

**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
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# **TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS**

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# **TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS BY SOFIE HANSEN**



Toxic relationships are far too common. Take these statistics, for instance:

- 60% of people who have been in relationships report that it was toxic.
- 1.5 million high schoolers have reported being in a physically abusive relationship.
- 76% of high schoolers have reported being in an emotionally abusive relationship.

One of the most prominent issues relating to toxic relationships in high school is the usage of social media. On social media it is easy for older men to prey on young people, especially the people that they consider vulnerable or at risk. This process is called grooming, and it affects a lot of young people. A majority of these relationships are extremely toxic as the groomers main way of keeping the teen under their control is through manipulation. They target minority youths because in the groomers mind it is easier to manipulate them and make them their victims. Social media plays a big role in this as it makes it easier for the groomers to have access to the teens. This has been exacerbated by Snapchat's new feature, Snapchat+, if a person chooses to use this feature then they have full access to see where their friends have been in the last 24 hours. It is important that if you or someone you know has Snapchat they should turn their location off using the settings in order to protect their privacy from groomers and other people who are looking to control them.

Another major thing to keep in mind when talking about toxic relationships is how romanticized they are by hollywood. In movies and books the trope of being in a toxic relationship that then ends in a situation where the feminine character fixes them can be seen very often. This creates an unrealistic narrative in teenagers' brains, it should be emphasized that this trope is not realistic and it should not be expected in anyone's life. A celebrity who has made it clear that toxic relationships should not be entertained or normalized is Demi Lovato. This conversation has been sparked recently because Lovato just released a song titled 29, the song addresses her relationship with Wilmer Valderrama who was 29 while Lovato was 17. In the song Lovato addresses how wrong the relationship was and how inappropriate it was for a 29 year old to be dating a 17 year old, this song is used to show young people that relationships that have a big and inappropriate age gap should be a major red flag.

If you or somebody you know is in a toxic relationship it is not too late to get out of it. A relationship that is toxic can also lead to physical abuse and the relationship should be ended before it gets to that point. There are many resources for people who are in a toxic relationship such as counseling and a website called the hotline. This site has resources such as: hotlines, safety plans, local solutions, as well as help identifying abuse.