



TRAINING WORKBOOK FOR SCHOOL STAFF



The aim of the SPARX program is to promote positive romantic and intimate relationships among teenagers.

To achieve this goal, the program has several components: in-class workshops for grade 3 and 4 students + youth ambassador committees in participating schools + video clips for parents and caregivers + a website + an online training for school staff.

This document is a companion to the online training for school staff and provides a summary of the content covered.

An initiative of the SPARX team
and its partners



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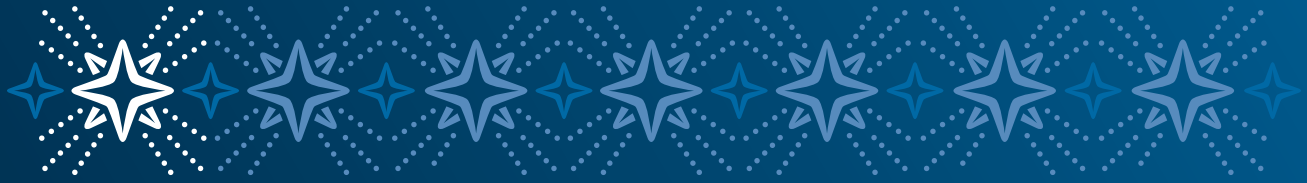
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LESSON 1

THE “WHY” OF THIS TRAINING

Why develop training for school staff?

As members of the school staff, you are in a unique position to promote positive romantic and intimate relationships among teenagers:

- You offer a daily presence in teenagers’ lives;
- You build bonds of trust with them, which can encourage them to confide in you;
- You are positive role models for teenagers;
- You have the power to make a difference in their lives.

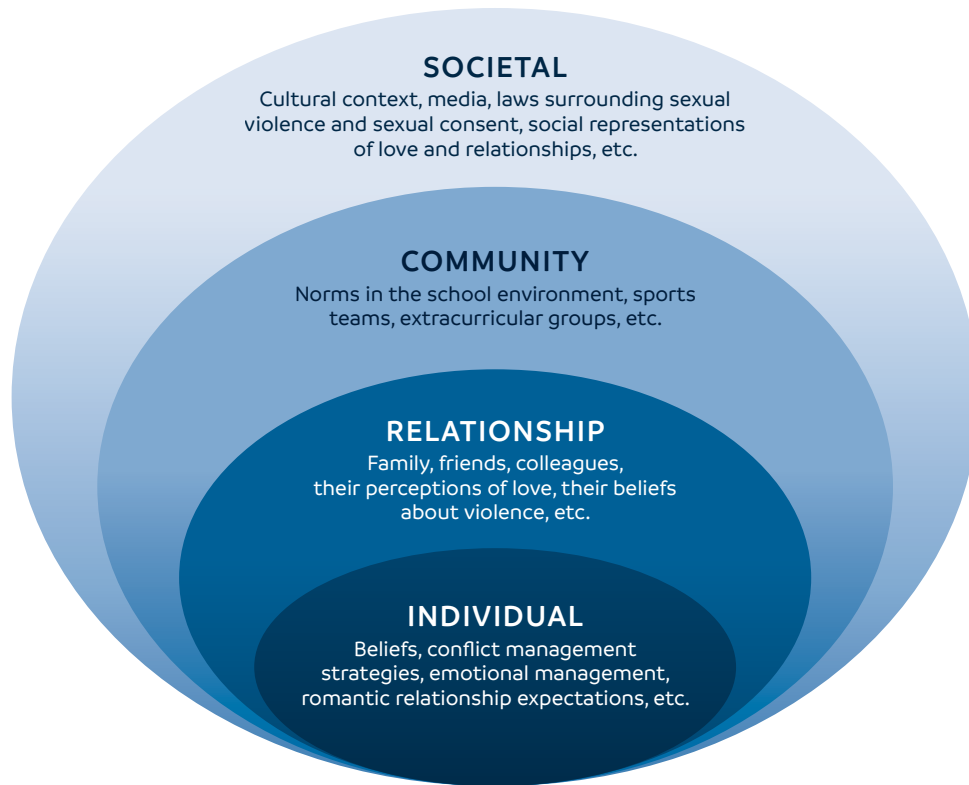
The purpose of this training is to provide you with the tools to support you in your daily interactions with teenagers.

Why the SPARX program was created

Relationships and intimacy are an important part of teenagers’ lives. Through their experiences, teenagers learn to define their needs, assert their limits, negotiate daily conflicts, and establish a balance between the different spheres of their lives. However, the pressures that teenagers face, such as social pressures, can lead them to tolerate inappropriate actions and want to maintain a relationship at all costs.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to dating violence. This issue is complex and multidetermined. The social-ecological model identifies the various risk and protective factors that may play a role in this problem. This model also shows that different interventions at all levels of the model can help prevent violence.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACCORDING TO THE SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL



Through your ability to change the school environment around teenagers and provide support, you play a critical role in preventing teen dating violence.



REFLECTION QUESTION

From your own perspective, how would you describe your role in relation to teenagers' romantic and intimate relationships? And in relation to teen dating violence?

Why talk about positive romantic and intimate relationships with teenagers?



REFLECTION QUESTION

Why do you think it is important to talk to teenagers about positive romantic and intimate relationships?

Romantic and intimate relationships are among the most common issues of concern during adolescence.

Talking about them with teenagers can:

- Help them gradually define what a positive romantic relationship is for them;
- Dispel myths, misconceptions, and unrealistic ideas about relationships;
- Convey positive messages about relationships and sexuality;
- Prevent the occurrence of violence in teen relationships;
- Break the cycle of violence if it is present;
- Answer their questions on the subject.



LESSON 2

POSITIVE ROMANTIC AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

➤ The foundations of a positive romantic and intimate relationship

According to more than 8,000 Quebec teenagers who participated in the Youths' Romantic Relationships Survey, the three words most often associated with a positive romantic experience are:



Love, Trust and Happiness.



REFLECTION QUESTION

What are your first impressions of the 3 words most often mentioned by the teenagers?



REFLECTION QUESTION

Based on what you observe with teenagers, what words should be added to this word cloud?



Not all teenagers will have romantic and intimate experiences during adolescence, **but it is important for them to learn relationship skills in order to develop and maintain positive relationships in a timely manner.**

A positive relationship is generally based on mutual respect, trust and communication between partners. The definition of a positive relationship may vary from person to person and over the course of a lifetime, but a positive relationship makes partners feel good and in tune with their values.



LESSON 3

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Dispelling certain myths about violence

Key points to remember:

- **Dating violence is a very real issue** and is particularly prevalent in adolescence.
- **Violence is rarely experienced in isolation;** rather, the dynamics of violence between partners tend to be sustained over time.
- **Psychological violence is often the first form of violence used between partners,** but it is also the most trivialized by teenagers, who often confuse it with the expression of feelings such as jealousy.
- **The concept of sexual consent is not always well understood by teenagers,** which can lead to sexual violence between partners and the non-recognition of this form of violence.
- **All forms of violence are associated with negative impacts** on teenagers' lives, whether they are visible or not.
- **Boys, as well as teenagers with previous experiences of victimization,** feel less able to seek help for violence in their relationships.
- **Teen dating violence is a social issue:** as members of the school staff, you have not only the power, but also the responsibility to act and support teenagers who are experiencing violence.

The different forms of violence



REFLECTION QUESTION

In your opinion, how is teen dating violence defined?

Behaviours and words that lead to controlling the other person and taking power over the relationship are considered violence. In romantic and intimate relationships, violence can take three main forms:



Psychological violence

A series of contemptuous and humiliating attitudes and words, such as threatening, insulting or ridiculing, controlling the other person or trying to make them jealous.

- *This form of violence is often trivialized, in particular because it does not result in visible physical injury. Nevertheless, it leaves traces and has consequences for teenagers.*



Sexual violence

Acts, gestures or words related to sexuality that are committed, threatened or attempted against a person without their consent, such as kissing or touching without consent, insisting, threatening or blackmailing for sexual activity.

- *Lack of knowledge about sexual consent makes this form of abuse more difficult for teenagers to recognize.*



Physical violence

Physical violence includes pushing, slapping or hitting, throwing an object or using physical force to control.

- *This is the most easily observed form of violence, but all forms of violence can have consequences, whether they are visible or not.*

Contexts in which violence occurs

Violence in teenagers' relationships can occur in a variety of contexts. Because violence often occurs in conflict situations, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish violent behaviours from those that reflect difficulties in resolving a disagreement. The presence of violence can be recognized by the use of strategies to scare, hurt, manipulate or control one's partner.

The use of technology is another context in which violence in teenagers' romantic and intimate relationships can occur. Cyberviolence is the use of various technologies to control, monitor, humiliate, threaten or isolate one's partner.

Statistics on violence



58% of teenagers

Data from the Youths' Romantic Relationships Survey revealed that **over half of teenagers report having experienced at least one episode of violence** in their romantic relationship in the past 12 months.

Overall, **girls report more episodes of dating violence than boys**. This distinction is particularly pronounced with respect to sexual violence.

Some teenagers are at greater risk of experiencing teen dating violence, **including sexually diverse youth and teenagers who have experienced child maltreatment**.

Psychological violence is the form of violence most reported by young victims.

Half of teenagers who experience violence in their relationship **are still experiencing it 6 months later**.

As members of the school staff, you can help break the cycle of violence by promoting positive romantic and intimate relationships among teenagers.

Is this relationship positive?



REFLECTION QUESTION

*How do we know if a relationship is not positive for the partners?
What are the signs that can help us become aware of this?*

There are no universal signs that confirm that a relationship is unhealthy or violent, but there are signs that can indicate when something is wrong.

When a relationship is not working out, teenagers may feel that:

- They are not good/attractive/smart/interesting enough for their partner;
- Their partner has a hold or control over them, in particular through hurtful remarks;
- They have to ask permission to do activities or see their friends;
- They have changed for their partner, they no longer recognize themselves;
- All the difficulties in the relationship are their fault;
- Their relationship brings more distress than well-being;
- They are afraid of their partner's potential reactions.

As members of the school staff, if you suspect that a teenager is experiencing violence, you have the power to encourage them to reflect on their perceptions and feelings about their relationship, in order to point out the warning signs that may indicate that their relationship is not positive.

Mutual violence

Violence can be initiated by only one of the partners, or it can alternate between them. When this happens, it is referred to as a mutual or bidirectional violence dynamic, regardless of the form of violence used by each partner. However, self-defence against violence is not considered mutual violence, as this does not involve initiating the violence. The dynamics of mutual violence must be taken seriously, as episodes of violence tend to be more severe than in situations where only one partner is the initiator.



LESSON 4

KEY ELEMENTS OF INTERVENTION WITH TEENAGERS

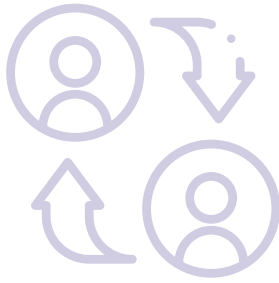
Factors that facilitate communication with teenagers



REFLECTION QUESTION

What is your most important takeaway from the two accounts presented?

*What are your skills as a teacher or a member of school personnel?
How can these skills be useful in your interactions with teenagers?*



Several factors can facilitate discussions about romantic and intimate relationships with teenagers:

- > Open-mindedness and non-judgment
- > Respect for people and differences (being inclusive)
- > Ability to relate well to teenagers
- > Ability to adapt language and attitude
- > Ability to talk with teenagers
- > Ability to listen
- > Empathy and kindness
- > Ability to reassure
- > Authenticity in dealing with teenagers

The skills that school staff members have in their teaching, support and mentoring roles with teenagers can also be valuable resources for discussing intimate issues with them.

Colleagues can also be a valuable resource for tips and advice, as well as for sharing experiences and identifying other avenues for intervention with teenagers.



LESSON 5

HOW TO ANSWER TEENAGERS' QUESTIONS?

What lies behind teenagers' questions

Through their questions, teenagers may also express underlying needs; therefore, looking beyond the initial question can help us identify these needs.

NEED

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE

To have access to accurate and developmentally appropriate information

Provide the information requested or assist the teenager in their search.

> *This is a very interesting question... from what I know of...*

To be reassured or have their questions or concerns validated

Be reassuring, especially by mentioning that many teenagers are wondering the same thing.

> *I understand your concerns; it can't be easy to ask yourself these questions.*

To get approval, advice or guidance from someone else

Assist the teenager in their reflection so they can find their own answers.

> *This question involves personal choices that are yours to make; what do you think of...?*

To provoke, make others react or get attention (group setting)




Reframe the language as needed and turn the question back to the group.

> *Are you (others in the group) concerned about this issue as well?*

▶ Answering teenagers' questions step by step

Here are some recommended steps that can help you answer teenagers' questions. These steps are general guidelines that can be adapted to your reality. Keep in mind that the reception and transfer stages may be the only steps that you need to apply if you are short on time or don't feel comfortable taking action. These two stages are sufficient for an intervention.

The reception stage is particularly important: it can be difficult for a teenager to ask a question or for help, and a positive reception will allow them to feel validated and heard. The teenager will realize that coming to you was a good decision.

STAGES	STEPS
 RECEPTION	<p>Welcome them and thank them for their trust in you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>You did the right thing by coming to me.</i> > <i>Thank you for coming to me with your question.</i> <p>Validate the emotions expressed / Help identify the emotions experienced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>You say that it stresses you out to _____. It's normal that this causes you to feel stressed.</i> > <i>You say that you're confused about all this... What do you mean by "confused"?</i> > <i>And you, how do you feel about it? Are you worried about anything?</i>
 ACTION	<p>Turn the question back to the teenager</p> <p>It is usually at this stage that we can better identify the need behind the question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>You asked me if _____ What do you think?</i> > <i>What makes you ask this question?</i> > <i>If a friend asked you this question, what would you say?</i> <p>Encourage personal reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>What do you think you should do?</i> > <i>Which strategies have you tried so far? What has worked?</i> > <i>What would happen if _____?</i> > <i>What is most important to you regarding _____?</i>
 TRANSFER	<p>Refer to resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>In addition to talking to me about the situation, do you know other people who could help you?</i> > <i>Do you know the organization _____? If you want, I can go through the process with you if you'd like their help.</i> > <i>Let me find some resources that may help you and I'll get back to you quickly.</i>

4. What self-reflection questions could you ask Sophie?

5. Does this situation require you to refer Sophie to someone? To whom/what type of resource?

Examples of possible responses in this situation:

STAGES

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION OF THE STEPS



RECEPTION

Welcome them and thank them for their trust in you

"You did the right thing by talking to me about it / Thank you for coming to me with your question / I understand, it's completely normal to feel sad when someone leaves you... Breakups are hard."

Validate the emotions expressed / Help identify the emotions

"I understand that the breakup makes you sad and that you cry a lot; what makes you saddest about the situation? / Besides sadness, does the breakup make you feel other emotions?"



ACTION

Turn the question around and build on their strengths

"On your end, what do you think you can do to feel better?"

Encourage personal reflection

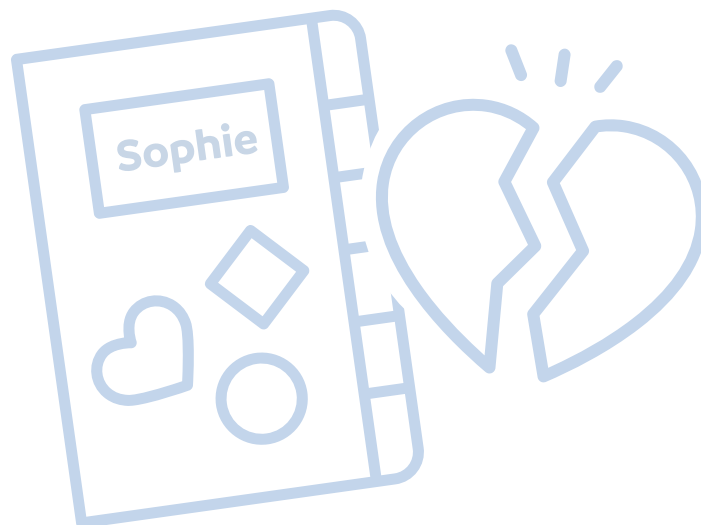
"What has helped you in the past when you've gone through difficult times?"



TRANSFER

Refer to resources




"Are there people in your life who are there for you? Would you like to talk about it with a counsellor?"



4. *What self-reflection questions could you ask Arthur?*

5. *Does this situation require you to refer Arthur to someone? To whom/what type of resource?*

Examples of possible responses in this situation:

STAGES	EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION OF THE STEPS
 RECEPTION	<p>Welcome them and thank them for their trust in you <i>"This situation you're telling me about is a difficult one. It took courage to share it with me, so thank you for taking the decision to do so."</i></p> <p>Validate the emotions expressed / Help identify the emotions <i>"You say you'd like to help your girlfriend, but how do you feel in all this?"</i></p>
 ACTION	<p>Turn the question around and build on their strengths <i>"How do you think you can help her?"</i></p>
 TRANSFER	<p>Refer to resources <i>"Do you know the organization _____? They are well equipped to help you. If you want, I can go through the process with you if you'd like their help."</i></p>

The need for information and questions asked in a group setting

When a teenager seems to only need factual information on a topic, it is still important to validate the need, for example by asking the teenager why they are asking this question or if they have any concerns. If the need for information appears to be the only one, you can simply answer the question or use the transfer to resources stage.

For questions asked in a group setting, the reception stage and the question approach can also be used, namely by turning the question asked back to the group: "Thanks for your question, that's really interesting. Group, what do you think?" If you feel that the question is not appropriate for a group setting, thank the teenager for the question, explain that you will talk about it together later, and engage the group in a new discussion.



LESSON 6

HOW TO REACT WHEN A TEENAGER CONFIDES IN YOU

How to react when someone confides in you

“In May, my boyfriend stopped being nice to me... Lie after lie. Negative words on top of negative words. Small bruise on top of small bruise... What do I do?” (Girl, age 14)



REFLECTION QUESTION

Faced with this confidence, what would be your first reactions?

As a significant adult, your reactions are crucial when a teenager confides in you. A teenager confiding in you in a group setting can be tricky. When you are planning to discuss sensitive issues in a group setting, be sure to tell a school counsellor so that you can seek immediate support if needed. As with questions asked in a group setting, you can acknowledge what they shared and tell them that you will talk about it later: "What you just said is important, and I'd like to talk about it together after class."

Helpful attitudes and reactions... and those to avoid

Some attitudes are more helpful than others when it comes to reacting when a teenager confides in you.



ATTITUDES TO PRIORITIZE

- > Believing the teenager
- > Emphasizing the teenager's courage in talking about it
- > Thanking the teenager for their trust in you
- > Validating their emotions and alleviating their feelings of guilt
- > Directing the teenager to resources
- > Being available, while respecting the teenager's pace and your own limits
- > Reminding the teenager that your door is always open, if needed



ATTITUDES TO AVOID

- > Minimizing the severity of the experiences
- > Setting the teenager's experience aside
- > Putting the responsibility back on the teenager
- > Telling the teenager how they should have acted
- > Avoiding the topic and ending the conversation
- > Asking questions to find out all the details of the situation
- > Telling the teenager all the specific steps to take
- > Promising to keep the secret



LESSON 7

CONCLUSION



REFLECTION QUESTION

As a result of your participation in this training, how would you describe your role in relation to teenagers' romantic and intimate relationships? And in relation to teen dating violence?

What should you take away from this training?

- You play an essential role in teenagers' lives;
- You have an important support role with the teenagers you work with;
- You have the skills to talk to teenagers about positive romantic and intimate relationships and teen dating violence;
- You can make a difference in teenagers' lives when it comes to romantic and intimate relationships, just as you do in other areas of their lives;
- However, you are not alone in achieving this goal; remember that your individual actions are part of a set of strategies that are in place to equip and support teenagers.

LIST OF RESOURCES

Suicide prevention

Centre de prévention du suicide

For suicidal persons, those close to them and suicide-bereaved persons

- Phone (24h/7 days): **1-866-277-3553**
- Website: www.cpsquebec.ca/en

Consult the resource list on the SPARX website.



Violence

Need Help Now

For teen victims of cyberbullying or those who want to stop the spread of sexual pictures or videos

- Website: www.NeedHelpNow.ca

SOS violence conjugale

For people who are victims of intimate partner violence or those affected by this issue

- Phone (24h/7 days): **1-800-363-9010**
- Text: **438-601-1211**
- Website: www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca/en

Sexual Violence Helpline

For victims of sexual abuse and those close to them

- Phone (24h/7 days): **1-888-933-9007**
- Website: www.sexualviolencehelpline.ca

CALACS

Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel

For victims of recent or past sexual abuse, their family members and close friends

- Website: www.rqcalacs.qc.ca
(to find the nearest CALACS)

CAVAC

Crime Victims Assistance Centre

Services for crime victims or witnesses and those close to them

- Phone: **1-866-532-2822**
(free and confidential)
- Website: www.cavac.qc.ca/en

AVIF

Action sur la violence et intervention familiale

For teenagers who want to stop controlling and violent behaviors

- Phone: **450-692-7313**
- Email: avif@bellnet.ca
- Website: www.avif.ca
(in French only)

Option

For people who want to stop violent behavior in their marital and family life

- Phone: **514-527-1657**
- Website: www.optionalternative.org
(in French only, bilingual services)

Centre d'intervention en délinquance sexuelle

For teenagers and adults who have committed sexual infractions or have deviant sexual fantasies without taking action

- Téléphone: **579 641-3941**
- Site: www.cidslaval.com

Mental and physical health

Info-Santé & Info-Social

For people with a non-urgent health issue

- Phone (24 h/7 days): **811**
- Website: www.quebec.ca/en/health/finding-a-resource/info-sante-811

Tel-jeunes

For all topics that affect youth under the age of 20, services offered by phone, text and online chat

- Phone (24 h/7 days): **1-800-263-2266**
- Text (8 am to 10:30 pm): **514-600-1002**
- Website: www.teljeunes.com

Kids Help Phone

For youth across Canada, services by phone or text

- Phone (24 h/7 days): **1-800-668-6868**
- Text: **Text CONNECT to 686868**
- Website: kidshelpphone.ca

Deuil-Jeunesse

For people living with severe illness or bereavement of a loved one, abandonment or adoption

- Phone: **1-855-889-3666**
- Website: www.deuiljeunesse.com
(in French only, bilingual services)

PIaMP

For minors that exchange sexual services for any type of remuneration

- Phone: **514-284-1267**
- Website: www.piamp.net
(in French only, bilingual services)

Relief

For people living with anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder, as well as their loved ones

- Phone: **1-866-738-4873**
- Website: www.myrelief.ca

Phobies Zéro

For people affected by anxiety, isolation, stress or obsessive-compulsive disorder

- Phone (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 9 pm): **1-866-922-0002**
- Website: www.phobies-zero.qc.ca
(in French only)

ANEB

For people who suffer from an eating disorder and their loved ones

- Phone (8 am to 3 am): **1-800-630-0907**
- Text (11 am to 8 pm): **1-800-630-0907**
- Website: www.anebados.com/en

Tel-Aide

For anyone who suffers from loneliness or stress, is emotionally distressed or angry, or wishes to confide in someone who will listen without judgment

- Phone (24 h/7 days): **514-935-1101**
- Website: www.telaide.org/en

Avant de craquer

Network of organizations offering services to people living with mental health problems and their loved ones

- Phone: **1-855-272-7837**
- Website: www.avantdecraquer.com
(in French only)

Sexual and gender diversity

AlterHéros

Information on sexual, gender and neuro diversity

- Email: intervention@alterheros.com
- Website: alterheros.com/en

Interligne

Services for people concerned with sexual and gender diversity

- Phone: **1-888-505-1010**
- Website: interligne.co/en

Project 10

For Montreal youth between 14 and 25 years old who identify with the 2LGBTQ+ community or are questioning their sexual and gender identity

- Phone: **514-989-4585**
- Website: www.p10.qc.ca

Centre de solidarité lesbienne

For people who identify as lesbian, trans or nonbinary and are victims or perpetrators of intimate partner violence

- Phone: **514-526-2452**
- Website: www.solidaritelesbienne.qc.ca (in French only)

Parenthood

LigneParents

Provides support and information to parents by phone, text, email or online chat

- Phone (24 h/7 days): 1-800-361-5085
- Website: www.ligneparents.com (in French only, bilingual services)

Première Ressource

For any questions on parenting and parent-child relationships, support for parents on their parenting journey, and help with challenges related to schooling, by phone, email or online chat

- Phone: **1-866-329-4223**
- Email: consultation@premiereressource.com
- Website: www.premiereressource.com/en

Pregnancy

SOS Grossesse

For people who have questions related to contraception, pregnancy or termination of pregnancy

- Phone (7 days/9 am to 9 pm): **1-877-662-9666**
- Website: www.sosgrossesse.ca (in French only, bilingual services)

Grossesse-Secours

For questions about pregnancy or any related subjects, by phone or online chat

- Phone (Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm): 1-877-271-0555
- Online chat (Monday to Friday 9 am to 4:30 pm, Wednesdays 6 pm to 9 pm)
- Website: www.grossesse-secours.org (in French only)

Substance abuse and addiction

Drugs: Help and Referral

For people concerned by substance use and addiction

- Phone (24h/7 days): **1-800-265-2626**
- Website: www.aidedrogue.ca/en

Runaways

En marge 12-17

For youth aged 12 to 17 years old that have run away from home or are homeless, as well as parents affected by their runaway child or by their street activities

- Phone: **514-849-7117**
- Website: www.enmarge1217.ca (in French only, bilingual services)

Academic disengagement

Revdec

For youth aged 12 to 16 years old at risk of dropping out of school or who have dropped out of school, as well as for parents and people who are under 25 years old and pregnant

- Phone for youth 12-16 years old: **514-259-0634**
- Phone for parents and pregnant people under 25 years old: **514-899-5499**
- Website: **www.revdec.org**
(in French only, bilingual services)

Legal advice

Young Bar of Montreal

Offers youth aged 12 to 21 the opportunity to ask volunteer lawyers legal questions (free and confidential)

- Phone: **514-954-3446**
- Email: **servicesprobono@ajbm.qc.ca**
- Website: **www.ajbm.qc.ca/en**

Juripop

For people who need legal advice, assistance or information at reduced rates (legal services are free for victims of sexual violence)

- Phone: 1-855-587-4767
- Website: **www.juripop.org/en**

Inform'elle

For people seeking free legal information about family law

- Phone: **1-877-443-8221**
- Website: **www.informelle.osbl.ca**
(in French only)

Licensed professionals

OPQ

Ordre des psychologues du Québec – Psychologists

- Phone: **1-800-561-1223**
- Website: **www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/english**

OPSQ

Ordre professionnel des sexologues du Québec – Sexologists

- Phone: 1-855-386-6777
- Website: **www.opsq.org**
(in French only)

OPPQ

Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec – Psychoeducators

- Phone: **1-877-913-6601**
- Website: **www.ordrepsed.qc.ca**
(in French only)

OTSTCFQ

Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec – Social workers and marriage and family therapists

- Phone: **1-888-731-9420**
- Website: **www.otstcfq.org**
(in French only)

OPCQ

Ordre professionnel des criminologues du Québec – Criminologists

- Phone: **1-844-437-6727**
- Website: **www.ordreccrim.ca**
(in French only)

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Thank you for your participation
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