

Protect yourself by knowing the signs

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talk to, you could be in trouble.

Unreasonable jealousy is also a sign. If you're asked (told) to stop talking to your friends, forbidden to be with other members of the opposite sex, or told to stop doing things and going places without them, you should definitely look for an exit.

Mrs. Miller explained that jealousy and nosiness go hand in hand with control. When your sweetheart tells you how to live your life, they probably aren't doing you any favors. "A common one is, 'Stop wearing makeup, you're beautiful without it,'" she said.

An ex-girlfriend/boyfriend may be able to tell you more about the person that you are dating, but take the information that you receive with a grain of salt, because an ex may hold old grudges and give you false details.

A whole list of people who tell you horror stories about your partner, though, is a definite red flag.

Some key things to remember are that abuse can be many things,

not just hitting. Abuse can be physical, sexual, or even emotional.

A common myth about abuse is that it is always male to female, but men can be abused by women, as well.

"Mostly boys come in because their girlfriends are insanely jealous, or control freaks," explained Mrs. Miller. She did stress however, that she has seen cases where the girl actually physically harmed the boy, or the two were mutually abusive to one another.

"I think that the boys are a little embarrassed at being abused by their girlfriends though, because of the role society places on them, so they aren't as likely to come in," she said.

According to Mrs. Miller, reported incidents of abuse within relationships at RCHS have risen within the last five years. Obviously, the problem isn't going away.

If you recognize any of these things in your relationship, please get help, and distance yourself from that person. No one ever hit someone because they loved them.

Dreams may mean more than you think

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"I had a dream that I was flying through my house...I landed on my couch. Then, I ran up stairs and jumped and I couldn't fly anymore," said senior Zach Pennix.

Experts say that flying dreams can signify a "top of the world" feeling or maybe rising above a struggle. However, there are some dreams that don't seem to have any

meaning at all.

Sophomore Elizabeth Matekovich once dreamt she was being chased through the mall by the Trix rabbit and he was throwing cereal at her.

"Maybe it means not to eat cereal?" said Matekovich.

So do dreams really hold mysterious answers to life? Perhaps we'll never know, but some students aren't very concerned with what these midnight visions are all

about. Senior Rachelle Hammond believes that dreams are overrated.

"Because it's a sense of false reality," said Hammond.

Maybe so, but humanity will always be trying to decipher dreams to find some sort of meaning in a very stressful and strange world.



Black and Blue doesn't deserve a beating

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Harsh. But, why change something so good? Obviously the "Backstreet formula" has worked in the past. The group is smart not to change too much. Their mix of lovey-dovey ballads and jamming dance tunes seems to have worked great so far. And it's true that *Black and Blue* isn't much different.

The song slated to be the next single, "The Call", is an edgy rock song that teaches an interesting way to cheat on your girlfriend--tell her the battery on your cell phone is running low. "Get Another Boyfriend," "Shining Star," and "Every-one" (not to be confused with their earlier hit "Everybody") are all worthy dance tracks, as well.

The ballads that the Backstreet Boys are famous for still

exist in full force, too. First release "Shape of My Heart" is much the same as their mega-hit "I Want It That Way," but lacks the explosion the previous ballad caused. Other typical BSB love songs include "I Promise You (With Everything I Am)" and "More Than That", which will have every girl wanting to hook up with one of the Boys.

"Time", one song written by all five guys together, is a mellow song that talks about friendship through the test of time (hence the title). The ending track, "How Did I Fall in Love with You," closes the album with a soft love song about two best friends questioning the route of their feelings.

Black and Blue, a CD the group promoted in a 100-hour world tour, is a compilation of 13 songs (plus a bonus track if you buy it at Wal-Mart). The group is proud

of this album and feels it is a step up for them.

Member AJ McLean said in an interview with MTV, "...We wrote seven songs on this album, two of which were written by all five of us, as a group."

They also had a larger role in producing and deciding which songs were to be included on the final cut.

Overall, the latest album from these princes of pop, hasn't changed a great deal. But, that's ok--what they've always had is still working.

The Backstreet Boys have disproved the theory of a boy band's two-year life span. They've been together for eight. Backstreet's back alright and their album is still good stuff, no matter what the critics have to say.

Have a safe
and happy
holiday!

Terri, Sherry, and Dicie wish you a Merry Christmas from...



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