



Information Pack

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Introduction

by Ashley Henderson, founding member of Oor Fierce Girls



Conversations surrounding healthy relationships and creating a safe space are absolutely crucial. We owe it to the young people in our lives to help them understand how they deserve to be treated, and to provide them with a safe space to talk about their relationships. This is where we come in! These toolkits were created with young people's best interests at heart and are designed to encourage us all to address peer sexual abuse comfortably, and without stigma.

The more we talk about the basics of healthy relationships and how we should expect to be treated in relationships, the safer our young people will be. Even now, the number of young women and girls facing gender-based violence and sexual abuse is astounding, and it is our belief that providing young people with the means and the space to talk about these issues will be a key factor in lowering these figures. Young women deserve to know their worth and to go into relationships – whether they be platonic or otherwise – without fear or uncertainty.

We have created three separate toolkits – one for young people themselves, the second for parents and adults around young people on a regular basis, and a third for the professionals working with them. They each give tips on how to create a positive and safe environment for these conversations to take place, and how to navigate these chats in different ways. We have also created a list of top tips for how to set up a safe space for young women and girls to have these conversations in schools and community settings. We have also provided contacts for help services for the young person to consult if they ever want to. We know that one size does not necessarily fit all when it comes to these issues, and there is no step-by-step guide that can be used. Every young person is different! But what never changes is the fact that each and every one of them deserves to be listened to and cared about, which is the main goal of these toolkits.

We hope that our toolkits help people tackle these difficult topics in an open and positive way, and that young people are more informed about what a healthy relationship looks like. If we can help young women and girls understand how they deserve to be treated and what they are worth, then we hope that they can gain the confidence to leave a toxic or unsafe relationship and get the help they need. Everyone is worthy of love and protection, and the first step to making sure our young people realise this is to talk to them – and, more importantly, to listen to what they are saying. They matter, and they deserve to know it!

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet and we hope it is useful in facilitating these conversations and spaces with your young people!



Young people and friends

Supporting friends can be hard and if you are worried about them it can be difficult to know the right things to say. This toolkit provides some ways for friends to approach conversations about healthy relationships.

It is really important that you remember that you do not have to support a friend alone and if you are worried about someone then it is important that you get advice.

This doesn't mean you are breaking their trust, by getting advice you can ensure your friend gets the support they need. You can speak to an adult you trust or contact **Childline** on **0800 1111**, visit **childline.org.uk** or you can contact **Cool2Talk** at **www.cool2talk.org**

♥ Why should we talk about relationships?

As a young person, it isn't always easy to know what a healthy relationship is or what to do if it feels wrong. By having conversations about relationships with our friends we can normalise asking for help and advice. For many young people, friends will be the first place they turn to with any worries and you can be a valuable source of support.

♥ Let's talk!

Speak somewhere privately where you both feel safe and comfortable. The first time you speak about this subject it might only be for a few minutes but it should be in a space where both of you feel able to speak openly.

Let your friends know you are there for them if they need you – remind them that you aren't there to judge them but are there for support.

You might want to start the conversation by talking about something relevant you have seen recently on TV or in the media.

Listen – if your friend wants to talk, listening to them will help you understand what they are going through.

Go at their pace – if your friend isn't ready to have this conversation, don't force it.

Make sure that you are looking after yourself. While it's good to look after your friends, make sure that you are also taking care of your own mental health.

If your friend discloses abuse or is in any danger it is important that you tell someone.

Signpost – if your friend is worried or upset about something you should let them know how they can get support. This might be through speaking to a parent/carer or teacher, or they can contact **Childline** on **0800 1111** or **Cool2Talk** **www.cool2talk.org**.



♥ Conversation Starters

Everybody is different and how you approach these conversations will depend very much on your relationship with the person. Below are some conversation starters which you might find helpful.

Ask how they are feeling.

Ask what a healthy relationship means to them.

Talk about examples in films or TV of unhealthy relationships and what 'red flags' are.

Let them know that you are there if they ever need to talk about something.

If you are worried about someone, you might want to:

Let them know that they deserve to be happy/safe.

Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong.

Ask what their advice to someone else would be in this situation.

Let them know where they can get help.

You should avoid telling them to end a relationship as this may mean that they don't open up to you in the future.

♥ Get advice/support

If you are worried about yourself or a friend, it is really important that you speak to someone. This could be a parent or carer, a teacher or you can contact **Childline** on **0800 1111** or visit **Childline.org.uk**.

Childline is there for all young people up until their 19th birthday. If you suspect someone is in immediate danger you should call the police on **999**.

You can also contact **Cool2Talk** – a safe space for young people aged 12 or over living in Tayside.
<https://cool2talk.org/>



Parents and carers

Having conversations about relationships, sex and consent isn't always easy and some of us might feel a little awkward or unsure about how to approach these.

However, these conversations are important and parents and carers play a crucial role in keeping children and young people safe.

It is important that young people know that they can come to their parents/carers with questions or for advice about relationships, especially if something has happened to upset them.

♥ Let's talk!

Parents and carers should feel empowered to have conversations with children and young people on this subject from an early age, in an age-appropriate way.

Find a time when your child is relaxed and somewhere they feel safe to have the conversation. Try to find somewhere they won't be overheard and can speak freely e.g. in their bedroom or going for a walk.

It can sometimes help to have these conversations while also doing something else such as cooking or baking so that the young person doesn't feel under pressure.

These conversation starters were designed with a group of young women and girls and are intended to provide a guide in having these conversations.

If your child doesn't want to talk about this now, don't force it but do try again in future.

Listen to them and let them know that they can come to you if something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset and assure them that they are never alone.

Don't make them feel as though they are being lectured or judged.

You might want to use examples from films or TV shows where appropriate to open the conversation.

Rather than having one, big conversation, try to chat with your child little and often about this subject.



♥ Conversation Starters

Everybody is different and how you approach these conversations will depend very much on you and your child or young person. Below are some conversation starters which you might find helpful.

Ask how they are feeling.

Ask what a healthy relationship means to them.

Ask about their friendships and relationships with others.

Talk about examples in films or TV of unhealthy relationships and what warning signs are. Where appropriate you may want to give examples of your own experiences.

Let them know that you are there if they ever need to talk about something.

If you are worried about them, you might want to:

Use positive language to help them see good things about themselves – you deserve to be happy/safe.

Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong.

Ask what their advice to someone else would be in this situation.

Let them know where they can get help.

You should avoid simply telling them to end a relationship or giving ultimatums as this may mean that they shut off.

♥ Sex and consent

You can find more information on how to talk to young people about sex and consent by visiting:

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/healthy-relationships/

♥ Need more advice?

For parenting advice and support call the **NSPCC Helpline** on **0808 800 5000** or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Professionals working with children and young people

As someone who works with young people, you are in a unique position to help them understand what a healthy relationship is.

You will also know the young people you work with and may often be the first person to spot the signs if something is wrong.

♥ Let's talk!

Relationships matter – young people need to be comfortable with the person they are speaking to and feel as though they can trust them.

Create an atmosphere and ethos to encourage young people to speak to someone they trust whenever they need to.

Conversations should take place somewhere that a young person has the confidence to speak freely without being overheard.

These conversation starters were designed with a group of young women and girls and are intended to provide a guide in having these conversations.

Help the young person feel comfortable – be friendly, approachable and let them know that they are not in any trouble.

Use positive language to help them feel at ease and be positive about themselves e.g. you deserve to be happy/safe.

Ensure that the young person knows reputable and safe resources and agencies that they can turn to for additional support.

Talk to the young person about confidentiality and let them know that you will only tell others about this if you are concerned about their safety or wellbeing.



♥ Conversation Starters

Everyone is different and how you approach these conversations will depend on you and the young person you are working with. Below are some conversation starters which you might find helpful.

Ask how they are feeling.

Ask what a healthy relationship means to them.

Ask about their friendships and relationships with others, and how they make them feel.

Talk about examples in films or TV of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Let them know that you are there if they ever need to talk about something.

If you are worried about them, you might want to:

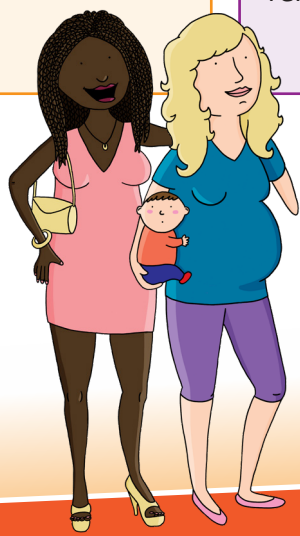
Ask if they feel happy and safe.

Let them know that they should feel respected and safe in their relationships – including friendships.

Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong.

Let them know where they can get help/what you will do next.

You should avoid simply telling them to end a relationship or giving ultimatums as this may mean that they shut off.



Safe Spaces Top Tips

As someone who works with young people, you are in a unique position to help shape their views on relationships from an early age. You will also know the young women and girls you work with and may often be the first person to spot the signs if something is wrong.

The tips below were designed by a group of young women and are intended to provide a guide in creating safe spaces for young women and girls in schools, colleges, universities and community settings.

♥ Top tips for setting up your safe space

1

Work with young people on what they want in a safe space including physical surroundings and atmosphere.

2

Create a quiet space away from main thoroughfares which young people can access without being seen by their peers.

3

Ensure the room is bright, airy and comfortable.

4

Have an approachable member of staff available in the room. This should be someone who is trained and open to having honest conversations about relationships. There should be visible timetables showing who is available and when.

5

Have refreshments and tissues available.

6

Have a timetable for the room with specific times for young women and girls only, consider the need for different age groups.

7

A room agreement – written by young people – should be on display at all times.



♥ What young women and girls need from you as a Safe Person

- 1 Relationships matter - young people need support from an adult who is approachable, caring and non-judgemental.
- 2 As a safe person, you can create a safe space around you in your department or classroom.
- 3 Believe what they tell you.
- 4 Treat what they have said with confidence and tell them when this is not possible.
- 5 Tell them what will happen if they disclose abuse.
- 6 Follow up with the young person and on any actions.

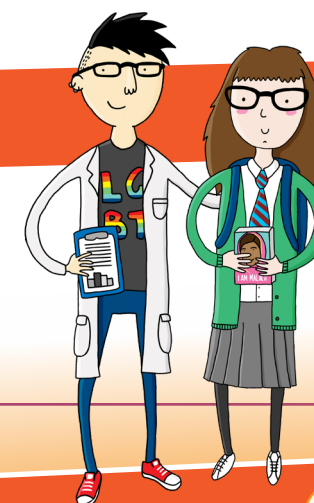


The young women involved in this campaign acknowledged the importance and value of virtual safe spaces and the increased accessibility, anonymity and flexibility they can provide.

As part of this they would like to signpost to **Childline.org.uk** and **Cool2Talk.org**.

If you are worried about yourself or a friend, it is really important that you speak to someone.

This could be a parent or carer, a teacher or you can contact **Childline on 0800 1111** or visit **Childline.org.uk**. Childline is there for all young people up until their 19th birthday. If you suspect someone is in immediate danger you should call the police on **999**. You can also contact **Cool2Talk** – a safe space for young people aged 12 or over living in Tayside. **cool2talk.org**.





Oor Fierce Girls is a youth led campaign designed to raise awareness of healthy relationships, delivered in partnership by YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement, NSPCC Scotland and Dundee City Council.

You can find more information at
www.ywcasotland.org/oor-fierce-girls

YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement, NSPCC Scotland and Dundee City Council would like to express their gratitude to the partners who supported the delivery and creation of Oor Fierce Girls:

Cool2Talk
Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership
Dundee Women's Aid
Girlguiding Dundee
NHS Tayside
Scottish Government – Delivering Equally Safe Fund
WRASAC

A special thank you to Katherine Laidlay who has provided all design support for the campaign.

And to the young women who volunteered their time and energy to create these resources, thank you.

This campaign would not have been possible without your passion and commitment.

Abbie, Ashley, Elena, Fatema, Fatima, Katie, Leona, Margerate, Megan, Oliwia, Sophie, Tamara and Tamsyn.
You will always be Oor Fierce Girls.