

## Violence in Relationships

Relationships for young people can come in many forms from peers, friends, family, co-workers, partners and online connections. An incredibly important discussion to have with your teenager is the different forms of violence that may occur in future or current relationships.

### Understanding and Communicating About Violence with Your Teenager

It is essential to help your teenager recognise and discuss the various forms of violence to empower them in identifying these behaviors in relationships. These forms of violence include:

- Cyberbullying
- Tech Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, also referred to as online abuse, is a form of mistreatment that occurs through the internet. It involves someone being unkind or bullying another person with the intent of causing them emotional distress or upset.

Cyberbullying can take place in various online environments, including:

- Social media platforms
- Websites
- Online games
- Applications
- Any other online service

The forms in which cyber bullying can be delivered are:

- Posts and comments
- Text messages
- Direct messages and chats
- Livestreams
- Memes, images, and videos
- Emails

## **Tech Abuse**

Tech Abuse or Technology Abuse, is a form of abuse which occurs through technology. It may sound similar to Cyber abuse, however they're two completely different forms. Tech abuse is when a person uses technology, such as a mobile phone, social media, or other digital platforms, to try to hurt, impersonate, stalk or control someone.

Examples of tech abuse include:

### **Deep-fake A-I generated content:**

Generating AI images or videos of another person which are fake this includes convincing pornographic images or videos.

### **Harrasment:**

Overwhelming someone with constant calls and messages..Or sending purposefully upsetting or sensitive content such as porn, violence or racism.

### **Sexual & image based abuse:**

Threatening to, or actually posting sexual content of someone without their consent - including the deep-fakes.

### **Emotional abuse & threats:**

Sending messages or leaving comments that are designed to hurt someone's feelings, or threaten their physical safety.

### **Location monitoring:**

Monitoring your location via social media and apps.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is when a person is constantly making another person have self-doubt, feel bad or as if the person is useless. The emotionally abusive person does this to have power and control over the other person.

Examples of emotional abuse can include:

**Verbal abuse:**

Shouting, swearing, putting down, making you feel like you've done wrong.

**Isolation:**

Controlling where you go and who you see and be friends with.

**Social:**

Putting you down in public, spreading rumours about you.

**Gaslighting:**

Lying or tricking the person in a way that makes the other person doubt and question themselves.

## **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is when a person intends to hurt you physically in any form. In unhealthy relationships the signs of this may start really small and grow more intense and unsafe as the physical violence and the relationship progresses.

Physical violence can look like:

- Someone punching, kicking, slapping, pinching, burning you
- Throwing things at you
- Poisoning you
- Pushing
- Withholding your medication
- Drugging you
- Choking or strangling you
- Weapons or objects that could harm you
- Restraining you: tying you up, pinning you down
- Endangering you with reckless driving or other acts which put you in danger

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse can also be known as sexual assault. It's recognised as when someone forces, pressures, tricks, takes advantage of a person for any kind of sexual activity without the other person consenting.

Some forms of sexual assault could be:

- Forcing you to get naked – possibly to perform acts on your own body while they watch. This could be in person or online.
- Making you touch their body
- Forced to watch porn
- Stealthing: taking a condom off during sex without your consent
- Performing sexual acts such as sex, touching, oral sex without consent
- Taking pictures or videos of a person, naked without consent

## **Warning Signs to look out for**

Everyone can have different reactions to violence within relationships, however signs to lookout for in your child or loved one are:

- Depressed or anxious
- Seems lonely or avoidant of people
- Aggressive
- Mood swings
- Not eating
- Lowered confidence
- Lack of self esteem

## **How to help your child**

It may seem challenging to approach your child when you suspect or are aware they have experienced violence. It's important to know they may not want to talk due to shame, guilt, feeling like they won't be believed, considering it might be "normal" or fear of being punished.

## **How to communicate with your child**

Try to have an open conversation and ask gentle open ended questions. It's important to educate your child on what healthy relationships look like and the importance of having boundaries. When your child reaches out, be understanding and non judgemental, they might fear they will be punished.

## **When to seek help**

- If your child is in immediate danger call emergency services on 000.
- If there are signs of abuse get in touch with clinical professionals such as a counsellor, psychologist or a youth service.