

## RESPECT! Tips for Teachers

As a teacher, you are a natural influencer, motivator and leader among children and youth. As a mentor and role model to your students, you play a critical role in shaping young people's attitudes and behaviors about respectful relationships.

Every day millions of lives are devastated by violence within the home and in the community. Teenagers, like adults, often experience violence and abuse in their relationships as well. There are a huge number of young people in this country, many whom may be students of yours, whose lives are affected – sometimes shaped – by violence.

You are in a prime position to work closely with your students to challenge the normalization of violence against women and girls, and inspire youth to think and act differently about relationships that go beyond friendship. Through classroom content and discussion, special projects, and modeling appropriate behavior through your own words and actions, you can have a tremendous impact on how your students grow to understand and appreciate safe, healthy and respectful relationships.

### WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

If more teachers proactively help shape the way young people think and act *now*, relationship abuse and violence can be prevented and can end with the next generation. With your help we can create a world free of relationship violence.

- **Be clear.** Tell your students that abuse is unacceptable and that this is an issue you take very seriously.
- **Encourage discussion.** Ask students what they think about abuse. Encourage them to think critically about the impact of violence – in their own relationships and society at large.
- **Listen.** Listen to what students tell you and what you see and hear. Let them know you care, that you are there for them and that you are paying attention.
- **Be prepared.** Be aware of mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher and notify your school counselor when you suspect abuse.
- **Spread the word.** Enlist your fellow teachers and administrators in raising awareness of teen dating violence. If you're an English teacher, start teaching *Lessons from Literature* in your classroom today!

### LESSONS FROM LITERATURE<sup>SM</sup>

*Lessons from Literature* is an innovative program created by the Family Violence Prevention Fund that calls on English teachers to bring violence awareness and prevention into their classrooms. *Lessons from Literature* provides the framework for you to use the books and stories you're *already teaching* to increase awareness about the damaging effects of physical, sexual and verbal abuse. Designed to integrate easily into your existing literature curriculum, the program helps your students build key academic skills and meet national education standards while also learning to recognize abusive uses of power and control *and* alternatives to violence.

A conscious, responsible, and respectful 21<sup>st</sup> century is in your students' hands. Help them grasp it. Visit [www.lessonsfromliterature.org](http://www.lessonsfromliterature.org).