no more silence

it’s time to talk

TALK-A-THON GUIDE | FEBRUARY 2015
February is Teen Dating Violence (DV) Prevention and Awareness Month!
THE ISSUE:

Dating abuse isn’t just a big issue. It’s an epidemic.

HOW:

Parents, schools, communities need:

- Information—about dating violence, how to talk to young people the care about;
- Tools—like this can be found at www.loveisrespect.org and www.breakthecycle.org
- Action—change policies, change relationships.

WHEN:

The headlines won’t allow us to turn away any longer. Too many young people depend on us!

It’s time to talk.
WANT TO HOST
A TALK-A-THON?
Talk-A-Thons are hosted events by caring people who want change. They can happen anytime during the year and It's Time to Talk Day kicks it off. It's Time to Talk educates and then equips parents, mentors, and other caring adults to talk with young people about healthy relationships.

They can be as simple as a group of moms huddling in a coffee shop, or a more elaborate gathering of parents and teachers in a school gym.

**PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

**GOALS**

1. Adults improve communication with young people.

2. Participants engage in movement building activities—like the Love Is Not Abuse Coalition—year-round!

**OUTREACH AND PUBLICITY**

Who do I invite?

Start with people you know. Invite friends and coworkers. Invitations can be sent before the event via email, regular mail or through a Facebook event (for details on creating a Facebook event, click here).

Open up your invite list. Go beyond your personal networks. Reach out to schools, youth centers, religious groups, the local YMCA or domestic violence program.

**Publicity**

This guide includes customizable materials: a poster, invitation, and a sample blog post.

For gatherings with friends, family, and coworkers:

- Send an invitation and then follow up by phone, text, email or in person.

For larger gatherings that are open to the public:

- Have groups "pin" you, publish a blog announcement or promote the event to their networks through their website or other communications efforts.
- Contact your local newspaper. Have them publish the event on the local calendar or write a letter to the editor.
- Send an announcement to local television and radio stations and ask them to promote or attend the event. Follow up with a phone call to their newsroom to ensure your note reaches the correct person (Note: please contact Khalisa Jacobs at Break the Cycle, 202.824.0707 or kjacobs@breakthecycle.org for support and specialized materials for contacting media about your Talk-A-Thon.
Engage your social media networks.
Here are some ideas:

Tweets:

- February is the month to Start Talking! Talk to a teen about what it means to have a healthy relationship. Learn how: http://bit.ly/itttdfeb4

- Talk to Young people about what it means to have a healthy relationship during the month of February! Learn how: http://bit.ly/itttdfeb4


Sample Facebook Posts:

- Did you know that February is the month to Start Talking? Join this national month of conversation and help prevent dating abuse. Learn how. www.itstimetotalkday.org

- Did you know that 1 in 3 young people experience dating abuse? Talking about it is the first step to ending it. Talk to them about healthy relationships during the month of February! Learn how. www.itstimetotalkday.org
LOGISTICS

Your space needs to accommodate guests—do you want round tables or a theatre style? Are participants going to walk to different stations or sit and listen to a guest speaker? Your living room may be comfortable or you may want a gymnasium. It’s up to you.

- Technology - Do you need a microphone, an iPad, speakers? Are you playing vignettes off of YouTube?
- Do you want refreshments? Are there accessible bathrooms?
- Hosting a Talk—Thon event is much like any other event. Think about what you want to accomplish, how you want your guests to feel, and ensure that your space accommodates that.

THE TALK-A-THON

Talking with young people about dating violence and healthy relationships isn’t easy. Get prepared before the event. Later in the guide, you will find statistics, a check list, warning signs, etc. It is important that you feel comfortable with the topics before the Talk-A-Thon.

Activity Ideas:

- In collaboration with a local domestic violence program, host a survivor impact panel at a high school.
- Host one or more speakers to discuss how teen dating abuse has impacted their family
- Break into small groups / facilitate a large group discussion on how to apply the tools in this guide — conversation starters, warning signs, etc. – on the family, school or community level.
- Using the conversation starters in this guide, facilitate role-playing of various conversation scenarios.
- Host a group of parents in your home to talk about the challenge of keeping teens safe in the “tech age”.
- Have iPads on hand that attendees can use to engage with the digital resources from Loveisrespect – the “Healthy Relationship Quiz,” and the “Relationship Spectrum,” which allows users to rate relationship behaviors as healthy or unhealthy.
- Host a member drive to join the Love Is Not Abuse Coalition - a grassroots coalition of parents and advocates who are committed to promoting healthy relationships in their communities across the country (Note: anyone can join the Coalition at www.itstimetotalkday.org).
- Pledge online to have a conversation about healthy relationships and preventing teen dating abuse with a teen, family member or friend. Every pledge will appear on the It’s Time Talk Day Conversation Map, that tracks where conversations and events are taking place across the country (Note: hosts can collect paper pledge cards, provided in the “Talk-A-Thon Tools” section of this guide, and submit pledges online after the event).

Take Action. Talking about healthy relationships should occur year-round. Provide ways for your guests to take action on It’s Time To Talk Day and beyond.
Talking to tweens, teens and young adults about what it means to have a healthy relationship is not always easy.

#It'sTimeToTalkDay

**TOOLS**

**Planning for Success**

**Invitation**
Personalize this template invitation with details about the time, location, RSVP information and format (as needed) of your Talk-A-Thon. Also, consider using this graphic and template verbiage to send an invitation email, or create a Facebook event for your Talk-A-Thon.

**The Warning Signs of Unhealthy Relationships**
Familiarize your self with these signs. The day of the event display or distribute them to attendees to ensure they can recognize the often subtle warning signs of dating abuse. Visit www.teenDVmonth.org for more information on warning signs.

**Know the Facts: Teen Dating Violence Abuse**
Display or distribute these key statistics to Talk-A-Thon attendees to increase awareness of who is impacted by teen dating abuse. These are a great statistics to include when approaching school administrators, community leaders and other parents, to reinforce the need for increased education and programming on this subject.

**Blog Posts**
Personalize this sample blog post with specifics on your Talk-A-Thon. This can be used by local organizations, bloggers, news outlets, etc. who want to help spread the word about It’s Time To Talk Day. A follow-up call to the editor or producer will help ensure your announcement gets published. Click here to see the sample blog post.

**The Talk-A-Thon**

**How to Start A Conversation**
Use the various versions of this “How To Start A Conversation,” tool at your Talk-A-Thon. These can be used and adapted by parents, youth mentors, aunts and uncles or other relatives, teachers, coaches, counselors or anyone who knows or works with young people. Participants can share these handouts with people they know to encourage others to have conversations about healthy relationships on February 3rd.

**After the Talk -A-Thon**

**Sample-Follow- Up Letter**
This is an example of an email or letter you can send out to your participants within a few days of your Talk-A-Thon. The letter thanks guests for their attending and encourages them to join the thousands of other parents and advocates who have made it their mission to promote healthy teen relationships nationwide, by becoming part of the Love Is Not Abuse Coalition.
Planning for Success: Key Information on Dating Violence and conversation starters

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?
To facilitate a Talk-A-Thon you don’t have to be an expert. The only requirement is that you have the willingness to talk with others about dating violence. To be prepared, we have compiled some important information so that when you event arrives, you feel prepared to facilitate the conversation.

Dating Relationships Today:

Young people report that the concept that adults have of “dating” is different today.

This produces a significant challenge when creating tools for conversations with young people. The term “dating abuse” itself has been challenged. As Break the Cycle continues to explore terminology that represents youths’ realities, we will use “dating abuse” and “partner” as generic terms until new language is found. Ask the youth that you talk to what terms they like. Let us know!

In the past, “dating” meant anything from casual to committed relationships. In general, dating as a term today means a much more significant relationship between two people. Casual relationships may also be termed “hooking up”, “friends with benefits”, “hanging out”, or “talking”.

“Dating Abuse” can happen in any of these relationships.

We also use the term “partner” to be inclusive and affirming to all types of intimate relationships, and is not intended to only represent long-term or committed relationships.

Dating Abuse Defined:

Dating abuse is when one partner uses various tactics and patterns of behavior to control, intimidate, humiliate, coerce, or physically abuse the other partner.

A victim of dating violence may:

- Be depressed or anxious.
- Stop participating in extracurricular activities or other interests.
- Stop spending time with other friends and family.
- Begin to dress differently.
- Have unexplained marks or bruises.

Because relationships exist on a spectrum, it can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. One important consideration is if there is a pattern of behavior. For example, if a young person decides not to hang out with her best friend one day there is no need for concern. If she decides to stop seeing her friend all together for no reason there may be more reason for concern.

Believe them and take them seriously. Youth may be reluctant to share their experiences because no one believes what they say. As you validate their feelings and show your support, they can become more comfortable and trust you with more information.

How to “translate” abusive behaviors to young people

Effective communication happens when you put concepts into the words used by the person you are communicating with. When talking with young people, you may want to use the following examples.

Does your partner:

1. Say mean things to you that makes you feel bad?
2. Act really jealous or insecure?
3. Isolate you from family or friends?
4. Accuse you of things that are untrue?
5. Make you feel like you are crazy?
6. Make you feel like everything is your fault?
7. Physically hurt you…like punching, slapping, pulling your hair?
8. Tell you what to do.
9. Check your texts, or watch what you do on Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, or SnapChat.
Dear [Name]:

Thank you for attending and participating in our Talk-A-Thon, part of It’s Time To Talk Day that kicks off on February 3, 2015 and runs through the entire month. For almost a decade, It’s Time To Talk Day has brought together parents, survivors, celebrities, nonprofit organizations, corporations and journalists to spread the word about domestic and dating violence.

As many as one in three teens will experience dating violence and two-thirds of them will never report it. Abuse crosses all social, economic and ethnic boundaries, devastating a young person’s health and safety. Your participation and activism in It’s Talk To Talk Day means you are encouraging young people to pursue healthy relationships and end dating abuse.

We encourage you to join the thousands of other parents, teachers and advocates who are promoting healthy relationships across the nation by becoming part of the Love Is Not Abuse Coalition.

Thank you again. Together we can break the cycle of violence.

Sincerely,

www.itsstimetotalkday.org
#ItsTimeToTalkDay
This February is National Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention month. Adults across the country are joining forces to start having critical conversations with young people—it’s Time To Talk Day. An annual conversation presented by Break the Cycle, It’s Time To Talk Day educates adults about dating violence and encourages conversations with young people. Getting involved is simple and every conversation makes a difference.

Step 1  Visit www.itstimetotalkday.org, and pledge to talk to someone—be it your own child, a teacher, co-worker or a friend—about why promoting healthy relationships is so vital to the safety, health and our collective wellbeing.

Step 2  Go a step further, and attend or host an It’s Time To Talk Day Talk-A-Thon near you. These dynamic conversation events equip caring adults to talk about healthy relationships. Hosting an event is easy and free. Register your event on the It’s Time To Talk Day map and find out where other advocates are hosting Talk-A-Thons across the country, [including one in INSERT DETAILS ON YOUR EVENT city/ location/ time]. Whether it’s in your living room or a school gym, these conversations could help save a life.

Step 3  You can also add your name to the Love Is Not Abuse Coalition, a grassroots movement of thousands of caring adults across the country who support healthy relationships in their local communities. Many of these passionate mothers, fathers, teachers and mentors have brought the issue of dating violence out of the shadows and into school districts, legislation, and to our community leaders.