

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your teen's health class is currently studying violence prevention. Teens are more likely than adults to be victims of violence. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among teens. In this chapter your son or daughter will learn strategies for personal safety, safety at home, safety at school, and safety in the community. Your teen will learn about factors that play a role in school violence, such as bullying, sexual harassment, and gangs. He or she will study ways to reduce the risk of violence, including learning to recognize the warning signs. Causes and effects of violence, as well as the different types of violence and abuse, will be examined. The chapter ends with ways to overcome abuse and where to go for help.

Some questions your teen will explore in this chapter include: *What protective factors decrease the likelihood of teen violence? What precautions can you take to help prevent being a victim of violence? How is body language important? What can families do to keep their homes safe? What are some causes of conflict that lead to violence in the schools? How might gang members endanger the safety of other students? What can schools do to ensure the safety of students? How does peer mediation work? How can parents and community members be more involved? Why does violence occur, and what factors contribute to violence? Does the media contribute to violent behavior and, if so, how? What are the different types of violence? How can you prevent and escape a sexual attack? What are some strategies to help prevent physical, sexual, and emotional abuse? What is date rape? Where can victims of abuse or rape get help?*

Please reinforce our classroom work by discussing with your son or daughter one or more of the following topics:

- Investigate and discuss with your teen the anti-violence programs and policies at his or her school.
- Review the procedures you have at home to keep your home safe, and review precautions your son or daughter should take to avoid risky situations and to develop safety habits.
- Ask your teen whether he or she has ever been a victim or perpetrator of violence of any kind, including bullying. Discuss the causes, results, and feelings involved. Ask your teen to explain what should be done if he or she witnesses any violence or abuse.
- If your son or daughter is in a dating relationship, ask whether the relationship is a healthy one. Discuss the signs of an abusive relationship, and encourage your teen to discuss any problems with you or another trusted adult. Brainstorm tips for avoiding date rape, such as avoiding risky situations and alcohol and other drugs.

Please plan other activities you think will help protect your son or daughter from violence and abuse of any kind. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher