

Today we presented parts of the Safer Smarter Teens, Be the Change Curriculum and the following topics were discussed. For more information and ways to further discuss these topics with your teen, please go to www.saferSMARTerteens.org.

A healthy relationship is one where there is a balance of power, where healthy boundaries are protected and the relationship is positive, productive and supportive. People sometimes use power to try to control others. It is very important to understand when there is an imbalance in power and learn how to stand up for yourself and maintain control over yourself and your choices.

These can be warning signs of an abuse or an unhealthy relationship.

Signs of an Abuser

- Being overly jealous
- Checking on you constantly or demanding constant contact to confirm where you are and what you are doing
- Getting overly upset or blowing things out of proportion
- Insulting and putting you down
- Threatening to break up if you don't do what they want
- Throwing things, hitting walls, explosive anger
- Secrets and pressure to keep them

Signs Someone is Being Abused or in an Unhealthy Relationship

- Always worrying that you are making your partner upset or mad
- Giving up friendships and activities that were important to you
- Constantly making excuses for your partner's behavior
- Getting pressured for sexual behaviors
- Bruises or cuts
- Becoming withdrawn or isolate

We also presented information about sexual abuse and the concept of grooming which is the techniques an abuser uses to establish and maintain a relationship. Grooming starts with the abuser finding a target with vulnerability. By exploiting that vulnerability, the abuser strives to fill a need for the target and establish a relationship. Next the abuser works to isolate the target. Control is maintained through secrecy and blame. Control can be gained through force, coercion and fraud. **It is important that if you notice any of these warning signs, tell a trusted adult and get help. You have the right to maintain control of yourself and stay safe.**



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CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS

- **Peer Pressure**: “everyone is doing it,” threatening to spread rumors
- **Threats**: causing fear by telling someone “if you don’t do what I want, I will retaliate”
- **Intimidation**: bullying, using gestures or looks that create fear
- **Using Social Status**: requiring certain behaviors to remain in the group, treating someone less valuable
- **Emotional Abuse**: insulting, mind games, make someone feel bad about themselves
- **Isolation**: separating from others, controlling what someone can say, do, or who they can see

EQUALITY BALANCERS

- **Respect**: thoughtful, considerate, and supportive
- **Trust**: reliable, confidential, and loyal in good times and bad
- **Responsible**: having each other’s back
- **Fairness**: equal partners, sharing in decisions and choices
- **Positive Interaction**: both physical and verbal interaction is positive and respectful
- **Honesty**: being sincere and genuine

For a relationship to be healthy, there should be a balance of power. When one person takes control or manipulates the other person, the relationship may not be healthy. These can be warning signs of an unhealthy relationship.



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It is extremely important to be aware of the signs of **grooming**, both for yourself and your friends. Remember the **warning signs**:



- The abuser looks for someone who is vulnerable
- The abuser seeks to fill a need for that person
- The abuser establishes a relationship
- The abuser begins to isolate the victim from friends and family
- The abuser establishes control over the victim by using force, coercion, or fraud
- The abuser begins to test the sexual boundaries

If you notice any of these warning signs, tell a trusted adult and get help.
You have the right to maintain control of yourself and stay safe.

RESOURCES

- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline**—24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) Text to 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **National Dating Abuse Helpline**—24/7 support for teens, young adults and their concerned friends and family members who have questions or concerns about their dating relationships 1-866-331-9474 (TTY: 1-866-331-8453) Text “LOVEIS” to 22522 www.loveisrespect.org
- **Teen Line**—Teen-to-teen hotline and community outreach program available every night from 6-10 pm to help adolescents address their problems in a confidential, anonymous and comfortable way 1-310-855-4673 Text “TEEN” to 839863 www.teenlineonline.org
- **Trevor Project Lifeline**—24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24 (1-866-488-7386)
www.thetrevorproject.org
- **Call for Help Sexual Assault Victims** 1-618-397-0975 www.callforhelpinc.org, support services for victims of rape, incest or sexual abuse.
- **Illinois Child Abuse Hotline** 1-800-25-ABUSE (22873) to report child abuse or neglect of a child/teen

