

**TEEN TALK** (an original column from The Daily Record)

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Teentalk is really taking off—and it's all because of YOU! Thanks for your great questions--keep those letters coming! Write to us "teentalk" at [teentalk@the-daily-record.com](mailto:teentalk@the-daily-record.com). Don't forget to put "Teentalk" in the subject line.

**YOU:** My girlfriend is being abused by her parents. How can I prevent this from happening?

**TEENTALK:** Wow. That's a big question. You're a caring boyfriend for writing to get advice on this. You didn't say what kind of abuse or what has led you to suspect it. Have you seen evidence of physical abuse or witnessed it happening, or are you going by what your girlfriend has told you? Or do you mean emotional abuse? If it's emotional abuse you're worried about, are they just driving her crazy like normal parents, or are they really being cruel? If you truly feel she is being abused, she needs help, and the sooner the better. It would be best for her to tell her school counselor or a teacher she trusts what's going on. (You could go with her to support her.) But if she doesn't want to tell, you need to do it for her. Sometimes in abusive situations, the person being abused gets really protective of the abuser and won't ask for help. If that's the case here, you need to tell an adult you trust that you want to report possible abuse. You'll have to tell her what kind of abuse you suspect and why, being as specific as possible. This is too big a load for you to carry alone, and if there truly is abuse, your girlfriend needs help—fast!

**YOU:** How do I talk to my mom without getting grounded when we fight?

**TEENTALK:** Great question! The key here is to be sure you are *talking* and not arguing! Sometimes it's easy to get into the habit of just yelling at each other instead of really communicating. Of course, the solution is to *really talk* with your mom—so fasten your seatbelt! First off, don't start a discussion when you're angry or upset, and make sure that you're not only talking to your mom when you want something from her or disagree with her. Next, try *talking* to her about *talking with her*. Huh? You might say something like this: "Mom, I really want us to talk more, and I'd like to be able to tell you what I think and ask for your advice on things, but I feel like every time we talk, I end up getting grounded. That makes me kind of afraid to talk to you about anything." Maybe that will encourage your mom to cut you a little extra slack while you try to figure out new ways of communicating. Remember, talk just about *you* and your feelings—don't tell your mom what *she's* thinking and feeling or accuse her of not listening or being too harsh. Try hard not to interrupt when it's her turn to speak, too. Also, acknowledge what she says even if you disagree. "I hear what you're saying about chores, and I agree that they're important. I just wish I didn't have to do so much on the weekend." And sometimes, just to surprise her—say something nice! Good luck!