

Presentation Plan- Relationship safety

Dating/Relationship Violence: Grades 9-12

**Please note that all text in italics is only present in the script. This additional information can be used to spark discussion with the students*.*

Slide 1: DEAL.org Presents: Relationship Safety

Slide 2: Why is relationship violence an important issue?

- *Both men and women fall victim to relationship violence.*
- *You are more likely to be abused by a partner than a stranger.*
- *Relationship violence can happen to anyone.*
- *Relationship violence can occur in friendships, romantic relationships or family relationships.*
- *If violence in a romantic relationship is ignored and the partners live together or marry, the behaviour will likely continue and the problem will involve not just the couple but any children they might have ([Teen Dating Violence Facts](#)).*

ASK THE CLASS: What do you think are the characteristics of a healthy relationship? After students have responded and the group has had a brief discussion, go on to the next slide.

Slide 3: What are the characteristics of a healthy relationship?

- **Non-threatening behaviour**
- **Respect**
- **Trust**
- **Support**
- **Honesty**
- **Accountability**
- **Responsibility**
- **Fairness**
- **Compromise (Negotiation)**

ASK THE CLASS: What do you think are the characteristics of an unhealthy relationship? After students have responded and the group has had a brief discussion, go on to the next slide.

Slide 4: Unhealthy relationships show signs of:

- **Verbal or emotional abuse**
- **Harassment**

- **Physical abuse or assault**
- **Sexual abuse or assault**

Slide 5: What is dating violence?

- *Dating violence is an abuse of power where one person tries to take control over another person.*
- *This abuse can take many forms: physical, emotional or sexual.*
- *Dating violence can happen to anyone, boy or girl.*
- *In most cases the abuser is a person that you know and not a stranger.*

Slide 6: The dating experience in High School

- *1 in 4 students are victims of minor physical aggression*
- *3 out of 10 students have experienced some sort of violence in their relationship*
- *Dating violence can happen in any kind of relationship, no matter their sexual orientation or the duration of the relationship.*

(Source: [Lamarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution](#))

Slide 7: Examples of verbal or emotional abuse include...

- **Insulting, yelling, swearing, humiliating, teasing, belittling, and ignoring.**
- **Making all the decisions in the relationship: where you go, whom you should see, what you should do, etc.**
- **Isolating the other person.**
- **Forbidding him or her to see friends or being jealous of those friends.**

Verbal or emotional abuse is difficult to pinpoint, because it isn't always obvious, especially when the relationship is just beginning.

Slide 8: Stalking is also considered a form of emotional abuse. What is stalking?

- *Repetitive harassment or threatening of another person, especially in a way that haunts the person physically or emotionally.*
- *It can occur during or after the relationship.*
- *Stalking can be done by phone, in person, or online (cyberstalking).*
- *Perpetrators may or may not show their face.*
- *Stalking may result in physical abuse.*
- *It is characterized by the sense of fear the victim feels towards his or her perpetrator.*

For more information on stalking, visit [Berkeley: Sexual and Dating Violence - Stalking](#)

Slide 9: What tactics do stalkers employ?

- *Repeated phone calls, sometimes with hang-ups.*
- *Following, tracking (possibly even with a global positioning device).*

- *Finding the person through public records, online searching, or paid investigators.*
- *Watching with hidden cameras.*
- *Suddenly showing up where the victim is, whether at home, school, or work.*
- *Sending emails, communicating in chat rooms or with instant messaging (cyberstalking: see below).*
- *Sending unwanted packages, cards, gifts, or letters.*
- *Monitoring the victim's phone calls or computer-use.*
- *Contacting the victim's friends, family, co-workers, or neighbours to find out about the victim.*
- *Going through the victim's garbage.*
- *Threatening to hurt the victim or their family, friends, or pets.*
- *Damaging the victim's home, car, or other property.*

Slide 10: Jenna's story

Since they broke up two weeks ago, Mike has emailed Jenna telling her that she has made a big mistake and that he wants her back. Jenna thought that was sweet of him, but her friends keep telling her she shouldn't give in. As a result, since the breakup, Jenna has been spending more time with her friends, and last night she went to the movies with Josh, one of her longtime friends. The next day, when she checked her email, she saw that Mike had emailed her. In his email, he tells Jenna that she shouldn't be seeing other guys because they are still exclusive. He also warns that Josh better steer clear or else...

What should Jenna do? Alert a parent, adult, or your school resource officer to the situation and discuss the next steps. Cyberstalking can be a form of harassment; however, authorities need tangible and explicit threats in order to prosecute a perpetrator.

What type of abuse is present here? Cyberstalking, emotional abuse

Slide 11: What are examples of physical violence?

- *Pushing and shoving*
- *Slapping, punching, hitting, kicking*
- *Choking*
- *Hair-pulling*
- *Throwing objects at the person*
- *Threatening to hurt the person with a weapon*

In physical abuse, physical force is used to intimidate the other person.

It is against the law, and the offender could be arrested, prosecuted, and if found guilty, sentenced to jail.

Slide 12: Abuse and the law

In Canada, certain categories of abuse, such as assault, sexual assault and criminal harassment are crimes under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Some types of abuse are also addressed under provincial legislation. The [Youth Criminal Justice Act](#) is relevant to young persons between the ages of 12 and 17.

Slide 13: Psychological abuse can also fall under certain laws of the Criminal Code, such as:

- criminal harassment
- uttering threats
- harassing telephone calls
- intimidation

Slide 14: Meghan and Jason's story

Megan is 15. She began dating 17-year-old Jason last year. She was very happy when she first met him because he was good-looking and popular. When they started going out together, she was quite flattered by his attention. He told her what clothes she looked best in and how to wear her hair. However, after a while, he began telling her what she should and shouldn't wear and that she had better not cut her hair short. Whenever she went against his wishes, he lost his temper and yelled at her. More recently, he has been getting more physically violent with her and has held her arm and even slapped her once when she yelled back at him.

Is this considered dating violence? If so, what forms of dating violence are illustrated in the scenario?

- *Physical violence, emotional abuse*

Slide 15: What are examples of sexual abuse/assault?

- *Forcing, pressuring, or physically demanding that someone participate in sexual activities that he/she does not want to engage in.*
- *Examples of unwanted sexual activities: fondling, exposing sexual parts of the body and intercourse.*
- *Although girls are victims in the majority of cases, boys can also be victims.*

Slide 16: Date rape. What is it?

- **Date rape is sexual abuse/assault. It occurs when a person forces his or her dating partner to have sex.**
- **The aggressor may use emotional coercion or physical strength to demand sex. Sometimes, although less frequently, the aggressor threatens the other person with a weapon.**

Date rape can also involve one partner drugging the other. GHB is a drug that is commonly associated with date rape and is often slipped into drinks.

Slide 17: The Effects of Sexual Assault

In most cases the victim of sexual assault is left feeling confused and conflicted.

Victims often wonder or feel the following:

- *A feeling of guilt: the victim often feels responsible for what has happened to him/her. "Maybe I led him on...He couldn't control himself."*
- *It is better to keep this to myself, because it's embarrassing for me and my family.*
- *"I can handle this. I can make it stop."*
- *"He did it because he loves me, so it's ok."*
- *"Abuse is normal in any relationship."*
- *"He promised he wouldn't do it again."*

These excuses are NOT true – victims of sexual assault are in no way to blame. Any kind of sexual violence is unacceptable behaviour and the victims have nothing to be ashamed of. By telling someone what has happened, victims can get the support they need to deal with the situation and ensure their safety.

Slide 18: The Effects of Sexual Assault

A sexual assault victim may also be scared. Some fears are:

- **Fear of not being believed**
- **Fear of rejection by partner or peers**
- **Fear of retaliation or abandonment**

Victims of sexual assault often find it difficult to talk about their experiences because:

- *Victims are often ashamed and embarrassed. Sexual assault is a very personal crime that affects one's body and sense of self.*
- *Victims think that they did something to cause or contribute to the assault. The abuser wants victims to feel this way so that they won't speak out.*

While it is normal for victims to feel this way, they have nothing to be embarrassed about. The sexual assault was not their fault, and they have nothing to be ashamed of in asking for help.

Slide 19: Why do people stay in abusive relationships? Leaving isn't always as easy as it seems...

- *Being in a relationship gives a person a sense of belonging. Most people value this greatly.*
- *The victim might be involved in his or her first romantic relationship and want it to last as long as possible. The victim might want to avoid the sense of disappointment that he or she would feel if the relationship ended.*

- *Peer pressure could be involved: the victim might want others to see that he or she has a girlfriend or boyfriend in order to appear popular and desirable.*
- *The victim might think it is his or her fault if things do not work out. (This feeling is often reinforced by the abusive partner, who blames the victim for what is going wrong.)*

Slide 20: Why stay

- **The victim might confuse the jealousy and possessiveness of the abuser with real love and concern.**
- **The abusive partner might apologize and the victim might become hopeful that things will work out. The victim might want to help the dating partner change.**
- **The abusive partner might threaten the victim: “If you don’t go out with me, you’ll be sorry.”**
- **The victim may still love the abuser and not want to lose that.**
- **The victim might not want his or her parents to say, “I told you so.” This is especially true if the parents did not like the boyfriend/girlfriend right from the start. You might think your parents are too strict or controlling.**

Slide 21: Mike and Susan’s story

Mike (16) is dating Susan (18). Susan has more dating experience than Mike does. They have been going out for three months and Mike likes Susan very much – she is his first serious girlfriend. Susan has asked Mike several times to skip doing his homework so that they can see each other. Mike wants to keep his grades up, but does not want to disappoint Susan. Sometimes, when he doesn’t meet her, she becomes very angry and yells at him, calling him a “mama’s boy” and “immature.” Lately, she’s been pressuring him to go all the way and have sex. Mike is reluctant to do so. He is still a virgin and thinks it is too soon for him. However, he is scared she will dump him if he says no. She often tells him, “If you really loved me, you would show it by sleeping with me.” She is now starting to demand that they get together, or she will find a “man” to do what she wants.

► Is this considered dating violence? If so, what forms of dating violence are illustrated in the scenario?

- *This scenario represents a situation of emotional abuse.*
- *If Susan forces Mike to engage in sexual activities against his will, the situation will also represent sexual abuse.*

Slide 22: Common myths concerning dating:

Myth 1: Spending money equals favours: e.g., “I spent a lot of money on you, so you owe me something in return (like sexual favours).”

Facts:

- *Paying for a date does not entitle a person to anything more than the pleasure of the other person's company.*

Slide 23: Myth 2: Revealing clothes equals a sexually willing person: e.g., “She’s dressed in tight, revealing clothes, so she must be willing to have sex.”

Facts:

- *Just because someone dresses in skimpy or revealing clothing does not give other people permission to touch the person or expect anything from her or him. However, some people have the misconception that if someone dresses in revealing clothing, he or she is willing to have sex. Although this assumption is untrue, it's good to be aware of the beliefs some people have in order to keep yourself safe.*
- *You have the right to dress as you please. Be very clear and open about your boundaries and discuss what you want or do not want and what you will and will not tolerate.*

Slide 24: Myth 3: Being nice means he or she wants to continue seeing me: e.g., “He was nice to me during our date, so he must want a relationship with me or something more.”

Facts:

- *People can be nice to you during a date, but this does not necessarily mean that they want to see you again.*
- *The point is not “Does he or she like me?” The point is do you really like the other person? Do you think that he or she might be a good addition to your life?*
- *If you don't think you'd like to keep seeing the other person, be firm. Tell your date that although you think he or she is a good person, you do not want to see him or her again. Avoid giving mixed messages.*

Slide 25: Myth 4: Constantly calling the girlfriend/boyfriend on the telephone is okay: e.g., “It's okay to call her all the time, bring flowers and gifts, or go to her home, even if she tells me to stop. After all, I'm being persistent because I love her – it's true love.”

Facts:

- *This type of behaviour could be considered stalking or harassment.*
- *To protect yourself, make it very clear to the person that you do not want him or her to call you, stop by, or try to be your friend. If the person persists, be sure to tell your parents who should then contact the police.*

Slide 26: Myth 5: If a person is drunk or high, then he or she is fair game: e.g., “She got drunk/high during our date, so I can have sex with her.”

Facts:

- *Taking advantage of a person who is drunk or high could lead to sexual assault charges.*
- *To protect yourself, do not drink alcohol when you are out on a date. If you have a clear head, you will be able to think clearly and determine if things are getting out of hand.*
- *Remember, taking illegal drugs is against the law. It is never a good idea, at any time.*

Slide 27: Myth 6: Jealousy and possessive behavior equal love: e.g., “Being jealous and possessive shows that I love him.”

Facts:

- *Jealousy is not love. Becoming jealous to the point of treating the other person like a possession is abusive behavior.*
- *To protect yourself, consider whether you want to continue seeing someone who forbids you to see other friends. Possessiveness tends to get worse over time.*

Slide 28: Samantha and Ryan’s story

- **Samantha is 14. She met 18-year-old Ryan while hanging out with her friends. They would skateboard, play tennis, and do other activities with this group of friends. Her parents are very strict and do not allow her to date. One evening, Samantha told her parents she was going to her friend’s house. In reality, she met up with Ryan at the youth centre as he had asked her to do. Outside the centre, Ryan invited her to go for a ride with him. She noticed he had been drinking, but thought he was okay to drive.**
- **Ryan drove her to a secluded place in the park and offered her a beer, which she drank. Then he began touching her. She did not really want him to do so but was afraid. Her protests did not work on him, and he continued pulling her clothes off. He forced himself on her, despite her protests and tears. He then drove her home and kissed her goodnight. Smiling, he said they would get together again tomorrow. She ran out of the car, went up to her room, and took a bath. She did not tell her parents what had happened. The next day Ryan called and said he wanted to see her that evening. She agreed.**

Is this situation considered dating violence? If so, what forms of dating violence are illustrated in the scenario? What should Samantha do?

- *This scenario illustrates sexual abuse.*

- *Nobody should feel forced to engage in sexual activities they don't feel comfortable with. Samantha should tell a parent or an adult she trusts about the situation. She can also consider going to the police if she feels comfortable doing so.*

Slide 29: What are the consequences of dating violence?

There are short term and long term consequences.

- *Dating violence may harm victims physically, sexually, or psychologically, and the consequences may affect them for the rest of their lives.*
- *Consequences vary and may include:*
 - ▶ *damage to a person's self-esteem, confidence or sense of security*
 - ▶ *damage to his or her development and functioning*
 - ▶ *physical injury, sexually transmitted infections (STI's), HIV/AIDS, or death*
 - ▶ *higher risk of experiencing further violence in future relationships.*

Slide 30: Effects of dating violence vary according to gender

- **Women who are physically abused by their dating partners tend to suffer more physical and emotional harm compared to abused men.**
- **Adolescent women are more likely to be punched or forced into sexual activity ([Youth Dating Violence](#)).**
- **Adolescent men, however, are more likely to be pinched, slapped, scratched or kicked ([Teen Dating Violence Facts](#)).**

Slide 31: Violence in relationships during the teenage years can also lead to further violence during adult life.

- **FACT: The severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to increase if the pattern has been established in adolescence ([Teen Dating Violence Facts](#)).**
- **Children in approximately half a million households had either heard or witnessed a parent being assaulted ([Justice Canada Child Abuse Fact Sheet](#)).**

Violence that occurs between spouses is often referred to as domestic abuse. It encompasses many of the same characteristics as teen dating violence: jealousy, possessiveness, physical violence, and emotional abuse. The cycle of violence in adult relationships often has serious consequences on the whole family.

Slide 32: How widespread is domestic violence?

- **A survey of 26,000 Canadians found that 7% of people in married or common-law relationships experienced some form of domestic abuse in the past five years.**

Source: [Family Violence: Department of Justice Overview](#)

Slide 33: Consequences of Domestic Abuse

- **Children who are exposed to violence in their homes may experience serious emotional, developmental, behavioural and academic difficulties.**

For example, children who are exposed to physical violence between adults or teenagers in the home are more likely to be physically (or indirectly) aggressive, have emotional disorders, be hyperactive, or engage in acts of vandalism.

Source: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/facts-info/sa-vc.html>

If spouses are violent with each other, there is also a greater chance they will be violent towards their children.

Slide 34: How can you protect yourself from an abusive partner?

- *Follow your instincts about the person. If you feel uneasy at anytime, get out of the situation as soon as possible.*
- *End the relationship as soon as you can. Leave the relationship as safely as you possibly can (for example, inform friends and family of your decision; have someone with you when you end the relationship; bring a friend or family member if you need to pick up some personal items from your partner during/after the break-up).*
- *Talk to someone you trust, such as a parent, school counselor, or teacher.*
- *Tell your parents or a trusted adult about any physical or sexual assault.*
- *Once you have ended the relationship, avoid meeting the abuser again, especially if you are alone.*
- *Be assertive with anyone who is pressuring you. Say no loudly if someone is doing something that you do not like. Speak up.*

Slide 35: How can I protect myself? (Part 2)

- **Avoid confusion. Be clear with your boyfriend/girlfriend about where you stand on issues such as drinking, drugs, and sexual activities.**
- **When dating a new person, go out in a group or to public places only.**
- **Keep enough money to get home safely. Carry a cell phone on dates.**
- **Find out as much as you can about your date: Does he drink? Did he hit his previous girlfriend?**
- **Pay attention if your parents and friends do not like your boyfriend/girlfriend. Remember that experience is a good teacher.**
- **Do not assume that things will get better or improve. Even if they apologize, they rarely improve and often become more abusive. Unless they get treatment for the issues that contribute to their abusive behaviour, it is rare for an abusive person to change.**
- **Insist on being treated with respect. No one deserves abuse.**

- **Remember that you have choices – you can choose the people you go out with, how you will behave when you are with them, and whether you will continue seeing them.**

Abuse tends to come in cycles, with periods of abuse being followed by periods of calm where it seems like everything is better. However, the cycle inevitably starts again, with the abuse reoccurring again and again. If you see signs of abuse, don't assume that the person will change – in many cases, the abuse will only get worse.

Slide 36: How can you protect yourself from an abusive family member? What can you do if your parents are abusive to each other?

- *Nobody deserves to be abused, and it can be particularly scary if you live with the person abusing you.*
- *If a family member is abusive to you or if your parents are abusive towards each other, it's important to tell an adult you trust. A teacher, police officer or another relative can all help you.*
- *Some useful resources are the Kids' Help Phone (www.kidshelpphone.ca) and your local police department.*

Slide 37: How can I tell if a friend is being abused?

Some signs include:

- *Low self-esteem (the victim feels that she or he is unworthy and responsible for the abuse).*
- *He or she has a tendency to be withdrawn.*
- *He or she seems nervous all the time.*
- *He or she has unexplained cuts, bruises, scrapes, burns or bite marks.*
- *His or her weight, appearance, or grades have changed dramatically. These could be signs of depression, which could indicate abuse.*
- *He or she is giving up things that used to be important to him or her, such as spending time with friends or doing other activities, and is becoming more and more isolated.*
- *He or she apologizes and makes excuses for his/her partner's behavior.*
- *He or she frequently cancels plans at the last minute for reasons that sound untrue.*

Slide 38: What can I do to help?

If you have a friend who is being abused there are ways you can help:

- *Tell an adult you trust about your concerns and ask about the best course of action*

- *Be supportive! Help him or her become informed. Remember, he or she is the one who has to make the decision to change things!*
- *They may feel guilty because they told you. They may feel embarrassed or even angry. Be prepared for many different feelings and/or reactions.*
- *Don't criticize them for staying or trying to make it work again. Just remind them you'll be there for them.*
- *Listen to him or her without judgment. Instead, talk to them about the choices he or she has.*
- *Don't confront your friend's partner - it could make a bad situation even worse.*
- *Offer them contacts, such as the kids helpline 1-800-668-6868.*

Slide 39: Want more information?

- **Check out the DEAL.org website for fact sheets and blog posts on these issues.**
- www.deal.org
- deal-choix@rcmp-grc.gc.ca