

## What's Love Got To Do With It?

Sometimes in relationships, things that may seem innocent and romantic can be something else entirely. A young woman hopes for a boyfriend who is attentive and watches out for her but not one who won't let her out of his sight. A young man may appreciate a girlfriend who calls to see how his day is going but not one who calls every hour to see where he's going.

Television, music, videos and magazines scream the message that to be complete, you must be loved, and that love should be romantic, sexy and all-forgiving, even if it involves physical or sexual violence.

By high school, it is no wonder they have difficulty discerning the fine line between sweet and smothering, concern and control, passion and possession. And, when that line is crossed, even more difficulty realizing that the relationship can be harmful, even deadly.

One-third of teens report experiencing some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships. Studies have shown that young people who are exposed to domestic violence at home or in their own dating relationships are more likely to smoke, drink, fail in school, get pregnant, use drugs, suffer from bulimia or anorexia, consider suicide or be murdered by an intimate partner.

Take time to talk with the young people in your life about what a healthy, loving relationship looks like. Encourage your kids to talk to their friends who may be abusive or in an abusive relationship.

When young people understand that trust, patience and kindness – not jealousy, rage and obsession – are signs of love, it increases the chances that they will be safe in their dating relationships and truly be loved.

If you are worried about your teenager and you need to talk, call us.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages.

All contact with the hotline is free and confidential.