



FEB

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE  
AWARENESS MONTH

# TDVAM BOOK LIST

In honor of Teen Domestic Violence Awareness Month, check out one of these books to learn more about healthy & unhealthy relationships

TEEN

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To learn more about DVCC or find more ways to get involved this February, visit [www.dvccct.org](http://www.dvccct.org)

# TDVAM Book List



***Always Forever Maybe* by Anica Mrose Rissi:** When Betts meets Aiden at the candy store where she works, their connection is like a sugar rush to the heart. Betts already knows the two of them are infinite. Inevitable. Destined to become an us. Betts has only ever kept one secret from her best friend, Jo, but suddenly there's a long list of things she won't tell her, things Jo wouldn't understand. Because Jo doesn't see how good Aiden is for Betts. She finds him needy. Possessive. Controlling. She's wrong. With a love like this, nothing else matters.

***And We Call It Love* by Amanda Vink:** Clare and Zari are best friends. They write music together, go everywhere together, and they know everything about each other. At least they did before Zari started dating Dion. The more Zari falls for Dion, the less she has time for anything else. At first, Clare chalks it up to a new and exciting relationship, and she tries to be happy for her friend despite her loneliness. When Zari starts to show up to school with half-hidden bruises, Clare knows there's something darker about this relationship that has to be stopped.


***Asking For It* by Shannon Kennedy:** In this award-winning story, Sarah Flynn's fondest desires come true when she makes the varsity cheer squad at Stewart Falls Academy. And wonder of wonders, her dream guy, Jason Phillips, the football captain, finally has time for her. He claims to "love" her as much as she adores him. However, things aren't as perfect as they seem. No matter how hard she tries, she can't make him happy. As the days go by it grows harder and harder to explain her constant injuries. She knows she shouldn't be battered by someone who supposedly cares about her, but how can she change Jason? And more importantly, can she get out of this relationship alive?

***Bad Boy* by Dream Jones:** Devastated to find herself back in a group home after a peaceful year of living with loving foster parents, a Brooklyn teenager striving to become strong and independent soon falls prey to the dangerous affections of a good-looking but shady young man.

***Bad Romance* by Heather Demetrios:** Grace wants out. Out of her house, where her stepfather wields fear like a weapon and her mother makes her scrub imaginary dirt off the floors. Out of her California town, too small to contain her big-city dreams. Out of her life, and into the role of Parisian artist, New York director—anything but scared and alone. Enter Gavin: charming, talented, adored. Controlling. Dangerous. When Grace and Gavin fall in love, Grace is sure it's too good to be true. She has no idea their relationship will become a prison she's unable to escape. A deeply affecting and unflinchingly honest portrayal of a destructive relationship, *Bad Romance* is a young adult novel about spiraling into darkness—and emerging into the light again.

***Bitter End* by Jennifer Brown:** When seventeen-year-old Alex starts dating Cole, a new boy at her high school, her two closest friends increasingly mistrust him as the relationship grows more serious.

***Breaking Beautiful* by Jennifer Shaw Wolf:** Allie is overwhelmed when her boyfriend, Trip, dies in a car accident, leaving her scarred and unable to recall what happened that night, but she feels she must uncover the truth, even if it could hurt the people who tried to save her from Trip's abuse.



**Break From You by Rebecca Green:** Gasper Brooke Myers wants to believe she has it all: the perfect guy, the perfect relationship, the perfect life. She wants to believe it so much that she's willing to overlook the fear, the isolation, and the pain her boyfriend has caused her. She knows it isn't right but tells herself that love isn't always easy. However, when a fire destroys the restaurant during homecoming dinner, she forms an instant bond with the boy who saves her, one her boyfriend wouldn't like. With the pain of a concussion reminding her of how bad things can get, she is forced to re-evaluate the relationship she has with her boyfriend and face the ghosts that haunt her. Brooke once believed love was all it took, but is it enough? Is it truly love when you've lost yourself in it?

**Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn:** Sent to counseling for hitting his girlfriend, Caitlin, and ordered to keep a journal, sixteen-year-old Nick recounts his relationship with Caitlin, examines his controlling behavior and anger, and describes living with his abusive father.

**But I Love Him by Amanda Grace:** Traces, through the course of a year, Ann's transformation from a happy A-student, track star, and popular senior to a solitary, abused woman whose love for the emotionally-scarred Connor has taken away everything—even herself.


**Criminal by Terra Elan McVoy:** This is the story of 18-year-old Nikki. She comes from an unstable home and tends to make bad choices, like dating a suspicious guy named Dee, who ropes her into more ill-fated decisions. She falls into the trap of telling herself it's "all for love," even when Dee convinces her to help commit a crime that ends in murder. The overall themes here are coercive control and emotional abuse, two things that are important to talk about as they're less recognizable forms of dating violence than outright physical abuse.

**Crush by Eve-Ainsworth:** Love hurts ... but should it hurt this much? Reeling from her mum's sudden departure, Anna finds the comfort she needs in her blossoming relationship with Will. He's handsome and loving, everything Anna has always dreamt of. He's also moody and unpredictable, pushing her away from her friends and her music. He wants her to be his and his alone. He wants her to be perfect. Anna's world is closing in. But threatening everything is a dark secret that not even Will can control... Eve Ainsworth's gripping second novel is a pitch-perfect exploration of love at its most powerful, addictive, and destructive.

**Dark Song by Gail Giles:** After her father loses his job and she finds out that her parents have lied to her, fifteen-year-old Ames feels betrayed enough to become involved with a criminal who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

**Dreamland by Sarah Dessen:** After her older sister runs away, sixteen-year-old Caitlin decides that she needs to make a major change in her own life and begins an abusive relationship with a boy who is mysterious, brilliant, and dangerous.

**Die for You by Amy Fellner:** Dominy Emma has it all going for her—she's about to start college, and she's been given an opportunity to go to Rome for a yearlong internship. But her boyfriend, Dillon, isn't crazy about that idea. His increasingly menacing behavior escalates into physical violence and extreme possession, forcing Emma to make choices she's not even close to ready for. While the book does a good job of covering important topics like psychological and physical abuse, it does seem to imply, in certain points, that Emma's internship is the catalyst for the abuse starting, when abusers are going to abuse no matter what the circumstances. This is an important fact for teens to take note of—the abuse is never the survivor's fault; it is always the choice of the abuser.



***Falling For You by Lisa Schroeder:*** Rae's new boyfriend seems like the perfect guy until jealousy grows into obsession.

***Fingerprints by Suzanne Casamento:*** When her mother remarries, and their house is invaded by her new stepbrother and stepsister, Savanna is extra grateful for her amazing boyfriend, David. But as his thoughtful ways become increasingly controlling, Savanna seeks help from her mom, only to find that she's too wrapped up in her new family to care. Left to deal with an abuser on her own, Savanna turns to her best friends, Jane and Tally, for help. What was supposed to be a fun summer for the three best friends turns into a series of twists to break free from a stalker.

***Girl on the Brink by Christina Hoag:*** He was perfect. At first. The summer before senior year, seventeen-year-old Chloe thinks she's found the perfect boyfriend in Kieran, an aspiring actor, but he soon reveals a darker side to his charming quirks and carefree attitude. He's possessive, jealous and prone to violent fits of rageful blame. Chloe tries to help him but soon realizes that he is beyond her reach. She must get away from him, but Kieran will not let her go. Chloe faces the ultimate choice: save herself or save Kieran. This is a riveting, realistic story of a teen romance gone wrong, finding the courage to break free and the strength to survive.


***I Hold Your Heart by Karen Gregory:*** When Gemma meets Aaron, she feels truly seen for the first time. Their love story is the intense kind. The written-in-the-stars, excluding-all-others kind. The kind you write songs about. But little by little their relationship takes over Gemma's life. What happens when being seen becomes being watched, and care becomes control? Told in both Gemma's and Aaron's words, this is a raw, moving exploration of gaslighting in teenage relationships that skewers our ideas of what love looks like.

***Inexcusable by Chris Lynch:*** Keir loves his girlfriend, but she says he's done something unforgivable. Something he thinks he'd never do. But could she be telling the truth?

***It Ends with Us by Colleen Hoover:*** Is the story of Lily who witnessed her mother getting abused by her father all her life and feeling helpless to do anything about it. Determined to live her life on her terms, she moves to Boston and it is here that she meets Dr. Ryle Kincaid. Charismatic, suave and decadently handsome, he is a man who looks like he stepped straight out of a men's magazine. Life is good, too good but then one incident leaves this perfection of a life in pieces. Faced with heartbreaking situations and hard decisions, Lily has to decide if It Ends with Us.

***Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me by Mariko Tamaki:*** is a graphic novel that looks at young love and what happens when one partner questions the healthiness of their relationship and discerns who or what needs to change.

***Lily & Taylor by Elise Moser:*** From the opening moments when Taylor witnesses her sister's autopsy to the final cathartic scene after the two girls have survived their ordeal, the reader is glued to every page of this frank, gripping, and beautifully written novel that raises questions for every teenager. Do you need to be a certain way to get a boyfriend? Can someone who loves you also hurt you? How can a million small compromises eat away at who you are? What happens when you don't think you deserve to be treated well? How do you end up in an abusive relationship, and what keeps you there? Elise Moser goes deeply into the hearts and minds of Lily and Taylor, who in the end save each other in unexpected ways.



**Rage: A Love Story by Julie Anne Peters:** At the end of high school, Johanna finally begins dating the girl she has loved from afar, but Reeve is as much trouble as she claims to be as she and her twin brother damage Johanna's self-esteem, friendships, and already precarious relationship with her sister.

**Say What You Will by Cammie McGovern:** Even if love itself doesn't last forever, it can leave us changed for the better. Amy was born with cerebral palsy; at school, she needs a walker, a voice box — and an adult aide. When she meets Matthew, a fellow high-school student who struggles with OCD, he argues that she's spent years keeping herself separate from her peers, and dares her to use a student aide instead. In return, she challenges him to be that aide — and to start working to overcome his obsession and compulsions. As they push one another, and their bond grows, they realize that their friendship is becoming something deeper. And whether or not their love is forever, the changes they're urging one another to make will be.

**Shattered by Sarah N. Harvey:** After March shoves her boyfriend and he ends up in a coma, she tries to figure out what it means to have a perfect life.

**So Much it Hurts by Monique Polak:** A teen actress gets involved with an older director, whose explosive temper and controlling behavior threatens to destroy her life.

**Sparrow by Mary Cecilia Jackson:** Sparrow has always believed that her lifelong creed, "I'm not the kind of girl who tells", will make her just like everyone else: Normal. Happy. Safe. But in the aftermath of a brutal assault by her seemingly perfect boyfriend, Tristan, Sparrow must finally find the courage to confront the ghosts of her past or lose herself forever.

**Stalker Girl by Rosemary Graham:** During a difficult time in her life, when her mother and stepfather have broken up and her father cancels a trip she has been anticipating, Carly becomes obsessed with her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend.

**Stay by Deb Caletti:** In a remote corner of Washington State where she and her father have gone to escape her obsessive boyfriend, Clara meets two brothers who captain a sailboat, a lighthouse keeper with a secret, and an old friend of her father who knows his secrets.

**Teenage Love Affair by Ni-Ni Simone:** Seventeen-year-old Zsa-Zsa is torn between her current boyfriend who is abusive and her first love, Malachi.

**The Girl Who Fell by S.M. Parker:** Themes of jealousy, possession, and isolation infiltrate Parker's debut novel about high school senior Zephyr, who falls for the dangerous newcomer, Alec. Once again, the main character continues to justify Alec's power and control tactics as "love," and she is quickly over her head both emotionally and sexually with her new boyfriend. While the book reads a bit more like a suspenseful horror novel than a cautionary tale about dating violence, this may be what makes it more appealing to the high school crowd. It still highlights plenty of important themes surrounding dating violence, especially how easily an abuser can infiltrate someone's life without any overt warning signs.

**The Things You Kiss Goodbye by Connor Leslie:** Bettina is thrilled when her strict Greek American dad allows her to start dating, but things take an unexpected turn when her boyfriend becomes possessive and abusive.



**Things Change by Patrick Jones:** Sixteen-year-old Johanna, one of the best students in her class, develops a passionate attachment for troubled seventeen-year-old Paul and finds her plans for the future changing in unexpected ways.

**The Places I Cried in Public by Holly Bourne:** Amelie loved Reese. And she thought he loved her. But she's starting to realize love isn't supposed to hurt like this. So now she's retracing their story and untangling what happened by revisiting all the places he made her cry. Because if she works out what went wrong, perhaps she can finally learn to get over him.

**What Kind of Girl by Alyssa B. Sheinmel:** The girls at North Bay Academy are taking sides. It all started when Mike Parker's girlfriend showed up with a bruise on her face. Or, more specifically, when she walked into the principal's office and said Mike hit her. But her classmates have questions. Why did she go to the principal and not the police? Why did she stay with Mike if he was hurting her? Obviously, if it's true, Mike should face the consequences. But is it true? Some girls want to rally for Mike's expulsion—and some want to rally around Mike. As rumors about what really happened spread, the North Bay Academy students will question what it means to be guilty or innocent, right or wrong.

## Discussion Questions

- What stood out to you most in this book and why?
- Did any part of the story challenge how you think about relationships?
- Did any character ignore their own feelings or were pressured to do something they weren't comfortable with? What signs showed that?
- What are some "green flags" and "red flags" you noticed in the relationships in this book?
- If you were a friend to the main character, what advice would you give them?
- What is one thing this book made you want to talk about more?