

# HOW CAN I HELP?

## DO

- Do: Assure confidentiality**, let the victim know if you must report
- Do: Be understanding, non-blaming, honest, and supportive**
- Do: Listen and validate feelings**
- Do: Acknowledge the abuse, show concern**
- Do: Ask questions**, help victim to identify abusive behaviors
- Do: Remind them of their strengths, compliment them**
- Do: Assess for danger**
- Do: Express concern**
- Do: Offer help, refer to school social worker, guidance, administrator**
- Do: Share information about dynamics of abusive relationships**
- Do: Support their decisions, be patient, and stand by them for as long as it takes**
- Do: Provide information: RICADV, Nat'l Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, Safety Plans, Legal information**
- Do: Remember that the most dangerous time for a victim is right after they leave the relationship. The victim needs to have a safety plan.**

## DON'T

- Don't: Pressure**
- Don't: Judge or blame**
- Don't: Assume victim wants to leave relationship**
- Don't: Place conditions on your support**
- Don't: Put down the abuser**
- Don't: Talk to victim & abuser together**

## **SAFETY PLANNING FOR TEENS**

Think ahead about ways to be safe if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship. And you must remember that you are in the greatest danger AFTER breaking up with your boyfriend. Here are some things to consider in designing your own safety plan.

- What adults can you tell about the violence and abuse?
- With your parents, consider going to the police and getting a restraining order. Notify your school and workplace about this and your situation so they can help to keep you safe. Know that a restraining order alone cannot protect you at all times. Your safety plan can help.
- What people at school can you tell in order to be safe--teachers, principal, counselors, police resource officers?
- Consider changing your school locker or lock. (sometimes you may need to change schools as well)
- Consider changing your route to/from school.
- Use a buddy system for going to school, classes and after school activities.
- What friends can you tell to help you remain safe?
- If stranded, who could you call for a ride home? Try not to be alone. Go out with friends or in groups.
- Have a "code word" and share it only with your friends, family, and school personnel. When you use it with them they will know to call for help.
- Do not meet the abuser alone, no matter how "nice" or apologetic they sound. Do not believe them even if they threaten suicide. You can never be "just friends"...that is a ploy to get you back. Anything they say to you is all said to get you back. Do NOT believe any of it.
- Keep a journal describing the abuse in detail. Write down dates, witnesses, the type of abuse and what was said or done to you or your property. Take photos of your injuries and damage done to your property. Tape record any phone calls from the abuser. Print out email messages. File police reports and see a doctor for injuries and be truthful with them. They will document the injuries. Keep all police and medical records and your journal in a safe place.
- Get rid of or change the number to your beepers, pagers or cell phones and to those the abuser gave you. Change your email address and do not tell the abuser. Consider moving.
- Keep spare change, calling cards, number of the local shelter, number of someone who could help you and restraining orders with you at all times. Call 911 in an emergency.
- Where could you go quickly to get away from an abusive person?
- Don't drink alcohol or use other drugs. Remember they will decrease your ability to make healthy decision