



KATIE BROWN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Promotes Respectful Relationships by
Teaching Relationship Violence Prevention

What Not to Do if Your Teen is Being Abused

Don't ignore your child or say you'll only support them if s/he gets out of the abusive relationship:

Don't put down the abuser:

Don't tell your child that her/his boy/girlfriend is a terrible person. Instead, talk about how you think relationships in general should or shouldn't be. Remember, your child cares about their boy/girlfriend – bad mouthing the partner will most likely lead your child to stop talking to you about the relationship.

Don't talk to your child about the abuse in front of her/his boyfriend or girlfriend:

It may not be safe for your child to talk about the abuse in front of her/his partner. Don't talk to the boy/girlfriend about the abuse AT ALL without your child's permission.

Don't put your child down for being in an abusive relationship:

Don't say things like, "I can't believe you're stupid enough to stay with someone like this!"

Don't tell your child what to do:

This may make your teenager afraid to disappoint or anger you. The abuser is already trying to control her/him. You don't want to try to control your child as well. This just reinforces their role as a victim.

Don't blame your child:

Don't ask your child what s/he did to provoke the abuser. This will only reinforce any feelings of self-blame that your child may already have and make it harder to expect the abuser to take responsibility for the violence.

Don't tell your child s/he has made a bad decision:

Your child is the only one who can decide what is best for her/him and what s/he is ready and able to do. Your child probably has a lot of doubts about her/his ability to make good choices. You don't want to make it worse. You also don't want your child to stop talking to you because s/he is afraid you won't approve of what s/he has decided.

Don't try to physically protect or rescue your child:

Abusive relationships can be very dangerous. You can't help your child if you put yourself in danger or get so involved that you lose your perspective too.