



Safe Dating - For Parents

As our children grow up and start dating, we often see it as a right of passage, and put odd behavior down to being a teen. Yet it's easy to miss warning signs that something is wrong, especially when it looks like typical teenage development.

One way to think about it is to see the ebb and flow of teenage behavior— while they can be moody or seem distant, this usually happens in shorter bursts. If you see sustained behaviors for longer than a couple of weeks, it could be a sign there is a problem.

Teens are often more secretive when something is wrong. They want to handle the situation themselves and think they 'should' be able to deal with it. Often the experience they are caught up in is beyond the skills they have developed, and can result in depression and using unhealthy coping skills such as substance use or self harm.

Start a conversation - nothing has to be wrong for it to be the right time to talk.

- What is fun about dating? Difficult? Scary?
- What does respect look like?
- What kind of person would you like to be with?
- How should couples treat each other?

Signs that your child is in an unhealthy relationship:

- Excessive texting or emails.
- Your son/daughter becomes depressed or anxious.
- They stop participating in extracurricular activities.
- Their partner is extremely jealous or possessive.
- They begin to dress differently.
- Mood swings.
- Stops spending time with friends.

What should I do:

- Believe them and take them seriously.
- Be supportive and understanding.
- Never put down their partner.
- Avoid telling them what to do.
- Refer a young person to DoVE.
- Contact an advocate to help start a conversation.

DoVE offers FREE & CONFIDENTIAL help, advice, and resources.
thevashondoveproject@gmail.com | (206) 462-0911