



Teen Dating Violence Protection: Discussion Guide



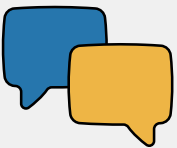
Guidance for School Staff to Continue the Conversation

This guide is designed to help educators and school staff build shared understanding, foster collaboration, and promote safety by discussing the signs of teen dating violence (TDV) and interventions within the school community.

Starting the Conversation

Use the following questions to open a dialogue during staff meetings, professional development sessions, or informal team check-ins:

- ➔ What behaviors have we noticed that might indicate that a student is experiencing dating violence (in-person or digitally)?
- ➔ How confident do we feel in recognizing digital forms of abuse?
- ➔ Who on our team is responsible for receiving and reporting student safety concerns?
- ➔ How can we better support students who may be causing harm while maintaining safety for victims?
- ➔ What resources and interventions are available for the victims and the youth who caused harm?
- ➔ What role can extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) play in promoting safety, and how do they differ from civil protection orders?



Conversation tip: Ask each person to share one TDV warning sign they will watch out for this month to normalize noticing and reporting.

Recognizing When to Act (Real-World Scenarios)

Review one or more of the following hypothetical situations with your team. Identify immediate safety steps, documentation needs, and who should be informed.

These examples are meant to spark discussion, increase awareness, and build consensus about appropriate steps.

a. Scenario 1 (Private Photos/Coercion):

A student shares that their partner is threatening to share private photos online if they break up.

Ask

- ➔ What immediate steps should we take to protect the student?
- ➔ Who handles documentation?
- ➔ How do we gather evidence and protect privacy?

b. Scenario 2 (Firearm Access/Threats):

A student reports that their ex has access to a firearm at home and has made a threatening comment to them after school.

Ask

- ➔ When and how do we notify the administration, the threat assessment team, or the school mental health provider?

c. Scenario 3 (Retracted Disclosure):

A student who disclosed that she has been a victim of TDV has now retracted her statement and no longer wants help.

Ask

- ➔ What supportive, trauma-informed responses can we offer while continuing to monitor safety?
- ➔ What documentation still occurs?

d. Scenario 4 (Firearm Access/Threat):

A student shares that they are concerned about a friend who doesn't seem to be in a healthy relationship and whose abusive partner likely has access to firearms.



Ask

- ➔ How can we encourage bystander reporting through Safe2Tell and ensure supportive follow-up?

e. Scenario 5 (Observed Controlling Behavior):

Staff have observed concerning behavior by a student toward his girlfriend, including controlling actions and aggressive body language.



Ask

- ➔ What facts or pieces of evidence should we record?
- ➔ What is the threshold for immediate referral?

f. Scenario 6 (Threat Reported Secondhand):

A high school teacher learns that a student of hers has threatened his ex-girlfriend with a gun.



Ask

- ➔ Whom do we inform first?
- ➔ What evidence do we need to capture?

g. Scenario 7 (Parking Lot Altercation):

A student with a history of aggressive behavior is observed having a verbal fight in the school parking lot with his girlfriend. Other students believe he keeps a gun in his car.



Ask

- ➔ What steps should we take with the administration, SRO, threat assessment team, or mental health provider?

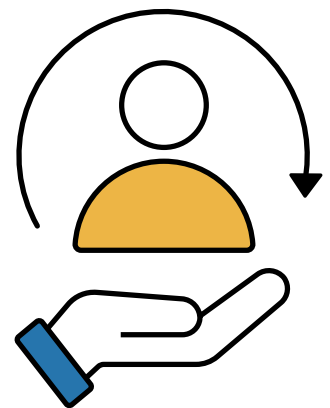


Conversation tip: For each scenario, draft a mini “if-then” flow (e.g., “If violence is disclosed by a victim, then ...”) with contacts, evidence steps, and follow-ups.

Clarifying ERPO Roles and Responsibilities

Not every educator needs to understand the full legal process for filing an ERPO, but it is recommended that every educator know the following:

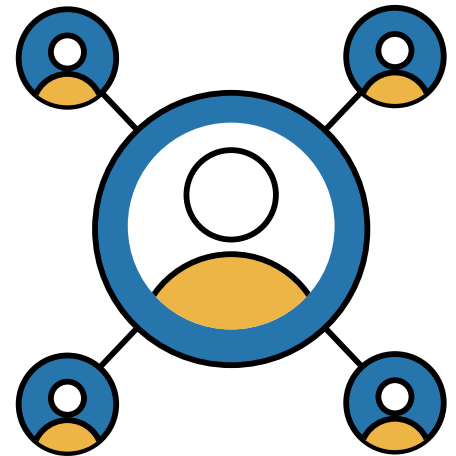
- ➔ **What an ERPO is:** A legal civil tool that temporarily removes access to firearms when someone is at risk of harming themselves or others.
- ➔ **Who can file one:** In many cases, schools or district personnel can file an ERPO to protect a student from firearm violence, even without the student’s collaboration. However, a petition can only be filed if the youth who is at risk of causing harm is a student, regardless of whether the victim is a student or not.
- ➔ **When to consider one:** An ERPO can be considered if the student or others are at risk and other interventions have not been effective.
- ➔ **Whom to contact:** Identify your school’s or district’s point person for ERPO questions or filing.
- ➔ **ERPO Training:** Consider exploring more about ERPOs and the filing process by taking the following training:
 - ➔ **Module 1 Welcome to ERPOs 101:** An Introduction to Extreme Risk Protection Orders
 - ➔ **Module 2 Petitioning for an ERPO:** A Road Map for Educators



Building a Supportive School Culture

Encourage continued learning and support through the following:

- ➔ Staff-wide conversations on recognizing TDV signs, responding in trauma-informed ways, and reviewing school safety protocols, including school and legal interventions.
- ➔ Scheduled staff-wide reviews and regular collaborative meetings involving teachers, mental health professionals, administrators, and security staff to ensure that students receive consistent, coordinated messaging.
- ➔ Promoting shared responsibility across all roles, emphasizing that an educator's role is not to investigate or fix the situation but to notice, support, and refer.
- ➔ Encouraging the use of Safe2Tell when students are not ready to disclose directly to school staff. This platform allows anonymous reporting while ensuring that the concern is addressed.
- ➔ Referring to prevention education programs on the Supporting Teens in Teen Dating Violence Situations job aid, including Safe Dates, One Love Foundation, Love Is Respect, Expect Respect, and The Trevor Project, to integrate healthy relationship discussions into the curriculum.



[Onelove](#)



[Love is Respect](#)



[The Trevor Project](#)



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