



# SHALOM TASK FORCE PRESENTS: HOW TO SPEAK TO YOUR CHILDREN

# ABOUT HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

# Resource Manual

- Forms of Abuse
- Statements of Support
- Talking Tips
- Local Resources

# Forms of Abuse

**Domestic Abuse-** A pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another and instill fear in an intimate relationship.

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**Physical abuse-** any intentional act causing or threatening injury or trauma to another person by way of direct contact.  
This act puts a person directly in danger.

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**Verbal abuse-** the use of words to control, manipulate, devalue, insult, criticize and hurt another person.

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**Financial abuse-** the use of power to financially control a partner by withholding money, earnings and financial care.

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**Emotional abuse-** mistreating a person through use of words or gestures aiming to affect a victim's self-esteem. This can be to deliberate to try and scare, humiliate or isolate a person.

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**Psychological abuse-** extreme manipulation and psychological control which can distort the victims' sense of reality (also known as gaslighting). The abuser often convinces the victim that they are crazy or incompetent.

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**Religious abuse-** the practice of someone in a dominant position creating a toxic culture using scripture or religion to control, harass, ridicule, shame, manipulate or intimidate someone else.

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**Digital abuse-** The use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner.



# Statements of Support:



**"You did not do anything to deserve this."**

**"You did the right thing to tell me."**

**"I know this must be uncomfortable."**

**"This was not your fault."**

**"I am so sorry this happened to you."**

**"If you want to talk about this again,  
you can talk to me."**

**"You are not alone."**

**"I support you."**

**"I believe you."**

# Talking Tips

## Start discussing relationships earlier:

- There is a misconception that students can't handle, or won't comprehend, a discussion about abusive relationships at a young age. However, we as humans enter into relationships from the moment we are born. So why don't we start the conversations earlier than we do?
- While children in elementary or middle school may not be ready to discuss domestic abuse in the context of romantic relationships, they do understand another form of relationships - friendships. This could look like having a conversation with your third-grade daughter about the "mean girl" who isolates her from the rest of the girls by making fun of her and leaving her out of games. Similarly, supporting your seventh-grade son who is pressured and manipulated by a peer to do his homework for him. Many red flags that appear in abusive relationships can also appear in abusive friendships. Introducing these concepts early on will help the next generation have a better understanding of what to look out for when they begin dating.

## Everyone can be a part of the solution:

- Statistics in the United States show that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will be victims of domestic abuse at some point in their lives. In addition to recognizing the significance of this widespread problem, we also need to increase awareness of men as survivors, not only as the perpetrators of abuse. One of the most common responses we hear when discussing domestic abuse is: "that doesn't happen in my community." Dispelling myths of abuse as only occurring "in that community" or to "those people" or "this gender" will promote vital recognition of the nature of its universality. Most people have a preconceived idea about what victims of domestic abuse look like, when in reality domestic abuse can effect anyone regardless of gender, race, socioeconomic status or religion.

## Create a supportive environment:

- Shalom Task Force often receives calls from youth stuck in abusive relationships who are terrified to tell anyone in their life about their situation because they are not supposed to be dating and are afraid of the repercussions from their parents and community. Nobody should have to choose between receiving the help they need and being accepted by their community. Even when younger people get into a situation their community standards do not agree with, they still need support. For other youth, the experience of living in a home with domestic abuse may cause ongoing trauma and stress. In addition to navigating this painful reality, the burden of "holding the family secret" is often described by students who disclose their situation, often for the first time, to our staff and advocates. It is imperative for us to lead by example. This begins by normalizing the discussion of difficult conversations with youth from a young age. By normalizing these discussions during times of non-crisis moments will help teens and young adults come forward to seek support during a time of crisis.

## Know your target audience:

- A parent once called in to Shalom Task Force to seek advice about how to speak to their teen about a concerning relationship they were in. "I tried the advice you gave my friend a few years ago, but it didn't work," they told us. While it would be much easier to find a one-size-fits-all approach to having difficult conversations, different approaches will work for different teens. While some teens may enjoy having a long conversation with their parents, others would rather give up their phone for a week than discuss relationships or dating with an adult. For these teens, try getting the conversation to start organically. Play a song or watch a movie depicting unhealthy and abusive relationships and slip it into the conversation.

# Local Resources



## **Shalom Task Force-International (888)883-2323- Call. Text. WhatsApp**

Contact our Confidential Hotline to discuss any issues about relationships or domestic abuse. We provide a listening ear to all. Our referrals help our callers gain access to helpful resources.

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## **School Guidance Counselor**

If you are concerned that your child is going through anything, an important first step is contacting your school's guidance counselor, social worker, or administrator to discuss your concerns.

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## **Project S.A.R.A.H.-JFS Clifton- New Jersey**

### **Call 973-777-7638 ext. 643 or [intake@jfsclyton.org](mailto:intake@jfsclyton.org)**

Project S.A.R.A.H. is New Jersey's statewide program working to overcome cultural, legal, and religious barriers confronting those impacted by domestic violence and sexual abuse in the Jewish community. Our highly trained staff provides free and low-cost individual and family therapy, support groups, and educational programming for community leaders and members.

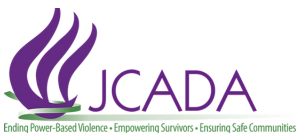
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## **Journey to Safety -JFCS Boston- Boston, Massachusetts 781-647-JFCS (5327) or [jdvc@jfcsboston.org](mailto:jdvc@jfcsboston.org)**

Journey to Safety (JTS) is the JF&CS response to domestic abuse. We specialize in providing culturally competent and religiously sensitive services for Jewish survivors while offering free and confidential assistance to all who contact us.

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## **JCADA- Silver Spring, Maryland Helpline- 1.877.885.2232**

JCADA's mission is to support victims of domestic violence to become empowered and live safely; educate the community about domestic violence and the appropriate responses; and prevent future generations from suffering.

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## **JFS Hope- Los Angeles, California Hotline- (323) 681-2626**

JFS Hope's highly trained, nurturing, and compassionate staff of licensed and pre-licensed clinicians provide the highest level of services, trauma-informed care, individual service plans, and more.

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## **Shalom Bayit- JF &CS Atlanta- Atlanta, Georgia (770)677-9322 or [shalombayit@jfcsatl.org](mailto:shalombayit@jfcsatl.org)**

The Shalom Bayit Program provides counseling support and guidance for individuals who are facing physical, emotional or sexual abuse and for those who have experienced abuse in the past.

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