

# One of your students has disclosed something troubling about their relationship—What now?

## Appropriate Responses

### Validating messages:

- “I’m so sorry that happened—it happens way too often.”
- “You don’t deserve to be hurt and it’s not your fault.”

### Assure the student this is a safe environment:

- “I’m glad you told me and you can always talk to me about these things.”
- “Is there anything I can do to help?”

### Ask their permission to share with others:

- “Wellness Center might have additional information that might be helpful for you—would you like to go to their office together?”
- “I know a program that works with teens in these kinds of relationships- would you like to call them together?”

## Inappropriate Responses

### Blaming messages:

- “Well what did you do to make him so mad?”
- “What were you wearing? Why were you out late by yourself?”
- “It must not be that bad if you’re still with him.”

### Passing judgment:

- “Well, why were you even out with him so late at night?”
- “Why don’t you just leave him then?”

### Downplaying the incident/excusing the behavior:

- “That doesn’t sound that bad—you should hear what happens in other people’s relationships.”
- “Fighting is a normal part of relationships”
- “He was just drunk- I’m sure he didn’t mean it.”

## Mandatory Reporting

- Be aware of your school or organizations protocol for managing disclosures and circumstances that require a mandatory report [Reporting to School Administrators, Reporting to Department of Education eSchool Discipline Center]
- Be aware of your professional mandates regarding mandatory reporting [Educator, Healthcare Professional, Mental Health/Therapist]

Generally, teen dating violence **does not** constitute a mandatory report with some exceptions:

- Violent Felony in the school environment
- Assault III in the school environment
- Unlawful Sexual Contact III in the school environment
- Any abusive sexual behavior committed against a minor [any forced sexual act or violation of age of consent laws] regardless of where it occurred
- Reasonable suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect

### Important Phone Numbers:

- Child Abuse Hotline (DFS): 1-800-292-9582
- 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline:
  - Kent/Sussex- 302-422-8058
  - Spanish- 302-745-9874
- Contact Lifeline 24/7 Rape Crisis Hotline: 1-800-262-9800
- YWCA Sexual Assault Response Center: 800-773-8570



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