

Dating Violence and Abuse

Dating can be complicated, and there are a few important points for teens – both girls and boys- to know about how to judge your relationship. It is easy to become confused by a relationship that is sometimes loving and fun, but sometimes frightening. For example, it can be easy to confuse possessiveness and jealousy with love, but these are NOT forms of love! They are forms of control, which is not healthy.

Here are some signs to help you assess whether you are in an abusive relationship. Does your partner:

- Call you names, insult or humiliate you?
- Tell you that you are ugly?
- Tell you that no one else will ever want you?
- Tell you how you may or may not dress?
- Tell you what friends you can or cannot see?
- Become very jealous or angry if you talk to other people or go places with other friends?
- Unjustly accuse you of flirting or being with other guys or girls?
- Check up on you to see what you've been doing when you're not together?
- Follow you?
- Force you to have sex when you don't want to?
- Drive recklessly to frighten you?
- Push, pinch, or slap you, twist your arm, or hurt you physically in any way?
- Tell you that it's your fault he or she is violent or abusive?
- Threaten to hurt you if you leave the relationship?
- Threaten to commit suicide if you leave the relationship?

You may think your partner's behavior is your fault. You may think that if you loved your partner more or tried to become a better person, he/she would not behave this way. In reality, you cannot stop your partner's violence. If a partner hits or verbally hurts once, he/she will do it again no matter what you may do or not do. This is not your fault.

You can get help.

You have the right to NOT be abused, physically, emotionally or sexually.

You have the right to fall out of love and live without threats

You have the right to express your opinions

You have the right to grow as an individual in your own way and not be criticized for it.

You have the right to change your mind.

You have the right to say no.

You have the right to be respected and loved, and to live a peaceful life.

You have the right to accept responsibility for your own behavior, not someone else's.

This information is provided by *Safe in Hunterdon*. Visit their website at www.safeinhunterdon.org or call the Safe in Hunterdon 24 hour hotline for free and confidential help: **888-988-4033**