

How Can Teens Get Out of an Abusive Relationship?



Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence

If you are in an abusive relationship, Break the Cycle can help.

If you have recognized warning signs of abuse in your relationship, be proud of yourself. You have taken the first step to getting help. So now what? Leaving can be more complicated than it seems, but there are many resources available to help you.

What Do I Need to Know?

If you are in an abusive relationship, you're probably feeling confusing emotions about what to do. You may fear what your partner will do if you leave, or how your friends and family will react when you tell them about the abuse. If you are financially or physically dependant on your partner, leaving may feel impossible. You might also think that the police and other adults won't take you seriously if you report the abuse. These are all understandable reasons to feel nervous about leaving your partner, but staying in the abusive relationship isn't your only option.

What Can I Do?

Ultimately, none of the above obstacles are worth staying in an abusive relationship, although they can make it feel scary to end it. Whether or not you are ready or able to leave, there are steps you can take to help keep yourself safe:

- Talk to someone (friend, parent, teacher, counselor) that you trust. They can help you deal with your feelings and support you during this time.
- Create a safety plan to reduce your risk of being hurt by your partner. Because you think through it ahead of time, your personalized safety plan can help you avoid dangerous situations and know the best way to react when you are in danger.
- Learn about your legal rights. You may be able to get a restraining order against your partner. Restraining orders may also protect you from harassment from your partner's friends and family.
- Contact one of the helpful and confidential resources available to assist you if you are concerned about being outed, taken seriously, or affecting your immigration status. Break the Cycle can help connect you to those resources.

Some things to keep in mind when thinking about breaking up:

- Your relationship has probably been a large part of your life. If you feel lonely after the break up, talk to friends or find a new activity to help fill your time.
- Because of the significance of the relationship in your life, it is normal to miss your partner after the break-up. Don't let yourself forget that you're leaving for important reasons.
- Breaking up with an abusive partner can be a dangerous time. If you don't feel safe, break up with your partner over the phone or with a friend waiting nearby. Let your family and friends know you're planning on breaking up so they can support you and help keep you safe during this time. And if you are ever in immediate danger, call the police.