of some naked girl” are bystanders witnessing tech abuse. They can report it, ignore and delete it, or pass it on. And their choice can make a significant difference in the duration and scope of the tech abuse. And, to the target trying to contain the abuse, it can make all the difference in the world. Empowering bystanders to report what they see is crucial. To do that, we have to address the issues that cause bystanders to ignore or forward the image in the first place:

- Awareness programs have to teach them what should be reported.
- Bystanders must understand that a good faith report, even if it turns out to be wrong, will not come back and haunt them.
- The networks need to make reporting abuse easy and remind their users that abuse reports are confidential.
- And bystanders must be convinced that making the report makes a big difference. If they think their abuse report will be futile, they won't bother reporting what they see.

How bystanders take a stand can make all the difference in the world:

- They can reach out to the abuser and discuss the abuse calmly.
- They can reach out to others and have them agree not to pass any of the abuse onto others.
- They can report it to the sites/networks and campus authorities.
- They can refuse to vote, forward messages, or visit the profiles or sites where the abuse is happening.
- They can share what they have learned in these lessons about getting help, digital hygiene, and self-defense.
- They can seek help online from sites like breakthecycle.org and wiredsafety.org.
- They can call someone out when they see them doing things that they shouldn't be doing, like reprogramming their partner's cell phone or warning targets not to leave cell phones unattended.

Reporting abuse is one of the easiest ways for a bystander to do something. Yet, many people are uncomfortable reporting abuse. Sometimes they don't know if the report is warranted. They may worry that they have misread the situation and might get blamed for making a report that turns out to be groundless. They also often believe that the person or account being reported is given their name or contact information. Some don't know where or how to report something or believe that the network or site doesn't do anything when abuses are reported. Few understand what the network or site will take action on, never having read the terms of service when joining.

This is why it is crucial for their reports to be effective. Knowing where and how to report different kinds of abuse can sometimes mean the difference between someone taking action based on a report, or the report just sitting in limbo. The handout “Reporting Tech Abuse” details how to make a tech abuse report online and should be reviewed by you beforehand.

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

Remind students that most of the time the identity of the person reporting the abuse is not given to the person being reported. The sites and networks record those who make reports in order to track false reports that are intended to target someone else, but if bystanders report something in good faith that they believe is tech abuse, they won't get into trouble.

And suggest that students act quickly when they see tech abuse. The faster they act, the more effective their actions are. (You can learn more about this in the "Reporting Tech Abuse" handout.)

PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIPS

People in abusive relationships have options for increasing their safety. They may decide to stay with the abuser, exploring ways to keep themselves safe while still in the relationship. They may decide to end the relationship.

MAKING A DATING SAFETY PLAN

A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. The plan should be practical and specific. People who are experiencing dating abuse and/or are in the process of ending or have already ended an abusive relationship should create and use a dating safety plan. This allows them to think in advance about how to protect themselves from harm rather than trying to figure it out when they are in immediate danger. The plan should be practical and specific. NOTE: We do not recommend sharing many details about what a safety plan might look like with all students because this might enable abusers to notice signs that the person he or she is abusing is planning to leave the relationship, which could potentially put the target in danger.

Anyone who remains in an abusive relationship should consider the following strategies:

- Keep important phone numbers (e.g., police, dating abuse helpline, domestic violence shelter, family, friends) nearby at all times. Always have a cell phone or change for a phone call. If you usually store these numbers in your phone, keep them on paper, too, in case your battery goes dead or you can't access your phone.
- Keep a record of all incidents of the abuse and violence. Save any threatening or harassing letters and email, text, or voicemail messages that the abuser sends.
- Explain to trustworthy friends and family that if they think you may be in danger for any reason, they should call 911.
- Plan escape routes from places like your dorm, apartment, house, lecture halls or the abuser's home.
- Keep phone card/money for a phone card with you at all times.
- Keep subway/bus/taxi fare with you at all times.
- Be aware of the closest emergency room. An emergency room can act as a brief safe haven, enabling you to sit in the waiting area to consider your next steps.

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

- Try not to be alone in isolated areas in public. Try to get a ride to class, or ask someone to walk or ride the bus with you.
- Join a support group for individuals who have experienced dating abuse.
- Put the original and copies of important documents (e.g., identification, health insurance, immigration papers) in a location that cannot be easily found by the abuser.
- Create a new email account and use a password that the abuser will not be able to guess so that the abuser will not be able to read your incoming and outgoing mail.

In addition to the suggestions above, an individual who decides to leave a relationship with an abuser should consider the following:

- Go to court to get a restraining order. Keep at least one copy and give copies to the police, school administrators, people at work, etc.
- Tell close family and friends that you are no longer in the relationship.
- Change your class schedule to avoid being in class with or running into the abuser; avoid arriving at and leaving class at the same time as the abuser.
- Screen calls and texts and/or change one's phone number.
- Avoid going to locations where the abuser might look for you.

ACCESSING SHELTER, COUNSELING, AND/OR OTHER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Many communities have resources for individuals experiencing domestic and dating abuse, such as confidential emergency shelters, counseling services, and support groups. Some domestic violence organizations will serve teenagers as well as adults. To find help in your area, contact National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org or call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

ACCESSING THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Students who experience dating abuse can seek help from the legal system, typically by using civil law, criminal law, or both. Students may also be able to seek help from their campus judicial systems. These options are very different. All states provide some protection from domestic violence in both the criminal and civil law, but the details of the 56 protections available vary greatly from state to state. For help understanding your state's civil and criminal laws, contact Break the Cycle at breakthecycle.org. For more information specifically about cyberlaw, contact WiredSafety (WiredSafety.org) or the technology safety project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV.org). You can also find helpful information from Women's Law at womenslaw.org.

Facilitator BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOTE: This Information Is Not Intended For Distribution To Students

THE CRIMINAL LAW: CALLING THE POLICE

Many acts of dating abuse are crimes for which the abuser can be arrested and sent to jail. In order to use the criminal justice system with regard to abuse, either the person who experienced the abuse or someone who witnessed it or heard about it must report what happened to the police. Sometimes social networks or websites/services will discover abusive behavior or digital images and report it themselves.

If the prosecutor decides to press charges, a judge or a jury will hear the evidence and the prosecutor's case against the defendant. If the defendant is a minor, he or she is typically tried in juvenile court. If the defendant is found guilty, a judge determines the sentence (e.g., prison or jail time, probation, community service, counseling, fine).

In most states, when a defendant is convicted of a crime related to domestic violence, the judge may also issue a criminal protective order requiring the abuser to stay away from the person he or she has harmed and not contact him or her in any way. Criminal protective orders are an important option for adolescents who live in a state that does not allow young people, people who are dating, or same sex-couples to obtain civil domestic violence restraining orders. Protective orders can also include restrictions on digital communications and activities.

THE CIVIL LAW: OBTAINING A RESTRAINING ORDER

People who experience abuse can also use civil law for protection from the abuser. In this case, the person who was abused asks to be protected from the abuser by a restraining order. A restraining (also called protective) order is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm, come near, or contact the target in any way. Restraining orders often can also serve to protect a person's children or other people who live in his or her home. With a restraining order, the person who has experienced abuse can call the police as soon as the abuser comes too close or contacts him or her in any way. In most states, violation of a restraining order is a crime.

In order to qualify for a domestic violence restraining order, an individual must have a "domestic" relationship with the abuser. Many state laws do not include the kind of relationships college students typically have (such as people who are dating but not living together) in their definition of domestic relationships and, thus, may not be eligible for protective orders. Contact Break the Cycle (help@breakthecycle.org) to learn more about the laws in your state or to identify local resources for legal assistance.

HANDOUT

Facilitator'S COPY

LOOKING AT SHANNON AND GREG'S SITUATION (SAMPLE ANSWERS FILLED IN)

DIRECTIONS: In your small group, respond to the following questions or to only the one question assigned to your small group, as well as to question no. 5.

1. Cite at least three specific examples of Greg's misuse of power in Shannon's story – make sure that at least two examples are of tech abuse.

OFFLINE

- Greg called Shannon "stupid," saying that these other guys only wanted one thing
- Greg always criticized Shannon's friends and tried to isolate her from them
- Greg accused Shannon of cheating
- Greg threatened to break up with her whenever they had an argument
- Greg yelled at Shannon frequently
- Greg threw things and broke things when he was upset
- Greg was suspicious of everything Shannon did
- Greg's jealousy got in the way of Shannon's work for the campus newspaper
- Greg said he didn't want to be with a girl who others thought was easy, and he said guys thought she was easy

DIGITAL

- Greg misused Shannon's passwords, logging into her accounts, communicating with her friends, reading her IMs and text messages, and deleting pictures
- Greg changed Shannon's social network status when he was mad at her to say "Shannon is stupid"
- Greg called her names in IM and by text message
- Greg would block certain senders, change Shannon's buddy lists and delete IMs before she could even see them
- Greg would monitor her friends and buddy lists to delete all guys
- Greg "defriended" and blocked messages from Shannon on his Facebook page
- Greg would send her constant text messages, demanding that she respond immediately and made her sleep with her cell phone

2. When Greg does explode, what types of abusive behaviors, online and offline, does he engage in?

OFFLINE ACTIONS

- Greg blamed her for leading guys on
- He yelled at her and called her names
- Greg refused to answer Shannon's phone calls
- He went ballistic when she took an innocent picture of the football team

DIGITAL ACTIONS

- Greg defriended Shannon and blocked her from his accounts
- Greg deactivated Shannon's Facebook account
- He would harass her by text messaging
- He destroyed her Flickr content
- He changed her Facebook account to "deactivate" it

HANDOUT

Facilitator'S COPY

3. After the abuse, what does Greg tell Shannon to justify his abusive behavior and shift the blame for the abuse to her? Why do you think this is an effective tactic on Greg's part? How does it help him control Shannon's actions? Identify how Greg strategically used tech abuse to attack Shannon's self-esteem.

- Greg convinces Shannon that her actions are misunderstood by guys.
- Greg uses the one year difference in their ages, and his greater technology skills to convince her that he knows more than she does.
- Greg calls her stupid, repeatedly, online and offline and Shannon starts to believe him.
- Greg convinces Shannon that she has given him no choice but to teach her a lesson for talking with and befriending guys.

4. Bystanders play an important role in either stopping or perpetuating abuse online and offline. How did Greg use technologically abusive tactics to isolate Shannon from her friends and potentially helpful bystanders?

- By using her ID to send nasty comments and refuse friend requests, Greg allowed others to think Shannon was the one sending mean messages to them. Those people could reject her friendship.
- When Greg blocked friends on Shannon's buddy list and either deleted messages from her friends or replied, pretending to be Shannon, they all thought she was turning against her friends.
- Shannon pulled away from all guy friends to avoid making Greg angry. These guy friends were not there to provide support for her when she needed it.
- Shannon's friends who did not know about the abusive relationship might have pulled away when they saw bizarre posts, status changes, and messages on her Facebook account.
- Shannon's friends may have resented that their private messages were being reviewed by Greg without their knowledge or consent.

Could bystanders have helped?

- Bystanders can always help.
- Bystanders may have been able to show her how controlling Greg was and helped her regain self-esteem.
- Bystanders could have helped her explain that hurtful messages were really being sent by Greg, and advised her to change her password.
- Bystanders could have given her support and someone to talk with when she felt isolated.

5. In Shannon's story how did Greg use a combination of tech abuse tactics and traditional dating abuse tactics to shift power and control in his favor? Do you think that most tech abuse takes place without at least some offline dating abuse tactics as well?

- This question has no right answer. It explores the students' impressions and experiences with tech abuse and dating abuse generally. It is an opportunity to learn from the students. Getting a response from all of the small groups will help define the rest of the lesson and identify areas where additional resources and materials can be helpful.

HANDOUT

SHANNON'S STORY

We began dating during our first semester at college. He spent a whole weekend helping me recover files when my laptop died. Then, he helped me upload everything to Flickr and Facebook before the hard drive died entirely, so that I would have a back-up and a spare copy of all my pics and files.

Those first two months were incredible. We exchanged passwords. He said that people who loved each other didn't have secrets. I thought this was taking our relationship to a new level. But once school started everything changed. Greg didn't like my girlfriends from school. He said they were a bad influence on me. He made me stop seeing them. He wouldn't let me have guy friends either. He'd call me "stupid," saying that these other guys only wanted one thing. He would check my cell phone and my texts, yelling at me if they were from guys. He yelled a lot. Sometimes he would throw things or break them. He was always asking me about other guys. I never gave him any reason to be jealous. I did what I could to keep him happy.

But he was always suspicious - logging into my accounts, reading my private messages. He would deny friend requests from anyone he didn't like. He would edit my page, removing pictures he thought were too "sexy." He would change my status when he was mad at me to say "Shannon is stupid." And he would block certain senders, change my buddy lists, and delete IMs before I could even see them. He would send me text messages all day long, asking where I was and who I was talking to. If I didn't answer right away, he would get really mad and yell at me. And he called my friends names, sometimes even to their face.

Greg always apologized afterwards. He explained that he loved me too much to share me. He said that he was doing this for my own good. "Slutty" friends could reflect badly on me, he explained. Better to cut them off. I listened because I loved him and didn't want to make him mad. But it was getting worse. He would accuse me of cheating if I accepted any friend requests from guys, and he'd make me unfriend them. I also couldn't have any guys on my buddy list. Basically, I had no one other than Greg. He said that he should be enough for me. The texts would arrive day and night - "What are you doing? Don't even think about cheating! You're mine!"

He'd threaten to break up with me if I didn't reply that instant. I had to sleep with my cell phone to make sure I didn't miss any texts. Once, I didn't hear a text come in, so he unfriended and blocked me on his Facebook page for a week. He said I was "stupid" about lots of things. I started to believe him. After all, he only did this because he wanted to protect me.

HANDOUT

One day I posted a group pic of the football team. I took it for campus newspaper. He went ballistic. He said all the guys would think I was coming on to them and didn't want to be going with a girl that other guys believed was "easy." I begged him to forgive me. I promised to remove the pic as soon as I got home.

I went home and checked my email, and realized I had received a message from Facebook saying my account had been deactivated. I figured it was a tech thing and went to Flickr next. I couldn't believe it. All of my pictures were gone – not just the football team's pic but everything! Family pictures, birthday parties, mom and dad's wedding anniversary, the pictures of my cat, Woody...everything was gone. I couldn't understand what had happened. My "one backup and a spare copy" of these photos were on my Facebook profile, so I tried to log-on to my Facebook and reactivate my account, only to find that my username and password had been changed.

I called Greg and left a voicemail. I explained about the problems with Facebook and Flickr. His text reply was "It's all gone." All gone! How did he know? Then it slowly began to sink in. My one copy and one backup wasn't enough to protect me from an angry Greg. I called Greg's cell phone again and left a message. I told him I could understand him deleting all the material about the dance but not everything else. I told him it wasn't fair. He texted me back a few minutes later. "I'll come and get you at 8. We'll talk then." I was so relieved.

He showed up and told me he was sorry. He explained that "deactivated" wasn't the same as "deleted." You could restore it completely whenever you wanted. He told me that he loved me, but needed to teach me a lesson for my own good. I started crying. He reached over and held me, kissing me. I was still in shock. I wasn't sure what to think or feel, all I could do was cry.

Greg reached into the back seat for a bouquet of flowers. He promised never to leave me and hoped I had learned how much he cared about me. He surprised me with a slide show on his laptop with our favorite songs and pictures of us at camp and kissing at the dance. I cried again. I didn't know what to do.

HANDOUT

LOOKING AT SHANNON AND GREG'S SITUATION

Directions: In your small group, respond to the following questions or only to the one question assigned to your small group, as well as to question 5.

- 1.** Cite at least three specific examples of Greg's misuse of power in "Shannon's Story"—make sure that at least two are examples of tech abuse.
 - a.**
 - b.**
 - c.**
- 2.** When Greg does explode, what types of abusive behaviors online and offline does he engage in?
- 3.** After the abuse, what does Greg tell Shannon to justify the abusive behavior and shift the blame for the abuse to her? Why do you think this is an effective tactic on Greg's part? How does it help him control Shannon's actions? Identify how Greg strategically used tech abuse to attack Shannon's self-esteem.
- 4.** Bystanders play an important role in helping the target. How did Greg use technologically abusive tactics to isolate her from her friends and potentially helpful bystanders? (How could bystanders have helped?)
- 5.** In Shannon's Story how did Greg use a combination of tech abuse tactics and traditional dating abuse tactics to shift power and control in his favor? Do you think that most digital abuse takes place without at least some offline dating abuse tactics as well?

HANDOUT

THE 20 QUESTIONS

Passwords, when misused, can be a serious threat to students who quickly find their accounts hacked, taken over, or have messages sent to their friends in their name. While 70% of polled students told WiredSafety that they share their passwords with their friends, others have passwords or secret questions that can be easily guessed. We find that most passwords are created from this list. Is your password formed from these 20 questions? How many of your friends know the answer to these? How hard will it be for them to guess your password? Too easy!

- 1.** favorite sports team
- 2.** where you go to school
- 3.** pet's name
- 4.** favorite color
- 5.** lucky number
- 6.** date of birth
- 7.** middle name
- 8.** favorite animal
- 9.** favorite movie
- 10.** favorite band/singer
- 11.** what college you want to go to
- 12.** the year you graduate high school
- 13.** best friend's name
- 14.** favorite sports player
- 15.** favorite season
- 16.** shoe size
- 17.** favorite clothing store
- 18.** favorite book
- 19.** dream car
- 20.** dream job

HANDOUT

REPORTING TECH ABUSE

Report it or support it. That's your choice. Whether you are the target of tech abuse or merely encounter it with someone you know, or even a stranger online, the faster it is reported the faster the abuse will stop.

First, some quick pointers: If you are being physically threatened, you have to take it seriously. Tell your resident assistant or hall director or adviser and then call your local police! Make sure that any report to the online service provider includes a request that they "retain the data" so police can review it during an investigation. Otherwise, when the post or profile is deleted, the evidence is often lost.

Save a copy of everything, not just in printed form, but by clicking "save" on your browser and saving the email and text message live. If you are being cyberbullied on a social network you should report it to that social network. Most social networks will have a Report Abuse button or some other report mechanism on their site. Become familiar with how the report abuse approach works on the social networks you use. And remember to Stop, Block, and Tell!

- **Stop** – don't reply. Don't forward it. Don't threaten the abuser. Don't act out in any way.
- **Block** – the sender, message or account so they can't continue to abuse you.
- **And Tell** – a trusted person (resident assistant or hall director, professor, adviser, or health professional) and the site used in the tech abuse or provider where the tech abuse came from.

Some console game systems also have built-in mechanisms for their users to report abuse. A good example is Microsoft's X-Box 360. To learn more about how you can report abuse on Xbox Live, visit their code of conduct for US users: www.xbox.com/en-US/legal/codeofconduct.htm.

If you receive an abusive, threatening, or gross email or IM, the only recourse you may have is to report the person responsible to his or her email service provider, IM provider or Internet Service Provider (ISP). If the actions violate the terms of the provider, he or she may lose the account or have it suspended temporarily. You start by visiting their ISP, IM or email service provider's terms of service or terms of use section. There, read the policy carefully. Make notes about which sections you believe were violated and how. Copy and paste the section that applies to the communication you are reporting.

In the majority of cases, the websites also have an email address posted to send violation reports to. If they don't, you can usually use "abuse@[name_of_ISP_goes_here] or tos@[ISP name] to make the report. Copy yourself on the email so you have a permanent record of what you sent, where you sent it, and when.

HANDOUT

Many IM providers and social networks also have a “report abuse” button you can click. Try and save a copy of whatever you send. Don’t expect too much, though. It has been WiredSafety’s experience that most networks are reluctant to act on a first contact, if at all. And they have good reasons for this. Sometimes the cyberbully poses as the victim, in an attempt to get the network to unknowingly assist in the harassment. It is also typical that some of the “evidence” being provided has been fabricated, or has been “enhanced” to be more serious than it actually is. There are also privacy and legal considerations that they must consider. And they receive hundreds of thousands of Terms of Service (TOS) reports and have to prioritize them. Marking any abuse report with the kind of abuse you are reporting – “cyber bullying,” “sexual predator,” “suicide threat,” etc., will help them recognize the more important reports and act on them more quickly.

How Can I Improve My Chances of Getting a Response or Having the Network or Service Provider Take Action?

The likelihood of getting a response and their taking any disciplinary action depends on how well you make your case and the policy of the site. Many don’t respond, other than an auto-responder telling you that your abuse report was received. So, don’t hold your breath waiting for a formal report on your complaint.

But you have a good chance of having them take action if you take a few minutes to get your ducks in a row. All reports should follow the rules that the ISP, social network, game or email provider sets out in their report Terms of Service (TOS) information. Check and double check to make sure you have all the information they ask for and have clearly identified whatever you have. Most ISPs require the following information to be provided, at minimum:

1. Date and time that the violations of their TOS took place (keep each violation separate in the report and make sure you include your time zone).
2. Copies of emails (Your “help” instructions with your email application may walk you through it, step-by-step.), IMs or the full and correct URLs of the profile, website, forum, newsgroup, or bulletin board postings (copy the exact address in your browser when you read it, and paste it “as is” into the report).
3. Screen shots of offending IMs and profiles (save these also to your computer, as the profile/posting may change and you will need proof of what used to be there).
4. A time-line of how the situation developed, including copies of all communications. (Using a monitoring application can be very helpful here).
5. Any information you can provide as to what steps, if any, you have taken to try to deal with this before reporting it to them.

Don’t tell them things about a certain harasser you know in real life or make unfounded accusations unrelated to the communications. Don’t rant and rave. Also, do not ask them for the identity of the harasser. They are not permitted to give out that information except through valid legal process.

HANDOUT

You need to follow up in a few days if you have not received any response other than an “auto responder” and the situation is continuing. Check first, since they may not send a follow-up email, but may have taken down the content or shut down the offending account.

Be firm and consistent when you follow up. Remind them of the previous report or email, or resend it marked as “resent on [fill in the date]”. Always copy yourself on these reports for your own records. Do not copy help groups, the FBI or others on the correspondence. Be focused and clear and you will probably get the help you need.

HANDOUT

INCREASING YOUR SAFETY IN AN ABUSIVE DATING RELATIONSHIP

- If you are in an abusive relationship, whether you decide to stay in the relationship or leave, you need to think about steps to take to increase your safety.
- Talk with a trustworthy person (e.g., parent, resident assistant or hall director, adviser, professor, counselor, clergy member) about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you to feel less isolated.
- Create a dating safety plan. A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating abuse to think about safety strategies. Safety plans enable individuals to think ahead about steps to take that may help keep them safer during a dangerous incident. Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline, ndvh.org, for information about dating abuse.
- Call the police. If someone is hurting you or you are in immediate danger, it may be best to call the police. Many acts of physical and sexual violence are crimes; the abuser can be arrested and go to jail for them.
- Get a restraining order or a protective order. A restraining order (also called a protective order) is a court order that makes it illegal for the abuser to harm you, come near you, or contact you in any way. When you have an order, you can call the police as soon as the abuser comes near you or contacts you. To find out about the laws in your state, visit thesafespace.org.
- If your home is not a safe place and/or you live with the abuser, consider going to a domestic violence shelter.
- A shelter is a safe place. It's usually a house or apartment in a secret location, where people experiencing dating or domestic violence and their children can live for a limited time. Staff at the shelter can help you find a more permanent place to live.

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a national 24-hour resource that can be accessed by calling 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) or visiting ndvh.org.

HANDOUT

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

If you are in an intimate relationship with someone, is it the healthy situation that you deserve? Put a check next to any of the responses below that apply to this relationship.

Note: It is important to remember that sometimes there are no signs that an intimate partner may become abusive.

Does the person I am with

- Get extremely jealous or possessive?
- Accuse me of flirting or cheating?
- Constantly check up on me via calls or texts or make me check in?
- Tell me how to dress or how much makeup to wear?
- Try to control what I do and whom I see?
- Try to keep me from seeing or talking to my family and friends?
- Have big mood swings—getting angry and yelling at me one minute, and being sweet and apologetic the next?
- Make me feel nervous, or like I'm walking on eggshells?
- Put me down or criticize me or post things online to embarrass or humiliate me?
- Force me to send nude or otherwise “inappropriate” photos of myself?
- Make me feel that I can't do anything right?
- Make me feel that no one else would want me?
- Threaten to hurt me?
- Threaten to hurt my friends or family?
- Threaten to commit suicide?
- Threaten to hurt him - or herself - because of me?
- Threaten to hurt my pet(s)?
- Threaten to destroy my things?
- Hurt me physically? (includes yelling, grabbing, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, slapping, holding me down, etc.)
- Break or throw things when we argue?
- Pressure or force me into having sex or going further sexually than I want to?

If you checked any of these responses, you may be in an abusive relationship. There are resources out there. The National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle can help. For more information, visit thehotline.org or thesafespace.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.loveisnotabuse.com Love Is Not Abuse is a program of Liz Claiborne Inc. that provides information and tools that men, women, children, teens, and corporate executives can use to learn about domestic and dating violence and how they can help end the epidemic.

www.loveisrespect.org National Dating Abuse Helpline provides 24/7 access to information and services. 1.866.331.9474 / 1.866.331.8453 (TTY).

www.acalltomen.org A Call to Men is a leading national men's organization addressing domestic and sexual violence prevention and the promotion of healthy manhood. It is committed to maintaining strong partnerships with women's organizations already doing this important work. It helps to organize communities in order to raise awareness and get men involved in this effort.

www.atask.org The Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Inc., is a coalition that aims to eliminate family violence and to strengthen Asian families and communities.

www.athinline.org MTV's initiative to empower America's youth to identify, respond to and stop the spread of digital abuse.

www.austin-safeplace.org Safe Place works to end sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing and prevention for individuals and the community in Austin, Texas. SafePlace's Expect Respect Program builds healthy relationships for youth.

www.bbbs.org Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with measurable impact.

www.breakthecycle.org Break the Cycle, Inc., is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and empower youth to build lives and communities free from domestic and dating violence.

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters.html Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention is a 60-minute, interactive training session designed to help educators, youth-serving organizations, and others working with teens understand the risk factors and warning signs associated with teen dating violence. The training was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in partnership with Liz Claiborne Inc.

www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention online resource for violence prevention.

www.childhelp.org Outlines ChildHelp USA's programs and services, supplies hotline numbers and local contacts, and provides information for children and teens about abuse.

www.childrennow.org Provides access to Children Now publications, poll results, policy papers, press materials, and updates on federal and state legislation.

www.darkness2light.org Darkness to Light works to shift responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse from children to adults, and to reduce child sexual abuse nationally through awareness and education.

www.dayoneny.org Day One provides preventive education and direct legal services to young people, and technical assistance to professionals, related to teen dating abuse and violence.

www.deanaseducationaltheater.org Deana's Educational Theater is an arts-based organization that develops and produces educational theater and other programs to promote healthy relationships.

www.dvinstitute.org Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community provides a forum for identifying appropriate and effective responses to prevent/reduce family violence in the African American community.

www.endabuse.org The Family Violence Prevention Fund is a national non-profit organization that focuses on domestic violence education, prevention, and public policy reform.

www.fvlc.org/rap Family Violence Law Center Relationship Abuse Prevention Project educates middle and high school youth as well as parents, educators, adolescent health care providers, and youth service workers about the dynamics of domestic and dating violence.

www.mencanstoprape.org Men Can Stop Rape mobilizes male youth to prevent men's violence against women. It builds young men's capacity to challenge harmful aspects of traditional masculinity, to value alternative visions of male strength, and to embrace their vital role as allies with women and girls in fostering healthy relationships and gender equity.

www.ncadv.org The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence website posts information on events, provides links and resources, and offers information and a 24-hour hotline on how to get help.

www.nctsn.org The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) provides information and resources to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized youth, their families, and communities throughout the United States.

www.ncvc.org/dvrc The National Center for Victims of Crime's Dating Violence Resource Center provides training, resources, and information to increase awareness of and commitment to addressing dating violence.

www.ncvc.org/src The National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center provides training, resources, and information to increase awareness of and commitment to addressing stalking, including abusive use of high-tech devices.

www.thehotline.org The 24-hour, toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline links individuals to help in their area using a nationwide database and offers information on local domestic violence shelters, other emergency shelters, legal advocacy and assistance programs, and social service programs.

www.neahin.org NEA Health Information Network, the non-profit health affiliate of the National Education Association, provides health information on topics of concern to educators and students.

www.nnedv.org The National Network to End Domestic Violence's Safety Net Project provides training, resources, and information about ways abusers are misusing technology to abuse, stalk, and terrorize, and how survivors can use technology strategically to respond to these crimes.

www.nrcdv.org The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence provides technical assistance, training, and information on the response to, and prevention of, domestic violence.

www.peaceoverviolence.org Peace Over Violence is a social service agency dedicated to building healthy relationships, families, and communities free from sexual, domestic, and interpersonal violence.

www.safeyouth.org The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center is a Federal resource for communities working to prevent violence committed by and against young people.

www.sportinsociety.org/mvp The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program is a leadership program that motivates student-athletes and student leaders to play a central role in addressing rape, battering, and sexual harassment.

www.stopcyberbullying.org A web site devoted to cyber bullying issues, run by WiredSafety.

www.tascorp.org The After-School Corporation provides grants, training, and assistance to community-based organizations in New York City that run after-school programs.

www.teensagainstabuse.org Teens Experiencing Abusive Relationships (TEAR) is a teen-run organization that works with schools and organizations to

educate people about teen dating violence.

www.teenangels.org A peer expert and help group on cyber safety and digital responsibility run by Wiredsafety teen volunteers.

www.thatsnotcool.com That's Not Cool is a multi-media campaign developed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund in collaboration with others to help young people "draw their digital line" against disrespectful and controlling behavior.

www.thesafespace.org A project of Break the Cycle, thesafespace.org is a comprehensive online dating abuse resource for teens with access to help, information, and activism opportunities.

www.safehorizon.org Safe Horizon works in New York City's five boroughs to provide support, prevent violence, and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families, and communities.

www.startstrongteens.org Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships is a national initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to stop teen dating abuse before it starts.

www.wiredsafety.org Originated by a group of volunteers, this web site provides one-to-one help, extensive information, and education to cyberspace users of all ages on a wide range of internet and interactive technology safety issues. WiredSafety.org houses the cyber harassment helpline run by the charity. It provides online support for victims of cyber harassment, cyber bullying and stalking.

www.womenslaw.org Provides easy-to-understand legal information to women living with or escaping domestic violence.

www.youthoverviolence.org Youth Over Violence empowers teens to end violence and abuse.

LOVEISNOTABUSE.COM