



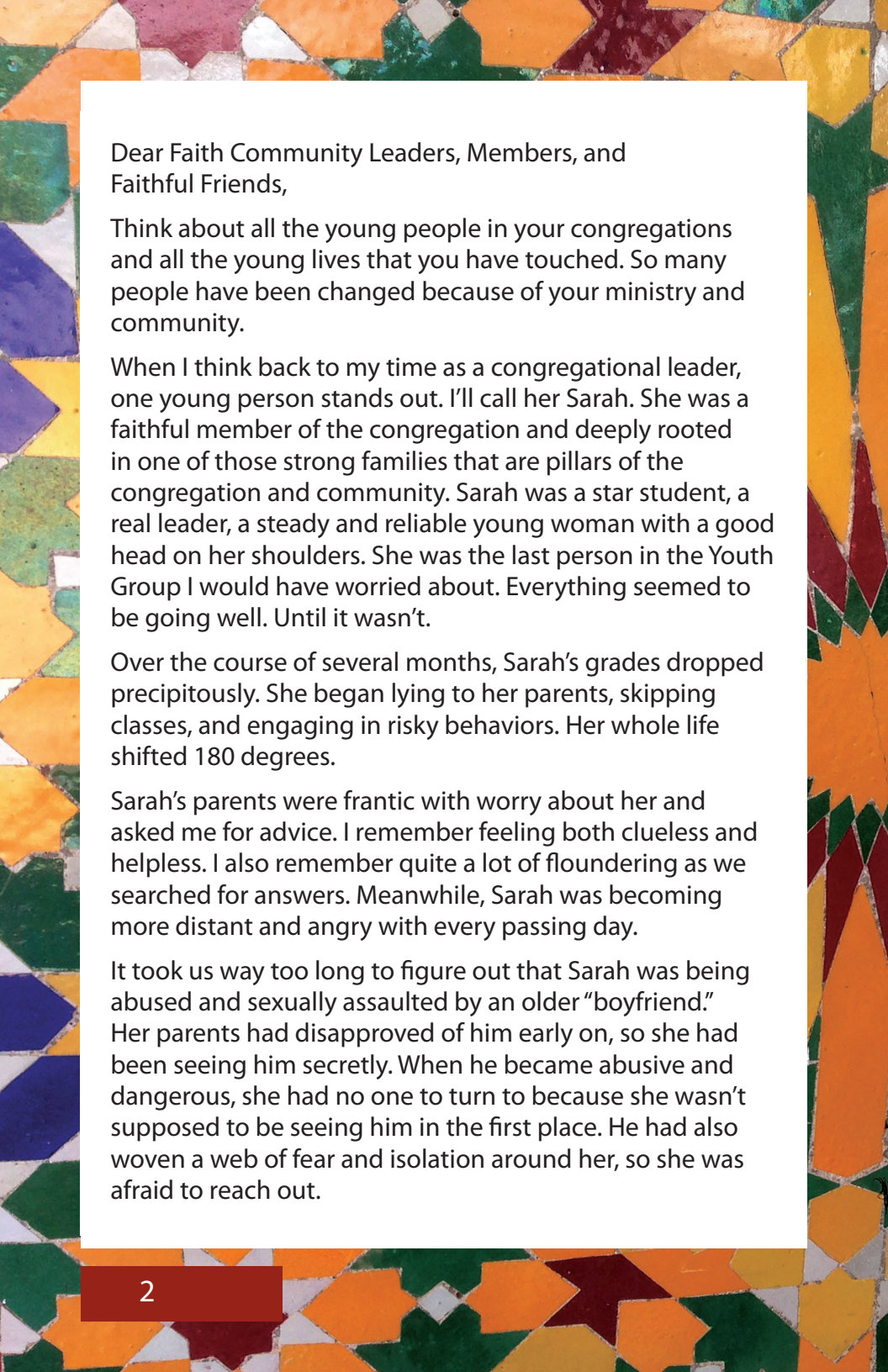
Supporting Victims and Survivors of Dating Violence in Our Faith Communities

A Guide for Faith Leaders and Congregations



Pieces of a Bigger Picture

Faith Communities and Service Providers Working Together
to Support Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence



Dear Faith Community Leaders, Members, and Faithful Friends,

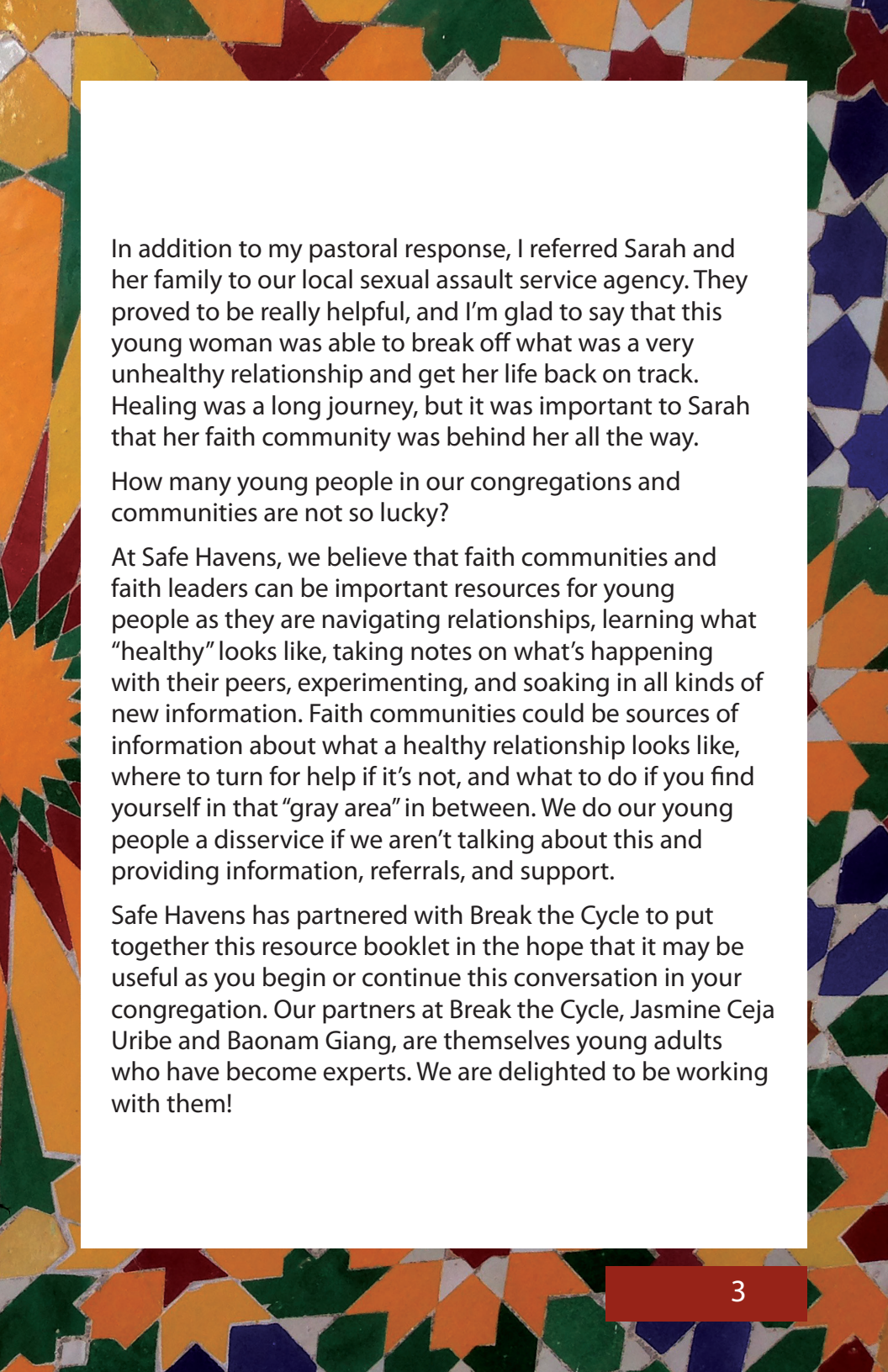
Think about all the young people in your congregations and all the young lives that you have touched. So many people have been changed because of your ministry and community.

When I think back to my time as a congregational leader, one young person stands out. I'll call her Sarah. She was a faithful member of the congregation and deeply rooted in one of those strong families that are pillars of the congregation and community. Sarah was a star student, a real leader, a steady and reliable young woman with a good head on her shoulders. She was the last person in the Youth Group I would have worried about. Everything seemed to be going well. Until it wasn't.

Over the course of several months, Sarah's grades dropped precipitously. She began lying to her parents, skipping classes, and engaging in risky behaviors. Her whole life shifted 180 degrees.

Sarah's parents were frantic with worry about her and asked me for advice. I remember feeling both clueless and helpless. I also remember quite a lot of floundering as we searched for answers. Meanwhile, Sarah was becoming more distant and angry with every passing day.

It took us way too long to figure out that Sarah was being abused and sexually assaulted by an older "boyfriend." Her parents had disapproved of him early on, so she had been seeing him secretly. When he became abusive and dangerous, she had no one to turn to because she wasn't supposed to be seeing him in the first place. He had also woven a web of fear and isolation around her, so she was afraid to reach out.



In addition to my pastoral response, I referred Sarah and her family to our local sexual assault service agency. They proved to be really helpful, and I'm glad to say that this young woman was able to break off what was a very unhealthy relationship and get her life back on track. Healing was a long journey, but it was important to Sarah that her faith community was behind her all the way.

How many young people in our congregations and communities are not so lucky?

At Safe Havens, we believe that faith communities and faith leaders can be important resources for young people as they are navigating relationships, learning what "healthy" looks like, taking notes on what's happening with their peers, experimenting, and soaking in all kinds of new information. Faith communities could be sources of information about what a healthy relationship looks like, where to turn for help if it's not, and what to do if you find yourself in that "gray area" in between. We do our young people a disservice if we aren't talking about this and providing information, referrals, and support.

Safe Havens has partnered with Break the Cycle to put together this resource booklet in the hope that it may be useful as you begin or continue this conversation in your congregation. Our partners at Break the Cycle, Jasmine Ceja Uribe and Baonam Giang, are themselves young adults who have become experts. We are delighted to be working with them!

We also hope you will take advantage of the tremendous expertise and resources in your local domestic violence and sexual assault service agencies. They support young victims and survivors every day and are on-the-ground experts who offer practical and life-saving help.

Warm regards,



Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter
Director, Safe Havens



Alyson Morse Katzman, MPA
Associate Director, Safe Havens



We are deeply grateful to the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice for their guidance and support of this groundbreaking work. It is an honor to share the journey with you.

This project is supported by Grant No. 2017-TA-AX-K060, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. 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.

Table of Contents

What Is Dating Violence or Dating Abuse? 6



What Does Dating Abuse Look Like? 6



Scope of the Problem 8



Who Perpetrates Dating Abuse and Why? 10



Warning Signs and Red Flags 11



What Is a Healthy Relationship? 13



Healthy Boundaries and Consent 15



As a Faith Community, What Do We Need to Know? 17



As a Faith Community, How Can We Help? 18



Where Can I Find Resources? 22

For additional copies of this resource, please contact:

Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership
Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse
89 South Street, Suite 603, Boston, MA 02111

www.interfaithpartners.org | info@interfaithpartners.org
617-951-3980

You can download this and other resources for free at
www.interfaithpartners.org.

What Is Dating Violence or Dating Abuse?

Dating abuse (also known as teen dating violence, dating violence, intimate partner violence, or relationship abuse) is a pattern of abusive behaviors that occurs over time and is used to exert power and control over a partner in an **intimate relationship**. For young adults, an intimate relationship is a step above platonic friendship that usually includes a significant emotional attachment. An intimate relationship may or may not include sexual relations.

What Does Dating Abuse Look Like?

Every relationship is different, but the things that unhealthy and abusive relationships have in common are issues of **power and control**. Violent and/or hurtful words and actions are tools an abusive person uses to gain and maintain power and control over their partner.

Any young person can experience dating abuse or an unhealthy relationship, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic standing, ethnicity, faith, or culture. Abuse can happen to anyone, in any relationship, whether that relationship is casual or serious.

Teens and young adults experience the same types of abuse as adults, including these listed below.

- ❖ **Physical Abuse:** Any intentional use of physical force to cause fear or injury, like hitting, shoving, biting, strangulating, kicking, or using a weapon.
- ❖ **Verbal or Emotional Abuse:** Any use of threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, or stalking to cause fear or to establish power and control over a partner.
- ❖ **Stalking:** A series of actions directed at a specific person that uses constant following, monitoring,

and/or harassment to make that person feel fearful, anxious, or in danger. (Please see Safe Havens' resource, *Supporting Victims of Stalking in Our Faith Communities: Help for Faith Leaders and Congregations*, which is available at www.interfaithpartners.org.)

- ❖ **Spiritual Abuse:** The misuse of scripture, traditions, religious practices, and/or cultural norms to isolate the partner, force the partner to submit, and/or to assert power and control. This can include justifying control of sexuality and reproduction, restricting the partner's access to health care and medications, and misusing religious precepts (for example, forgiveness) to keep individuals in an abusive relationship.
- ❖ **Sexual Abuse:** Any action that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs, including rape and/or coercion.
- ❖ **Digital/Technology Abuse:** Use of technologies and/or social media to intimidate, harass, or threaten a current or former dating partner. Examples include: demanding passwords, checking cell phones, cyberbullying, sending excessive or threatening texts, or stalking on social media. Often, what happens on social media is outside the supervision of caring adults.
- ❖ **Sexting:** Sharing sexually explicit photos or sexually suggestive messages online or through text. Sexting is abusive when it is forced or unwanted. Examples include sharing a private image without permission or forcing a partner to send messages they are not comfortable sending. Sometimes, threats are used to force a partner to send sexually explicit photos or messages.

- ✦ **Financial Abuse:** Exerting power and control over a partner through their finances, including taking or withholding money from a partner or prohibiting a partner from earning or spending their money.

Scope of the Problem

Dating abuse is a public health epidemic that can affect anyone, regardless of their background, age, immigration status, or religious community. However, it is important to note that sexual violence, physical violence, and stalking disproportionately impact young people. In fact, young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience intimate partner violence at rates almost triple the national average.¹ Tragically, 1 in 3 high school students who are dating report physical or sexual violence.² More than half of the women (69.5%) and men (53.6%) who report physical or sexual abuse or stalking by a dating partner first experienced the abuse when they were between the ages of 11 and 24.³ These statistics are staggering, and they don't even include the two-thirds of young adult victims who never report the abuse.⁴

To put these numbers into perspective, over 13 million young people experience dating abuse every year, which is more than the populations of Los Angeles and New York City combined. This widespread abuse is closely connected to other problems facing young people, such as suicide, teen pregnancy, and drug use.⁷

“ *A healthy relationship will never require you to sacrifice your friends, your dreams, or your dignity.* ”

– Mandy Hale⁵

“ *An abusive relationship at such a young age sets the standard for future relationships. For me, it was harder to realize that I was in an abusive relationship as an adult because the sexual violence I had experienced as a teen had normalized that in a relationship.* ”

– *Survivor of Teen Dating Violence* ⁶

Young people not only face serious abuse, they also face additional challenges when they reach out for help. When they do report or tell someone close to them about the abuse, they may be belittled, judged, or disbelieved. Parents and other caring adults may minimize the importance of early relationships in young people’s lives with comments such as, “they are only 12; they aren’t really dating” or “they can’t even go to the movies or out alone with friends, how could they be experiencing or perpetrating dating violence?” Often, adults don’t have the necessary information or resources to understand the situation and provide support.

Intimate relationships are critically important to young people and can consume their time in school or on social media. These relationships are just as important as adult relationships and the dangers are as important as well. It is vital that parents and other caring adults listen to young people, speak about and understand the scope of abuse in their relationships, work to prevent future abuse, and learn to respond with support and resources.

Who Perpetrates Dating Abuse and Why?

Anyone can perpetrate abuse. However, studies have shown that if a child grows up in a home where there is domestic violence their chances of experiencing or perpetrating abuse are increased because abuse is a learned behavior. These children may learn that abuse is normal, okay, or to be expected in their future relationships.

Perpetrators of violence may abuse drugs or alcohol, which can lower inhibitions and make the abuse more severe. They also may struggle with mental health issues, such as depression.⁸

In many cases, perpetrators of abuse also show love and care for their partner. Most perpetrators are not abusive all the time, and this makes it hard for the victim to navigate the difficult and abusive episodes. Although a partner may express love and care, they're not showing love in a healthy way when their actions are abusive.

Also, young people are impressionable. Social pressures, peers, and media may influence how they treat their partners. Those who abuse may also have skewed, unrealistic, or blurred ideas of healthy relationships, interactions, and boundaries.

These statistics and risk factors reflect the depth and impact of dating violence, both for perpetrators and survivors, and point to the crucial need for prevention education. The first step is to prepare young people with critical skills around healthy communication and boundaries. As faith communities, we can emphasize the importance of compassion and respect for all people, which is at the heart of many faith traditions. It is also important to prepare caring adults with warning signs, referral resources, and response skills. Young people need and deserve support.

Warning Signs and Red Flags

Dating today is different than in the past. These differences can mask dating violence.

For example, young people today use different words to describe “dating.” A young person may instead say they are “talking,” “hanging out,” “just friends,” “casual,” and/or “exclusive.” These are all words used to describe different levels of an intimate relationship. Dating violence can occur during any of these levels.

If a young person you know says that they are “talking” with someone, it may not be talking in the way you would think. Talking can signify the beginning stages of an intimate relationship in which two young people may be spending time together but have not yet put a formal title on the relationship. At this stage, they may be communicating only or mostly by social media. While the relationship may be informal, dating violence can still occur in this stage. Because many parents and caring adults don’t understand the context of these terms, dating violence can remain invisible.

Personal, cultural, or religious prohibitions against dating, rules about dating a particular person, or other norms that make it difficult for young people to talk about their relationships can also render dating violence invisible. While well intentioned, these norms can encourage young people to keep their relationships secret. Like the young woman mentioned in the introduction to this resource, some young adults experiencing abuse don’t tell their parents or faith leader about the abuse because the individual partner or dating itself are not approved.

Also, survivors often don’t want to get their partners into trouble or disappoint their families. This can cause young adults experiencing abuse to date in secret and suffer abuse in silence.

No two relationships are alike, but there are documented warning signs that may indicate an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Examples include when a dating partner:

- ❖ sends obsessive text messages (“Where are you?” “Who are you with?” “Why didn’t you answer me?”),
- ❖ exhibits extreme jealousy or insecurity,
- ❖ isolates their partner from family and friends,
- ❖ has mood swings or an explosive temper,
- ❖ makes false accusations,
- ❖ belittles their partner and uses put-downs,
- ❖ physically inflicts pain or hurt in any way,
- ❖ displays possessiveness or constant pressure, and/or
- ❖ threatens suicide or uses other forms of manipulation.

Signs that a young person could be experiencing abuse include:

- ❖ withdrawal from favorite activities or from congregational, community, or school events,
- ❖ isolation from friends, family, or congregation,
- ❖ drop in grades,
- ❖ depression and fatigue,
- ❖ crying constantly,
- ❖ changes in attire, especially wearing clothes to cover injuries,
- ❖ constantly checking phone, and/or
- ❖ anxiety about texts and messages.

The context of the situation is always important. Dating violence is a repeated pattern of behaviors that establishes power and control. If a young person has a day when their partner is texting a lot, it could be because of a family crisis or an accident and is not necessarily an indicator of abuse.

What Is a Healthy Relationship?

Relationships vary from casual to serious, but the bottom line is that all relationships should be healthy, safe, and free from fear. It's important to help young people identify what healthy relationships look like.

It is also important to remember that relationships may not always be 100% healthy. There is a continuum from healthy to unhealthy to abusive. We all (young people and adults) work to build and sustain healthy relationships. But sometimes we simply don't "show up" as our best selves. This is important to understand when working with young people.

Bottom line, no matter how a young person may describe their relationship, it's important that they establish a foundation of boundaries, communication, and respect. This is true for their relationship with another person and their relationship with themselves. Healthy boundaries require an assessment of our likes and dislikes and are communicated with a partner.

Many times, young people are not getting information and education about healthy relationships. They may rely on media to inform their ideas of what relationships should look like. In the media, boundaries are often blurred, and disrespect and distrust are often the norm. Equality and shared power are seldom modeled. This is why it's so important that congregations and faith communities create the space to have honest conversations about healthy relationships, respect, and love with young people early in adolescence.

Healthy relationships are . . .

- ✦ built on trust and open communication,
- ✦ respectful,
- ✦ honest,
- ✦ open to lots of fun, laughter, and good vibes, and
- ✦ respectful of boundaries and rights to privacy.

Unhealthy relationships are . . .

- ✦ devoid of trust,
- ✦ filled with blame and guilt,
- ✦ marked by jealousy, confusion, and loss,
- ✦ disrespectful, and/or
- ✦ built on blurred lines and boundaries.

Abusive relationships are . . .

- ✦ extremely disrespectful and degrading,
- ✦ threatening,
- ✦ based on fear,
- ✦ marked by control, manipulation, and an imbalance of power and control,
- ✦ dangerous, and/or
- ✦ devoid of boundaries, trust, and communication.

Healthy Boundaries and Consent

As faith leaders and faith communities, we value the importance of respect and compassion for ourselves and others. Healthy boundaries and consent within relationships help to uphold this respect and compassion. As the previous section mentioned, it is important to teach young people from an early age what healthy boundaries and consent are.

Consent is when someone gives permission to another person to allow something to happen. In other words, it is “the notion that we should respect one another’s boundaries, in order to be safe, preserve dignity, and build healthy relationships.”⁹ In terms of dating violence, consent is often thought about as being related to physical activity with a partner, such as hand holding, hugging, or touching.

But consent is not just about physical touch between two people. We practice consent all the time within relationships. For example, when your friend or partner asks if you want to go to the movies and you respond by saying no, you did not give consent to going to the movies. We expect our friends and partners to respect our boundary of not wanting to go to the movies without becoming angry, threatening to no longer be friends with us, or forcing us to go to the movies anyway.

We can teach consent and healthy boundaries from an early age. Model consent by asking, “Can I give you a hug or high five?” before doing so. Teach children and young people in your community that it is okay to express their emotions in a healthy way and that they are in control of their body. This helps to lay the groundwork for increased emotional intelligence in children from a young age, so that respect for consent comes naturally as they grow up.



To make the concept of consent simple, follow these reminders:

- ❖ If it's not a "YES," it's a "NO." These lines do not blur. It's important to listen and observe verbal and body language cues.
- ❖ Consent is not a one-time ask. An individual can change their "yes" response at any time and that should be respected.
- ❖ Consent should never be forced, coerced, or manipulated.
- ❖ Consent must be freely given. The individual giving consent must be aware of their decision, conscious, and coherent.

As a Faith Community, What Do We Need to Know?

Understanding how young people interact in relationships today is crucial to starting the conversation around healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. Part of this understanding is recognizing that although we may have standards for when and how young people date, the reality is that they are also constantly being influenced by media, peers, and social norms. Many of these wider influences may go against our ideals. For this reason and more, we need to be active and engaged as we explore how our expectations of young people differ from their day to day realities, especially as they develop relationships.

Young people “date” differently! “Old school romance” is not very popular among young people anymore. Students in high school often mock the idea of flowers and cards. So how do they express romance? Through technology? Sending pics? Social media statuses? Every young person shows their affection and goes public with their relationship in different ways. In fact, some relationships don’t go public at all, or live strictly online or through a phone.

Young people DO want caring adults involved in their lives. In conversations with hundreds of youth throughout the country, young people stated this time and time again. However, young people want adults to provide support, ideas, and help when young people ask for it, not when the adult wants to intervene. Creating an environment for youth to feel comfortable in approaching you with their problems is the best way to show them that you are there and ready when they want to talk.

To create this open environment, the number one thing to do is to be supportive and listen. This is especially important because it is so difficult for victims and survivors

of abuse to talk about their experiences. Pay close attention to the warning signs and behavior changes in the young people in your family, congregation, and community. Make an effort to start and revisit conversations often.

Approaching someone about an abusive relationship may be difficult. You might have already tried to talk to them or their parents, and it may seem like they don't listen. When someone is in an abusive relationship, it is difficult for them to recognize the warning signs of abuse. Even when they do recognize the signs, the associated threats, fear, embarrassment, or lack of options can make it extremely difficult and dangerous to seek help or get out.

As a Faith Community, How Can We Help?

If you think a young person is experiencing or perpetrating abusive behaviors, there are ways you can help. Here are a few tips for creating opportunities to better help the young people in your community.

- ✦ **Start the Conversation with Young People** – Check in to see if they have considered what it takes to have a healthy relationship. Ask them how they would know if someone were in a “good relationship” and what the signs would be if someone were in a “bad relationship.” Help them identify these behaviors by connecting them to resources or sharing information about signs of a healthy relationship.
- ✦ **Be Supportive** – Someone experiencing abuse may not recognize the abuse or want the relationship to end. This can be difficult when other people clearly see the signs. When speaking to an individual who approaches you with concerns, be supportive. Don't judge or blame them, keep an open mind, and help them get the resources they need.

❖ **Provide Referrals** – It is important to refer young people who are experiencing abuse to services where they can get help and support. Domestic and sexual violence service agencies provide important services, such as medical and court accompaniment, lethality assessment, safety plans, and support groups.

One important service that an advocate at a domestic or sexual violence agency can provide is help in creating a **safety plan**. A safety plan is a practical guide that helps lower the risk of being hurt by an abuser. It includes information specific to the individual and their life that will help keep them as safe as possible. A good safety plan helps the survivor think through lifestyle changes that could keep them safer on campus, at home, and other places they go daily. A safety plan could help the survivor consider these questions.

- ❖ What steps can I take to stay safe at home? If I am ever alone, who can I reach out to in an emergency?
- ❖ What steps can I take to stay safe at school? Who can walk with me to my classes? Who can I contact to change my class schedule or report a problem?
- ❖ What steps can I take to stay safe in my congregation and other places I go frequently? Do I need to file for a restraining order? Should I inform my friends, family, or faith leader about what is going on?
- ❖ What steps can I take to stay safe at work? Who can I contact to change my schedule or report a problem?
- ❖ What steps can I take to stay safe online? Are my passwords protected? Do I know how to report abuse online?

- ❖ What information should I keep with me at all times? (For example, a copy of my restraining order, important phone numbers, a list of crisis support hotlines, etc.) For more information about safety planning, visit <http://www.breakthecycle.org/safety-planning>.

“There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds.”

– Laurell K. Hamilton¹⁰

✦ **Keep Your Communication Door Open** – Young people need and want you to listen and be supportive. What you see or hear may make you frustrated and worried. If this happens, try to stay calm. Let them know that you want to help and can connect them to resources when they are ready.

✦ **When in Need, Get Support** – If you feel that a young person is in immediate danger or their life is at risk or has been threatened, you may want to get emergency support by calling 911. You may also consider recommending the individual seeks support by talking to a counselor, another trusted adult, or a legal resource. These situations are difficult, and there may not be an easy solution. As an adult trying to support and help a young person, you may also consider reaching out to other

“There is no one way to recover and heal from any trauma. Each survivor chooses their own path or stumbles across it.”

– Laurie Matthew¹¹

faith leaders, a mentor, a domestic or sexual violence advocate, or a confidante to talk about your feelings. However, the identity of the young person should be kept confidential unless something has happened that you are mandated to report, the young adult is going to hurt themselves or someone else, or the young adult is in immediate danger.

- ✦ **Send a Message to Your Faith Community** – There are many prevention tactics that you can implement within your faith community to send a clear message to people experiencing abuse that you care. Host a fundraising campaign for a local youth program working to end sexual assault or dating violence. Organize a group of volunteers to spend time at a shelter. Create a speakers' bureau of community members who want to educate others on dating violence. Invite the dating violence expert from your local domestic violence services agency to meet with your youth group. The options are endless and send the message to young people in your community that you care and want to support initiatives that make a difference in real people's lives.

“ *It was so hush hush at the school I went to that I didn't even know how to approach my fears or humiliation ... I think if someone had said something about what was never acceptable in a relationship and taught us the differences, I would have, at least, felt safer telling my teacher or someone else what was going on.* ”

– Survivor of Dating Violence¹²

Where Can I Find Resources?

There are many resources available to support a young person who needs help. We recommend connecting them to a caring adult, someone they trust and feel comfortable speaking with. This could be a parent, mentor, or another adult within your faith community that can provide ongoing communication, support, and help. Also, check out these agencies for additional resources and information.

- ✦ **Break the Cycle:** A national nonprofit organization that provides prevention education and capacity building to youth and adults, as well as legal services in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, CA.
www.breakthecycle.org
- ✦ **The National Resource Center on Tech Abuse, eTAG (End Tech Abuse across Generations):** A project of Break the Cycle and the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault that addresses the use/misuse of technology in sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking (including cyber stalking) cases. www.endtechabuse.org
- ✦ **Loveisrespect:** Loveisrespect's purpose is to engage, educate, and empower young people to prevent and end abusive relationships.
www.loveisrespect.org

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are in need of help, but not in immediate danger, you can contact one of the following resources. Support is available 24/7 on each of the hotlines.

- ✦ **National Dating Abuse Hotline:**
Call (866) 331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522.
- ✦ **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** (800) 799-7233
- ✦ **Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network (RAINN) National Sexual Assault Hotline:** (800) 656-4673

Endnotes

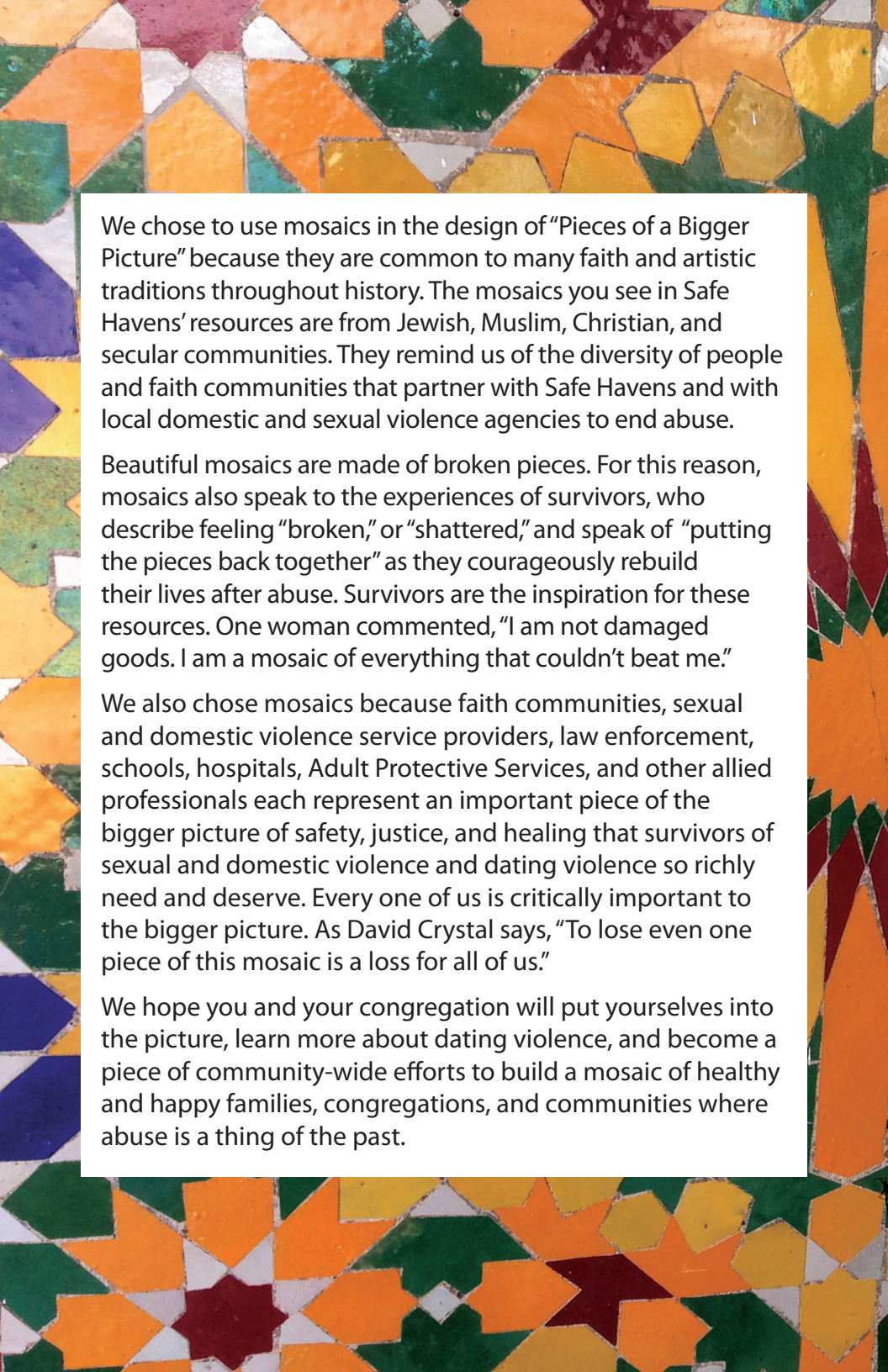
- ¹ Love is Respect. (2017). Dating Abuse Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/dating-violence-statistics/>.
- ² Vagi, K. J., Olsen, E.O. M., Basile, K. C., & Vivolo-Kantor, A. M. (2015). Teen Dating Violence (Physical and Sexual) Among US High School Students: Findings from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169 (5), 474-482.
- ³ Beiding, M. J., Chen, J. & Black, M. C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States – 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ⁴ Love is Respect. (2017). Dating Abuse Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/dating-violence-statistics/>.
- ⁵ Hale, Mandy. (2013, Mar 23). A healthy relationship will never require you to sacrifice your friends, your dreams, or your dignity. [Tweet]. <https://twitter.com/thesinglewoman/status/315682101330575360>
- ⁶ Murray, C. E., King, K., & Crowe, A. (2016). Understanding and addressing teen dating violence: Implications for family counselors. *The Family Journal*, 24(1), 52-59. DOI: 10.1177/1066480715615668
- ⁷ Parker, E. M. & Bradshaw, C. P. (2015). Teen Dating Violence Victimization and Patterns of Substance Use Among High School Students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 57 (4), 441-447.
- ⁸ Bennet, L. & Bland, P. (2008). Substance Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence. <https://VAWnet.org>.
- ⁹ Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2018). Consent at Every Age. Retrieved from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/12/consent-every-age>.
- ¹⁰ Hamilton, Laurell K. (2019). Good Reads: Mistral's Kiss. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/205823-there-are-wounds-that-never-show-on-the-body-that>.
- ¹¹ Matthews, Laurie. (2019). Good Reads Quotes: Behind Enemy Lines. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/8419173-there-is-no-one-way-to-recover-and-heal-from>.
- ¹² Murray, C. E., King, K., & Crowe, A. (2016). Understanding and addressing teen dating violence: Implications for family counselors. *The Family Journal*, 24(1), 52-59. DOI: 10.1177/1066480715615668
- ¹³ National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2019). Abuse Defined. <https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>.

“

It's not always easy to tell at the beginning of a relationship if it will become abusive.

”

– National Domestic Violence Hotline¹³



We chose to use mosaics in the design of “Pieces of a Bigger Picture” because they are common to many faith and artistic traditions throughout history. The mosaics you see in Safe Havens’ resources are from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and secular communities. They remind us of the diversity of people and faith communities that partner with Safe Havens and with local domestic and sexual violence agencies to end abuse.

Beautiful mosaics are made of broken pieces. For this reason, mosaics also speak to the experiences of survivors, who describe feeling “broken,” or “shattered,” and speak of “putting the pieces back together” as they courageously rebuild their lives after abuse. Survivors are the inspiration for these resources. One woman commented, “I am not damaged goods. I am a mosaic of everything that couldn’t beat me.”

We also chose mosaics because faith communities, sexual and domestic violence service providers, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, Adult Protective Services, and other allied professionals each represent an important piece of the bigger picture of safety, justice, and healing that survivors of sexual and domestic violence and dating violence so richly need and deserve. Every one of us is critically important to the bigger picture. As David Crystal says, “To lose even one piece of this mosaic is a loss for all of us.”

We hope you and your congregation will put yourselves into the picture, learn more about dating violence, and become a piece of community-wide efforts to build a mosaic of healthy and happy families, congregations, and communities where abuse is a thing of the past.