

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 adult (parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, clergy member) about what you are experiencing. Doing so can help you to feel less isolated.

Create a teen dating safety plan. A dating safety plan helps people who are experiencing dating violence to think in advance about how to keep themselves safe. Safety plans enable individuals to think ahead about how to protect themselves from harm instead of trying to figure it out when they are in danger. (see Safety Plan handout)

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 dating violence are crimes; the abuser can be arrested and go to jail for them.

With help from a trustworthy adult (parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, clergy member) get a restraining order or a protective order. A restraining order (also called 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.

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, usually a house or apartments 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.

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