

Before you break up...

It is always difficult and can be dangerous to break up with a person who is abusing you. The following are some suggestions about ways to keep safe.

Take a risk assessment.

A risk assessment prepares you for the possible outcomes of breaking up, and it helps you to stay safe. To assess your risks, answer the following questions:

- What was the first incident of abuse?
- What was the worst incident of abuse?
- What might happen if I break up?
- Do I need to change my daily schedule or routine so I won't run into this person?
- Who are the people who can help me through this?
- What can I do to stay safe?

Break up in a public place or through use of technology.

Send a text message or email to ensure safety. Your emotional and physical safety is most important. Being in a public place—like school, in a restaurant, or at the mall—may keep the abuser from hurting you. Or, if an abusive incident should arise, others may intervene or simply serve as witnesses. Finally, don't rely on the abuser to drive you home afterwards. Make sure to have alternative transportation.

Don't have contact after the relationship has ended.

You will probably have mixed feelings about the breakup. But it is very important to end all contact to help you heal from the relationship and to keep you safe. Reach out to friends and family for support.

Inform an adult if you are concerned about your safety.

Sometimes an adult is needed—a counselor, mentor, teacher, parent, coach, security guard or police officer—to help to keep you safe.

Take all threats seriously.

Abusers often follow through on their threats. It is especially important to pay attention to threats of suicide or homicide (Has the abuser threatened to kill you? Has s/he threatened to kill his/herself if you leave?) Tell a trusted adult—like a parent or a teacher immediately.

Reach out to community resources.

JBWS provides help for teens, young adults, family and friends. A counselor is available 24 hours a day to listen to concerns and answer questions. The caller can remain anonymous. Sometimes a phone call is just the beginning. The helpline counselor can schedule an appointment for a private counseling session. Services are free. 24 Hour Helpline: 973-267-4763 or 1-877-R-U-ABUSED. Visit www.jbws.org.

Choices is a counseling group for male teens, ages 12-17, who have begun using abuse in relationships. It meets once a week for 12 weeks to teach skills for maintaining healthy relationships. It is a program of Jersey Center for Non-Violence of JBWS. We know change can be difficult but you do have a choice. Call *Choices* today. Call: 973-539-7801.

Learn more at No2DatingAbuse.org