

## Do's & Don'ts of Smart Dating

### DO:

1. Be confident. Speak-up about your feelings, interests and values towards the relationship.
2. Meet and hang-out in a public place. Avoid being isolated with a person you do not know that well.
3. Ask about his or her likes and dislikes, families and friends, values and beliefs, goals and dreams.
4. Bring your own money on a date and be prepared to pay.
5. Be very careful about meeting people through the Internet. If you're going to meet, ALWAYS meet in a public place with friends around.
6. Trust your instincts. If your uncomfortable with a person or with a situation, don't be afraid to do what you need to do to feel safe.

### DON'T:

1. Try to force someone into going out with you if they're not interested.
2. Go alone to the other person's home or invite him or her to your home, get in a car alone with someone, or become isolated with someone you don't know very well.
3. Send mix messages, especially about sex.
4. Get drunk or high in order to "loosen-up" and be confident on a date.
5. Play "hard to get" or other mind games.
6. Do anything you don't want just because you want the other person to like you or don't want to hurt his or her feelings.

**If you are in a relationship that is painful or abusive, remember:**

~ You cannot make your partner change. You can let your partner know what changes you need him/her to make, but it is up to your partner to make the changes.

~ You are not responsible for your partners actions. If your partner is abusive, changing your behavior will not make the abuse stop.

~ It is not your fault. Abuse is NEVER deserved.

~ Abuse is dangerous and will only escalate in frequency and severity over time.

~ You are not alone. **Help and support is available.**

**WOMENSAFE, INC.**



Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence

P.O. Box 656  
Chardon, OH 44024  
Phone: (440) 285-2222 ext. 5680  
Fax: (440) 286-1037  
E-mail: [womensafe@netzero.net](mailto:womensafe@netzero.net)  
[www.womensafe.org](http://www.womensafe.org)

**COPEline: 1-888-285-5665**  
**24-Hour Support and Crisis Management**

R **LOVE**

*Pain*

*Selfish*

F **Abuse-Free**

S **Dating**

P *Guilt* N

*Fear*

E **TRUST**

*Need*

C *Jealousy* *Obsession*

T **HONESTY**

*Violence*

**CARING**

**WOMENSAFE, INC.**



**Abuse or violence in a relationship is a pattern of behavior that a person uses to intimidate and control another person.**

### **Emotional Abuse**

Manipulates you into feeling wrong or “crazy”  
Isolates you from friends and family  
Questions every detail of your time  
Deliberately humiliates you in front of friends

### **Verbal Abuse**

Yelling or name calling  
Threatening to hurt you, family, friends, or pets  
Constantly blaming you for all problems  
Criticizing what you wear or how you act

### **Sexual Abuse**

Rape  
Constant sexual demands  
Forces unwanted sexual acts

### **Physical Abuse**

Hitting, Kicking, Shoving, Choking, Biting  
Using a weapon to threaten or hurt  
Smashing things to intimidate

### **Financial Abuse**

Controlling or stealing money  
Destruction of personal property  
Taking keys, purse or wallet



Love is a **behavior**  
— not just a word.

⇒ Women between the ages of 16 and 24 who are in dating relationships experience the highest rate of intimate violence.

⇒ An estimated 1 in 4 teen couples experience abuse in their relationships.

⇒ 40% of teenage girls ages 14-17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or threatened by a boyfriend.

⇒ 38% of all date rape victims are between the ages of 14-17.

**Jealousy and possessiveness are not signs of love, but are instead the most common early warning signs of abuse.**

## **How can you help:**

**If you know someone who is being abused:**

1. Be there. Listen and believe what she/he tells you. Don't tell your friend how she or he should feel. Instead, acknowledge your friend's feelings.
2. Don't pressure your friend to break-up with her/his partner, and don't put the partner down. This may driver your friend away from you when she/he needs you most.
3. Encourage your friend to get help by building a wide support system. Have her/him go to a support group, talk to friends, parents, teachers or counselors.
4. Give her/him good information about abuse. Share written information or call COPEline for more information or support.
5. Don't make victim-blaming statements like "You're stupid to stay" or "Why do you let him treat you like this?" This will not help your friend.
6. Do not spread gossip. It will only further hurt your friend and could put her/him in danger.
7. Call the police if you witness physical violence.

**If you know someone who is abusing a partner:**

1. Don't laugh at jokes or make light of talk about abusive behavior.
2. If your friend grew-up in a violent home, try to get him/her to talk about how that effects current relationships.
3. Encourage your friend to get help. Offer to help him/her find a counselor or adult he/she can trust.
4. Share written information or encourage your friend to call COPEline to find out what help is available.
5. Be a role model for healthy relationships. Treat your partner and friends with respect.
6. Call the police if you witness physical violence.