



**TEEN DATING VIOLENCE.  
END THE POWER TO SHIT  
THEY HAVE SEEN.**

## SHIPSHONNIONIA TEEN HEALTHY BUILDING

### **PARENTS: START RELATING BEFORE THEY START DATING**

Family dinners offer a great opportunity to check in with your teens. With 1 in 5 high schoolers experiencing dating violence, table time offers an opportunity to talk with kids about healthy relationships, even if they're not dating yet.

**YOU** play a critical role in teaching your child the importance of respect, how to make responsible decisions, and how to say "no" to unwanted behaviors in a relationship.

The best time to prepare your son or daughter to develop healthy relationships is before dating begins. Do your part to help your child understand what a healthy relationship feels like and looks like.

- Talk to your teen today.
- Visit [www.startstrongparents.org](http://www.startstrongparents.org) to learn about conversation starters.
- Find out about school-based support groups and youth leadership activities in Austin at [www.startstrongaustin.org](http://www.startstrongaustin.org)
- E-mail [ExpectRespect@SafePlace.org](mailto:ExpectRespect@SafePlace.org) or call the SafePlace 24-hour Hotline, 512.267.7233, if you have concerns about your teen's relationships.

# **The act of love is to say, “I want you to be who you are.” The act of abuse is to say “I want you to be who I want you to be.” It is that simple.** James Gill

Each relationship is unique. We have many different kinds of relationships with friends, parents, teachers, and boyfriends/ girlfriends, but all healthy relationships have a few things in common: respect, safety, fairness and equality, acceptance, honesty and fun.

**Respect.** Do your friends accept you for who you are? No one should pressure you into doing things that make you uncomfortable —such as smoking, drinking, drugs, taking or sending embarrassing pictures, or unwanted physical contact.

**Safety.** Do you feel emotionally and physically safe in all of your relationships? Emotional safety means you feel comfortable being yourself without fear of being put down. Physical safety means you are not afraid of being hurt or intimidated; or pressured into unwanted physical contact.

**Fairness and Equality.** Do you have an equal say in your friendships and relationships? From the activities you do to the friends you hang out with, you have a right to make your own decisions.

**Acceptance.** Do your friends or your boyfriend/girlfriend accept you for who you really are? You shouldn't have to change who you are or compromise your beliefs to make someone like you.

**Honesty and Trust.** Are you and your friends honest with each other? Honesty builds trust. You can't have a healthy relationship without trust. If you have ever caught a friend in a lie, you know that it takes time to rebuild trust.

**Good Communication.** Do you talk face-to-face (not just text) with your friends or your girlfriend/boyfriend about your feelings? You and your friends should listen to each other and hear each other out.

**Respectful Disagreements.** In every relationship you have, there should be mutual respect and an understanding that people can have different opinions.

**Enjoy Being Together** – Do you laugh, have fun and feel comfortable with your friends, girlfriend or boyfriend? While relationships aren't perfect all the time, you should always feel safe and comfortable being yourself.