

TEEN COURT NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Healthy Relationships & Understanding Domestic Violence

Written By: Stephanie Cruz, Center for Abused Persons

Relationships are an important part of teenage life, whether they involve dating, friendships, or family connections. Healthy relationships are built on **respect, trust, communication, and equality**. Knowing the difference between healthy and unhealthy behavior can help you protect yourself and others. In a healthy relationship, you can share your opinions, set boundaries, and say “no” without fear. Disagreements may happen, but they are handled calmly—without insults, threats, or pressure.



Domestic violence and abuse are **not just physical harm**. Abuse can happen in many forms and often starts small. **Emotional abuse** includes constant criticism, name-calling, embarrassment, or making someone feel worthless. **Verbal abuse** may involve yelling, threats, or insults. **Physical abuse** includes hitting, pushing, grabbing, or any action meant to cause harm. Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual contact or pressure. **Digital abuse** can include controlling social media, demanding passwords, or using technology to monitor or threaten someone. **Financial abuse** includes controlling someone’s money or using money to manipulate or threaten. For teens, this may look like someone taking your money, pressuring you to buy things, or using gifts or money to control your choices. **Relationships shouldn’t be about control or power, especially through money.**

Many abusive relationships don’t start with violence. They often begin with intense attention and affection, then slowly shift to jealousy, pressure, and control. This is why recognizing early warning signs is so important. A major warning sign of abuse is **control**. Telling someone who they can talk to, what they can wear, where they can go, or how they spend their money is controlling. **Relationships shouldn’t be like that.**



Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued. If a relationship makes you feel scared, pressured, or uncomfortable, talk to a trusted adult, counselor, or a support organization. Healthy relationships help you grow. Abuse holds you back—and it is never your fault.

24-hour Crisis Hotline: 301-645-3336

The Center for Abused Persons offers the only 24-hour, seven-day-a-week hotline in Charles County. Trained hotline counselors provide emotional support, problem solving and practical guidance, referrals to additional resources, and administrative support like appointment scheduling.

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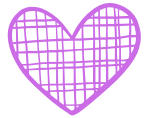
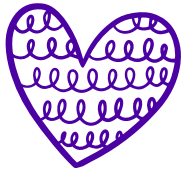
UPCOMING CLASSES

Healthy Relationships - La Plata

Parents and youth ages 12 to 18 can join us for an interactive discussion and informational session focused on recognizing the signs and habits of healthy relationships.

Next Class: Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Location: CCSO Headquarters Building
6915 Crain Highway La Plata, MD 20646



DID YOU KNOW?

February is **American Heart Month**, a crucial time dedicated to raising awareness about cardiovascular health, the leading cause of death in the U.S..

Here are some Heart Health Tips:

- **Eat Smart:** Focus on whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and limit saturated fat and sodium.
- **Know Your Numbers:** Regularly check blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- **Manage Stress:** Utilize yoga, meditation, or breathing exercises to reduce strain on the heart.
- **Stay Active:** Break up long periods of sitting by standing or walking around.



For more information on
Upcoming Classes & Events,
check out our website:



Teen Court Website

If you would like to subscribe to the Teen Court Newsletter, use the subject 'Teen Court Newsletter' to one of the contacts below:

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