

**TALKING POINTS ON HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING VIOLENCE**

**(From LoveisRespect.org)**

It’s never too early to talk to your child about healthy relationships and dating violence. Starting conversations -- even if you don’t think your child is dating -- is one of the most important steps you can take to help prevent dating violence. Here are some sample questions to start the conversation:

* Are any of your friends dating? What are their relationships like? What would you want in a partner?
* Have you witnessed unhealthy relationships or dating abuse at school? How does it make you feel? Were you scared?
* Do you know what you would do if you witnessed or experienced abuse?
* Has anyone you know posted anything bad about a friend online? What happened afterwards?
* Would it be weird if someone you were dating texted you all day to ask you what you’re doing?

Need more tips to get started? Here are some other ways you can prepare to talk to your child about healthy and unhealthy relationships:

* Do your own research on dating abuse to get [the facts](http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/dating-violence-statistics) before talking to your teen or 20-something. Start with the information and resources on loveisrespect.org.
* Provide your child with examples of healthy relationships, pointing out unhealthy behavior. Use examples from your own life, television, movies or music.
* Ask questions and encourage open discussion. Make sure you listen to your son or daughter, giving them a chance to speak. Avoid analyzing, interrupting, lecturing or accusing.
* Keep it low key. Don’t push it if your child is not ready to talk. Try again another time.
* Be supportive and nonjudgmental so they know they can come to you for help if their relationship becomes unhealthy in the future.
* Admit to not knowing the answer to a particular question. This response builds trust.
* Reinforce that dating should be fun! Stress that violence is never acceptable.
* Discuss the options your child has if they witness dating abuse or experience it themselves.
* Remind your son or daughter they have the right to say no to anything they're not comfortable with or ready for. They also must respect the rights of others.
* If your child is in a relationship that feels uncomfortable, awkward or frightening, assure them they can come to you. And remember -- any decisions they make about the relationship should be their own.
* Find ways to discuss gender equality at [A Call to Men](http://www.acalltomen.org/" \t "_blank).
* Contact [Break the Cycle](http://www.loveisrespect.org/about-break-the-cycle) to find out if there are dating violence prevention programs in your community. If not, work with [Break the Cycle](http://www.loveisrespect.org/about-break-the-cycle) to bring abuse prevention to your local school or community group.

***informed \* involved \* connected***

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