

Building a Support System In Your Community



When you're going through a tough time, you often feel alone. You are not. There are people all around who can help. Consider reaching out to these members of your community if you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

Friends

Try reaching out to your friends but be careful about what you share. Friends can provide a lot of support, but they can also spread information you'd rather keep private. Make sure to specifically point out anything you want to keep secret and share the fact that breaking your trust may put you in danger.

Teachers

Do you have a favorite teacher? Try talking to him or her for support. If you aren't close with this person already, it may be awkward. Stay after school and start by discussing your homework or questions about class. Once you feel comfortable, let them know you need to talk. Understand that your teacher may be required to tell someone about your situation, depending on the state or school policy. Learn more about building a support system at school at loveisrespect.org.

A Faith Leader or Mentor

Someone in your faith community may be a good choice to open up to because they probably share your values, are willing to talk with you and may be able to speak confidentially. If you don't know the person well, tell them about yourself first and see how they react. If they're judgmental, they're probably not a good choice.

School Counselors

Consider talking to your school counselor -- they may be trained on dating abuse and should know the related campus' policy and resources. They may also be able to help you talk to your parents, campus police or school principal. Try approaching your counselor about a different problem. Then, based on their reaction, decide if you feel comfortable talking to them about your relationship.

Coaches

If you have a coach you feel comfortable around, hang around after practice or approach them during a free period at school. Since coaches often focus on both mental and physical well being, yours may be able to provide a unique perspective on your situation. Again, know they may be required to report any abuse to their superiors.

Extended Family

Consider your extended family when looking for support. A close aunt, uncle or cousin may be able to help you. Be upfront with your family member about your needs. It's ok to say you're only looking for someone to listen if you're not ready for advice. Also, be sure to point out any information you want to keep confidential and clarify what's ok to share with others. Learn more about building a support system at home by visiting loveisrespect.org.

Campus Safety or Police

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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Discuss your options confidentially.
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

Ask your local or campus police for help before and after an abusive incident. Feel free to use them as a resource by asking questions about your rights. Campus police should be aware of school policies about dating violence and may know resources available on campus. Local police hopefully have similar information about the law and community services. Consider requesting an officer to periodically stop at your residence and check on your safety.

If you ever feel unsafe, be cautious and call your local law enforcement. Once you're safe, make sure they file a report on the incident.

Get Support Other Places

If you don't feel comfortable talking with these members of your community, you can also consider looking for support at home or at work.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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