

Starting the Conversation

A guide to addressing dating violence among youth

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. If you have a child in your life that you are close to, take this as an opportunity to talk with them about healthy relationships. Here are some questions to help get you started.

"How are things going?"

Start with a general question. Ease them into a conversation before jumping into a heavier topic.

"Have you ever seen abusive behaviors between partners?"

This question allows you to define abuse within a relationship and compare your definition to their definition.

"How are relationships portrayed in the media?"

Talk about how some portrayals of relationships may romanticize or minimize abusive behaviors.

"What kinds of relationships do your friends have?"

What is their current perception of relationships? Do they have expectations of gender roles? This will help shape how you continue the conversation.

"What makes a relationship healthy?"

Partners in a healthy relationship respect each other's individual differences and personal boundaries. They do not hurt their partner(s) emotionally, sexually or physically.

"Where can you get help if you or a friend needs it"?

Let them know that you are always there for support and familiarize yourself with available resources. For assistance in finding your local resources, you may contact CARE.