

Parents' Guide

New Resource To Prevent Dating Abuse

(NAPSA)—The good news for families of many young people is that a new, free iPhone app can connect them with resources and advice to help them deal with and possibly prevent dating abuse.

Many parents are unaware of how prevalent the problem is. In fact, as many as 10 percent of U.S. high school students report having been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year. In addition, one in four teens reports being victimized by a boyfriend or girlfriend through technology. However, a recent study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that only 55 percent of parents talk to their 11-to-18-year-olds about dating abuse—in fact, they're less likely to talk about dating abuse than about any other risky behavior, although the consequences can be both severe and long lasting. Dating abuse can result in injury, death and mental health problems including suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, eating disorders and depression.

To help, the new Love Is Not Abuse app collects top resources in the field so parents can find information from leading experts and organizations in one easy-to-access place. The app provides facts on dating abuse, helps people recognize abusive behaviors, directs them to immediate help if they suspect their child is in an abusive relationship and offers tips on how to talk to their teen about the issue. It even simulates abuse through phone calls, text messages and e-mails, so that parents can see and feel what the abuse is like. Videos on privacy invasion, deleting a partner's friends on social networks, and unauthorized access to a boyfriend's or girlfriend's social networks teach parents about the destructive behaviors common in digitally abusive relationships.



When parents understand about dating abuse, they are better able to protect their children.

“This app is an important tool that works to end dating violence by shining the light on it in all of its nuances,” said Cindy Southworth, founder of the National Network to End Domestic Violence’s Safety Net Technology Project and app expert contributor.

“Our research shows that parents are dangerously out of touch with the high levels of dating violence and abuse taking place in their children’s lives,” added Jane Randel, director of Liz Claiborne Inc.’s Love Is Not Abuse campaign. “We aim to put dating abuse, in all its forms, on the radar for parents. Our hope is that the app will wake parents up to the truly terrible reality of teen dating abuse and get them talking to their kids about dating relationships.”

That’s one reason Liz Claiborne Inc. created the resource along with its national partners, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Break the Cycle, the National Dating Abuse Helpline, loveisrespect.org and the Joyful Heart Foundation.

The Love Is Not Abuse iPhone app can be downloaded, free, in the iTunes App Store under search words “Love Is Not Abuse.”

To learn about the coalition, get involved or find help, visit www.loveisnotabuse.com and www.loveisrespect.org.