RELATIONSHIP STATUS

READ THIS! IF YOU ARE IN A RELATIONSHIP, EVER WANT TO BE IN ONE, OR EVER EVEN MAYBE MIGHT CONSIDER HAVING SEX...

VERMONT NETWORK

© 2014

THANK YOU!

A big thanks to **Sam Carbaugh,** cartoonist and illustrator, for lending us his skills to make this booklet more fun to look at. He created the cover art and the cartoons inside. You can find more of Sam's work at:
samcarbaugh.com

This booklet was originally the result of a joint project among AWARE, Clarina Howard Nichols Center, the DCF Family Services Domestic Violence Unit, the Morrisville DCF Family Services District Office, and the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Project. March 2000.

Revised with input from the Youth Advocacy Task Force and staff at the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the DCF Family Services DV Unit. October 2002, June 2004, October 2005, October 2007, October 2010, September 2011, September 2014, January 2017.

Table of Contents

What Is This Book All About	4
SUPPORTIVE and **CONTROLLING** Relationships?	8
Relationships 101 *Getting Together* *Dealing with Conflict* *Don't Forget the Good Stuff* *Breaking Up*	16 17 19 21 22
Sex and Consent	28
Sexual Violence	33
Virtual Connections *Sexting* *Digital Harassment* *Privacy*	36 36 38 40
Word Search	41
You've Got the Power To Make It Better	43
Reaching Out	45
Resources	51

What is this book all about?

Relationships of all kinds. While we mostly focus on *dating relationships*, these skills can be applied to friends, family and other types of relationships too.

Relationships can be exciting, complicated, super easy, really messed up, awesome, high stress, supportive, controlling, good, bad, serious, light hearted...the list goes on. Relationships come in all different shapes and sizes, and they can be hard to figure out.

In this book we will talk about different relationship skills and tips to help you navigate your way towards a supportive and healthy relationship. There are stories, lists, activities, and resources to help you sort it out, know what to do if your friends need help, and find support for yourself if you need it.

Who is this for? EVERYONE!

No, really, EVERYONE. Regardless of your gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, sex, ability, hearing status, or whatever makes you *you.* Everyone enjoys a healthy relationship and we all need support in making them happen.

You're in a lot of "relationships"

We all have connections with a variety of people in our lives, some romantic, some not.

The information in this book can be used in all types of relationships because supportive relationships are all built of the same stuff:

- ★ ***Trust***
- ★ ***Communication***
- ★ ***Respect***

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Best Friend/ BFF/ Bestie
- ☐ Boyfriend/ Girlfriend/ Significant Other
- ☐ Friend with benefits
- ☐ Make out buddy
- ☐ Special someone
- ☐ Crush
- ☐ Fling
- ☐ Classmate
- ☐ Teammate
- ☐ Sibling (brother, sister, step or half)
- ☐ Parent/ step-parent
- ☐ Grandparent
- ☐ Other family member
- ☐ Other: _____

FYI: In this booklet, we have chosen to use "datemate", "partner" and "b/gf/s.o." (which stands for boy/ girlfriend/ significant other) to refer to people you might be dating or engaging in sexual activity with.

Why do we need this information?

Some young people are getting hurt in their relationships, either because one person is intentionally controlling, hurtful or harmful, or because the people involved just haven't had a lot of relationship experience. They might not know how to talk to each other and navigate all the stuff that is needed to build something solid and supportive.

When one person makes choices to repeatedly and intentionally hurt or control another person in a dating relationship, it is called ***DATING VIOLENCE*.**

And when someone is sexually aggressive and forces unwanted sexual contact or advances on another without consent, that is ***SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE.***

We hope that by talking about what a supportive relationship and healthy sexual contact looks like, we will prevent dating and sexual violence and people will have the tools they need to build safe and supportive connections with each other.

If you are being hurt or are scared of being hurt by your dating partner, someone you've engaged in sexual activity with or anyone else in your life, **OR** if you're scared you might be hurting someone emotionally or physically, **THERE IS HELP.** Check out the **REACHING OUT** section in the back of this booklet for more information.

Did you know that…

- **In Vermont, 9% of High School students reported being physically hurt by someone they were dating or going out with, and 6% were physically forced to have sex.**

  (Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013)

- **More than 1 in 3 women (35.6%) and more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.**

  (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2012)

- **Nationally, 44% of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of 18.**

  (U.S. DOJ 2004 National Crime Victimization Survey)

There are many words that are used to describe how relationships are working. Words like: healthy, positive, caring, loving, considerate, kind, fun, respectful and thoughtful are used to describe **SUPPORTIVE** relationships.

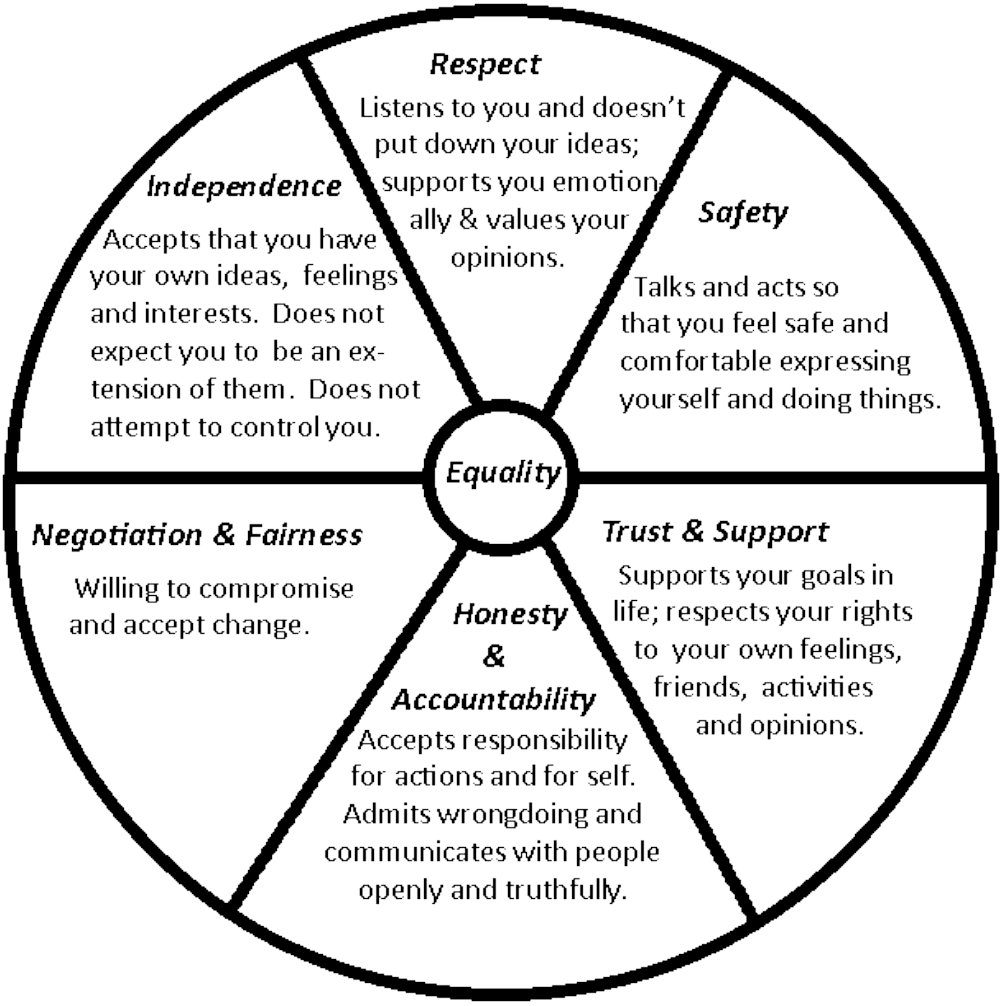
In a *SUPPORTIVE* relationship, both people are equals.

They:

- don't need to change to make the other happy
- give each other space to hang out with friends and family or by themselves
- feel safe bringing up things that make them upset and do so in a way that doesn't make the other person feel bad
- decide on what to do together or take turns
- check in about sexual activity with each other often
- make it comfortable for either of them to say no if one of them doesn't want to do something

The relationship makes them feel better about themselves WAY MORE than it stresses them out.

THIS IS WHAT EQUALITY LOOKS LIKE!



For **CONTROLLING** dynamics, we hear words like: *abusive, unhealthy, coercive, harmful, mean, bad, and messed up.*

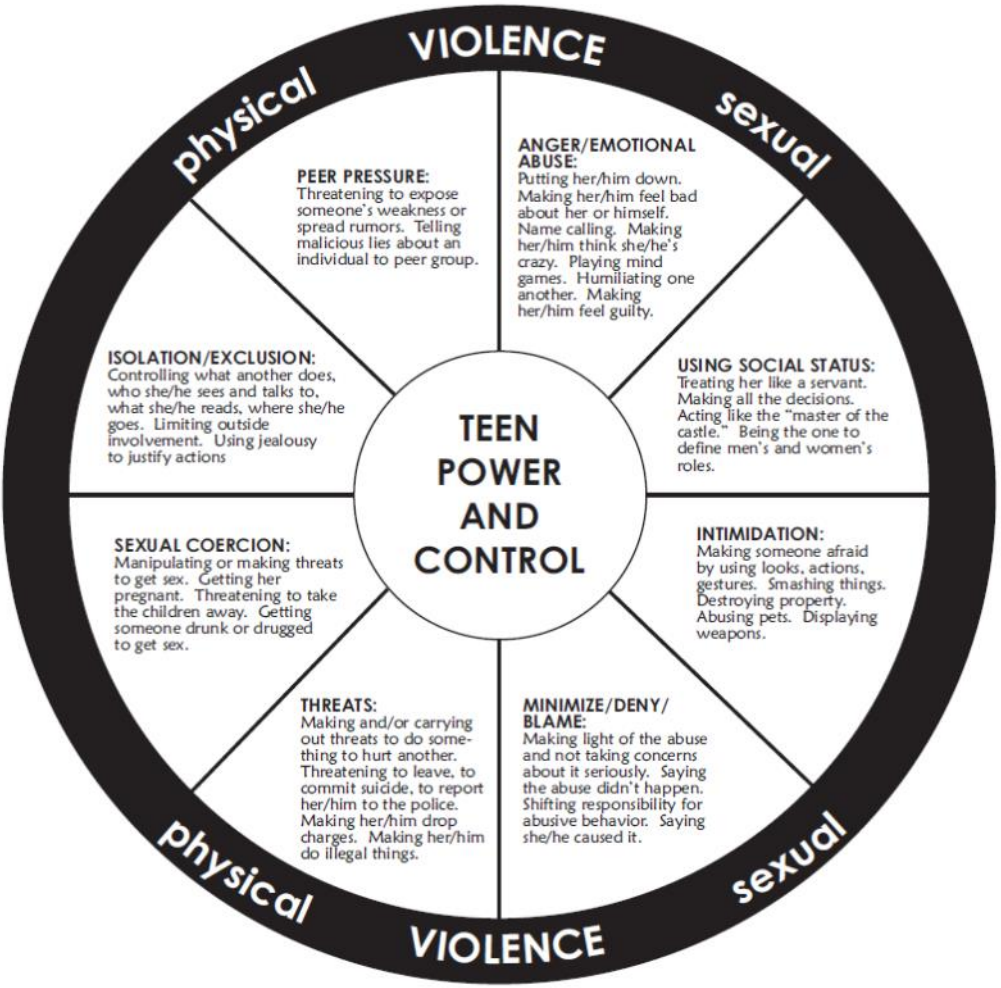
In a *CONTROLLING* relationship, one person makes the other person's world get smaller.

One person:

- makes it hard for the other to hang with friends
- says the other can't wear certain clothes or go some places
- makes the other person feel like there is no choice but to do what they want, their way all the time
- doesn't take their partner's feelings seriously
- may say things that pressure the other person into sex
- threatens to hurt one or both of them
- is sometimes really sweet or caring, but can flip out at any moment
- is scary and makes their b/gf/s.o. feel they have to constantly watch what they say and do

Sometimes there is no physical or sexual violence at all – but an ongoing feeling that violence may be possible.

POWER AND CONTROL



ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IS NOT A 'LOSS OF CONTROL' OR A 'ANGER PROBLEM',
IT IS A CHOICE SOMEONE IS MAKING

Used with permission from loveisrespect.org and adapted from the original domestic violence P&C Wheel of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN

Let's look at a couple of stories to see how controlling vs. supportive choices look in dating relationships:

Alex and Sam

Sam and Alex are going out. They are psyched to spend A LOT of time together. They like to:

hold hands, hangout, **make out**, **watch movies**, *talk about their problems together*, *talk about the future*, walk to class together, chat online and text each other.

Things are going great. They go to a school dance together. When Alex goes to talk to some friends, Sam starts to dance with someone else. Alex sees this and has a choice about how to respond. *Here's what might happen...*

⬇ SUPPORTIVE ⬇	⬇ CONTROLLING ⬇
Alex asks another friend to dance too. They all dance together! At the end of the night, Sam and Alex are making out in the car and things start getting heated up. Alex asks Sam if they could go a little further than last time. Sam says, "No, not yet, Ok?" Alex says "Cool" and they kiss more until it's time to go.	Alex pulls Sam away and out of the room. Alex starts to yell at Sam and says Sam can't act that way with other people. Then Alex kisses Sam really hard and aggressively while holding Sam's arms down. Alex then makes them leave saying it would be better to be alone.
Sam loves how much more fun everything is when Alex is around.	Sam thinks that the jealousy is a sign of affection at first.
Alex likes meeting Sam's friends and getting to know Sam better.	Alex doesn't want Sam hanging out with anyone else and gets mad and gives Sam the cold shoulder if Sam does go out with friends. Sam stops returning friends' calls and hanging out with them to avoid Alex's bad reaction.
Alex texts Sam a lot. Sam doesn't like it and asks Alex to chill out a little. Alex listens to Sam and asks how much texting feels ok.	Alex sends Sam texts all the time wanting to know what Sam is doing and who Sam is with. When Sam doesn't answer them, Alex gets mad and starts saying that Sam "doesn't care" about Alex and they should break up. Sam reminds Alex that Sam can't answer all the texts because Sam's parents put a limit on how many Sam can use. Alex doesn't seem to care and keeps texting.

Jordan and Taylor

Jordan and Taylor have been together for a couple of months. Jordan is into sports and plays on the school team. Taylor isn't as into sports but supports Jordan.

Taylor has a job at a local restaurant and tries to work as much as possible to save up for college. Sometimes Taylor's work schedule conflicts with Jordan's games and he can't make it. *Here is what might happen...*

CHECK IT OUT!

You can link to an interactive power and control wheel and see video diaries that talk about each spoke of the wheel from a teen perspective.

http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/power-and-control-wheel/

Supportive	Controlling
Jordan asks Taylor to be there as much as possible and offers to drive Taylor to the games and back if Taylor doesn't mind getting there early for warm up.	Jordan says Taylor needs to be at every game and that Jordan can't play as well if Taylor isn't there.
Sometimes Taylor has to work and can't go to the game. Taylor usually texts a 'good luck' message to Jordan before the game though.	When Taylor is scheduled to work at the same time as the next game, Jordan gets really mad and starts yelling, throws the soccer cleats against the wall and grabs Taylor's phone to see the list of recent calls. Jordan doesn't believe Taylor has to work and thinks that Taylor is cheating.
Jordan texts the scores back to Taylor after the games Taylor can't get to and sometimes stops by Taylor's work for a quick hug.	Taylor starts to get pissed and yells back. They both yell for a while and then settle down. They start hugging and making out. Jordan says, "I can't stand the thought of you leaving me" and then "You should quit your job."

Relationship 101

(skills to build supportive relationships)

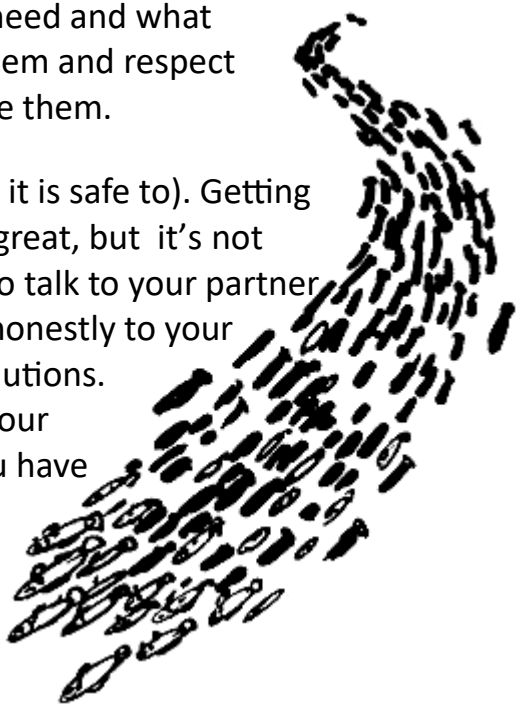
From getting and keeping it together to breaking it off, there are some basic skills we all need in relationships.

HONEST AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL.

BE CLEAR AND DIRECT with what you do and don't want from the start. If you're not sure, you can say that too. It can feel uncomfortable or awkward to put it out there, but if you don't, the other person won't have all the information they need to make informed choices about the relationship, understand your needs, and respect your boundaries.

Listen. Just like you want to be listened to, you've got to ask the other person what they need and what their boundaries are. Hear them and respect them. Don't pressure or tease them.

DO IT YOURSELF (as long as it is safe to). Getting support from your friends is great, but it's not a good idea to ask your BFF to talk to your partner for you. Talking directly and honestly to your partner will lead to better solutions. Be brave, you got it! And if your partner doesn't like what you have to say, there are other fish in the sea! You'll be better off with someone who listens to your needs.



Getting together– or not

Rule #1: **If you think you like someone, get to know them more!** Ask them questions and show you are interested. Relationships aren't built in a day; start as friends, build trust and share experiences. Maybe your crush will grow into something more.

"GAH! THEY DON'T LIKE ME BACK!"

It can be a bummer when you like somebody but they don't feel the same way. It's important to respect how the other person feels. Here are some ways to be respectful:

- ★ *Let the person know that you understand that they are not into you, and that if they begin to feel differently they should let you know because that would be cool.*
- ★ *Give them their space.*
- ★ *Don't start talking badly about them to others, or be angry at them. Continue to respect them.*
- ★ *Continue to be friendly with them. You liked them before and they are still nice, don't let an awkward situation ruin a good connection. The weirdness will pass.*
- ★ *Take care of yourself. Do things that you love to do, with friends or family. Sometimes it helps to take your mind off things.*
- ★ *Try journaling, physical activity, music or art to help get some of your feelings out.*

"OH GEEZ, SO SWEET, BUT ..."

You might find yourself in a situation where somebody likes you but you're just not that into them. It can be hard to feel like you might be hurting their feelings. It is especially hard if it is someone you have a good friendship with or if you feel pressure from others to like the person or be in a relationship. However, it's important to respect how ***you*** feel.

Here are some things you might say or do to let the other person know how you feel:

- ★ *"I think we work better as buddies. Let's keep it there."*
- ★ *"You're a cool person, but I'm not into you the way you are into me."*
- ★ *"I'm flattered you like me but I don't feel the same way."*
- ★ *"If my feelings change I will let you know, but right now I'm not interested in being more than friends."*

The other person might feel really sad and embarrassed. Here are some things you can do to help make it easier on them:

- ★ *Avoid telling lots of other people or gossiping about it.*
- ★ *If you were friends, stay friendly. Don't let an awkward situation come between that, the uneasiness will pass.*
- ★ *Don't try to duck for cover every time you see them coming. Continue to acknowledge their existence.*

Dealing with Conflict

Conflicts are bound to arise in every relationship, even the good ones. Part of being in a supportive relationship is figuring out how to talk about and solve problems with each other in ways that each person feels heard and respected.

- ★ Say what the conflict is from your view and ask for the other's thoughts.
- ★ Tell the person how you are feeling rather than act it out on them.
- ★ Consider your timeline. Do you want some cooling off and thinking time? Is now the best time to talk or are there distractions or time issues that make it better to wait?
- ★ Once you find a good time to talk, show respect by allowing the person to talk without interrupting.
- ★ Look at the person while they are talking and listen to what they are saying instead of what you want to say next.
- ★ Be open about what you might have done that hurt the other person. It may not have been your INTENTION to hurt them, but what matters is the IMPACT it had on them.
- ★ Be accountable for the role you played and apologize if you need to.
- ★ Ask what, if anything, will move you past the conflict.
- ★ Once you start moving towards a solution, make sure you are both comfortable with the outcome.

Jealousy

FEELING jealous happens and is an indication that you need to talk with your partner about your relationship expectations and needs.

ACTING jealous and controlling is a problem and not ok in any relationship because it limits one partner's ability to be themselves.

Here are some things you can say if *you're* feeling jealous:

"Sometimes I feel insecure when you hang out with them; I'm afraid you have a crush on them, or might be talking about me to them."

"I feel like we've both been really busy lately. Can we hang out soon, just you and I?"

If your partner or friends act jealous, ask some questions:

"I've noticed that you seem annoyed when I hang out with my friends. Can we talk about that?"

"It makes me feel really trapped when you tell me what to do all the time."

If someone is trying to control where you go, what you wear or who you hang out with it might be a relationship worth dropping.

Don't forget the good stuff!

Sometimes we get caught up in our daily lives or in managing our conflicts that we forget to point out all the things we like about our friends and partners. Make time for telling them how much you appreciate it when they are supportive.

You can say:

- ★ *"I really appreciated that conversation we had last night, I felt so much better after, thank you for listening to me."*
- ★ *"I admire how you always remember to ask me about my class, it feels really good that you notice those things"*
- ★ *"Thank you for being patient and waiting after school for me to finish my project."*
- ★ *"Thanks for helping me with that decision. It was great to think about all my options with you."*
- ★ *"I love it when you show up to cheer me on at my games!"*
- ★ *"Thanks for being so funny, you make me happy."*
- ★ *"I've really noticed you trying not to (do that annoying thing) around me since I talked to you about it, thank you!"*

Whatever it is you like about the person, tell them! It feels so good to hear and say and will build your relationship stronger.

Besides words, there are other ways we show we care about people too. One of the best ways is to show it with our actions. Have you heard of the saying "actions speak louder

than words"? It's so true! Here are some actions you can take to show you care:

- ★ Show up. Be there for their games and important events as much as you can.
- ★ Make quality time. Turn off the TV or the music, set down your phone and ask them questions about their life.
- ★ Offer to help without them asking you for it first. Ask if you can carry their bag or books if you have an extra hand or ask if they want help on a project they are working on.
- ★ Offer small gestures. Bring them a pretty leaf you found, a cookie, or a bottle of water to their sports game. Draw them a picture or offer to come help them with chores.

Breaking Up :(

Sometimes it doesn't work out. There are so many reasons why people break up. It might be hard, but it doesn't have to be mean. Here are some tips on how to end things:

If you feel safe to end the relationship:

- ★ Face to face is best and allows both parties to have a chance to say something.
- ★ Breaking up over social media/text/email isn't cool. Not only is it disrespectful, but it might draw out the breakup process because things are not as clear.

★ Don’t get caught in a blame game. If you are breaking up, you don’t have to agree on who did what. It might feel better if you did but it won’t change anything.

IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP:

★ If you do it in person, go to a place that has people you trust not too far away and let someone know you are doing it.

★ Phone may be safer than in person. This method provides some physical distance when needed but also the ability to each say something.

★ If you foresee the situation becoming scary or violent, consider getting help and support and safety planning. See the ***REACHING OUT*** section in the back of this book.

Someone broke up with you...

Ouch! It can really hurt when you get dumped. Talk to friends about your feelings and give yourself space and time to feel better. It will happen. Stay respectful even though you might be hurting. Avoid these things:

☠ Constantly texting them to get back together.

☠ Saying mean things about your ex on social media or to other people.

☠ Sharing their secrets or private stuff.

RELATIONSHIP QUIZ

Each relationship is unique, but all **supportive relationships** have a few things in common. In a supportive relationship there should be trust, support, respect, equality, and it should be fun. Take the quiz below and find out how healthy your relationship is!

Directions:
Indicate who in your current relationship does the following things by marking **one** of the boxes to the right of each statement. You should put an **X** in either the **Me, My Partner** or **Both People** columns.

	Me	My Partner	Both of us
Equally includes other person in decision making			
Talks respectfully about partner to friends and others			
Supports partner in setting and meeting personal and school goals			
Encourages partner to be the person they want to be			
Comforts partner when upset, sad, frustrated, etc.			
Asks for and listens to partner's point of view (even when having disagreement)			
Respects partner's need for alone time			

Expresses feelings when upset (instead of clamming up or holding a grudge)			
Treats partner's property/ belongings with respect			
Respects online privacy (facebook, e -mail, texts, etc.)			
Respects partner's decisions about sex and physical touch			
Introduces partner to their friends			
Treats partner as equal			
Says only positive things about their partner's appearance			
Admits mistakes and doesn't blame others			
Supports partner spending time with family and friends			
Checks in with partner about sexual activity or touch before doing it			
Communicates respectfully with partner both privately and publicly			
Trusts that partner is being honest about their actions and activities			
Cares if the other person has fun when going out			
TOTAL: Count the number of **X**'s in all 3 columns and write the numbers in the boxes to the right. Turn the page to see what it means.			

HOW DID YOUR RELATIONSHIP SCORE?

Both People score of 0-12: If you got a score of 0-12 in the 'Both People' column, this relationship has room for improvement or might even be harmful to one partner. A supportive relationship needs both people to contribute equally and have mutual respect.

Look at the scores in the 'Me' and 'My Partner' columns. Did one person score significantly lower than the other? This may indicate that this person is not supportive of the other or may even be controlling. It may also be that one person just isn't really into it. This relationship might work if both people feel safe in it **and** are willing to work together to improve it, but a reality check is needed first. ***Does this relationship feel good to you?***

Both People score of 12-16: Your relationship has potential and room to grow. If this is a relationship that you and your partner want to continue to be in, it might be good to look at how you each scored and pick areas to work on in order to make this a more healthy and equal relationship. Again, if one person scored significantly lower than the other, this may indicate a controlling or non supportive partner.

Both People score of 16-20: You're on track for a healthy relationship! Supportive relationships take time and effort and you are both definitely working at it. You have high

levels of trust, support, fun, equality and respect in your relationship. Both partners should keep up the good work in this relationship and remember that there is always room for improvement!

Hey!

There can be a lot of pressure from friends and others to stay in a relationship. If you aren't happy and it isn't working for you, or you have communicated with your partner about your needs and not been heard, it might be time to move on. You deserve to be safe and happy.

Need help now? Call our hotlines.

If you are under 18: you don't have to use your real name or say where you are from**.**

Domestic/Dating Violence	**1-800-228-7395**
Sexual Violence	**1-800-489-7273**

For more help options, see the REACHING OUT section in the back of this book.

This quiz was adapted from the Boston Public Health Commission, 2014
www.BPHC.org

Sex and Consent

Some teenage bodies and brains are hard-wired to start thinking about sex (some aren't!). You may begin to experimenting with what feels good. You have to decide for yourself what you do and don't want to do AND you have to respect someone else's choices about their boundaries. **Before there is sex, there has to be communication and consent.**

Consent isn't just about one person getting a yes from another, it is about **communicating TOGETHER about what BOTH people want to do with each other and where they want to stop.**

It can be fun and exciting to find out what your partner likes and doesn't like. When you're *sure* you know what the other person wants, you know that they are having fun too and it will be **more pleasurable for both of you.**

CONSENT means that at the time of the act (what you are doing together), there are words AND physical actions that show that BOTH people FREELY agree and REALLY want to do the same thing.

Consent can only be FREELY given if:

****

- **There is a sufficient balance of power in the relationship.** There is no significant age or developmental differences. One person doesn't have authority over the other (like a teacher, boss or tutor). And no one has used or threatened to use violence over the other.

- **Both people are aware of the consequences.** Decisions have been made together about birth control and STI/HIV protection, and both people understand what kind of relationship they are in together.

- **It is safe to say 'no' and there is no pressure.** There are no negative consequences for saying 'no' like: threats of harm or embarrassment, breaking up, teasing, jokes or telling other people. Instead, the person who was refused makes the other person feel totally okay with saying no and shows they respect it.

See the next page for more on pressure.

- **You're BOTH sober.** If someone is drunk or high, even just a little, you can't know for sure if they understand the consequences enough to say 'yes'.

- **Each type of sexual activity has clear consent from each partner *every time.*** Just because you did it once, doesn't mean you automatically can do it again.

- **Anyone involved can change their mind at any moment**. If someone said 'yes' but gets nervous or unsure, it is 100% okay to stop, slow down, or do something else. If your partner wants to stop or starts to tense up, stop what you are doing and check in with them.

Here is what VERMONT LAW says about sexual consent :

AGE:
People 18 and over cannot engage in sexual activity with people younger than 16 *unless* both people are between the ages of 15 and 18.

(13 VSA § 3252)

EXAMPLES			
Person 1 Age	Person 2 Age	Is It Legal?	
18	14	NO	⊘
18	15	YES	✓
19	15	NO	⊘
19	16	YES	✓

Vermont law defines sexual activity as contact between any genitalia or breasts (without clothing) and any other part of the body including the mouth; any penetration by any part of a person's body or any object into the genital or anal opening of another.

We say, you need consent for ALL touch including: kissing, hugging, touching or rubbing any body part under or over clothes, being naked with each other, and...everything!

Each activity needs to have clear consent from each partner EVERY TIME.

Doing it right: EMOTIONAL SAFETY

One of the critical parts about consent is knowing how to respond when your partner says no with their words or body (like tensing up or shaking.) Here are some things you can say to make them feel comfortable and safe if you are getting a no:

"It feels like you want to stop or slow down, I'm totally okay with that, I want you to feel good."

"It's cool if you don't want to do this right now, are there other things you want to do?"

"I'm hungry, do you want a sandwich?"

"Thank you for being honest with me."

"I'm glad you trust me enough to tell me what you want."

"Want to stop here and watch a movie?"

Do	*Don't*
Stop	Take it as personal rejection
Smile Reassuringly	Pressure them to keep going
Stay close if the person wants	Get up and walk away
Offer an alternative	Make them feel bad

LISTEN TO EACH OTHER:

Only enthusiastic yes means yes.

No is not a tease and it doesn't mean try harder.

Doing it wrong: PRESSURE

Pressure is used in an attempt to convince a person to do something they might not want to do. Some lines may feel good to hear (like: "You're the only one who really understands me"), but may imply more than a compliment. Pressure can come from your partner or peers.

Below are some lines some people may use to try to get what they want regardless of the other person's desires. It's not cool to use these lines on anyone, **ever.**

Persuasion	"I know you really want to." *"Have another drink, I want to REALLY get to know you."* " Come on, everyone does it."
Blame	*"But you can't stop now, you got me all excited. You can't do this to me."*
Put-Downs	"Everybody says you're just a tease." *"I'm the only one who would do this with you."*
Coercion	"If you loved me you'd show it."
Blackmail	*"I'll tell everyone you did anyway."*
Guilt Trips	"But I gave up going out with my friends to be with you." *"I should have known someone like you would never want someone like me."*
Manipulation	"How do I know you love me if you won't do this? I just want to be with you."

SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

is any form of unwanted sexual encounter: physical, verbal or emotional. Before you do ANYTHING sexual, you need to make sure who you are doing it with is completely into it. If someone expresses that they don't want to do something or aren't sure, you need to stop. Without freely given consent, it is sexual violence.

Remember, saying "no" is not the only way people express not consenting. These things also mean no:

WORDS	**ACTIONS**
"I don't know"	looking away or
"I don't like this"	uncomfortable
"Ow" "Wait"	stalling
"I'm nervous"	moving away
"Can we just talk "	blocking
"Please, just slow	putting clothes on
down a little"	stopping
"I've never done this	not responding
before"	crying
"uuummmm…"	

IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE OF ANY TYPE, there may be legal protections available to you no matter what your relationship was with the person who hurt you or what you were doing when it happened. Experiencing sexual violence is never your fault; no matter what you were wearing or what choices you made leading up to it. See the **REACHING OUT** section in the back of the book for support.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, SEX AND VIOLENCE

If you've seen a movie or TV, you've probably seen alcohol consumption leading to or mixed with sex. Substance use and sex are often tied together and glamorized in media and many people feel some pressure to engage in these activities at the same time. It's not cool though. **CONSENT *CAN NOT* BE GIVEN IF EITHER PERSON IS HIGH, DRUNK OR EVEN JUST BUZZED.**

But I'm nervous...

Some people are anxious about engaging in sexual activity. They use substances to make it easier. But when someone uses substances, their decision making is impaired and they aren't fully present to make informed choices about what kinds of activities they *really* want to do right then.

IF YOU AREN'T READY TO DO IT SOBER,
YOU AREN'T READY TO DO IT.

Substances as a weapon...

Some people who commit sexual violence use drugs or alcohol to manipulate or disarm their victim. They might:

- sneak more liquor or another drug into someone's mixed drink
- make a really fruity drink where the alcohol can't be tasted so someone drinks faster and gets wasted.
- wait and take advantage of someone who drank a lot at a party.

It is sexual violence when people choose to target and harm people who are impaired by substances. If you see someone doing this, find a way to stop them *(see page 43 for bystander tips.)*

It's not your fault.

If you were drinking or on drugs and someone had unwanted sex with you, pressured or forced you, it's not your fault. Even if you don't remember all the details or your memories are foggy. Even if you were underage or somewhere you weren't supposed to be. Even if you chose to do the substances or go to the party. Even if you are not comfortable calling the police or reporting what happened. No matter your choices, you deserve to be safe and feel supported.

Help is always available. Call one of the hotlines listed in the back. Advocates won't judge. They will listen, support and offer you options.

If you are out with a friend and suspect they might be drugged...

- ★ Get your friend to a safe place and stay with them.
- ★ Get medical attention for them immediately.
- ★ Ask your friend who else they would like you to call for support.
- ★ Call the sexual violence hotline for support: 1-800-489-7273

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Technology is used in a lot of ways that can help us strengthen our connections to others. Unfortunately, these connections can be used against us. Here are some common ways technology can be misused to control, embarrass or hurt someone and some actions we can take if they happen to us:

SEXTING– PSST, IT'S ILLEGAL!

Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or pictures on your phone (or other electronic device). There are lots of reasons people might be tempted to sext with each other, it can feel like a natural way to share sexy-feelings with our partners. As easy as it is, it is also potentially dangerous AND illegal for anyone under 18.

According to Vermont law, it is illegal to:

- send or possess a sexually explicit image of anyone under 18 on an electronic device, even if that person is you.
- to show or forward sexually explicit images of people under 18 to anyone.

Potential consequences could include legal involvement and getting expelled from school. If it's your first time sending a pic *of yourself*, and it was to someone who wanted it, you may not get legal punishment. Don't let your worries stop you from reaching out for help if someone is sharing your image with others.

UH OH, I SENT A SEXT, NOW WHAT?

Sometimes there can be a lot of pressure to sext or we get swept up in the moment. It's natural to want to experiment with expressing your sexuality. Hopefully the person you sent it to will delete it right away without showing it to anyone (it's illegal for them to have it if you are under 18). You might want to remind them of that (and don't trust things like Snapchat, it's too easy to take a screen shot).

If you are concerned that the person you sent it to might post it somewhere else or forward it, or if they have already, some things you can do include:

- ★ Tell an adult. It may be embarrassing and there may be some consequences, but it might also help to make sure the picture doesn't find it's way to the internet.
- ★ If you see it anywhere online, flag it and contact the site to have them remove it.
- ★ Get support from a friend and call the hotlines listed in the back of this booklet.

THE SOONER YOU TAKE ACTION THE BETTER.

UH OH, SOMEONE SENT ME A SEXT...

If it is from your datemate, a crush, or someone you wanted it from and had talked about it with (so it was consensual), delete it right away and never show it to anyone else. It is illegal for you to even have the image on your phone or computer if it is of someone under 18.

And you didn't want it or don't know who it is from...

This is non-consensual behavior and it is illegal no matter what age any of the people involved are. While you definitely should not forward or show the image to anyone else, you may not want to delete it if you want to report it to an adult or the police. You will not get in trouble for having it if you tell someone right away, don't show it to anyone else and then delete it once you have reported it and the authorities say it is okay to.

DIGITAL HARASSMENT :(

As cool as technology is for opening up the world, there are people who will use it for harm.

TEXT HARASSMENT is the act of bombarding someone with unsolicited text messages. You text your friends or partner *all the time* and it can make you feel connected and close to them, but texting can get out of control or come from unwanted or unknown people.

Harassing texts can be from a single person or a group. This also includes texting someone (even your b/gf/s.o.) over and over, demanding they respond, threatening them, or just annoying and disturbing them.

If someone you don't know is sending you texts that are mean or creep you out, you should tell someone you trust. While this isn't always illegal behavior (unless they are sending you nude images, sexualized language or if it rises to the level of stalking or bullying), there are ways to make it stop

like finding out who is sending the messages and blocking the number.

Check out this great website that has a lot of information around how to deal with these things:
www.thatsnotcool.com

CYBERSTALKING is when someone uses technology to track where you are or who you are talking to. Phones, computers, Facebook, check-ins and other media tools can make it easy for someone to do this.

If someone offers to give you a phone as a present, it can seem really cool and flattering and like they care about you a lot. But those phones can be used to track and monitor you and may have apps installed on them which let someone know where you are. The person who gifted the phone can also see what numbers you are texting or calling. So while it seems like a nice gift, you should consider your privacy and safety.

Often, if someone is being cyberstalked, the stalker is also following them in real life. There are legal protections available if you are being stalked. Call one of the hotlines listed in the back.

IF YOU ARE BEING DIGITALLY HARASSED:

- If you're being harassed on a social media site, you can go to their Help Center, report the harassment and have comments or images removed from other people's profiles or pages. Most social networking or online gaming sites allow you to report abuse.

☒ Block or unfriend anyone who isn't respecting you.

☎ Tell someone.

DIGITAL PRIVACY– PROTECT IT.

There are some things you can do to protect yourself and your privacy on your devices and social media.

- ✓ Don't share your passcodes or log-in information with others (except maybe your parents / caregivers if you trust them.) Even best friends get in fights and when people are mad, they sometimes make REALLY bad choices that could hurt or embarrass you.
- ✓ Use a combination of letters, numbers and symbols for passcodes or usernames instead of your real name.
- ✓ Set your privacy settings as high as possible. The people you want to connect with still will be able to, but it will keep the creeps out.
- ✓ Try not to give too much information about your personal life (like your address or schedule).
- ✓ Be thoughtful about who is on your friend list, **don't friend people you haven't actually talked to in real life**.
- ✓ Talk to your friends about what they can or cannot post about you. If they post something you don't want others seeing or knowing about you, ask them to take it down.
- ✓ Remember to always log off when you're done! Especially if you are at a shared computer.

Search and you shall find...

J	M	A	N	I	P	U	L	A	T	I	O	N	S	L
E	C	Q	E	G	T	R	U	S	T	H	K	S	L	O
A	O	K	R	O	W	D	R	A	H	O	E	A	M	R
L	M	E	A	F	J	W	Q	V	R	N	G	Y	I	T
O	M	C	P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	O	N
U	I	N	B	N	I	Y	Z	V	A	Z	X	W	Q	O
S	T	E	D	E	G	T	I	Y	T	L	E	U	R	C
Y	M	L	P	I	Q	S	J	T	E	C	M	V	K	H
K	E	O	L	J	S	I	H	E	N	G	P	D	F	O
L	N	I	F	E	A	R	O	F	I	P	A	Q	S	N
M	T	V	S	N	X	W	V	A	N	U	T	T	R	E
R	E	S	P	E	C	T	Y	S	G	Z	H	A	C	S
F	O	B	S	E	S	S	I	O	N	E	Y	D	B	T
P	E	N	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	Y

TRUST
HARD WORK
COMMITMENT
ENCOURAGEMENT
SAFETY
EMPATHY
RESPECT
FRIENDSHIP
HONESTY
JEALOUSY
POSSESSIVENESS
OBSESSION
THREATENING
CRUELTY
VIOLENCE
CONTROL
FEAR
MANIPULATION

Consuming Media: you are what you watch

Computers, TV, magazines and newspapers, video games, cell phones and radio; we are surrounded by media. These can be great ways to communicate with other people and find information and entertainment. There are also negative sides of these tools.

Media, along with our parents and friends, help shape our ideas and attitudes. We learn a lot about relationships and how to act by what we see. ***What do you see when you look at the media around you?***

Sometimes TV shows made for teen audiences highlight coercive sexual relationships. Reality shows and popular movies 'entertain' us with unhealthy relationships and violence. This may influence the choices we make in real relationships. If we don't see things that show us how to act respectfully with support and caring, how will we learn how to do that?

You could choose to go live in a cave on a remote island with no electricity to avoid seeing anything, but that's probably not realistic and honestly, some things we watch are great! What we *can* do is ask ourselves:

What are the messages this (song, show, movie, article) is sending me and do I agree with it?
Asking ourselves this can help us take our consumer power back and make informed choices.

You've got the power to make things better!

When you see or hear about something bad happening, you are what is called a **BYSTANDER.** There are two types of bystanders: Ones who do something (active) and ones who don't (passive). Everyone can strive to be an active bystander and really change the world.

Through taking action when you see bad things, or helping to reinforce the good stuff, you can help create a community that supports safety and equality.

Sometimes it can seem hard to be an active bystander when it means standing against actions your friends or family take. It is also important to consider your own safety. Luckily, bystander actions come in lots of different shapes and sizes and there is likely one that will fit where you need it.

First, let's think about WHERE bystanders can take action. Most times are when someone is:

- being mean or scaring someone
- telling offensive jokes
- picking on someone
- pressuring someone to do something they don't want
- saying mean stuff about their datemate
- making inappropriate comments about someone else's body
- sharing someone else's personal information
- constantly texting someone
- acting in controlling ways or
- harming anyone or anything

It is hard to see these things happening, and sometimes harder to know what to do. People often worry that doing or saying something will open them up to the harm too or end up making the situation worse. These are valid concerns and good reasons to think about the options you have.

Here are some possible bystander actions that you can take:

- Step in and ask the victim if they are okay.
- If you feel safe, tell the person to stop.
- Create a distraction that gives the victim a chance to get away.
- Get an adult, teacher, or authority figure of some sort.
- Call 911 if a crime is being committed.
- Tell your friend you aren't comfortable with the way they are acting.
- Say things like "that's not cool" or "that makes me uncomfortable."
- Leave if your friend is being a jerk.
- Get others to help you.
- Know the resources that are available and find a way to talk to the victim about them.
- Consider the kind of help you would want in that situation and see if that is something you can do now.
- Slip this booklet into someone's locker if you think they need it.
- Say something when you see something uncool on TV or in a movie or choose not to watch it.
- When you see someone being awesome, tell them!

REACHING OUT

Reaching out for support can be hard, whether you are scared for your safety in your relationship or worried that *you* may be abusive toward your girlfriend or boyfriend. There are people who will listen to you, believe you and help you with your decisions.

If you have experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence, or have been abusive to someone - **the sooner you talk to someone - the sooner you will know what options you have.** You may just need someone to listen to you and connect you to resources that can help.

What if my partner is controlling or hurting me or I have experienced sexual violence?

- ★ **Talk to a friend -** especially one you trust who will not judge you but be real with you!
- ★ **Consider talking to a safe adult -** maybe your parents, maybe a friend's parent or someone from school.
- ★ **Check out the helplines, hotlines, and websites on the next few pages.**
- ★ **Connect with your local domestic or sexual violence program -** you can ask lots of questions about your options, legal rights for victims and available services.

What if I have been abusive to my dating partner or have used sexual coercion?

The first step to ending these behaviors is to become aware of them and admit that they are wrong. Then...

- ★ **Talk to a friend or adult** that can be honest with you and hold you to your commitment to change your behavior.
- ★ **Find some help -** talk to a guidance counselor or find a local counselor. Making these kinds of changes usually means finding ongoing support over a period of time.
- ★ **Look at the people around you.** If your family or friends are also abusive in their relationships, you may want to find ways to spend less time with them. If that's not possible, at least pay attention to how you feel when you witness others being abused.
- ★ **Contact the Dating Violence Helpline:** call 1-866-331-9474; chat at www.loveisrespect.org or text "loveis" to 22522.

Mandated Reporters:

In Vermont, some adults, like teachers and coaches, are required (mandated) to report child abuse (including any sexual abuse of people under 18). This doesn't mean you shouldn't talk to them, but if you disclose harm to them, they may have to report to the Department for Children and Families.

If you aren't sure if the adult you want to talk to has to report, or what will happen if they report, ask them.

What happens when I call one of the Vermont Hotlines listed here?

If you have ever been physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abused, or are concerned about somebody who has been, you may decide to reach out to a state or local hotline, listed in the resource section of this book. When you call one of these numbers you will be connected to a person called an advocate.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is a person who is trained to provide support to people who have experienced the types of violence explored in this book. An advocate might be a paid staff member or a volunteer. They are there to provide emotional support, inform you of your options, and/or explore resources that might be available to you, your family, and your friends if needed.

It's OK to be nervous, excited, scared, sad, happy, unsure, or whatever else you might be feeling about working with an advocate. It's also OK to reach out to them even if you don't know what you want to say. They are trained to help guide the conversation if they need to. It is also their role to explore options with you, so it's OK if you don't know what you want to have happen. They are there to listen to you.

Advocates won’t judge you and are there to support the decisions that you make. They believe you are an expert in your own life, and you are going to know what is best for you!

Advocates and organizations will each have a bit of a different style. They will also likely check in with you to see what works for you, and what you want to see happen. If you ever want to meet with them in person, they might be available to meet you at their office, at your school, or another public location where you would feel safe.

Relief From Abuse Orders:

If you have experienced physical or sexual violence, threats of physical harm or stalking, you can consider getting a 'Relief From Abuse Order.' An *RFA* is a legal court order that makes the person who hurt you stay away from you.

To find out more about RFAs, you can talk to an advocate and visit here:
http://www.vtnetwork.org/education/teen-dating-violence/

Vermont 24/7 Hotlines

You don't have to use your real name

Domestic/Dating Violence	**1-800-228-7395**
Sexual Violence	**1-800-489-7273**

Safety Planning

If your partner is abusive and controlling you...

There are actions you can take to keep yourself as safe as possible. Safety plans are especially crucial when leaving an abusive relationship because your abuser may become more dangerous during this time. Whether you decide to leave the relationship or not, a safety plan may help.

Here is a short safety plan to start your thinking. You can learn more about safety planning at: www.loveisrespect.org

1. When I notice my partner using these abusive behaviors (red flags), I will know it's time to take action to try and keep myself safe: (list behaviors)

2. These are some actions that I can take that have kept me safe in the past: (think about school, home, and other places)

3. These are some people and places that I will try to reach out to for help*: (See the 'Reaching Out' section.)*

4. These are some safe places for me to go if I'm not feeling safe:

5. I will remember that my partner can use technology to track me. I can block certain numbers from calling or texting and turn off my location services. I can 'unfriend' someone, change my social network privacy settings and change my online passwords.

6. I will program important numbers, like police and hotlines, into my cell phone or somehow keep them with me. *(See the resource list in the back.)*

7. If I have experienced physical or sexual violence, threats of physical harm or stalking, I can consider getting a 'Relief from Abuse' (RFA) order. An *RFA* is a legal court order that makes the person who hurt me stay away from me.

To find out more about RFAs, I can check out youth publications on www.vtnetwork.org.

Call the Vermont Dating and Sexual Violence hotlines:

Domestic/Dating Violence	1-800-228-7395
Sexual Violence	1-800-489-7273

You are not alone, you deserve better and help is available.

RESOURCES

If you are under 18 years old, you may want to consider using a fake name to ensure that your conversation remains confidential.

Violence Help: Local Hotlines

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence:

Domestic/Dating/ Stalking Violence:	800-228-7395 (ABUSE-95)
Sexual Violence or exploitation:	800-489-7273 (489-RAPE)
Online:	vtnetwork.org

See next page for direct numbers for the agency near you.

Pride Center of Vermont, Safespace Support for LGBTQ and HIV victims:

Local:	802-863-0003
Toll free:	866-869-7341
Online:	pridecentervt.org

Child Abuse Reporting, Department for Children and Families:

Toll free:	800-649-5285
Online:	dcf.vermont.gov

Violence help: National Hotlines

Love is Repect

Toll Free:	866-331-9474
Text:	text “loveis” to 22522
Online Chat:	Loveisrespect.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline

Toll Free:	800-656-4673 (HOPE)

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)

Online Chat:	online.rainn.org

Childhelp Child Abuse Hotline

Toll Free:	800-422– 4453 (4-A-CHILD)

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence **LOCAL HOTLINES LISTED BY REGION:** *Provide hotline, advocacy services and support for victims/survivors of domestic, dating and sexual violence.*	
Addison Co. & Town of Rochester **WomenSafe**	388-4205 or 1-800-388-4205
Bennington Co. **PAVE**	 442-2111
Caledonia, Orleans, & Essex Co. **The Advocacy Program at Umbrella** St. Johnsbury Newport	 748-8645 334-0148
Caledonia, Washington & Orleans Co. **AWARE** (Hardwick Area)	 472-6463
Chittenden Co. **Steps to End Domestic Violence** (Dating violence) **HOPE Works** (Sexual violence)	 658-1996 863-1236
Franklin & Grand Isle Co. **Voices Against Violence/Laurie's House**	 524-6575
Lamoille Co. **Clarina Howard Nichols Center**	 888-5256
Orange & Northern Windsor Co. **Safeline**	 1-800-639-7233
Rutland Co. **NewStory Center**	 775-3232
Washington Co. **Circle** (Dating Violence) **Mosaic Vermont** (Sexual Violence)	 1-877-543-9498 479-5577
Windham and southern Windsor Co. **Women's Freedom Center**	254-6954 or 1-800-773-0689
Windsor Co. (Northeast) **WISE**	1-866-348-9473 or 603-448-5525

Other Important Helplines/Hotlines

In Vermont:

TeenLine:
For youth in need of services and adults seeking to support them.

Call or Text:	802-316-8126 (M-F; 1-5)
Online:	essexchips.org/teenline

Outright Vermont:
For LGBTQ+ youth and their families.

Phone:	802-865-9677
Online:	Outrightvt.org

Nationally:

The Trevor Project:
Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ youth.

Toll free:	866-488-7386
Chat:	thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/
Text:	"START" to 678-678

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
Support for suicide or mental health crisis; Spanish available

Toll free:	800-273-8255 (TALK)
Online:	suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Runaway Switchboard:
Resources for runaways and family members; Spanish available

Toll free:	800-786-2929 (RUNAWAY)
Online/chat/text:	1800runaway.org

National TeenLine:
Teen to Teen peer support

Phone	800-852-8336
Text:	"TEEN" to 839863
Online:	teenlineonline.org

More Online Resources
For Violence and Emotional Support

Men Can Stop Rape: mcsr.org
Mobilizing men to use their strength to create cultures free from violence. MCSR offers healthy masculinity trainings, resources for youth clubs, and the **Where Do You Stand campaign** wdys.shop, a bystander intervention campaign for young men and boys.

What's OK at Home: woah.org.au
Youth living with domestic violence and abuse; Interactive support for youth

That's Not Cool: thatsnotcool.com
Information for teens on textual harassment, how to communicate your boundaries and deal with pressure to send risky pictures or engage in other sexual activity.

More Info on Relationships and Sex
We ♥ these websites!

Scarleteen: scarleteen.com
"Sex ed for the real world". Inclusive, comprehensive, supportive sexuality and relationships info for teens and emerging adults.

AMAZE: amaze.org
"More info. Less weird." AMAZE takes the awkward out of sex ed. Real info in fun, animated videos that give you all the answers you actually want to know about sex, your body and relationships.

Advocates for Youth: advocatesforyouth.org
Advocates for Youth partners with youth leaders, adult allies and youth-serving organizations to advocate for policies and champion programs that recognize young people's rights to honest sexual health information; accessible, confidential, and affordable sexual health services; and the resources and opportunities necessary to create sexual health equity for all youth.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2009-WR-AX-0005 awarded by the office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, and by the Vermont Department of Health through a grant from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Rape Prevention and Education Program.

The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, office on Violence Against Women, the Vermont Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control.