



#Orange4Love
#TeenSafeJFCS
#TalkAboutIt

Teen Dating Violence: Relationship Myths

*Did you know that sometimes things that sound like love are really about **manipulation and control?***

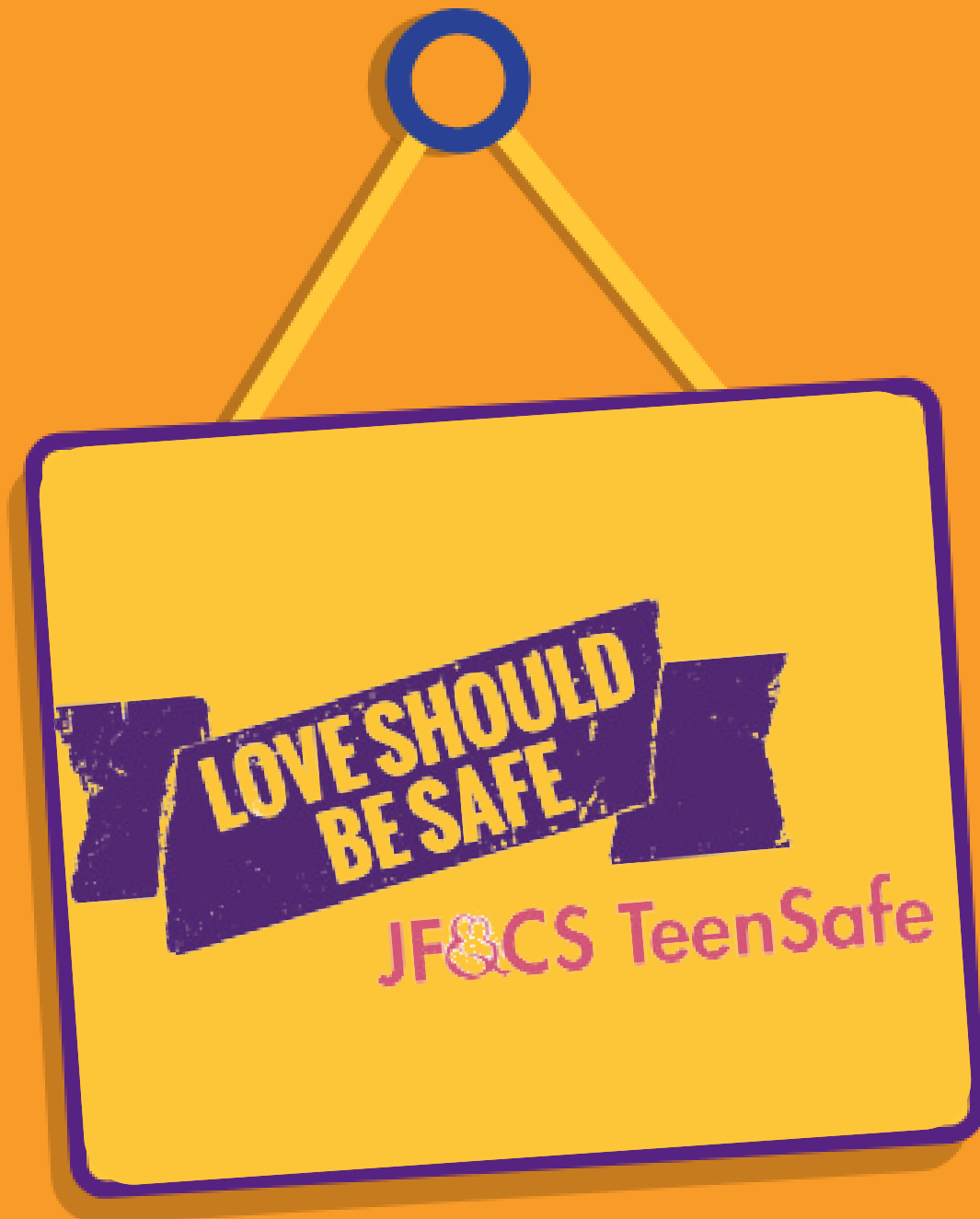
JF&CS
Jewish Family & Children's Service

The Sacrifice Myth

Love is about (or even requires) sacrificing everything else for your partner and your relationship.

Can Sound Like: "If you quit the team (school play, band, youth group, etc.), we'll have so much more time to spend together."

In healthy relationships, each person supports the other and encourages them to be their best selves. It's definitely important to intentionally set aside time to be together, but also to continue to devote time to people and activities outside of the relationship – and for each person to encourage the other to do the same.



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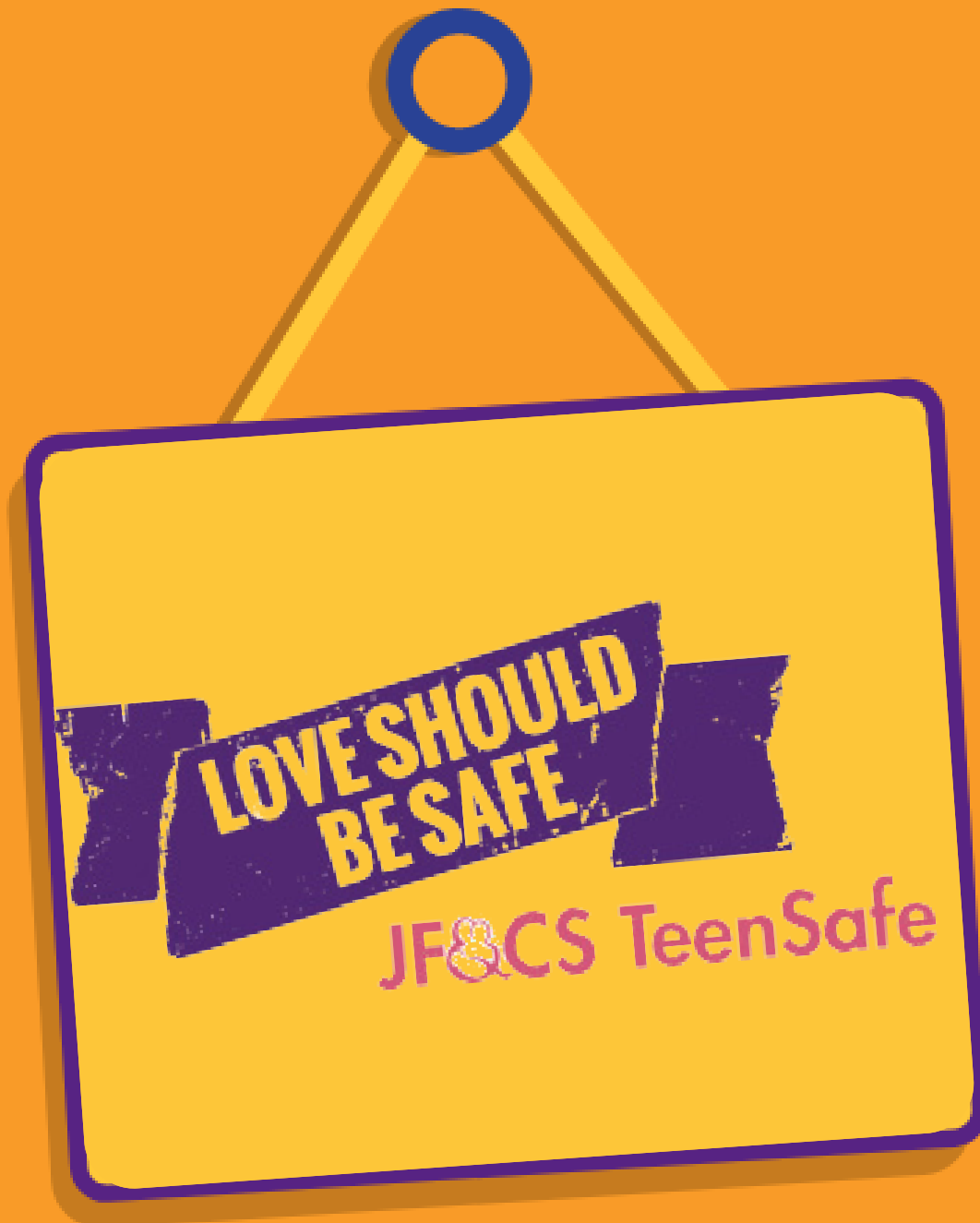
The Priorities Myth

If it's really love, your relationship with your partner should take priority over everyone and everything else.

Can Sound Like: "It's really important to me that when I call or text you, you answer right away. Just so I know that everything is okay. I get worried." **OR**

"I don't understand why you do (whatever) or spend time with (whomever) when we could be spending that time together."

Healthy relationships are balanced relationships and it's important that both people respect each other's commitments to family, school, friends, health (including sleep!) and other activities. How fast one person responds to a text or how quickly they answer a call is not an indicator of how fully committed they are to the person they are dating. Similarly, maintaining other relationships and continuing to be involved in other activities is not a sign that one person is less committed to the relationship than their partner.



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I Know What's Best for You Myth

If two people are dating, it's okay for one to pressure the other to stop doing certain things or spending time with other people that they don't approve of.

Can Sound Like: *"I think those friends aren't good for you to hang out with – you do crazy stuff when you are with them."*

It is definitely fine for one person to express concern if their partner regularly engages in self-harming or dangerous behavior, to support healthier and safer decisions and to assist their partner in seeking help in certain situations. However, controlling individuals often will create a false narrative that suggests or invents a problem or risk that doesn't really exist, making their partner feel like they can't spend time with other friends or decide to do anything other than spend time with their partner.

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**LOVE SHOULD
BE SAFE**

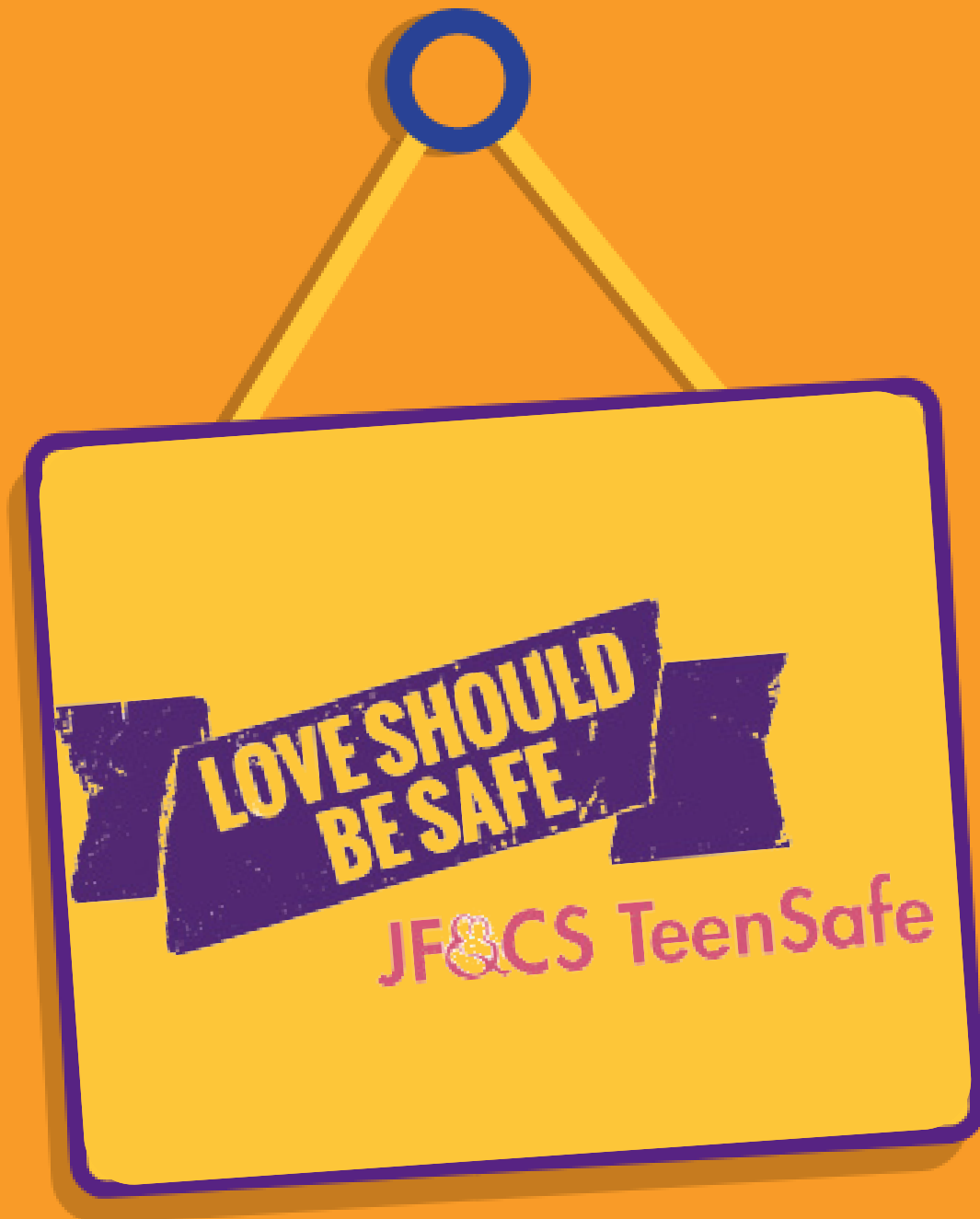
JF&CS TeenSafe

The Possession Myth

If you are in a relationship, it's okay to tell your partner to limit or eliminate time they spend with other people so that they don't wind up cheating or giving anyone the wrong idea.

Can Sound Like: "I don't understand why you keep talking to that kid in math class. We're together now. Why are you spending so much time with them?"

Jealousy and possessiveness are hallmarks of unhealthy – and controlling or abusive – relationships. Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect and communication. When one person agrees to get into a relationship with another person, they don't become that person's possession. Everyone should be able to maintain or begin friendships with people of all genders without having to reassure their partner repeatedly that there's nothing going on with anyone else.



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No Secrets Myth

When people are really in love, they shouldn't keep secrets from each other.

Can Sound Like: "Why can't I see your texts? Love is supposed to be about trust. Don't you trust me? (Or: What are you hiding?)"

Having boundaries and expecting some privacy is not about keeping secrets. Being in a relationship with someone does not mean that they are entitled to access to their partner's phone, email, social media, texts, journal or any other private spaces. What one person shares or doesn't share with their partner is not a reflection of how committed that person is to their partner or the relationship. Turning over their phone or passwords should not be a "loyalty test" anyone has to pass to stay in a relationship.



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Loyalty Myth

If you are really serious about your relationship and your partner is feeling insecure, you should do what that person asks (or demands) so that they understand how committed you really are.

Can Sound Like: "You would if you really cared about me."

We know that this myth sounds pretty clearly wrong when you say it out loud. But this kind of loyalty pressure is common and it's easy for someone to get caught in the trap of trying to prove their love so that the other person will finally stop worrying and feel okay. The problem is that when a person is manipulative and controlling, they often will continue to apply pressure like this to get what they want and keep their partner working hard to demonstrate their total commitment to the relationship.



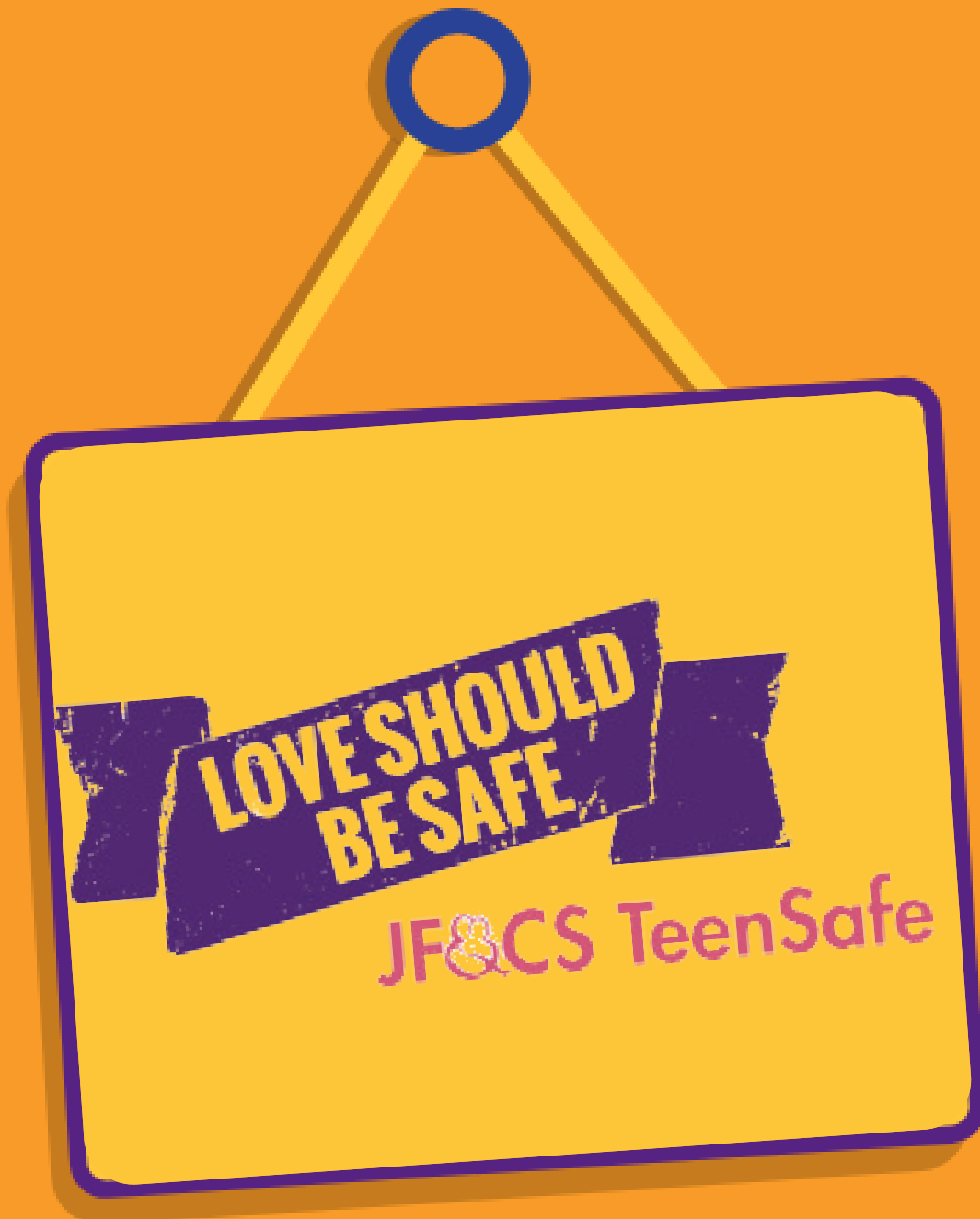
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The Compromises Myth

To be sure that a relationship is balanced, each person needs to compromise about everything they don't agree on.

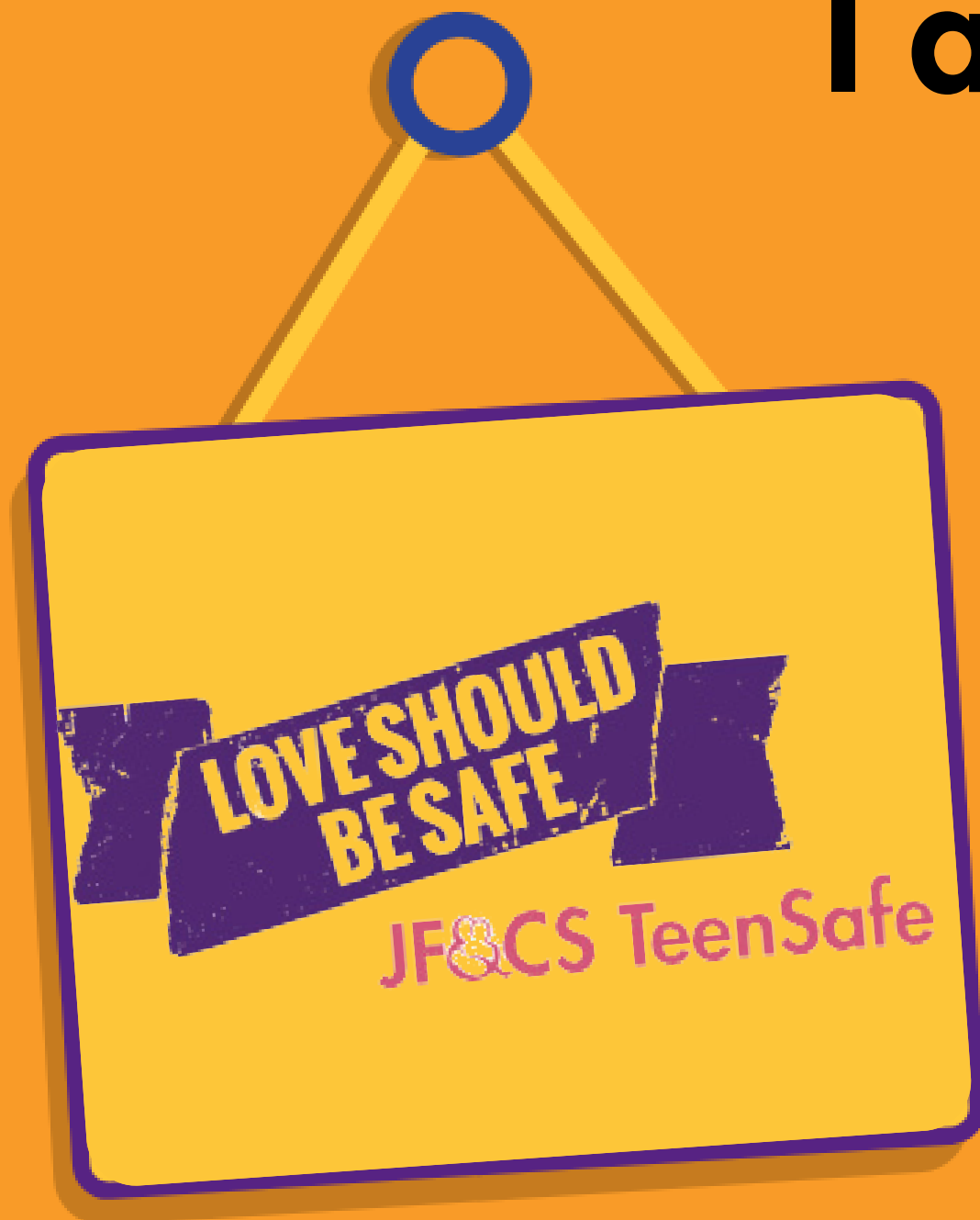
Can Sound Like: "I know that you don't ride on Shabbat. But we said we would go for a walk in a new place today and I found this really great path. It's too far to walk. It's really beautiful there and anyway, we'll be careful and no one will find out that you rode in a car this afternoon."

Yes, compromise is important in every relationship. But that doesn't mean that people in relationships have to shift their personal boundaries or compromise on core beliefs or values. In a healthy relationship, if one person is, for example, more or differently religiously observant than the other, it's important that they both respect each other's practices without pressure or judgement.



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I am Nothing Without You Myth/ You are the Only One Who Understands Me Myth



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Can Sound Like: "I don't know what I would do if we broke up."

When one person tells their partner that they can't live without them or that only they make life worthwhile, it is – simply put – too much for any one person to carry alone. It's important for both people in that relationship to find a trusted adult to talk to in order to get support and help. Sometimes, however, the controlling person is actually using a not-so-veiled threat about what might happen if their partner initiates a break-up. In that case, if that person's partner is indeed considering ending the relationship, it's important for them to find a trusted adult to speak with about planning for their own physical safety and emotional well-being during and after the break-up.