

Listen to your instincts. If you feel afraid, you should have support from a trusted adult when you break up. Your abusive partner may not accept the break up or respect your boundaries, or they may try to control you through guilt, insults, or threats. If you're thinking of ending your relationship, consider these tips:

- If you don't feel safe, don't break up in person. It may seem mean to break up over the phone or by text, but it may be the safest way.
- If you break up in person, do it in a public place. Have friends or your parents wait nearby. Take a cell phone with you.
- Don't try to explain your reasons for ending the relationship more than once. There is nothing you can say that will make your partner happy with your decision.
- Let your friends and parents know you are ending your relationship, especially if you think your partner will try come to your house or other place you frequent to confront you when you're alone.

## Where to get help

### **National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline:**

1-866-331-9474 – Speak with peer advocates or text LOVEIS to 22522. The crisis text line provides round-the-clock support for anyone in crisis which can be reached by texting HOME to 741741.

### **National Sexual Assault Hotline:**

1-800-656-4673

### **Trevor Lifeline** (for LGBTQ\* youth):

1-866-488-7386

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

1-800-273-8255

## **[www.OurGenderRevolution.org](http://www.OurGenderRevolution.org)**

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# Breaking Up



If you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, figuring out what to do can be hard. You have a history with your partner and you may still have feelings for them. It can be hard for people to understand that the person who is harming you isn't always abusive, and that the times when they aren't make it hard to end the relationship.

### **Staying Together**

If you decide to stay together, make sure you are honest with yourself about your decision. While an unhealthy relationship can become healthy with enough time and dedication, it is unrealistic to expect to "fix" an abusive relationship. Remember, at the end of the day, you can only change your own behavior, not your partner's.

### **Breaking Up**

You may want to think about ending your relationship if you feel or experience:

- Lack of contact or emotional connection
- Just want to be free and more independent
- Keeping secrets or not being honest
- One or both are irritable with the other
- Arguments (nothing gets solved, feelings get hurt)
- Feel happier when you are away from your partner
- Emotional, physical, or sexual abuse

### **Breaking up is natural**

Here's the thing – most teenage romantic relationships are temporary – in fact, maybe that's how it should be. Relationships are part of life. And as normal as relationships are, break ups are normal too. In many situations, breaking up can actually be better for everyone.

While breaking up with someone is always awkward, you can do it in a way that is respectful and best for all involved. When breaking up:

- Steer clear of blame, while being honest and clear about what you need.
- Avoid bringing up relationship issues in front of the world (like on social media), which may end up complicating things.
- Discuss in a safe setting where you have some privacy (unless you are fearful about their response).
- Stay open and ask yourself what you can learn from the experience
- Know that if your partner can't seem to be respectful, it's okay to end the conversation – and the relationship – without further discussion.
- It's okay to cry - just don't let the blues keep you from normal activities
- Allow time and space to heal - avoid making excuses to contact them