



Stand up to intimate partner violence

Guide for teachers

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is when someone harms the person they're in an intimate relationship with, such as someone they're dating or married to. IPV can affect youth in various ways — for example, they might have a parent who's a victim, or they might be in an abusive relationship themselves.

IPV is complex and can be difficult for young people to recognize, understand or deal with. Intimate relationships are often private and intense, so young people may find them scary or embarrassing to talk about.

Teachers have a crucial role to play in educating youth about healthy relationships, and supporting those who are affected by IPV. This guide suggests practical ways to start safe conversations with your students and take action against intimate partner violence.

How can I help as a teacher?

Teachers are often important and trusted figures in children's lives. You can make a big difference by giving students the tools and support to recognize and stand up to intimate partner violence (IPV).

- Educate yourself about IPV and the resources and services available to you.
- Create a classroom culture of compassion, respect and non-judgement.
- Lead by example. Get comfortable with talking safely about "uncomfortable" topics like violence and consent, and encourage your students to do the same.
- Emphasize the importance of consent and boundaries.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes and behaviours when you see them, including any form of violence.

Find resources and support



See It, Name It, Change It

has guides on how to spot and stand up to intimate partner violence.

Go to stopviolence.ca.



Ottawa Victim Services

offers support to victims of violence, and has a list of crisis lines and agencies.

Go to ovs-svo.com/resources.

— DRAW — THE — LINE.CA —

Draw the Line

has free educational resources on consent and sexual violence.

Go to draw-the-line.ca/get-informed.

Tips for talking to students about IPV

Children

Children don't understand violence in the same way that adults do. They may be more trusting and naive, and therefore easier to deceive, manipulate and brainwash. This is why it's so important to create a safe, nurturing environment where children can learn the value of healthy relationships and how to recognize and react to unacceptable behaviour.

- Emphasize that it's never okay for anyone to hurt another person.
- Talk about consent with kid-friendly language, such as “no means no, stop means stop,” and “your body is your own and no one can touch it without you saying it's ok.”
- Explain the importance of talking about feelings and how to do so safely.

Teenagers

In the teenage years, experiences and perceptions of relationships develop quickly. It's crucial to teach teenagers how to identify unhealthy behaviors early on and get support for things like intimate partner violence (IPV). Proactive education helps break the cycle of violence.

- Have open discussions about what violence, consent, respect and boundaries mean.
- Create a safe space for students to ask you questions or talk about concerns.
- Give students printed or online resources so they can read about IPV and related topics in their own time.

What if a student reports violence to me?

- Always believe them if they say they've experienced or seen violence.
- Stay calm, listen without judgement and give them time to tell their story.
- Validate their feelings. Say things like “it makes sense you feel that way” or “it's not ok that they did that.”
- Respect students' privacy where possible, but remember your duty to report suspected abuse or neglect of a young person.
- Explain your responsibilities. Tell them if you need to call the police or their parents or guardians, and let them process this.
- Talk to them about local resources. Say something like “is it ok if I reach out to this agency? Here's how they can help...”
- Let them be part of the solution and make decisions where possible.
- Prioritize safety — yours and your students'.

Self-care when you're supporting victims

It's important to support students, but it's also crucial to look after and protect yourself. It can be very difficult to talk about violence and hear stories of abuse. Self-care will allow you to support your students in a sustainable and healthy way.

- Remember you don't have to fix everything by yourself. Ask for help where appropriate and maintain healthy boundaries.
- Give yourself time to process what you've heard and the emotions it brings up.
- After hearing an upsetting story, it can help to share the load. It may be appropriate to talk to a counsellor, the school principal, or an agency like Ottawa Victim Services (OVS). Remember to protect your students' privacy where possible. You can talk to OVS without sharing identifying information.

6,544

The number of reports of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ottawa in 2022, according to the Ottawa Police Service.

Learn more about IPV in urban areas — download our *Guide for Communities* at stopviolence.ca.



About See It, Name It, Change It

See It, Name It, Change It (SINICI) is an educational campaign against intimate partner violence. We help people learn what violence is, what it looks like and how to stand up against it. Together, we can build a safer Ottawa for everyone.

The SINICI campaign in Ottawa is run by Ottawa Victim Services, a not-for-profit organization supporting survivors of crime and tragedy in Ottawa since 1998.

stopviolence.ca