



## Safe Dating

Below are some safety tips for dangerous situations you might encounter.

### **I'm going out with a guy I just met.**

- Consider double dating the first few times you go out with a new person.
- Before leaving on the date, make sure you know the exact plans for the evening, and make sure a parent or friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home.
- Let your date know that you are expected to call or let someone know when you get home.
- Be aware of your decreased ability to react under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- If you leave a party with someone you do not know well, tell a friend you are leaving and with whom. Ask your friend to call and make sure you got home safely.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way out of the situation. Remember, your safety is more important than being polite!

### **My girlfriend wants me to spend all my time with just her.**

- Stay in touch with your friends. Make it a point to hang out with people other than your girlfriend.
- Stay involved in activities that you enjoy. Don't stop doing things that make you feel good about yourself.
- Make new friends. Increase your support network.
- Set limits with your girlfriend about the amount of time that you can spend with her.
- Continue to make choices for yourself.

### **Sometimes I'm scared when I'm alone with my boyfriend.**

- Go out to public places with your boyfriend. Try not to be alone with him, or at least not to be alone in an isolated location.
- Let other people know where you are and what your plans will be.
- Try not to be dependent on your boyfriend for a ride. Always carry a few dollars with you in case you need to call a taxi or take a bus.
- Always keep a cell phone with you. Charge your phone daily.
- If you feel you are in danger, don't be afraid to call the police. Listen to your fears; they're telling you something important.

### **I want to break up with my boyfriend, but I'm afraid of what he'll do.**

- If you think the situation might be dangerous, don't break up in person. Call, email, or text-message him.
- If you do end up breaking up in person, do it in a public place and don't leave with him.
- Have a friend with you, or tell a friend or a parent what you are going to do and where you will be.
- Call a friend or counselor afterward to talk about what happened.

### **I want to break up with my boyfriend, but I'm afraid of what he'll do.** (continued)

- If he gave you a cell phone, get rid of it, he might be able to track your movements with the built-in GPS.
- Change your email passwords and user I.D.
- Vary your routine before and after school.

### **My ex-boyfriend is threatening me. How can I stay safe?**

- Consider telling your parents or other family members what is happening. They can help you screen calls and visitors.
- Try not to be alone at home. Stay at a friend's house when your parents are not home. Have a friend or school official walk you to your car.
- Make sure to always lock doors and windows when you're at home.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Take a quick look around before leaving your house or getting into or out of your car. Have your keys ready as you approach your door. Park in a well-lit area near building entrances.
- Talk to your local domestic violence agency about what you or your parents might be able to do about getting an order of protection. They might also offer group or individual counseling.
- Write down all of the things that he is doing to threaten or harass you in a notebook or journal. Record time and message of all phone calls, emails, and text messages.

### **My ex-girlfriend is harassing me at school.**

- Try not to be alone. Let your friends know what is happening and have them walk to classes and have lunch with you.
- Tell teachers, counselors, coaches or campus police.
- Change your routine. Don't always come to school the same way or arrive at the same time. Always try to ride to and from school with someone.
- Talk to school staff about rearranging your class schedule and changing your locker location. Also, remember to change your lock if necessary.
- Plan things you can do after school other than going home to an empty house.

### **I live with my abusive boyfriend. What can I do?**

- Think about places that you can go if you need to leave your home quickly.
- Make an extra set of keys for your car and home, and put them in a safe place in case he tries to take yours to trap you in the home.
- Think of a "code word" that you can create and share it with your close friends and family who are aware of what is going on. Use this word to relay messages to your friends and family in secret, such as: call the police, or pick me up at our meeting place.

### **My ex-girlfriend is using the internet to keep track of me. How can I stop her?**

- Change your email address and screen name and only give it to people you trust to keep your information confidential and your safety a priority.
- Be careful with the information that you give out on internet sites, such as MySpace and Friendster. Your abuser can easily get information about you from these sites and use that information to harass you. Putting only non-identifying information on web pages is always the best safety precaution.
- Be mindful of who can get access to your cell phone. Anyone can go into your call history and see who you talk to and read your text messages. If you are still with your abuser, it is a good practice to erase all call history and text messages routinely.

**Please call the 24-Hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224 to discuss your concerns and questions.**