

Situations and Discussion Questions for Teen Dating Abuse

Situation 1

Daniel and Mollie started dating at the end of ninth grade. They had a great summer and knew that fall would be difficult because they were going to different high schools. Mollie was going back to the same school, and Daniel was going to a new school to be in an advanced math program. Mollie became very worried that Daniel would meet new girls and forget about her. He insisted that nothing would change between them. Whenever he couldn't get together with her, she accused him of backing away so he could dump her once school started. Daniel denied this. On the first day of school, Mollie sent him text messages all day asking what the girls were like at the new school. Daniel wanted to talk with Mollie about the new program after school, but all she wanted to know was what the girls looked like and whether he talked to them. She gave him a scarf she had made for him in his new school colors and made Daniel promise he wouldn't talk to any of the girls at his new school. At the end of the first week, Mollie noticed that Daniel had a new friend on Facebook—a girl she didn't know. She called Daniel and told him to "unfriend" her immediately. Mollie was so upset she told Daniel that she might do something drastic. Daniel was afraid that Mollie might hurt herself, but, at the same time, he was angry that he felt like he couldn't even talk to any girls at his new school.

Situation 1 Discussion Questions

1. Is Mollie's behavior abusive? Why or why not?
(Yes. She is trying to isolate Daniel from other people, she is trying to make him feel guilty, she is threatening to do something "drastic.")
2. Why do you think Mollie might be acting this way? *(She is jealous, she wants to control Daniel, she is insecure.)* What is she trying to accomplish? *(To keep Daniel as her boyfriend, to have Daniel like only her.)* Is her behavior likely to result in what she wants?
3. What is this like for Daniel? *(It may be stressful—being at a new school and having his girlfriend upset, he may feel frustrated and stuck in an unreasonable situation, wanting to make friends with both boys and girls.)* What options might he be considering at this point?

(He may consider ending the relationship with Mollie, he may lie to Mollie about his female friendships, he may isolate himself and stay away from other girls.) Is it realistic and reasonable to expect your dating partner not to have friends of your same gender?

4. Would Mollie be abusive if she just told Daniel she was worried he would meet someone else and left it at that? *(No. Stating feelings and concerns may be healthy; when stating one's concerns conveys control and jealousy, happens repeatedly, and is used to try to manipulate someone or make them feel guilty, it becomes abusive.)*
5. How might Mollie have handled this situation in a healthier way?

Situation 2

Nick and Leticia had been dating for about four months. He was very proud of her looks and knew other guys thought she was really attractive. One night, Leticia was hanging out at Nick's house and a few of his friends were there, too. His parents weren't home. Nick made a comment about Leticia saying that "her body is a ten, which is perfect because her brain is a two." The boys laughed, but Leticia was hurt and insulted. Nick could see she was upset and said, "It's okay. With a body like yours, you won't need brains anyway." The boys laughed even louder. Leticia was on the verge of tears and turned to leave. Nick grabbed her arm hard and said, "You're not leaving." The boys laughed again, but they seemed uncomfortable now. Leticia tried to break free but Nick's hold was strong. He pulled her back down on the couch next to him. The boys soon left. Leticia told Nick that he had hurt her feelings by saying she wasn't smart. He said that he was sorry, that he didn't mean it, and that he loved her and wanted to prove it, trying to kiss her. She said she loved him, too, but that she wanted to leave after what happened. He swore at her and told her she was acting like a baby.

Situation 2 Discussion Questions

1. Is Nick's behavior abusive? Why or why not? *(Yes. He humiliated Leticia in front of his friends, he grabbed her and made her stay when she tried to leave, he called her a name and swore at her, his apology may have been manipulative, he was trying to be sexual when she was feeling hurt.)*
2. When did Nick's behavior first "cross the line" or become worrisome, in your opinion?

3. Why might Nick have acted this way? *(He wanted to feel powerful, he wanted to control her, having Leticia for his girlfriend made him feel good about himself with his friends.)*
4. Is it abusive if this was the first time that Nick had grabbed her or refused to let her leave? *(Yes. Restraining someone physically is abusive, even if it only happens once. If Nick continued to force unwanted sexual behavior on Leticia, he would be committing a crime, even if they'd been together sexually before.)*

Ali's Story

My boyfriend is so great. His name is Tanner and we have been going out for five months. I've never gone out with someone for this long, so I know there is really something right about this. **Weigh In.**

He's works out and he's on the wrestling team, so he's in great shape and he really likes my looks, too. **Weigh In.**

I think it's cool that he wrestles. He likes when I come to his matches. I told him that I'm going to try out for the softball team. He said he thought that was dumb, that it was just girls trying to be like boys playing baseball. **Weigh In.**

He said he wished that I wouldn't try out because if I made it, I'd have so many practices and we wouldn't get to spend as much time together. I thought that was really sweet, but I really do want to try out for the team. I haven't decided yet. **Weigh In.**

Tanner is also really sweet. He's right there if I need him. Like the other day, I had to stay after school to work on a project so I missed the bus. I called Tanner and he got the car and came to get me. **Weigh In.**

We have a lot of fun together. We like going to movies and hanging out. We both really like wild rides, and we go to this big amusement park and that's really fun. We laugh a lot and I really love being with him. **Weigh In.**

The last time a group of friends went to the park, I ran out of money—I do some babysitting but I don't earn that much. He got really mad and said he was tired of paying for me. He said he was trying to save up to buy a car. He said I was lazy and stupid, right in front of our friends. He's done that kind of thing before. **Weigh In.**

So I told him to shut up or I wasn't going to go out with him anymore. Later he said I embarrassed him in front of our friends and he slapped me and said not to tell him what to do ever again. **Weigh In.**

The next day he brought me some flowers and said he was sorry, that he's just been stressed out with school and his parents. **Weigh In.**

So anyway, I think I really love him and I think that he really loves me. I know it's not going to be perfect. **Weigh In.**