

# KNOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## #KnowDVJFS: Sophie

I couldn't believe Josh liked me. I've known him since 3rd grade, but he always seemed "too cool" to give me the time of day. When he asked me to Homecoming, I was so excited. After about a month, he asked me to be his girlfriend. Everything was great at first. We hung out every day after school and he texted me throughout the day. I always texted right back to show how much I cared. He gave me a bracelet for my birthday! But when it came time for me to go to my youth group trip, things changed. He told me not to go. He said there would be other guys there that would try to hook up with me. He said if I went, he'd never trust me again. I was so upset! I've been looking forward to the trip all year. Josh said that if I really loved him, I'd choose not to go. I didn't know what to do. I did not want to tell my parents- they like Josh and I was worried what they'd say. I didn't want to tell my best friend because she gets annoyed with him a lot. I was afraid she'd point out that he often travels for soccer. Also, she says that all I do is hang out with him now. But Josh says she's just jealous.



**What Red Flags do you identify in Sophie's story?**

**What actions would you take if you were Sophie's friend?**

(Answers on back.)

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### Red Flags

**Love Bombing:** Showers you with attention and affection early on; makes you feel special, loved, and appreciated; lowers your defenses and makes you feel closer to the person than you really are.

**Isolating You:** At the beginning, may compliment your friends and family and want to spend time with them. Over time, pulls away from your loved ones and encourages you to pull away.

**Owning You:** Doesn't see you as a person, instead sees you as a possession. Early on, says you are "theirs" or claims you are their boyfriend or girlfriend very early, sometimes before the first date.

**Double Standards:** Abusers often look down on others for the same things that they do.

### What actions could you take if you were Sophie's friend?

Calmly start a conversation on a positive note about how much you love and care about Sophie; ask open-ended questions about how things are going. Try not to talk negatively about Josh- this could make Sophie more defensive.

Be supportive- listen more than talking, let Sophie share her thoughts and feelings about the situation.

Offer Solutions. You can suggest options and help Sophie think of pros/cons to her choices, but she has to decide for herself. For example- you can suggest that she talks to her mom about her concerns, suggest she talk to her favorite teacher, or the youth group leader who she really likes.

Focus on unhealthy behaviors, rather than Josh as a person. Focus on concerning behaviors and share how you might feel if you experienced them and why you are concerned. Be specific about the behaviors. For example, you can share that you are concerned that she is feeling bad about wanting to do something that she loves and is totally safe to do (go on the youth group trip).

