



## Fact Sheet

### Take steps to prevent dating violence

Your heart is racing, your stomach is fluttering – your dream guy is about to pick you up for a date! Sometimes guys who seem dreamy turn ugly. One in 3 high school students know a friend who has been hurt by a partner. Instead of thinking “it won’t happen to me”, take steps to make sure it doesn’t.

#### Know Your Rights

You have the right to ask for a date and refuse a date, express your feelings, and voice your own opinion. You have the right to have your own friends, and spend time away from your partner. You have the right to have your values and limits respected, and to refuse affection and sex. Your body belongs to you.

#### Recognize Warning Signs

Does your partner call you names, or criticize you in front of other people? Does he text you constantly, wanting to know where you are or what you are doing? Does he get mad when you want to spend time with your friends? Does he blow up easily? Does he pressure you to use drugs or to have sex? Do you have to be careful around him, so you won’t make him angry? You may not call what is going on “abusive”. You may think he’s just moody, or that he gets jealous because he loves you, or that you just messed up. It’s time to get real – if these things are going on, you are in an abusive relationship and you need to get out.

#### Create a safety plan

You can lower the risk of dating violence by creating a safety plan. Go out with other couples or with a group. Before you leave home, tell your parents where you are going and what you’ll be doing. Carry a cell phone and cash with you, and have a code word you can give people you trust if you feel you are in danger. Always trust your instincts – if you feel something is wrong, or you are in danger, get help immediately.

Talk to your parents or a trusted adult. You can also call a peer advocate 24/7 at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) by calling 1-866-331-9474 or texting “loveis” to 22522. You are a valuable person, and you have rights. You don’t ever deserve to be abused. Dating can be exciting, fun, and safe – the choice is yours.

The Phelps/Maries County Health Department – caring for your family, caring for our community, caring for YOU!



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