

Healthy, Unhealthy & Abusive Relationships

(understanding relationships)

Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
<p>A healthy relationship means that both partners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively communicating: They talk openly about problems and listen to one another. They respect each other's opinions. • Respectful and kind: They value each other as they are and treat each other with respect and kindness. • Trusting: They believe what their partner has to say. They do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness. • Honest: They are honest with each other but can still keep some things private. • Sharing decision-making: They make decisions together and hold each other to the same standard. • Enjoying personal time: They enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. They respect each other's need for time apart. • Making mutual sexual choices: They talk openly about sexual and reproductive choices together. Both partners willingly consent to sexual activity and can safely discuss what they are and are not comfortable with. • Economic/financial partners: Partners discuss and make decisions about finances together. Both partners have access to the resources they need. • Engaging in supportive parenting: Both partners are able to parent in a way they feel comfortable with. They communicate together about the needs of their child(ren), as well as the needs of the parents. • Experiencing emotional connection: Both partners feel safe and experience intimacy and emotional connection. <p><i>(National Domestic Violence Hotline Relationship Spectrum)</i></p>	<p>A couple may be in an unhealthy relationship if one or both partners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffectively communicating: When problems arise, they fight or don't discuss them at all. • Disrespectful: One or both partners are not considerate of the other. • Not trusting: One partner doesn't believe what the other says or feels entitled to invade their partner's privacy. • Dishonest: One or more partner tells lies. • Trying to take control: One partner feels their desires and choices are more important. • Only spending time with their partner: One partner's community is the only one both socialize in. • Pressured by the other into sexual activity: One partner uses pressure or guilt on the other to have sex or do anything sexual at any point. • Ignoring a partner's boundaries: It is assumed that only one partner is responsible for making informed decisions. • Unequal economically: Finances are not discussed, and it is assumed only one partner is in charge of finances or makes decisions without input from the other partner. • Experiencing emotional distance or significant conflict: One partner does not feel emotionally close to the other. There is a lack of intimacy and connection and/or a high level of conflict. 	<p>Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates harmfully: Communicates in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demeaning. • Mistreats the other: One partner does not respect the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other. • Accuses the other of cheating or having an affair when it's not true: The accuser may hurt the other in a physical or verbal way as a result. • Denies that the abusive actions are abuse: An abusive partner may try to blame the other for the harm they're doing, make excuses for abusive actions or minimize the abusive behavior. • Controls the other: There is no equality in the relationship. One partner makes all decisions for the couple without the other's input. • Isolates the other partner: One partner controls where the other one goes and who they talk to. They may isolate their partner from family and friends. • Forces sexual activity or pregnancy: One partner forces the other to have sex or do anything their partner doesn't want to do sexually at any point. In relationships where pregnancy is a physical possibility, one partner may force the other to become pregnant. • Exerts economic control: One partner controls the money and access to resources. Having an open dialogue about finances is not an option. This may include preventing a partner from earning an income or not allowing a partner access to their own income. • Engages in manipulative parenting: One partner uses their child(ren) to gain power and control over the other partner, including telling the child(ren) lies or negative things about the other partner. • Experiences fear: One partner experiences fear in response to the words or actions of the other.