

Domestic Violence – you are not alone

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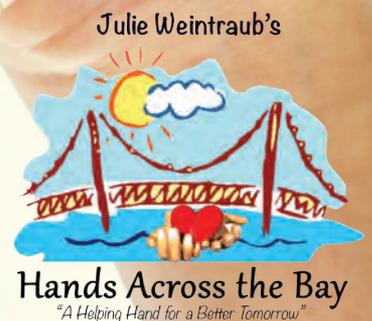
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Tampa Bay
Times
NIE
newspaper in education
tampabay.com/nie



What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.

Thirty-eight percent of Florida women and 29 percent of Florida men experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. Domestic violence affects individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation,

education level, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or nationality. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and LGBTQ relationships.

Domestic violence can include physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, financial abuse, and emotional and verbal abuse.

It is not always easy to tell in the early stages of a relationship if a person will become abusive. Domestic violence

intensifies over time. Abusers may often seem wonderful initially, but gradually become more aggressive and controlling as the relationship continues.

The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically. The one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence



Types of abuse

People often assume physical violence when they hear about domestic abuse, but that's not always the case. Intimate partner abuse is a pattern of behaviors used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner. Physical violence is just one example of this behavior.

- **Physical abuse** is any intentional, unwanted contact with you or something close to your body, or any behavior that causes or has the intention of causing you injury, disability or death.
- **Emotional or verbal abuse** includes non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or "checking in," excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking.
- **Sexual abuse** refers to any behavior that pressures or coerces you to do something sexually that you don't want to do.
- **Financial abuse** is using money or how you choose to spend it to control your actions or decisions.

Source: loveisrespect.org

Warning signs of abuse



Anyone can be an abuser. Abusers come from all groups, all cultures, all religions, all economic levels and all backgrounds.

Warning signs of an abuser include:

- Extreme jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Unpredictability
- Bad temper
- Cruelty to animals
- Verbal abuse
- Extremely controlling behavior
- Antiquated beliefs about roles of women and men in relationships
- Forced sex or disregard of their partner's unwillingness to have sex
- Sabotage of birth control methods or refusal to honor agreed-upon methods
- Blaming the victim for anything bad that happens
- Sabotage or obstruction of the victim's ability to work or attend school
- Control of all finances
- Abuse of other family members, children or pets
- Accusations of the victim flirting with others or having an affair
- Control of what the victim wears and how they act
- Demeaning the victim either privately or publicly
- Embarrassment or humiliation of the victim in front of others
- Harassment of the victim at work

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Do you think you're in an abusive relationship?

Does your partner...

- Embarrass or make fun of you in front of friends or family?
- Put down your accomplishments or goals?
- Make you feel like you are unable to make decisions?
- Use intimidation or threats to gain compliance?
- Tell you that you are nothing without them?
- Treat you roughly (grab, push, pinch, shove or hit you)?
- Threaten or abuse your pets?
- Call you several times a night or show up to make sure you are where you said you would be?
- Use drugs or alcohol as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- Blame you for how they feel or act?
- Pressure you sexually for things you aren't ready for?
- Make you feel like there "is no way out" of the relationship?
- Prevent you from doing things you want, such as spending time with your friends or family?
- Try to keep you from leaving after a fight, or leave you somewhere after a fight to "teach you a lesson?"



Do you...

- Sometimes feel scared of how your partner will act?
- Constantly make excuses to other people for your partner's behavior?
- Believe that you can help your partner change if only you changed something about yourself?
- Try not to do anything that would cause conflict or make your partner angry?
- Feel like no matter what you do, your partner is never happy with you?
- Always do what your partner wants you to do instead of what you want?
- Stay with your partner because you are afraid of what your partner would do if you broke up?

If any of these situations are happening in your relationship, talk to someone you trust or call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233). A list of more resources can be found on Page 8.

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Signs of a healthy relationship

My partner:

- Makes me feel safe, loved and comfortable
- Makes me laugh
- Trusts me
- Is truthful
- Likes that I have other friends
- Accepts me as I am
- Supports what I want to do in life

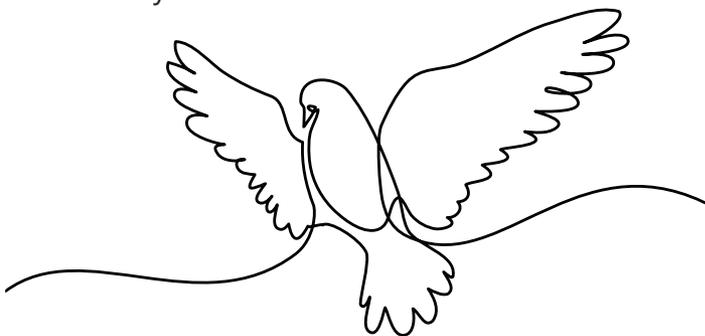
GOING BEYOND
THE TEXT:

Journaling to
self-awareness

Keeping a journal is a great way to learn more about yourself. Who are you? Why do you do what you do? For your first journal entry, read the blog post "Setting Boundaries in a Relationship" at breakthecycle.org/blog/setting-boundaries-relationship or by scanning the QR code. In the blog, the author states, "A relationship can't be healthy until both partners communicate their boundaries clearly, and the other person respects them." Think about the examples of boundary violations and the tips for establishing healthy boundaries. How might these apply to your life?



SCAN ME



Why do people stay in abusive relationships?

It can be difficult to understand why anyone would stay in an abusive relationship.

Abusive relationships are complex situations, and it takes a lot of courage to leave.

Abuse is about power and control. When survivors leave their abusive relationship, they threaten the power and control their partner has established, which may cause the partner to retaliate in harmful ways. As a result, leaving is often the most dangerous period of time for victims and survivors of abuse.

Even beyond the physical risks of leaving an abusive situation, there are many other reasons why people stay in harmful relationships, such as:

Fear: A person may be afraid of the consequences to themselves or to their partner if they decide to leave their relationship.

Normalized abuse: If a person grew up in an environment where abuse was common, they may not know what healthy relationships look like.

Shame: It can be difficult for a person to admit that they've been or are being abused.

Intimidation: A person may be intimidated into staying in a relationship by verbal or physical threats, or threats to spread secrets or confidential information (for example, "revenge porn").

Low self-esteem: It can be easy for a person to believe that they're at fault for their partner's abusive behaviors.

Lack of resources: A person may be financially dependent on their abusive partner or may feel they lack friends or a network to turn to.

Disability: If a person depends on another for physical support, a lack of visible alternatives for support can influence a decision to stay in an abusive relationship.

Immigration status: A person who is undocumented may fear that reporting abuse will affect their immigration status. A person with limited English proficiency may feel unable to express their circumstances to others.

Cultural context: Traditional customs or beliefs, whether held by themselves or by their family and

community, may influence a person's decision to stay in an abusive situation.

Children: Keeping the family together is often something that a person values. It also may be used as a tactic by their partner to "guilt" a person into staying.

Love: Experiencing abuse and feeling love are not mutually exclusive. A person may still have strong, intimate feelings for their abusive partner.

Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline



GOING BEYOND
THE TEXT:
**Learning
new things**

For this next journal entry, think about the information on Pages 4-5. What are some ways that people can help "change the conversation"? See if you can find a relevant article, editorial or letter to the editor in the Tampa Bay Times. Write down your ideas and thoughts in your journal.



Signs of a healthy relationship

My partner:

- Respects me and my family
- Treats me as an equal
- Understands my need for time alone or with family and friends
- Listens to my opinions
- Is understanding of my feelings
- Admits to being wrong

Unhealthy relationships can start early

Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime.

Dating violence often starts with teasing and name calling. These behaviors are often thought to be a normal part of a relationship. But these behaviors can set the stage for more serious violence, such as physical assault and rape.

- Nearly **1.5 million high school students** nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.
- **One in three girls** in the U.S. is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner.
- **One in ten high school students** has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

The NIE publication *Breaking the Cycle of Teen Dating Abuse* focuses on helping preteens and teens gain the knowledge and learn the skills they need to form positive, healthy relationships.

Scan the QR code or visit nieonline.com/tbtimes/downloads/supplements/BreakingTheCycle2022.pdf to read it.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, love is respect.



- Help them store important documents or a “to-go bag” in case of an emergency situation.
- Help them open a separate, private bank account.
- Help document instances of domestic violence in their life. This can include photos of injuries, exact transcripts of interactions or notes on a calendar of when incidents of abuse occur.
- Encourage them to participate in activities with friends and family. Helping a person identify and build support networks can help them recognize alternatives to the abusive relationship and build the confidence they need to leave.
- Encourage them to talk to people who can offer further help. See the resource list on Page 8. Offer to go with them to any service provider or legal setting for moral support.

Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline

How to support a friend or family member in an abusive relationship

Watching someone experience abuse is hard, especially if that person is someone you know and care about. Here are some examples of how to support someone in an abusive relationship.

- Acknowledge that they’re in a difficult and frightening situation. Let them know that the abuse is not their fault. Reassure them that they’re not alone and that there is help and support available, including from yourself.
- Be supportive and listen. It will be difficult for them to talk about the abuse.
- Be non-judgmental. Respect the decisions that a person in an abusive relationship makes. There are many reasons why they might stay in, or return to, an abusive situation. Don’t criticize their choices or “guilt” them over their decisions.
- Remember that you cannot “rescue” them. It’s difficult to watch someone you care about get hurt, but decisions about their lives are up to them to make. It’s important to support them no matter what they decide, even if you don’t agree.
- Help them develop a safety plan. Keep in mind that leaving is not always an option, and a safety plan may mean focusing on how to stay safe while remaining in the relationship. See Page 6 for more information on making a safety plan.

Making a safety plan

Although you can't control an abuser's use of violence, you can prepare for the possibility of a violent or abusive incident happening, plan how you will respond to it, and work out how to get to safety.

You might be thinking of leaving an abusive relationship. You do not have to leave immediately, or do it all at once. But having a plan in place can help you get out safely when you are ready to leave.

Trusted friends, family and co-workers can help with your safety plan if they are aware of the situation and want to help.

- **Identify a safe friend or friends and safe places to go.** Create a code word to use with friends, family or neighbors to let them know you are in danger without the abuser finding out. If possible, agree on a secret location where they can pick you up.
- **Keep an alternate cellphone nearby.** Try not to call for help on your home phone or on a cellphone that your partner has access to. Your partner

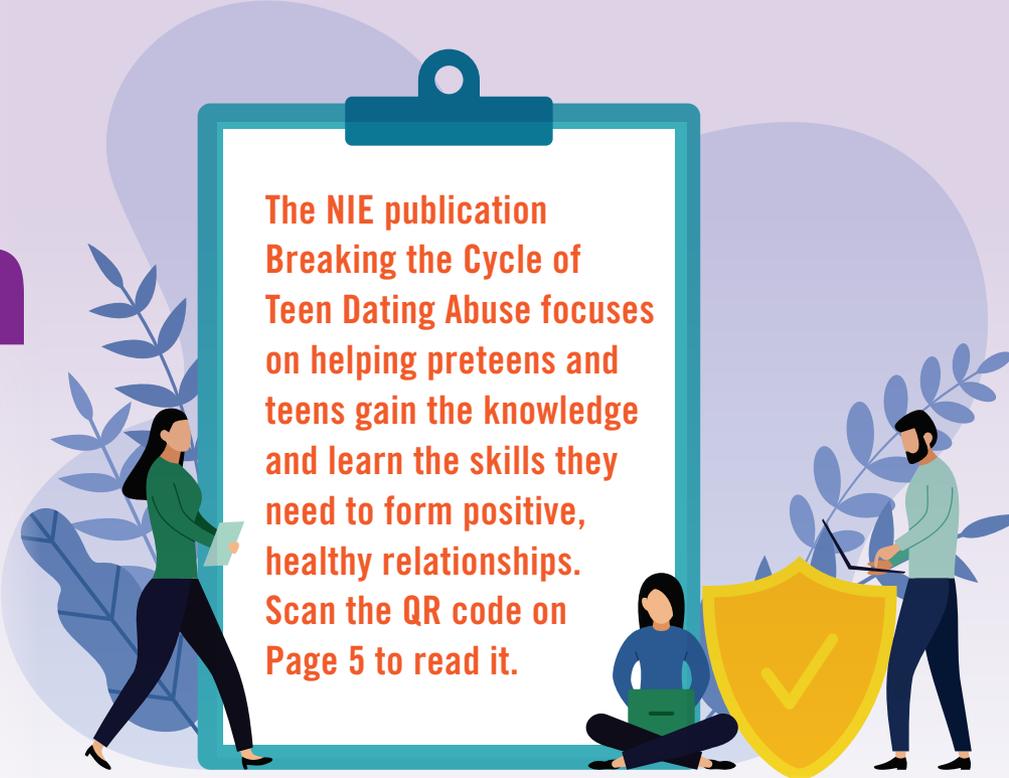
might be able to trace the numbers. Consider buying a prepaid cellphone. Some domestic violence shelters offer free cellphones.

- **Memorize the phone numbers of friends, family or shelters.** If your partner takes your phone, you will still be able to contact loved ones or shelters for a safe place to stay.
- **Make a list of things to take if you have to leave quickly.** See the safety packing list on Page 7.

for suggestions on items to pack. Get these items together and keep them in a safe place where your partner will not find them. If you are in immediate danger, leave without them.

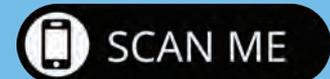
- **Make and hide an extra set of car keys** so you can leave if your partner takes away your usual keys.
- **Ask your doctor how to get extra medicine or other medically necessary items for you or your children.**

- **Protect your online security as you collect information and prepare.** Use a friend's computer or cellphone or a computer at a public library to download information. Your partner might be able to track your planning otherwise.
- **Keep copies of important documents on an external thumb drive.**



The NIE publication **Breaking the Cycle of Teen Dating Abuse** focuses on helping preteens and teens gain the knowledge and learn the skills they need to form positive, healthy relationships. Scan the QR code on Page 5 to read it.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline offers an interactive online guide to safety planning that will help you create a comprehensive personalized safety plan that you can view online, print out or email to yourself or a friend. Visit thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/create-a-safety-plan/ or scan the QR code at right.



Safety packing list

- Money, checkbook
- Car keys (extra set)
- Spare clothing for you and your children
- Medicine, prescriptions and necessary medical items or equipment (glasses, hearing aids etc.) for you and your children
- ID
- Birth certificates, Social Security cards, and passports or immigration papers for you and your children
- Health insurance cards for you and your children
- Any evidence of abuse or violence (such as copies of police or medical reports or photos of your injuries or damage to your property)

Sources: loveisrespect.org, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Domestic Violence Hotline, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health

Violence is a choice – that you can choose not to make

There is a very thin line between an unhealthy relationship and an abusive one.

As you read through this publication, did you recognize some of the unhealthy behaviors in your own relationships or friendships? It is never too late to make a change. You can choose what kind of person you want to be.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse have to want to get help for themselves. They need to be prepared to work hard and to face what they have done and the damage they have caused.

It takes strength and courage to be able to take responsibility for your actions.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline recommends that domestic abusers attend a certified intimate partner abuse education program, also known as certified batterer intervention programs. A list of programs in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties can be accessed by scanning the QR codes above.

Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline



Hillsborough



Pasco/Pinellas



Love yourself

Self-esteem means feeling good about yourself. Here are some tips to raise your self-esteem:

- Be with people who treat you well. Be that type of friend for others.
- Say helpful things to yourself.
- Accept your best, even if it's not perfect.
- Set goals and work toward them.
- Focus on what goes well.
- Give to and help others.

Source: KidsHealth.org

GOING BEYOND
THE TEXT:
A survivor's
story

Read the Tampa Bay Times article "At home and at peace" and the Newspaper in Education article "Melissa Dohme Hill: Sur-Thriver" on Page 2 of "Breaking the Cycle" by scanning the QR codes at right. In your journal, make a list of the abuse warning signs and types of abuse that these survivors experienced. What are your thoughts about these stories? Are there aspects that you can relate to? In the first story, the survivor and her children relied on the help of friends to escape from their abuser. Think about the steps they took and how you might help a friend or family member in a similar situation. See the article, "How to support a friend or family member in an abusive relationship" on Page 5 for ideas. Write down your thoughts in your journal.



Resources

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

24/7 free, confidential short-term crisis intervention, information and referral services.

Web: crisiscenter.com

24-hour hotline: 211

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline

24/7 free, confidential support, safety planning, information and referral services in English, Spanish and **Creole**.

Web: myflfamilies.com/service-programs/domestic-violence/

24-hour hotline: 800-500-1119

TDD: 800-621-4202

Florida Relay: 711

National Domestic Violence Hotline

24/7 free, confidential and compassionate support, crisis intervention information, education and referral services in over 200 languages.

Web: thehotline.org

24-hour hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Text: START to 88788

TTY: 800-787-3224

National Dating Abuse Helpline

24/7 information, support, and advocacy for young people ages 13 to 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships.

Web: loveisrespect.org

24-hour hotline: 866-331-9474

Text: LOVEIS to 22522

National Sexual Assault Hotline

24/7 free, confidential support, information, advice and referral services.

Web: rainn.org

24-hour hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)

Local resources by county

Citrus

Citrus Abuse Shelter Association (CASA)

Web: casafl.org

24-hour hotline: 352-344-8111

Hernando

Dawn Center of Hernando

Web: dawncenter.org

24-hour hotline: 352-686-8430

Hillsborough

The Spring of Tampa Bay

Web: thespring.org

24-hour hotline: 813-247-SAFE (7233)

TTY: 813-248-1050

Manatee

HOPE Family Services

Web: hopefamilyservice.org

24-hour hotline: 941-755-6805

Text: survivor to 69922

Pasco

The Salvation Army of Pasco County

Web: salvationarmyflorida.org/pasco-county

Helpline: 727-856-5797

Sunrise of Pasco County

Web: sunrisepasco.org

24-hour hotline: 352-521-3120

Pinellas

CASA Pinellas

Web: casapinellas.org

24-hour hotline: 727-895-4912

TTY: 727-828-1269

Hope Villages of America (formerly RCS Pinellas)

Web: rcspinellas.org/help

24-hour hotline: 727-442-4128

TTY: 727-446-2448

About NIE

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) serves educators, students and families by providing schools with class sets of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Tampa Bay Times – a “living textbook” – plus award-winning original curriculum supplements, teacher guides, lesson plans, teacher professional development resources and much more – all at no cost to schools, teachers or families.

In 2021-2022, NIE provided more than 10.5 million digital licenses and almost half a million print copies of the Times to area classrooms free of charge thanks to our generous subscribers and individual, corporate and foundation sponsors.

NIE is a member of Florida Press Educational Services, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote reading and critical thinking, particularly for young people.

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Florida Standards

This publication and its activities incorporate the following Florida Standards for high school students.

Health: HE.912.B.3.2; HE.912.B.3.4; HE.912.B.4.2; HE.912.B.4.4; HE.912.B.5.1; HE.912.B.5.5; HE.912.C.2.6; HE.912.C.2.7; HE.912.C.2.8; HE.912.P.8.3; HE.912.P.8.4

Language Arts:

ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.1.4; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.3.2; ELA.912.R.3.4; ELA.912.V.1.1; ELA.912.V.1.3



About Hands Across the Bay

Founded in 2010 by philanthropist and business owner Julie Weintraub, Hands Across the Bay has a simple purpose: "A Helping Hand for a Better Tomorrow."

Hands Across the Bay was developed to positively impact the lives of as many Tampa Bay residents as possible. The mission of the organization is to assist and mentor hardworking families in need, advocate for change, support other organizations, and spread love with various acts of kindness. Through its work, the organization hopes to inspire our community to become more compassionate, empathetic, and charitable.

For more information about Hands Across the Bay, visit handsacrossthebay.org, call 727-573-7720 or email requests@handsacrossthebay.com. Follow us on Instagram at instagram.com/HandsAcrossTB. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/HandsAcrossTB.

