

Breaking Up

Even if you've decided your relationship is abusive or unhealthy, that doesn't mean ending it will be easy.

How to prepare for a breakup

You may feel pressure from your friends and family to just break up with your boyfriend/girlfriend and move on, but it doesn't usually feel that simple.

Here are some things to keep in mind when thinking about breaking up:

- The person you're dating has probably become a **huge part of your life**. You might see more of them now than you do your friends or family. So being scared about feeling lonely after the break up is normal. Talking to friends or finding activities to fill the new time you have may make this easier.
- **You will miss your boyfriend/girlfriend** after you break up, maybe a lot and maybe just on occasion. Even if they've been abusive and controlling, this is normal. Try writing down the reasons you want to end your relationship now and keep them as a reminder for later on.
- If your boyfriend/girlfriend is **controlling and jealous**, they may make a lot of decisions for you. It can take time to adjust to making your own decisions again.
- **You may be scared** to end the relationship. If you are, take that fear seriously. Ending a relationship with an abusive or controlling person is not the same as ending a healthy relationship.

How to break up

Ending an abusive relationship can be difficult and even dangerous. Your boyfriend/girlfriend may become angry and violent - even if they have not been violent in the past. If you are thinking of ending your relationship, consider these safety tips:

- If you don't feel safe, **don't break up in person**. It may seem cruel to break up over the phone or by email, but these ways can provide you the distance needed to stay safe.
- If you decide to break up in person, **consider doing it in a public place**. Have friends or your parents wait for you nearby. Take a cell phone with you if possible.
- Don't try to explain your reasons for ending the relationship **more than once**. There is nothing you can say that will make your ex happy about the break up.
- **Let your friends and parents know** you are ending your relationship, especially if you think your ex will come to your house or try to get you alone.
- If your ex tries to come to your house when you're alone, **don't go to the door**.



- **Trust yourself.** If you feel afraid, you probably have a good reason.
- **Ask for help.** A Peer Advocate at the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline can help you make a plan or locate local resources if you need.

When it's over

Just because an abusive relationship is over, doesn't mean the risk of violence is over. Here are some tips to stay safe after ending your relationship:

- **Talk with your friends** about what you are going through so they can support you.
- If you can, **tell your parents** what's going on, especially if your ex might come by your home.
- Talk to your **school counselor or a teacher you trust.** Together you might alert security, adjust your class schedule or come up with other ways to make you feel safe.
- **Avoid isolated areas** at school and local hangouts, and don't walk home alone.
- **Stick with a friend at parties** or events you think your ex might attend.
- **Save any threatening or harassing emails or text messages** your ex might send. Set your profile to private on any social networking sites you use and ask your friends to do the same.
- **If you ever feel you're in immediate danger, call 911.**