

Teen Relationship Abuse: Parent Workshop Forms

Information for Parents on TEEN RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

As many as one-third of all high school and college-aged young people experience violence in an intimate or dating relationship.

Many parents think their children would not get involved in an abusive relationship, and often don't recognize signs of abuse until their children are too involved to get out of the situation without help.

Most teens continue to date their partners even after they have been physically abused, and few confide in their parents or other adults about this problem.

**The information contained in this packet is provided by the RAPP
(Relationship Abuse Prevention Program).**

**For further information, please contact RAPP Coordinator, _____
at _____, or come by Room _____.**



RAPP is a program of the Center Against Domestic Violence. For more information call (718) 254 - 9134 or contact the RAPP Coordinator in your school.

What is RAPP?

- RAPP is the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program at _____ High School.
- The RAPP Social Worker, _____, provides workshops in students' classrooms about relationship abuse, sexism, sexual harassment, date rape and healthy relationships. These workshops are done to increase student awareness of the dangers of relationship abuse, the availability of support, and to encourage teens to think about healthy relationships.
- RAPP provides individual counseling for teens interested in discussing relationship issues, learning more about how to have healthy relationships or for those teens involved in abusive relationships.
- RAPP provides group counseling to teens interested in discussing relationships in a group setting.
- RAPP provides teens with a safe place to come and talk about challenging things.
- RAPP encourages parents to call Social Worker _____ with questions, comments, or concerns at _____.



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Is Your Teen in an Abusive Relationship?

Sometimes the answer to the question of whether or not your child is in an abusive relationship may be obvious; you see bruises or other injuries, witness a physical or verbal attack, or your child tells you about the problem. However, for many reasons, teenagers will not tell their parents or guardians everything that goes on in their lives. For this reason it is important that parents and guardians be aware of the warning signs that indicate your child may be in an abusive relationship.

- Injuries s/he cannot explain or tries to cover up.
- Wearing clothing that is not appropriate for the weather, i.e. heavy coats, turtlenecks, sunglasses, etc.
- Signs that s/he is afraid to leave her/his partner, i.e. acting jumpy or nervous, afraid when the partner calls or is displeased with something, hesitant to disagree with or argue with partner, passive, always does what the partner wants to do.
- Excessive amounts of phone calls, pages, e-mails, or visits by the partner.
- Sudden changes in style, attitude, appearance, i.e. wearing clothes, makeup or jewelry that s/he normally never wore (or used to wear and suddenly doesn't anymore) prior to the relationship.
- Starts missing school, grades decline, becomes more defiant toward parents, stops hanging out with old friends.
- Isolated from friends and family- only hangs out with his/her partner.

... May be signs your child is a victim

- Excessive phone calls, pages, e-mails or visits to girl/boyfriend.
- Hesitant to discuss the relationship or always says everything is okay.
- Shows signs of aggression towards other people/things, i.e. damages people's property, lashes out quickly over minor things.
- Has violent or aggressive temper.
- Speaks of boy/girlfriend as property in an unusual, obsessive way for example, "she is mine."
- Has strong beliefs in women's inferiority and men's superiority.

...May be signs your child is an abuser

Both the abuser and the victim may also exhibit signs of depression including: sudden changes in attitudes and behaviors, irregular eating habits, excessive or little sleep, isolation from family and peers, loss of interest in hobbies, threats of suicide..



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Why Stay?

The answers to these questions are extremely complicated. There are many reasons why people do the things they do and since everybody is different the reasons vary. There is not a "type" of person that gets abused or that becomes abusive. It can happen to anyone. Following is a list of some of the reasons why people abuse, stay in, and leave abusive relationships...

WHY ABUSE?

- ▶ Insecurity
- ▶ Fear of losing his/her partner
- ▶ Low self esteem
- ▶ Possessiveness
- ▶ Desire for control
- ▶ Belief that violence is the way to express your feelings
- ▶ Sexist beliefs
- ▶ Belief that his/her problems are caused by a partner
- ▶ Because he/she can get away with it

WHY STAY?

- ▶ Insecurity
- ▶ Confusing jealousy and possessiveness with romance
- ▶ Confusion about the violence and his/her relationship with the abuser
- ▶ Fear about what will happen if he/she leaves
- ▶ Shame
- ▶ Hope that partner will change
- ▶ Belief that he/she is to blame for the abuse
- ▶ "Love"
- ▶ Fear of being alone or pressure to have a boy/girlfriend
- ▶ Lack of experience with healthy, non-abusive relationships
- ▶ Belief that he/she can't get anyone better
- ▶ Low self esteem
- ▶ Depression, despair, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- ▶ Feelings of loneliness or isolation from friends/family
- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Increased danger upon leaving
- ▶ Limited resources (i.e.: money, lack of shelters)
- ▶ Children
- ▶ Family pressure (i.e.: religion, culture, status)
- ▶ Lack of support - Isolation

WHY LEAVE?

- ▶ Realization that the abuser will not change
- ▶ Realization that things are getting worse and will continue to do so
- ▶ Support and help from friends and family
- ▶ Realization that this is not what he/she wants in a relationship
- ▶ Support and help from professionals



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Empowering a Victim of Domestic Violence

1. Listen and believe her/him.
2. Avoid any victim-blaming questions or statements:
 - "What did you do?"
 - "Why don't you just leave?"
 - "You're crazy for putting up with it."
 - "Don't you care about your kids?"
 - "How many times have you gone back?"
 - "Why do you stay?"
 - "You should have known better."
3. Never give her/him solutions but offer to assist in exploring options.
4. Recognize her/him survival skills.
5. Make concrete empowering statements:
 - "I'm concerned about your safety."
 - "I'm concerned about your children's safety."
 - "You deserve a better life."
 - "You are not crazy, your feelings are normal in this situation."
 - "Violence is never justified."
 - "You don't deserve to be abused, no matter what."
6. Give her/him numbers to call: hotlines, shelters, community resources.
7. Avoid criticizing her/his parenting style. Instead, offer information, referrals and your support.
8. Avoid diagnosing mental health problems.



Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

1. Infants - Age 3

- physical problems (frequent colds, diarrhea)
- excessive screaming and irritability
- problems falling asleep
- developmental delays, not gaining any weight, not eating
- anxiety, sadness, crying, emotional withdrawal

2. Ages 3 - 7

- developmental delay (language)
- infant-like behavior (thumb sucking)
- difficulty getting along with others
- hostility and aggression
- defiant and destructive behavior
- clinging behavior (wants to be with the mother all of the time)
- fear
- self-blaming and feelings of guilt

3. Ages 7 - 13

- low self-esteem
- conflicting feelings about the abuser
- increased aggression toward peers, siblings and parent
- shame (denying the violence at home)
- delinquent behavior (stealing, fighting, using drugs)

4. Ages 13 - 18

- patterns of blaming others for his/her behavior, especially parents
- high levels of anger and anxiety
- inappropriate belief that violence can be a response to conflict
- protective behavior toward the mother
- violence against the mother
- sense of responsibility for the care of younger siblings
- running away
- patterns of truancy
- substance abuse problems
- promiscuous behavior

5. Additional Effects- All Age Groups

- emotional needs
- difficulty adjusting to school
- school phobias (might fear leaving the mother alone)
- somatic problems (asthma, peptic ulcers, chronic headaches, abdominal cramps)
- eating disorders
- patterns of increased deceptiveness (excessive lying, stealing, cheating)
- inclination to mutilate or kill animals
- inability to trust and develop relationships
- low tolerance for frustration
- self-destructive behavior, self-mutilation
- memory of every detail of abuse on the mother
- places guilt on the mother, pressures her to make things better
- poor sexual image
- low self-esteem
- bed wetting behavior



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If You Think Your Teen is in an Abusive Relationship...

- **Keep Communication Open!** Let your child know s/he can talk to you about anything, anytime. Ask your child about his/her relationships, and listen to what s/he has to say. It is typical for teens not to want to talk about relationships with parents, but keeping an "open door" policy will let them know that they can talk when they are ready.
- **Be non-judgmental and try to keep an open mind.** Your child may not talk to you about her/his relationships if s/he is afraid you will not approve of the relationship. If your child knows you are accepting, it will be easier for her/him to confide in you. If your child can't talk to you s/he runs the further risk of staying in the abusive relationship and getting hurt.
- **Model positive behaviors.** If your relationships are violent your child is witnessing this and chances are s/he will take on those behaviors in her/his own relationship.
- **Set limits.** As a parent you are responsible for the safety of your child. It is important to set limits regarding how much time your child can spend with her/his partner. Also, to set rules regarding other responsibilities including curfew, homework and school attendance. Parents should know where their child is and whom s/he is with.
- **Do not minimize the abuse.** While we do not want to scare our child, it is important that they understand that abuse is not normal dating behavior. Studies show that as many as 1/3 of high school students interpret violent acts as acts of love.
- **Support your child in her/his efforts to end the relationship.** Help your child find resources. For the survivor, this may include helping him/her call the police, obtain an order of protection, seek medical help if needed, obtain counseling or attend support groups.
- **Let your child know that the abuse is not her/his fault.** Only the abuser is responsible for the abuse, whether physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or financial.

REMEMBER, LOVE IS NOT ABUSE.



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Obtaining a Family Court Order of Protection

Orders of Protection can be obtained in either (and possibly both) Family Court or Criminal Court, depending on the relationship between the parties and the situation involved.

Who can use Family Court?

- Those related by **BLOOD**-including foster kids/adoption
- Those related by **MARRIAGE**-including formerly married
- Those with **CHILDREN IN COMMON**

Who can't use Family Court?

- Common-law/living together without children in common
- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Same sex couples

Does the victim need to Press Charges for a Family Court Order of Protection?

- No! In fact, Family Court is the best option for victims choosing not to press charges against the abuser. However, any police report or documentation should be brought to court as it supports the case, *but it is not required.*

How exactly does the victim go about getting a Family Court Order of Protection?

- Victim should report to court as early as possible (8:30-9:00 AM). It is often all day event.
- Victim may choose to first go to the Safe Horizon Office. A counselor will explain the Order of Protection process, offer housing assistance and referral services.
- Next, go to the Petition Room, and tell the clerk the victim wants to file for an Order of Protection. The victim will fill out necessary forms, turn them in, and then wait for a clerk to call them.
- At that time, a court clerk will officially type up the allegations.
- The victim will then wait to go before a judge who will decide whether to grant the order. If s/he does, this order is **TEMPORARY**. At that time, another court date is set concerning the **FINAL** Order of Protection.
- The temporary Order of Protection must be served on the abuser (to inform him/her of its existence and upcoming court date). **Upon serving**, the order becomes valid.
- Both victim and abuser will appear at the next court date. The judge will decide whether a permanent order is warranted at the time.



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How is an Order of Protection served against the abuser?

1. Court can send it directly to the precinct where the abuser lives. Police must attempt to serve up to 6 times (if unable to serve it will be sent back to court).
Advantage: the victim need not be involved in this process.
Disadvantage: the victim is not informed when or if the order has been served.
2. Victim may also take the order directly to the police precinct where the abuser resides and/or works.
Advantage: S/he will know immediately if it was served.
Disadvantage: S/he must wait for an available police officer to attempt to serve, which, can take a long time.
Disadvantage: Police can require victim to accompany them when serving Order.
3. The Order may also be served by anyone over 18 years of age (other than the victim); this person must fill out and notarize the accompanying " Statement of Personal Service."
4. Finally, the victim may choose to hire a process server, an individual paid to serve court paperwork.

Manhattan Family Court
60 Lafayette St. Rm 1C2
NY, NY 10013
212/577-1270

Brooklyn Family Court
283 Adams St., Rm 573
Bklyn, NY 11201
718/834-7440

Queens Family Court
89-14 Parsons Blvd
Jamaica, NY 11432
718/262-0202

Bronx Family
900 Sheridan
Bronx, NY 10451
718-590-2374

Staten Island Family Court
120 Stuyvesant Pl. Rm. 242
Staten Island, NY 10301
718/727-6500 Ext.302



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Obtaining a Criminal Order of Protection

Who can use Criminal Court?

- Anyone who will PRESS CHARGES against the abuser.
- Couples (including same sex) not related by marriage with no children in common (whether living together or not) MUST USE CRIMINAL COURT (such persons may not use Family Court).

How do you get a Criminal Court Order of Protection?

In New York State, *Criminal Court Orders of Protection* are issued by a judge as part of the prosecution of a case that is before the court. Thus, the victim must be willing to press charges. There are two ways to get a case to criminal court:

1. **By arrest.** If the abuser is arrested on a domestic violence offense, *the victim will, in most cases, AUTOMATICALLY receive a Temporary Order of Protection*, which is issued at the abuser's arraignment and mailed to the victim (if the victim does not receive it, contact the District Attorney handling the case or the Victim Advocate in the appropriate borough). The victim does not need to petition or necessarily appear in the criminal court. The order will be renewed each time the case goes to court, and subsequently mailed to the victim. The abuser is served each time s/he appears in court. Felony cases must be handled in this matter.
2. **Civilian Initiated Complaint Process.** Other cases are started at a Court Dispute Referral Center (CDRC). The victim must go to the CDRC to begin this process.

What does the CDRC require?

- Criminal Sufficiency (A or B misdemeanor)
- A credible complaint
- Police report(s), evidence and/or witnesses

What happens next with a civilian-initiated complaint?

The case will be sent to the District Attorney to see if they are going to assume prosecution. If the case is taken, the DAs office will request that a temporary Order of Protection be granted until the defendant is arraigned on the case.

Note: regarding cases open to Detective Unit:

If the police refer a case to the detective unit (i.e. a possible arrest/investigation is pending), the victim cannot apply for an Order of Protection through the criminal court, since an investigation must be completed to see if an arrest is warranted.



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