

Advice to pregnant teen ends in tragedy

DEAR ABBY: I am extremely shaken by a recent experience. My daughter, "Mary," is almost 18 and in the 12th grade. She has always come to me to talk about what's going on in her life.

A few months ago, Mary told me about a terrible situation concerning one of her classmates. "Jill" had just learned that she was pregnant and was frantic. She told Mary that she couldn't tell her parents because she was afraid of a violent reaction.

Mary was so worried about Jill that she came to me for help. After hearing the story, I encouraged my daughter to tell Jill to talk to her parents. I never imagined what would happen next.

I knew from things Mary had said that Jill's parents were hard on her, but I didn't know the extent of her problems at home. When Jill took my advice and told her parents she was pregnant, her father beat her so badly she ended up in the hospital and lost the baby.

Abby, you can't imagine how terrible I feel about this. Jill will never be the same, and I feel I am to blame.

I hope you will share this letter with other concerned parents and give your thoughts on this heart-wrenching problem. — **SHOCKED AND SADDENED IN SHERMAN OAKS, CALIF.**

DEAR SHOCKED: Please stop



**JEANNE
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being so hard on yourself. You advised your daughter's friend to do what most other parents would have. What you failed to take into consideration was the fact that many teens live in homes where there is violence, abuse, drug problems and incest.

A year ago here in California, there was an attempt to legislate "parental notification" into law. Fortunately, it was voted down. It's teens like your daughter's friend who would have been harmed by this kind of law. They certainly cannot go to their parents — and I have never believed that the law can successfully force this kind of communication with the home.

Of course parents want their children — regardless of age — to come to them if there is a crisis. Those who don't usually have a good reason for not doing so. I'm glad you wrote to me. Your sad story is a lesson for other well-meaning adults.

JEANNE PHILLIPS writes "Dear Abby" under the pseudonym Abigail Van Buren.