

## **What Can You Do About Teen Dating Violence**

If you observe that someone you know may be a victim of Teen Dating Violence, **DO**:

- Listen to what the student, family or friend is saying without interrupting.
- Find out what the person would like to do about the relationship and support them regardless of their decision.
- You may let them know that abuse usually gets worse over time. Let them know that you will be there for them if they ever need you.
- Expect the person to be confused about their feelings and about what to do. Expect them to change their mind, maybe even a few times.
- Watch your body language and respect the person's right to privacy and personal space.
- Help the person become informed of available resources, some of which are listed on this page.
- Decide how you should proceed with informing any other persons, especially if you feel the person's safety may be in danger.

### **Be careful... DO NOT:**

- Judge the person
- Give advice - Instead talk to them about the choices they have and help them find persons able to help
- Ask unnecessary questions ; the victim may shut down if they feel like they are being pressed to share information that they aren't ready to talk about
- Overreact
- Confront the person's abusive partner about the abuse - confronting the abuser may put you in danger, and may put the victim at increased risk

### **Schools should...**

- Set clear policies about reporting dating abuse or violence of any kind, whether it occurs on campus or not, as required in Florida Statute 1006.148.
- Work to create a school environment where respect, responsibility and safety are promoted.
- Take all protection orders, or other court orders due to dating abuse, seriously and proactively enforce the order on campus.
- Train staff to recognize signs of dating abuse and intervene appropriately - local centers can assist.
- Teach an evidenced-based and effective curriculum about dating abuse.
- Host school-wide dating abuse campaigns involving students. Give students responsibility in the planning and organizing of such events.

- Educate parents about the issue.
- Identify local community resources and make these available to students in a safe, accessible place; some students may not feel comfortable asking for resources directly

### ***Obtaining a Protection Order***

#### **The following types of abuse can result in a protection order**

If someone has physically abused, sexually abused, attempted or threatened to physically abuse, stalked and/or unlawfully held another person against his/her will, a protection order may be obtained for the victim's safety.

#### **How do teens get a protection order?**

- If a teen qualifies for a protection order, they may go to court and file for a temporary order, which lasts for 15 days.
- If the judge schedules a hearing, they can grant a permanent order that lasts as long as the judge orders.
- Contact your local domestic violence center for more information and assistance with applying for a teen dating violence protection order.
- Many local domestic violence centers can assist with this process