













Dos and Don'ts for Talking with Youth about Healthy Romantic Relationships

DOS	DON'TS
<p> DO ask nonjudgemental, open-ended questions.</p> <p><i>"Can you walk me through the interaction and how it made you feel?"</i></p>	<p> DON'T use language that can be interpreted by the young person as implying blame or shame.</p> <p><i>"It might not have been productive to react like that. You probably should have reacted a different way."</i></p>
<p> DO encourage youth to explore the spectrum of identities and feelings.</p> <p><i>"It sounds like your partner may have made you feel unsafe or uncomfortable by doing that."</i></p>	<p> DON'T rely on black and white labels.</p> <p><i>"Your partner was being abusive toward you."</i></p>
<p> DO validate feelings, experiences, and fear.</p> <p><i>"Disagreements in relationships can be really stressful, and it's possible for partners to disagree about something without overstepping each other's boundaries."</i></p>	<p> DON'T trivialize experiences, fears, needs, or wants.</p> <p><i>"It's unrealistic to set a boundary to prevent disagreement or arguments from ever happening."</i></p>
<p> DO ask the young person about their knowledge on a subject and fill in gaps.</p> <p><i>"It can be difficult for someone to know if they're in an unhealthy relationship. What does a healthy relationship look like to you?"</i></p>	<p> DON'T make assumptions or generalizations about what a young person does or does not know.</p> <p><i>"Young people are too naïve and inexperienced to recognize when they're in an unhealthy relationship."</i></p>
<p> DO understand that the young person did what felt safest for them in the moment and validate them.</p> <p><i>"It can be really difficult to know what to do in that situation."</i></p>	<p> DON'T ignore complexities of a situation.</p> <p><i>"You should have left the relationship as soon as the problems started."</i></p>
<p> DO tell youth what is private, as well as what must be disclosed (and when).</p> <p><i>"I want you to feel safe sharing things with me, but there are things—like if someone hurt you or you are thinking about hurting someone else—that I'm legally required to report to authorities. We can talk more about that if you have questions."</i></p>	<p> DON'T assume young people know what must be disclosed or that everything is confidential.</p> <p><i>"Don't worry, everything you tell me will stay between us."</i></p>



Excerpted from: Rosenberg, R., Naylor, K., Simone-Woods, N., Rust, K., Beckwith, S. (2024). *Crucial Conversations about Healthy Romantic Relationships: A Toolkit for Youth Supporting Professionals*. Child Trends.

To access the full technical assistance tool, please scan the provided QR code or visit: <https://activatecenter.org/resource/crucial-conversations-about-healthy-romantic-relationships>