Ask the Sexpert

Sexologist Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD, a.k.a. Dr. Rachael answers your questions.

June 11, 2012 By Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD

Q: If teenagers are abused while dating, can it affect their adult relationships later on?

A: Despite the popular thought that an adolescent's romantic infatuations don't reflect the deep emotions felt by people in a mature relationship, young love is a very real experience. Teenage romantic partnerships set the stage for what adult relationships will be like. This is supported by alarming statistics that show 15 to 20 percent of all adults in abusive relationships were first victimized by a teen partner when they were between ages 11 and 17. What's more, partner abuse during high school negatively affects the adult relationships of one in 10 students.

But parents can do a lot to help children navigate possible dating disasters. They can intervene when necessary and talk to their teens about what it means to be in a healthy relationship.

In addition, parents should set rules and limits not only on kids' in-person romantic interactions, but also on their cyber and social media communications.

For the National Dating Abuse Hotline, 866-331-9474, or visit loveisrespect.org.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Sexpert-Teenagers-Dating-22508-4922