

## What About the Relationship?

If you're in an unhealthy relationship, figuring out the next steps can be hard. You may still have feelings for this person and it can be confusing. If you decide to stay together, be honest with yourself - you can only change your own behavior, not your partner's. If you decide to break up, seek support from a trusted adult. Be as safe as possible, whether you decide to end the relationship or not.

- If you and your partner go to the same school, you may be able to adjust your class schedule or find other ways to feel safer. Talk to a school counselor or teacher you trust.
- Avoid isolated areas at school and local hangouts. Don't walk alone.
- Keep friends or family close when attending parties or events.
- Save any threatening or harassing messages. Set your profile to private on social media.
- Change the passwords on your social media and other online accounts.

## Where to get help

**Contact your local domestic and sexual violence program**

**National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline:**

Text LOVEIS to 22522 or speak to a peer advocate at 1-866-331-9474

**National Sexual Assault Hotline:**

1-800-656-4673

**Trevor Lifeline** (for LGBTQ\* youth):

1-866-488-7386

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

1-800-273-8255 or [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) to chat with a crisis counselor online

**[www.engagingvoices.org](http://www.engagingvoices.org)**

A project of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence

This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-OWW-TA-AX-K019 and 2016-WR-AX-0008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.



## Unhealthy Relationship Signs\*

If you are experiencing unhealthy signs in your relationship, it's important to not ignore them and understand they can escalate to abuse.

**Overwhelm** – When someone expresses really extreme feelings and behaviors that feel too heavy or too fast.

**Possessive** – When someone acts jealous and tries to control who you spend time with and what you do, or constantly calls/texts or makes you feel like you have to respond at all times, or monitors you, your cell phone or social media, or accuses you of cheating.

**Puts Down** – When someone constantly texts or says things to make you feel bad about yourself, especially in front of others and negatively impacts your self-confidence.

**Isolates** – When someone intentionally keeps you away from friends, family, or other people, and makes you afraid to tell others.

**Manipulates** – When someone tries to control your decisions, actions or emotions or makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it's your job to keep them happy. When someone engages in unwanted touching or sexual activity or prevents you from using birth control or refusing to use birth control themselves or threatens to hurt themselves or suicide if you break up.

**Sabotage** – When someone purposely ruins your reputation, achievements, or success, or threatens to “out” you or share information with others to harm you.

**Guilt Trips** – When someone accuses you for everything or repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy or abusive behavior.

**Explosive** – When someone has a really strong, unpredictable reaction that makes you feel scared or intimidated, or destroys your things, or threatens to hurt you or actually physically hurts you.

## When to Tell Someone About the Abusive Relationship

If you are afraid or might be in a dangerous situation, trust your gut and get help.

While it can be hard to do, telling someone about what is happening is courageous and an act of self-love. Talking about your relationship might feel embarrassing; preparing what you're going to say first can help. Think of the main things you want to tell someone and then practice saying those things in your head or even practice aloud when you're alone. Practicing helps reduce fear and builds confidence.

When you're ready, tell someone you trust and keep talking until you get help – a parent or family member, teacher, counselor, or school nurse. If the person you confide in questions your experience or doesn't believe you, find another adult and tell them.