

# Teaching Considerations

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Using the themes of power, control, abuse and respect exemplified in literature to facilitate classroom discussion and reflection about healthy, non-violent relationships may not be a familiar instructional approach. Below are considerations for integrating the *Lessons from Literature* program into your core literature curriculum.

## Grow Your Awareness

In getting ready to teach *Lessons from Literature*, it's important to develop your *own* awareness of the dynamics and impacts of physical, verbal and sexual abuse so that you are confident and prepared to address these issues in the classroom.

- The *Lessons from Literature* website offers preparation materials and information to help get you started. We strongly encourage you to review the online sections entitled [Getting Ready to Teach](#) and [About the Program](#).
- Be a model of respect and empathy.
- Handle delicate situations carefully and without judgment.

## Create a Safe and Respectful Classroom

Before addressing the topics of abuse and violence, it's important to work toward creating a classroom environment that is conducive to open and respectful dialogue.

- Be sure to establish clear ground rules for student interactions. You may choose to have students sign a pledge to demonstrate their commitment to these rules.
- Remember that *you* know your students best. When planning class discussions and activities, consider their maturity level. Some topics may be better addressed at a later time.

## Know Your Resources

There is no doubt that the sensitive topics of relationship abuse and violence should be approached with care. Talk with school administrators and counselors to learn about policies regarding harassment, abuse and physical and sexual violence. Be aware of the mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher. You may choose to communicate these legal requirements to your students.

## Get Help When Needed

If you suspect a student is in an abusive or violent situation, be sure to take the proper steps to address the issue. Follow mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher, and be prepared to refer a student to the school counselor, a local resource, or emergency services if needed. Refer to [Responding to Relationship Abuse](#) on page 39 for teen abuse services and domestic violence agencies.

