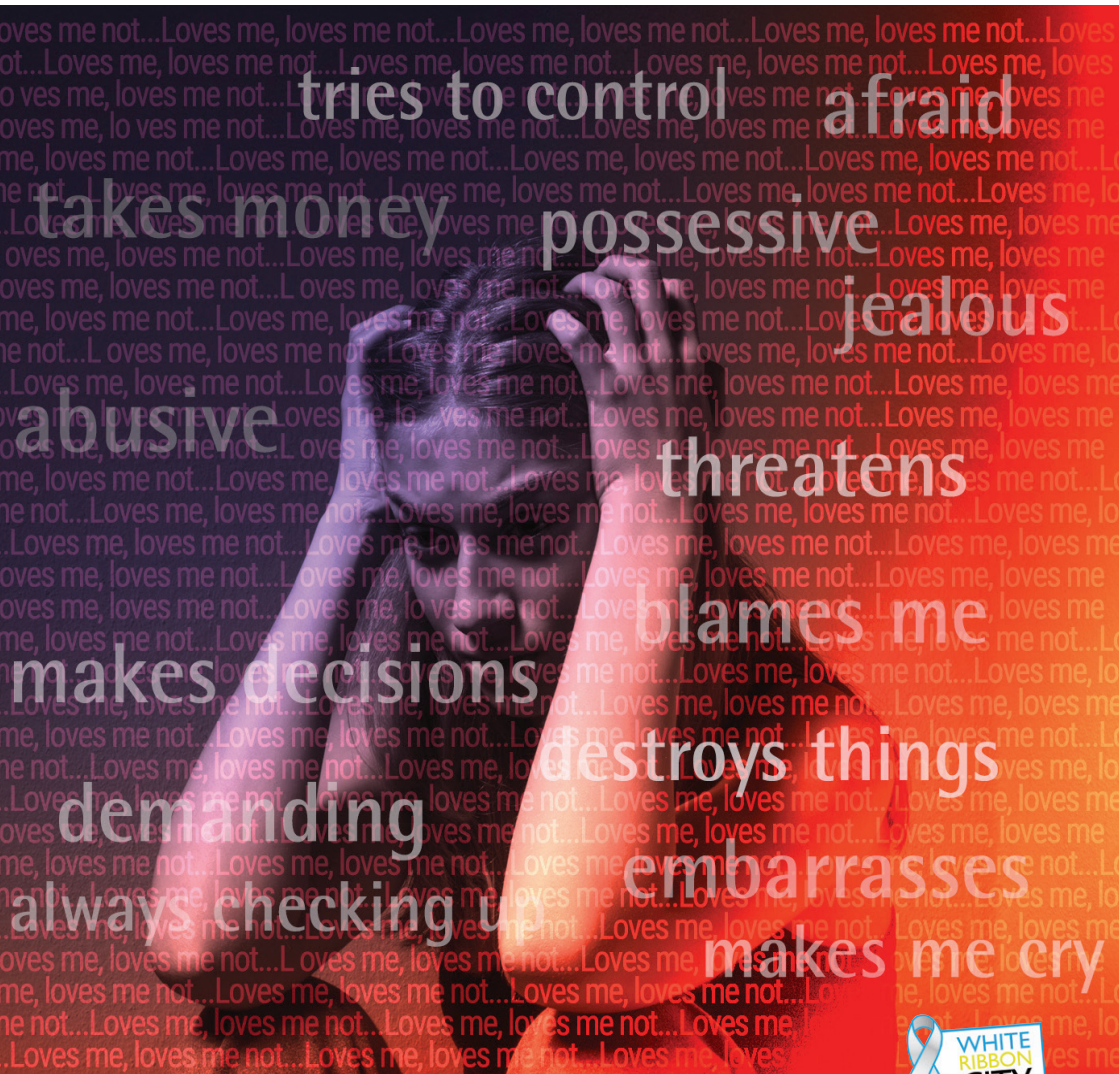


# Scared that your child is in an abusive relationship?



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tries to control a friend

takes money

possessive

jealous

abusive

threatens

blames me

makes decisions

destroys things

demanding

embarrasses

always checking up

makes me cry



# How to help...

**It can be scary to suspect that your child is in an abusive relationship. Here are some tips to keep in mind when trying to help your child who is experiencing abuse**

As a parent, your instinct is to help your child in whatever way you can.

This need to help can drive you to quickly react, but sometimes what feels like the right plan of action could stop the conversation before it begins.



## **Listen and give support**

When talking to your child, be supportive. If they do open up, it's important to be a good listener. Your child may feel ashamed of what's happening in their relationship. Many young people fear that their parents may overreact, blame them or be disappointed. Others worry that parents won't believe them or understand. If they do come to you to talk, let it be on their terms, and meet them with understanding, not judgment.

## **Accept what your child is telling you**

Believe that they are being truthful. Showing doubt could make your child hesitant to tell you when things are wrong and drive them closer to their abuser. Offer your unconditional support and make sure that they know that you believe them, and don't blame them, and accept that they are giving an accurate account of what is happening.

## **Show concern**

Let your child know that you are concerned for their safety by saying things like: "You don't deserve to be treated like this;" "You deserve to be in a relationship where you are treated with respect" and "This is not your fault."

## **Talk about the behaviors, not the person**

When talking about the abuse, speak about the behaviors you don't like, not the person. For example, instead of saying, "They are controlling" you could say, "I don't like that they text you

see where you are.” Remember that there still may be love in the relationship – respect your child’s feelings. Also, talking badly about your son or daughter’s partner could discourage them from asking for your help in the future.

### **Avoid ultimatums**

Resist the urge to give an ultimatum (for example, “If you don’t break up with them right away, your grounded until you see sense”). You want your child to truly be ready to walk away from the relationship. If you force the decision, they may be tempted to return to their abusive partner because of unresolved feelings. Also, leaving is the most dangerous time for victims. Trust that your child knows their situation better than you do and will end the relationship when they are ready.

### **Be prepared**

Educate yourself on dating abuse. Help your child identify the unhealthy behaviors and patterns in their relationship. Discuss what makes a relationship healthy. With your child, identify relationships around you (within your family, friend group or community) that are healthy and discuss what makes those relationships good for both partners.

### **Decide on the next steps together**

When you’re talking to your child about a plan of action, know that the decision has to come from them. Ask what ‘next steps’ they would like to take.

**If they’re uncomfortable discussing this with you, encourage them to find additional support.**



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01482 318759  
[www.hulldap.co.uk](http://www.hulldap.co.uk)



### **Useful contact numbers:**

Women’s Aid Children & Young  
People’s Service (support for  
young people male/female  
aged 0-19): **01482 474133**  
Preston Road Women’s Centre:  
**01482 790310, 07854 4716676**  
Childline: **0800 1111**

Strength to Change: **01482 613978**  
The Warren Project: **01482 218 115**  
Hull Women’s Aid: **01482 446099**  
[www.hullwomensaid.org](http://www.hullwomensaid.org)  
Hull DAP: **01482 318759**  
[www.hulldap.co.uk](http://www.hulldap.co.uk)  
[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999**