October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The numbers associated with domestic violence are startling:

- One in three women will be physically or sexually assaulted in her lifetime.
- One in five adolescent girls says she has been physically or sexually hurt by someone she dated.
- One in 10 high school students both boys and girls have been sexually assaulted on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

This month’s focus is on healthy relationships and dating violence prevention. It is a continuation of our knowledge sharing series on youth health and relationships. We encourage parents and community members to talk about their relationship so good for them as it is for their children. Parents are reaching out to support and educate each other about this important topic. Helping young men and women see the importance of respectful relationship and the warning signs of abuse can help prevent where the abuse is occurring before it is too late to stop it.

Teen friends often have unrealistic ideas about physical and sexual violence, as well as psychological abuse. They have low self-esteem and are being influenced by their peers. Violence is not a sign of love or a way to make a relationship better. It is a sign of abuse. Teenagers need to know that whether a relationship is healthy is the level of respect the partner has for the other. People can “control” others by looking at their phone call and e-mail, telling them what to wear or with whom they can hang out, making them feel bad in front of others and never let them have a friend. Teens will be more likely to work with you to end the abuse if they feel like they have someone who cares. 

Parents don’t always see these controlling behaviors happening. They don’t always recognize the warning signs that parents and teens can be looking for in someone who is having abusive behaviors. More research is needed to find out what to do when you see it happen. 

• No longer hanging out with friends because of your relationship
• Showing signs of anger before talking to your partner
• Making excuses for their boyfriends or their own behavior

I have to admit that the statistics and local resources available for all backgrounds and ages. I hope everyone public health issue facing individuals from that more than thirty percent of young heartbreaking. It is especially hard to hear you that supporting the health and achievement of our youth is a major focus this month’s other.

Talking to Young People About Sexuality

Young people represent 14 percent of the U.S. population, and they are at high risk of acquiring new sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV. It is critical for parents to have an open and honest discussion about sexuality at an early age. Many parents don’t know what to talk about, and what the best way to share information about sexuality have been developed. All but one of these programs focuses on improving parents’ knowledge about what to discuss and how often to have conversations about sexuality. One program teaches parents specific words to communicate. This may be the best way for young people to learn about sexuality. It will be better for them to have positive conversations about sexuality. It is the best way to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy choices about their sexual and reproductive behavior.

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