FEBRUARY IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Where are you?

Why aren't you picking up any of my calls?

Who are you with????!!!!!

There's a difference between love and obsession.

TOOLKIT

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
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INTRODUCTION

Nationwide, 1 in 3 teens reports being physically, sexually or emotionally hurt by their partner. According to the CT Department of Public Health, 17% of CT high school students report being emotionally abused by a dating partner and 8% report being physically abused by a dating partner (2011 School Health Survey Youth Risk Behavior Report). And early exposure to abusive or violent relationships increases the likelihood of those types of relationships being repeated later in life.

Unhealthy relationships during the teen years can disrupt normal development and contribute to other unhealthy behaviors in teens that can lead to problems over a lifetime. Teens who experience dating violence are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, engage in unhealthy behaviors such as experimenting with tobacco, drugs and alcohol, and have thoughts about suicide, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The mental and physical health consequences can extend into adulthood, and unhealthy relationships in adolescence also can create a cycle of abusive relationships.

For years, young people across the nation have organized to put a stop to dating abuse. With their adult allies, young people achieved a major victory in 2005 when the importance of addressing teen dating abuse was highlighted in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The following year, Congress followed the lead of dozens of national, state and local organizations in sounding the call to end dating abuse. Both Chambers declared the first full week in February "National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Week." Then in 2010, they began dedicating the entire month of February to teen dating violence awareness and prevention. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is a national effort to raise awareness about dating violence, promote programs that support young people, and encourage communities to prevent this form of abuse with the goal of decreasing the prevalence of dating violence among young people.

Thank you for taking part in Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. This toolkit contains information and materials for domestic violence agencies throughout Connecticut who are participating in Teen Dating Violence Awareness month. For more information, contact the following individuals from Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

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Communicating with young people about dating violence is the first step in ending abuse.
OVERVIEW OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

DEFINITION

Teen Dating Violence (TDV) is a pattern of abusive behavior in a dating relationship where one partner uses power in an attempt to control and coerce the other. TDV can occur in opposite sex or same-sex relationships regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, education or socio-economic status.

TDV can take many forms including:

- **Physical** such as hitting, slapping, punching and shoving.
- **Verbal, emotional and/or psychological** such as public or private name calling or put-downs, exhibiting extreme jealousy or preventing their partner from seeing family or friends.
- **Sexual** including coercing your partner to have sex she/he is not ready, demanding sexual photos or using date rape drugs.
- **Technological** such as tracking someone using GPS on a mobile device, monitoring someone’s text messages or emails without their knowledge or permission, or sending threatening or harassing messages via social media.

WHY FOCUS ON TEEN DATING VIOLENCE?

Many young people start dating before they even reach their teen years. They need to be armed with healthy relationship habits and knowledge of teen dating violence before they ever start dating. Education should start as early as middle school to prepare young people for the possible dangers when engaging in an intimate relationship. Exposure to violence, including teen dating violence, can cause young people to have learning and social difficulties. All teens respond to violence differently, and while the consequences may be invisible to others, they are still there. Exposure to violence can affect teens well into adulthood, so the best way to prevent these consequences is to prevent the violence from happening at all.

Allowing teens to commit dating violence reinforces the idea that those behaviors are reasonable behaviors in the context of a relationship. Targeting teens for educational programs and allocation of resources teaches them from a young age what acceptable practices in relationships look like and where they can get help. This is all part of a prevention model that deters intimate partner violence before it begins. Stopping teens from committing their first dating violence offense or falling victim to a dating violence offense prevents all the negative consequences of TDV.

The technological aspect of dating violence can be more serious with teens, because they tend to spend more time using technology.
FACTS ON TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Teen dating violence is not an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. Dating violence is a pattern of violent behavior that someone uses against their partner to gain control.

Did You Know…

- About 72% of students in 8th and 9th grade report "dating."¹ By the time they are in high school, 54% of students report dating violence among their peers.²
- About one in 11 teens reports being a victim of physical dating violence each year.³
- About one in four teens reports verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual violence each year.⁴,⁵
- About one in five teens reports being a victim of emotional abuse.⁶
- About one in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.⁷

Adolescents and adults often do not make the link between dating violence and poor health.

- About 70% of girls and 52% of boys who are victims of dating violence report an injury from a violent relationship.⁸
- Approximately 8% of boys and 9% of girls have been to an emergency room for an injury received from a dating partner.⁹
- Adolescents experience dating violence not only are at increased risk for injury, but are also more likely to report binge drinking, suicide attempts, physical fighting, and sexual activity.¹⁰
- Rates of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use are more than twice as high in girls who report physical dating violence or sexual abuse than in girls who report no violence.¹¹

11.8% of girls and 4.5% of boys in grades 9-12 reported being forced to have sex at some point in their lives.

81% of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don’t know if it is an issue.
WARNING SIGNS

It is important to understand the warning signs for dating violence so you can help teens develop healthy relationship attitudes and behaviors.

These “red flags” should alert you to the possibility that a teen may be a victim or is at risk of becoming victim of dating violence:

- Suspicious bruises, scratches, or other injuries
- Failing grades
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies that were once enjoyable
- Alcohol or drug use
- Extreme mood swings
- Excuses their dating partner's behavior
- Fearfulness around their dating partner or when his or her name is mentioned
- Avoidance of friends and social events
- Does not go out without their partner

These behaviors may indicate that a teen may be a perpetrator or is at risk of becoming a perpetrator of violence:

- Threatens to hurt others in any way
- Insults or ignores a dating partner in public or private
- Constantly calls or texts to check up on a dating partner
- Damages or destroys a dating partner's personal belongings
- Attempts to control a dating partner's friends, their activities, or even the clothes they wear
- Exhibits jealous and possessive behavior
- Demands to know where their dating partner is all the time
- Making a dating partner feel guilty or shameful with statements such as: "If you really loved me, you would..."
- Blames the dating partner for his or her feelings and actions with statements such as: "You asked for it" or "You made me mad"

Take teens seriously when they talk about their dating relationships and ask for clarification if needed.
TEN TEEN DATING VIOLENCE MONTH AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

The following are ideas to help you take action today:

1. Engage students in downloading and using td411 (See pages 8-9).
2. Engage teen boys in the “I Choose” campaign (See pages 10-12).
3. Have the mayor of your city or town issue a Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month proclamation (See page 13).
4. Distribute the Dating Rights manifesto to teens (See pages 14-15).
5. Tweet about Teen Dating Violence Awareness month (See page 16).
6. Add information about teen dating violence to your website or newsletter by using the materials included in this toolkit.
7. CHALK about it! Have students “Chalk” a sidewalk on their school, in their neighborhood, workplace, or wherever they like about what love means to them. Ask them to take and share their photos and videos with you.
8. Choose a specific day and have students wear something orange to commemorate Teen Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
9. Hold a poster contest for students on teen dating violence.
10. Have the students perform a short skit on teen dating violence (See pages 17-31).

IT’S OK TO KEEP YOUR INDIVIDUALITY WHEN DATING.
(IN FACT, WE RECOMMEND IT!)
ENGAGE STUDENTS IN DOWNLOADING  td411

It’s critical that teens have access to information about healthy dating behaviors and warning signs that their relationship might be abusive. CCADV’s mobile app, td411, does just that. td411 provides essential information to teens in a manner that makes sense for them - through their phone or mobile device. The app answers questions that they may be too afraid to ask and includes interactive tools to help them learn about their relationship and to connect with a counselor if they need someone to talk to. Encourage teens to download td411 so they have it readily accessible in case they or one of their friends needs help.

td411 lets you...

- Learn healthy behaviors for dating relationships and the signs of abusive behaviors
- Take the Dating Quiz to see where your relationship falls
- Check out important safety tips and ways that you can stay safe
- Use the search function to find the nearest counselor

How To Download td411

If you have an iPhone:

- On the screen of the iPhone, find the 'App Store'.
- Tap on the icon and 'Search' for the td411 App.
- Tap on the td411 App to download.
- Then, you are taken to a page where it shows the 'Install App'.
- Tap on 'Install App' and enter your Apple ID Password.
- When 'Download' is completed, enjoy the app.

If you have an Android phone:

- On the screen of the phone, find the “Play Store” app.
- Or you can go play.google.com
- Search or browse for the td411 App.
- Tap ‘Install’ to download the App.
- Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the transaction and get the content.

When you add the td411 App, it’s connected to your Google Account, not just the device you add it on. That means you don’t have to buy it again if you get a new device, and you can use it on multiple devices.

Teens may use different language to describe their relationships, like “hooking up” and “messing around.”
A MOBILE APP THAT GIVES TEENS THE 411 ON HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

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It’s critical that teens have access to information about healthy dating behaviors and warning signs that their relationship might be abusive. Our mobile app, td411, does just that. td411 provides essential information to teens in a manner that makes sense for them - through their phone or mobile device. The app answers questions that they may be too afraid to ask and includes interactive tools to help them learn about their relationship and to connect with a counselor if they need someone to talk to.

- Information on health and safety delivered to teens in a way that makes sense for them - through technology.
- Learn about healthy dating behaviors and warning signs that a relationship may be abusive.
- Take the Dating Quiz to see where your relationship falls.
- Know your rights! Read our Dating Rights Manifesto and ask for what you deserve - a healthy relationship.
- Check out the safety tips - learn ways that you can stay safe now and in the future.
- Use the search function to find the nearest counselor, someone who will talk to you 24/7, confidentially and free of cost.

Contenido ahora también disponible en español. (content now also available in Spanish)

AVAIBLE NOW FOR DOWNLOAD

Or, learn more at www.ctcadv.org
TEEN DATING VIOLENCE MONTH AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE BOYS IN THE “I CHOOSE” CAMPAIGN

The “I Choose” campaign is focused on engaging boys, and men, to make positive life choices that don’t involve violence. “I Choose,” stems from the idea that violence is a choice - and with the right mentors and the right tools, boys can choose to rise above domestic violence. Together, we are working towards educating boys about making good life choices: “I Choose respect;” “I Choose not to normalize violence towards women;” “I Choose to take a stand against domestic violence.”

By having successful male role models, boys can begin to understand how good choices can result in life affirming successes.

To engage boys in the “I Choose” Campaign, have them take a selfie, have a friend take a picture of them or a short video with their personal “I Choose” message. CCADV also has Instagram frames for loan when engaging boys. They can then:

- **Post Their Own Video:** Post your own video and tell us what you will be doing during Teen Dating Violence Awareness month to #TakeAStand against and what you choose to do to help bring an end to dating violence. Use the hashtag #IChooseCTCADV and tag us on Facebook Page (@CTCoalitionAgainstDomesticViolence) or Twitter (@CTCADV).

- **Selfie Signs:** Print a sign and post a photo or video on social media telling us what you choose and why! Use the hashtag #TakeAStand and #IChooseCTCADV to share your voice and help raise awareness and support.

You can also share the “I Choose” PSA Video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZBNbjAb_GI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZBNbjAb_GI)

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Engaging boys, and men, to make positive life choices that don’t involve violence.

“I Choose respect.”

“I Choose not to normalize violence towards women.”

“I Choose to take a stand against domestic violence.”
¡Comparta su voz! Involúcrrese en www.ctadv.org

#YoEscojoCTADV

Yo Escojo
Whereas,
All young people deserve to be treated with respect; and,

Whereas,
Respectful, supportive and non-violent relationships are key to safety, health and academic success; and

Whereas,
Teen dating abuse is a significant health issue; with 10-20% of youth reporting physical or sexual violence from a dating partner; and

Whereas,
Victimization increases teens’ risk for injury, substance abuse, eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy, and suicide, and young people exposed to violence are at greater risk for becoming victims and perpetrators in adult relationships;

Whereas,
Parents, teachers, coaches, healthcare providers, clergy, artists, musicians, and other important people in teens’ lives have the power to influence youth in positive ways;

We urge citizens to join the [City/town of XXX] in promoting healthy teen relationships and call upon youth and adults to observe National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month with activities and conversations about respectful and non-violent relationships in their homes, schools and communities.

Now, Therefore, I [Name of Mayor], Mayor of the City/Town of [Name of city or town], do hereby proclaim February, 2018 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in [Name of city or town].
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

DATING RIGHTS MANIFESTO

LOVE. I will love someone that I do not fear. I will be brave! But I will seek help if I need it. SELF WORTH. It is my right to feel supported by the person I love. I am awesome just the way I am. Seriously! I can determine my own goals and choose my own friends.

INDIVIDUALITY. It is my right to have personal space. I will not feel guilty for hanging out with my family or friends. Having my own friends and enjoying time with them will only help me and my dating relationship grow. RESPECT. It is my right to be treated kindly and with respect. It is ok to refuse affection or a date. Sex is not synonymous with love. It is my right to have complete control over my body. It is ok to not let my dating partner take a picture of any part of my body naked.

HAPPINESS. It is my right to be happy. Being alone is ok, being unhappy is not. Happiness comes from within and should not be determined by who I am dating. TRUST. It is my right to decide with whom I will spend my time. Trust is part of a healthy relationship. It really does exist! Jealousy and possessiveness are not the same as commitment and love.

COMMUNICATION. It is my right to express myself without fear. My opinion matters. I will share decision making power with my partner and always make my voice heard. HONESTY. It is my right to be true to myself and expect that others will be true to me. Embracing my personal identity is the best way for me to grow.

SAFETY. It is my right to be in a dating relationship free of physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse. I will end an abusive relationship and not be afraid to seek support from others.

STRENGTH. It is my right to determine my own future and to be loved. I am strong.

LOVE

Check out the td411 app to learn more or get help. Available on iTunes and Google Play. Or find us online at www.ctcadv.org.
TENGO DERECHO A ESTAR EN UNA RELACIÓN SALUDABLE
MANIFIESTO de PAREJAS

AMOR.
a quien no tema.
buscaré ayuda si me hace
Tengo derecho a sentir el apoyo de la como soy. ¡En serio! Puedo determinar

INDIVIDUALIDAD. Tengo derecho a mi propio espacio personal. No me sentiré culpable por estar con mis familiares o amistades. Tener mis propios amigos y disfrutar con ellos contribuye a mi crecimiento y el de la relación.

RESPETO. Tengo derecho a que me trate con amabilidad y respeto. Es aceptable rechazar afecto o una cita. El sexo no es sinónimo de amor. Yo tengo derecho a tener el control absoluto de mi cuerpo. Es aceptable no permitirle a mi pareja tomar una foto de ninguna parte de mi cuerpo desnudo.

FELICIDAD. Tengo derecho a ser feliz. Estar sola/o es aceptable, ser infeliz no lo es. La felicidad surge del interior y no debe ser determinada por la persona con quien estoy saliendo.

CONFIANZA. Es mi derecho decidir a quién dedico mi tiempo. La confianza es parte de una relación saludable. Y de veras existe! Los celos y la posesión no son sinónimos de

el compromiso y el amor.

Comunicación. Tengo derecho a expresarme sin temor. Mi opinión cuenta. Compartiré tomar decisiones con mi pareja, siempre se tomará en cuenta mi opinión.

HONESTIDAD. Es mi derecho ser fiel a mí mismo/o y esperar que los demás sean honestos contigo. La mejor manera de crecer es aceptar mi personalidad.

SEGURIDAD. Estaré en una relación libre de abuso físico, emocional, verbal y sexual. Le pondré fin a una relación abusiva y no tendré miedo a pedir ayuda a los demás.

FORTALEZA.

Es mi derecho hacer mi propio futuro y ser amada/o

AMOR

Para saber más o para obtener ayuda, descarga el app td411.
Disponible en iTunes y Google Play.
Encuéntrenos en línea en www.ctcadv.org
SAMPLE TWEETS FOR TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Remember, everyone deserves a healthy relationship! #IChooseCTCADV

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month! Remember, love should always be safe. #IChooseCTCADV

Share your voice. What do you choose? I Choose to stand up against dating violence. #IChooseCTCADV

We are all ambassadors in the fight against domestic violence. I Choose to share my voice. #IChooseCTCADV

It starts with one voice. One choice. Choose to rise up against teen dating violence. #IChooseCTCADV

Almost 1 in 10 teens reports being physically abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last year. Make a difference. #IChooseCTCADV
THERE’S NO EXCUSE FOR DATING ABUSE

Play

Characters

Emily: The girlfriend of Jason; she is experiencing abuse from Jason
Jason: The boyfriend of Emily; he is abusing Emily both emotionally and physically
Derrick: A friend of Emily who needs her help with algebra
Elizabeth: Concerned friend of Emily
Carissa: Concerned friend of Emily
Phil: Breaks up a fight between Derrick and Jason
Kirsten: Concerned friend of Emily
Scene I:  A School Hallway

**Derrick:** So, I'll see you tonight?

**Emily:** Yeah, don’t forget your algebra book, though.

**Derrick:** I’ll try not to.

**Emily:** Okay.

**Derrick:** Bye.

**Emily:** Bye.

**Jason:** What do you think you're doing?

**Emily:** What do you mean?

**Jason:** What is this thing you’ve got going with Derrick?

**Emily:** What are you talking about?

**Jason:** I saw you guys flirting in the hall.

**Emily:** Flirting in the hall? I was standing next to him, talking about when we’re going to work on algebra.

**Jason:** Oh sure, algebra again. You were probably just setting up another date.

**Emily:** Another date? Don’t be ridiculous, Jason. We haven’t even been out on one date. Look, he needs help with algebra, and I can help him. You know algebra is my favorite subject and we were…..

**Jason:** Yeah, we all know you’re a brain, but I don’t think it’s your brain he’s after.

**Emily:** Why can’t you trust me? Have I ever given you a reason not to trust me? *(Brief pause, then with a pleading tone.)* You know how much I love you.

**Jason:** If you really loved me, you’d stay away from him and any other guy who wants to get close to you.

**Emily:** How can I possibly stay away from all the other guys in this school?

**Jason:** Oh, so you’re saying you don’t want to stay away from other guys. . . .

**Emily:** That’s not fair! That’s not what I said. . . .
**Jason:** What you said is that you can’t stay away from all the other guys.

**Emily:** Look, I have a lot of friends at this school—girls and guys. But you’re really special. What’s wrong with you? What’s wrong with us? Why are you always doing this?

**Jason:** I don’t know. I’m sick of the way all the guys look at you and you’re always doing stuff with your friends; you never have time for me anymore. You say you love me, but I don’t believe it.

**Emily:** Stop it! Just stop it! *(She grabs his shoulders.)* You’re making this up! You’re creating something that’s just not real!

*(He grabs her arms, throws her against the wall, and exits. She sinks to the floor in tears. Derrick enters and walks toward her.)*

**Derrick:** Emily, are you okay?

**Emily:** Leave me alone. Jason is really mad and it’s all your fault!

**Derrick:** All my fault? What did I do? What are you talking about?

**Emily:** Jason thinks you and I have something going on. I tried to explain to him that I was just helping you with algebra, but he just won’t listen.

**Derrick:** That’s crazy. Where did he get that idea?

**Emily:** I don’t know. I don’t want to talk about it, Derrick.

**Derrick:** You’ve got to talk about it. You’ve got to get a grip on this. I can’t stand the way he treats you. He pushes you around and demands all your time. He cuts you off from all your friends. No one else can even begin to get close to you. Even if I were interested in dating you, I’d never have a chance with him around. He’d probably kill me, or worse, he’d hurt you!

**Emily:** He just did. *(Emily points to her head at the spot where it hit the wall.)*

**Derrick:** Well, what are you going to do about it?

**Emily:** I don’t know.

*(She rubs her head where she hit the wall. She gets up and exits stage left. Derrick exits stage right shaking his head.)*
(Emily is looking in the mirror, and two of her girlfriends enter. They notice Emily and greet her warmly. As one of the girls washes her hands, the other brushes her hair.)

Emily: Does anybody have some concealer?

Elizabeth: I think I do. (She looks through her purse.)

Carissa: So what’s up, Emily?

Emily: Nothing much. (Emily breaks out with a slightly defensive tone.) So do you have some concealer or not?

Elizabeth: Yeah, sure, here you go. (She hands her some makeup.)

Carissa: What happened to you?

Emily: I just hit my head. . . .

Carissa: Did you have another argument with Jason? (She crosses her arms and confronts Emily.)

Emily: No, well, I mean, he was pretty upset, but it was my fault. I shouldn’t have been talking with Derrick in the hall. I know that makes Jason crazy!

Carissa: What?

Elizabeth: What do you mean, you shouldn’t have been talking with Derrick in the hall?

Carissa: Yeah, what do you mean? Jason doesn’t own you!

Emily: Well, you know how much Jason loves me. He just can’t stand to see me talking to another guy, that’s all. (Still applying makeup.)

Carissa: Get real, Emily. He can’t even stand it when you want to have a night out with the girls or to spend time with your family. Does he really believe you’re cheating on him?

Emily: I don’t know. I need to do what he says; after all, he’s so good to me. Nobody else cares for me the way he does. I mean, we have our fights just like any other couple, but it’s usually my fault. I just have to try harder not to make him mad.

Elizabeth: Try harder not to make him mad? Emily, what about your feelings? Who does he think he is?
Emily: He’s my boyfriend and he loves me!

Carissa: Loves you? And you end up in the bathroom; your mascara is running and you’re asking us for concealer? Doesn’t sound like love to me. If that’s love, I don’t want a boyfriend.

Emily: You don’t understand, Carissa. He just wants me to . . . (pause). He wants me to . . .

Elizabeth: He wants you to what?

Emily: He wants me to be there for him. That’s what you do if someone loves you, right?

Carissa: No! Be there for him? Emily, you’re always there for him. What about the time he got suspended for fighting or when he cussed out Mr. Jones? You were there for him, but is he always there for you? How about all the times at night you’ve stayed home instead of going out with us, just because Jason might call, but then he doesn’t. I don’t know, Emily. I think he needs help. Looks like he’s going overboard.

Emily: He’s not. He’s really sweet. He’s just a little overprotective, that’s all. He doesn’t need help. We don’t need anybody. We’ll be just fine. Don’t say anything, okay?

Elizabeth: Yeah, hey are you finished with that concealer? Come on, Carissa, we’ve got to get to class.

(Elizabeth mumbles something about overprotective when it’s really overly possessive and controlling. Elizabeth and Carissa exit; Emily looks back in the mirror and starts to cry again.)
Scene III: Boys’ Gym Class

(Chas is dribbling the ball and runs into Derrick.)

Jason: Get out of my way, you wimp!

Derrick: Leave me alone, you jerk. What are you going to do, beat me up right here on the court? Are you going to push me around like you did Emily this morning?

(Derrick pushes Jason.)

Jason: Don’t push me; I could take you out right here! And you need to stay away from Emily. I know what you want. Get some other girl to help you with your algebra or chemistry, or whatever it is you brainy wimps spend your time doing.

Phil: Chill out, you guys, before the coach throws you out of class.

(Phil breaks the two apart.)

Derrick: I’m calm; he’s the one who needs to chill. I’m just trying to play.

(Derrick exits—Phil turns to Jason.)

Jason: Hey man, I’m cool. He’s in my way and he wants Emily for more than just algebra.

Phil: Jason, what is with you, man? Your temper is getting out of control!

Jason: I don’t know. My game sucks, my grades suck, my life sucks. Emily doesn’t have time for me anymore. She says she loves me, but I feel deserted and I get crazy when I see her with someone else.

Phil: Jason, nobody loves you more than Emily does.

(Phil places his arms on Jason’s shoulders.)

Phil: She probably loves you more than your own parents.

Jason: Oh yeah? She’s ready to help Derrick with his algebra, but I can’t get her to help me with history. And what about all the time she spends with her girlfriends and family?

Phil: Don’t you think Emily thinks you’re better at history than she is, and what do you mean she spends so much time with her girlfriends? She’s a girl; they do those things.

Jason: Yeah, girls, I don’t understand ‘em.

Phil: Hey, who does? What about the things you’re doing, what you’re feeling? Don’t you think you’re losing it way too often? Don’t you think you’re expecting too much of her?
Jason: Huh? I don’t think so. She says she loves me. If that’s true, I should be all that matters to her!

Phil: You’re not thinking at all. I saw that confrontation you had in the hallway. It looked like you were out of line.

Jason: Really? I was just....

Phil: Just what? You need to talk to her and get it together.

Jason: I’m not sure she’ll talk to me. I’m not sure anyone should talk to me.

Phil: Just try it.

Jason: I’ll try. I don’t really know what to say, but I’ll try.

(They both exit and the scene fades.)
Scene IV: A phone call from Jason to Emily

(Emily and Jason are seated on opposite sides of the stage facing different directions. Emily is looking at a picture of Jason when the phone rings.)

Emily: Hello?

Jason: Hello, Emily. It’s me, Jason. Look, honey, I’m sorry about what happened today.

(A long pause. Emily is trying to find the words.)

Emily: It’s okay. I mean, I guess I shouldn’t have been talking to Derrick in the hall. But he really needs my help, and…

Jason: Emily, we need to talk. I need you and I don’t want to lose you, but I feel like you’re slipping away. I feel like I’m slipping away. Can we meet later on at the park and try to work this thing out?

Emily: Sure, I mean, I guess I can get the car. What if I pick you up and we go for some pizza? My mom would ground me if I tell her I’m meeting you at the park, and you know she’s got to know where I am every second.

Jason: Sure, sounds great, but . . .

Emily: But what?

Jason: Look, Emily, I need you.

Emily: And I need you, but we do need to talk.

Jason: Emily, I love you.

Emily: And I love you too. Bye.
*Scene V: Carissa, Elizabeth, and Kirsten are sitting on the steps studying algebra*

**Elizabeth:** You guys, I can’t believe I got detention for being late to class.

**Carissa:** I know, but we just couldn’t leave Emily in the bathroom.

**Kirsten:** What happened?

**Carissa:** Emily was crying in the bathroom between classes. Jason must have slapped her in the hall. Something about Emily helping Derrick with algebra. . . .

**Kirsten:** I heard him screaming at her and later in gym class he and Derrick got into it. Phil had to step in between them. I think Jason’s really frustrated because he wants Emily all to himself.

**Elizabeth:** I don’t see why she doesn’t break up with him. I mean she’s always so sweet to everyone. I think she needs to be with someone who will appreciate her but also give her the space to be with her family and other friends.

**Carissa:** Yeah, maybe I’ll call her tonight. I know she won’t listen, but she’s got to get some help. I saw this phone number in the guidance office today for a place you can call with problems like this. Well, maybe I can talk her into calling them.

**Kirsten:** I mean Jason needs help, too, though. His parents are really rough with him. The last time Phil and I were at his house, they were screaming at him about his homework and getting a job. I really like Jason—he’s a great guy—but his temper is getting out of control and if he keeps going like this, he’ll never have a decent relationship with anybody. Maybe I can talk to him. He listens to me, sometimes.

*(Scene fades.)*
Scene VI: That evening Jason calls Emily on the phone

(The audience should be able to see both Jason and Emily talking on the phone.)

Jason: (Dialing) Come on, Emily, answer the phone.

Emily: Hello?

Jason: Hey, Emily. It’s me, Jason. What’s up?

Emily: Hey, thanks for the flowers, Jason. They were really beautiful and the card was so sweet, it made me cry.

Jason: I didn’t mean to make you cry.

Emily: Well listen, I’ve got another call. Can you hold on just one second?

Jason: Sure.

Emily: Hello?

Carissa: Hey, Emily. It’s Carissa.

Emily: Hey.

Carissa: So how’s it going, I mean with you and Jason?

Emily: Fabulous! Last night when we talked, he gave me flowers and this really beautiful card. Listen, he’s on the other line, so I probably need to go.

Carissa: Listen, Elizabeth and I just wanted to come over and talk if you’re not busy tonight.

Emily: Sure, that’d be great. I know Jason has to study, so we probably won’t be on the phone for long. Just come on over whenever.

Carissa: All right, see you in a bit.

Emily: All right, bye. (Clicking back to Jason.) Hey, that was Carissa. She and Elizabeth are coming over tonight.

Jason: You sure it wasn’t Derrick?

Emily: No, it was Carissa. Why are you always accusing me of talking with Derrick?

Jason: Because you usually are. Look, I’m coming over now so we can settle this.

(He hangs up abruptly. She hangs up and the doorbell rings. Carissa and Elizabeth are at the door.)
Carissa: Hi, Emily. How’s it going?

Emily: Well, Jason is really mad. He thought I was talking to Derrick when I was really talking with you on the phone. He said he’s coming over right now.

Carissa: You’re kidding! Well, I’m not leaving—you shouldn’t be alone with him when he’s angry like this.

(Jason storms through the front door and sees Emily with Carissa and Elizabeth.)

Jason: What are they doing here? I told you I was coming over so we could talk.

(Elizabeth approaches Jason as if to speak; Carissa pulls her away.)

Carissa: Listen, we’ll just go into the kitchen and get something to drink so you guys can talk. Jason, just calm down. C’mon, Elizabeth.

Jason: Why are they here, Emily? Are you bringing in your bodyguards now? Look, I told you I was sorry and I meant it (his voice gets louder). Why can’t we ever be alone?

Emily: Jason, Carissa and Elizabeth are my best friends and they called and said they were coming over before you stormed over here. What am I supposed to do, ask them to leave?

Jason: Fine, if you’d rather be with them, I’ll just leave. You choose; it’s either me or them!

Emily: Jason, don’t make me choose! Don’t leave like this!

(She runs to him, trying to hold on. Jason turns around and slaps her and storms out. Emily falls to the chair, crying. Carissa and Elizabeth appear at the door, observing the last bit of the interaction. Carissa tries to comfort Emily.)

Carissa: Are you okay? Look, Emily, you need to get some help. I saw a phone number in the guidance office today of some people who might be able to help.

(Carissa hands the telephone number to Emily, who accepts it.)

Emily: I just don’t understand what I did to make him so angry.

Elizabeth: Emily, you didn’t do anything wrong. He just slapped you and threw you against the wall; this is the second time in two days. You’re going to have to do something.

(Elizabeth hands Emily the phone. Though hesitant, Emily tries to call. When an older woman answers the phone, Emily quickly hangs up.)

Carissa: What’s the problem?
Emily: Some old lady answered. It couldn’t possibly be the person I was supposed to talk with. I don’t need help anyway.

Elizabeth: Let me have the phone. You didn’t even tell her why you were calling.

(Elizabeth calls the number and gets the same woman.)

Elizabeth: Hi, I have a friend who’s in an abusive relationship. Her name? Her name is Emily. I’m hoping you can help her.

Emily: What did she say?

Elizabeth: She said someone who’s been trained to help teens with dating abuse problems will call us right back.

Emily: Hmm . . . I don’t know about this.

Carissa: No problem, we’ll just sit here and talk while we’re waiting.

(Scene fades temporarily.)
Scene VII: Jason meets Kirsten and Phil on the street


Jason: Emily and I just got into another fight. I can't believe it. One minute we’re talking on the phone, no problem; the next thing I know, I'm screaming and pushing her around. It's like a bad roller-coaster ride and I've got to get off.

Phil: What makes you so uptight that you’re screaming and pushing?

Jason: I don’t know. I just can’t stand it when she'd rather be with her friends or family than with me.

Kirsten: So you’re angry because she wants to spend time with other people. Is that it?

Jason: I guess that’s most of it.

Kirsten: You know there are times when you just want to hang out with the guys. And you and me are always talking. Does Emily get upset then?

Jason: I guess not, but sometimes I feel really tight inside, like I’m gonna explode, and Emily’s usually around so she takes the heat.

Phil: Look, Jason, I’ve felt like that before.

Kirsten: Yeah, like yesterday, Phil, when I told you I am going to be competing against you in the science fair. You didn't lose it with me.

Jason: Well, what did you do?

Phil: I wrote Kirsten a note about how I felt betrayed and how I might drop out of the contest.

Kirsten: You haven’t given me any note.

Phil: I know. I was going to tell you about it, or maybe I’ll give it to you, or maybe I’ll just drop it altogether. The point is that it gave me time to cool off, step back, do a reality check.

Jason: Yeah, well maybe I can write Emily a note. Look guys, I gotta go.

Kirsten: We'll be here for you, Jason, just call us. We want to help!

(All exit.)

Scene returns to Emily, Elizabeth, and Carissa

(Elizabeth is talking on the phone.)
Elizabeth: I have a friend who’s being abused. Sixteen, he’s seventeen. Just now, I heard him yelling at her. I was in the kitchen and when I came out, he stormed off. He always wants to control her time and he never lets her be with her friends. Yeah, hold on just a minute.

(Elizabeth hands the phone to Emily.)

Elizabeth: She wants to talk with you.

(Emily is hesitant.)

Emily: Is it the same old lady?

Elizabeth: No, it’s someone younger who says she helps teens with dating problems. She seems really nice. What have you got to lose?

(Emily takes the phone.)

Emily: Hello, yes sometimes he gets upset . . . because he’s angry. Because I talk with my friends and he wants me to spend all my time with him. . . . No, he’s never really hurt me physically. Well, it wasn’t bad. It’s not like he gave me a black eye or anything. Yes, I guess it does hurt emotionally and sometimes when he gets upset, I get upset and sometimes I scream at him and that’s just not like me at all. . . . Yeah, he’s a really nice guy. I mean, he always apologizes and then everything is all right, for a while anyway. Have I thought about my options? Well, sure, I guess so. I guess most people would leave him.

(Carissa nods.)

Emily: But I can’t. I love him and there’s no one else for him. . . . There’s a support group? They meet next Wednesday? Well, do I just show up? I thought those were just for people who were really in trouble, like into drugs and . . . I guess I never thought anybody else would be in this situation. I don’t know if I can talk about Jason; maybe I’ll just go and listen. Well listen, I need to go. . . . Yes, my friends are here with me and Jason’s gone, so I’m safe now. If I need to talk to you, I’ll call. Thank you.

Elizabeth: Well, what did she say?

Emily: Well, she told me about a support group where you go and talk about dating. I don’t know if I’ll be able to go and talk about Jason. Maybe I’ll just go and listen. I know you guys think I should just leave him, but I can’t. I love him and there’s no one else for him.

Carissa: Emily, I want you to do what is right for you, and only you know that answer. You know I can’t stand to see you get hurt physically and emotionally. Well, maybe you need to take a break from Jason for a while and see how that goes.

Emily: Maybe you’re right, but I’d really like to talk to him and ask him why he....
Elizabeth: Why he pushes you around and slaps you? Emily, no one should have to put up with that, but you’re the only one who can do this; and you can change it. You’re smart and you’ve got lots of friends who want you to be happy and safe. We’ll be here for you and for Jason, too, if he’ll let us.

Emily: We’ll probably need all of you guys. Listen, can you stay with me tonight? My parents will be home soon, but I can’t talk to them about this right now and I really don’t want to be alone.

Carissa: Sure, let us call our folks and then we can just talk or chill or whatever you feel like.

Emily: Thanks, you’re great friends!

(All hug. Scene fades.)

— The End —
RESOURCES

1. www.ctcadv.org
2. www.breakthecycle.com
3. www.loveisrespect.com
7. Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum
8. Video resources:
   - Dating abuse by male: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xlfm6cDuu8A
   - Dating abuse by female: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrDJg9wfvTQ
   - Sexting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvC8CwG9X8E
   - Dating abuse in gay relationship: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3PeZ4m7mng
   - Sign of dating abuse: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=He1pu4VwKdM


6 ibid.


9 ibid.
