

Name: _____

What Factors Contribute to Relationship Abuse?

Abusers may:

- feel they have the right to control their dating partner
- think masculinity equals aggressiveness
- believe in rigid gender roles such as “A real man is always in charge”
- think they will lose the respect of others if they are attentive or supportive of their dating partner
- not view their dating partner as an equal
- cover up their own low self-esteem by dominating others
- have trouble dealing with anger
- have been abused themselves or witnessed one parent abusing another

Victims may:

- see jealousy and possessiveness as signs of love
- think they are responsible for solving the abuser’s problems
- feel there is no one they can turn to for help
- think they can persuade the abuser to change
- feel strong peer pressure to have a boyfriend or girlfriend, no matter the cost
- be afraid to be alone
- not recognize the abuse for what it is
- feel they do not deserve better treatment
- mistakenly believe that by enduring an abusive relationship, they are proving how grown-up they are

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

**THE WHYS OF
RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

Why Doesn't the Victim Leave?

A victim may:

- have little or no experience with healthy dating relationships
- believe that being involved with someone is the most important thing in his or her life
- confuse jealousy with love
- not see himself or herself as a victim
- feel no one will believe him or her
- have lost touch with friends
- cling to the fact that the abuser acts nice sometimes
- fear losing independence if he or she tells a parent
- believe that he or she can handle the situation
- feel ashamed or embarrassed
- hope the abuse will end
- fear retaliation if they break up
- feel there will be a stigma attached to being a victim
- feel responsible for the abuse
- feel others will blame him or her
- fear being "outed" if they are in a same-sex relationship