

Information and Resources

Unhealthy Relationships

Relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to unhealthy to abusive, but there are certain characteristics and behaviors to look out for. Signs that a relationship may be unhealthy or abusive:

- Checks your cell phone, social media, or email without permission
- Constantly puts you down
- Extremely jealous, possessive, or insecure
- Explosive temper
- Isolates you from family or friends
- Makes false accusations
- Mood swings
- Physically hurts you in any way
- Tells you what to do
- Repeatedly pressures you to have sex

(National Dating Abuse Helpline, loveisrespect.org)

Signs that someone you know may be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship:

- Seems afraid or anxious to please their partner, “walks on eggshells”
- Goes along with everything their partner says and does
- Checks in often with their partner to report where they are and what they’re doing
- Receives frequent, harassing texts or calls from their partner
- Talks about their partner’s temper, jealousy, or possessiveness
- Has frequent injuries, with the excuse of “accidents”
- Frequently misses school or social activities
- Seems increasingly isolated from friends and family
- Rarely goes out in public without their partner
- Has low self-esteem, even if they used to be confident
- Shows major personality changes (e.g. an outgoing person becomes withdrawn)
- Seems depressed, anxious, or suicidal

(Help Guide, helpguide.org)

Statistics

- 1 in 3 adolescents in the US is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
(loveisrespect.org)
- Nationwide, nearly 1 in 10 of US high school students has been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months.
(futureswithoutviolence.org)
- Nearly 1 in 3 sexually active adolescent girls in 9th to 12th grade report ever experiencing physical, or sexual violence from partners.
(futureswithoutviolence.org)
- 1 in 3 teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped or physically hurt by a partner.
(futureswithoutviolence.org)
- 35% of girls and 29% of guys say they’ve been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a partner.

- (American Psychological Association, 2013)
- Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (like taking pills or vomiting to lose weight), engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.
(futureswithoutviolence.org)
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence—almost triple the national average.
(loveisrespect.org)
- 53% of Americans 15 and older say they know a victim of domestic violence, but only 15% believe it is a problem among their friends.
(NO MORE and the Avon Foundation, 2013)
- Almost two thirds (64%) of Americans age 15 or older say that if we talk more about domestic violence and sexual assault, it would make it easier for them to help someone.
(NO MORE and the Avon Study, 2013)

Physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, digital, and economic abuse are *all* forms of abuse.

- **Physical:** Use of physical *force* such as hitting, choking, shoving, burning, grabbing, shaking, using weapons or restraints.
- **Emotional/Verbal:** *Intimidation or humiliation* such as screaming, belittling, public embarrassment or harassment, isolation from family and friends, threatening suicide or self- injury if partner leaves, controlling partner’s dress, stalking.
 - May also include threatening to “out” partner’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status.
- **Sexual:** Forcing or coercing *unwanted sexual contact* of any kind, controlling reproduction (sabotaging birth control, forcing partner to become/stay pregnant, or to terminate pregnancy).
- **Digital:** Using *texting and/or social networking* to intimidate, harass, or control a partner.
 - May include controlling social media accounts, using accounts to keep tabs on partner’s activities or whereabouts, pressuring partner for explicit pictures or messages, excessive texting.
- **Economic:** *Controlling spending, income, or purchases.* May include denying access to paycheck or shared bank accounts, giving partner an “allowance,” closely monitoring
 - spending, preventing partner from working, stealing partner’s identity

More Resources

- [Love is Respect \(National Dating Abuse Helpline\)](#)
- [Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month](#)
- [Dating Violence 101](#)
- [Is This Abuse?](#)
- [Helping Someone Break Up Safely](#)
- [How to Get Help and Give Support](#)
- [Facts about Dating Abuse](#)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
- [Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence](#)
- [Center for Disease Control: Intimate Partner Violence](#)

- [NO MORE: Resources](#)
- [About Domestic Abuse \(Peace Over Violence\)](#)
- [NO MORE & Avon Foundation Study](#)

Healthy Relationships

Healthy Relationships are built on respect, communication, and equality. Characteristics of healthy relationships include:

Mutual respect

- Respect means that each person values who the other is and understands the other person's boundaries.

Honesty and Trust

- Being honest builds trust and strengthens the relationship. Tell the truth, speak up if something is bothering you, and be willing to admit when you've made a mistake or been hurtful. A foundation of trust allows you to confidently give each other the benefit of the doubt when things get difficult.

Compromise

- You won't always get your way. Acknowledge different points of view and be willing to give and take. It's a bad sign when the relationship becomes a power struggle. (This is not the same as compromising your *values*. If something goes against your beliefs or feels morally wrong, it might not be something to compromise on)

Individuality

- You shouldn't compromise who you are, and your identity should not be based on your boyfriend or girlfriend. Continue seeing your friends or doing the things that you love. Be supportive if your boyfriend or girlfriend wants to pursue new hobbies or make new friends.

Good communication

- Speak honestly and openly to avoid miscommunication. If you need to sort out your feelings first, your partner or friend should respect your wishes and wait until you're ready to talk.

Anger control

- We all get angry, but how we express it can affect our relationships with others. Anger can be handled in healthy ways such as taking a deep breath, counting to 10, or talking it out.

Problem solving

- You can learn to solve problems and identify new solutions by breaking a problem into small parts or by talking through the situation.

Fighting fair

- Everyone will argue at some point, but those who are fair, stick to the subject, and avoid insults are more likely to come up with a possible solution. Take a short break if the discussion gets too heated

Understanding

- Take a minute to understand what others might be feeling - put yourself in their shoes. It can improve your communication skills, too.

Self-confidence

- Having confidence in yourself can help your relationships with others. It shows that you are calm and comfortable enough to allow others to express their opinions without forcing your opinions on

other's to win an argument.

(Idaho Center for Healthy Teen Relationships, lovewhatsreal.com)

In **any** relationship, you have the right to:

- Be treated as an equal
- Make decisions about your own body
- Choose your own friends
- Be treated with respect
- Express your own thoughts and opinions
- Live without fear or intimidation
- Feel good about yourself
- Spend time by yourself
- Choose what to wear
- Make decisions for yourself
- Say no
- Change your mind
- Spend time with your family
- Feel safe emotionally and physically
- Private use of your phone or computer
- Spend time doing things of interest to you
- Be honest and be told the truth
- End a relationship

More Resources

[Dating Basics](#)

[Project Respect](#)

[Teens Health: Healthy Relationships](#)

[Setting Boundaries](#)

[The Relationship Spectrum](#)

How You Can Make a Difference

- Start a conversation! Talk to your friends, peers, and family members about relationship abuse and what it means to have a healthy relationship.
- Notice when you see unhealthy relationships or violent behaviors being glorified in the media or on TV.
- Don't put up with degrading behavior and language, bullying, discrimination or violence against anyone. Recognize the connections between these behaviors and relationship abuse.
- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their gender.
- Speak out if you hear sexist comments about women and avoid using degrading language yourself.
- Avoid using language like 'boys will be boys' and 'you throw like a girl.' It hurts everyone.
- Look at how gender roles play out in your own relationships. Challenge yourself to change it up.
- Step up—and be an example for others to look to. Model healthy relationship skills in all of our relationships—with friends, siblings, parents, dating partners, etc.

How to Support a Friend

It is important to remember that it is not your job to 'fix' your friend's relationship. That is not your responsibility and oftentimes it is dangerous to even try. **If you are concerned about a friend, the most important thing is to tell a trusted adult—this could be a school counselor, a parent, or a client advocate from the WCA.** After that, there are steps you can do to support your friend:

- Start the conversation! Ask them how they are or how their relationship is going.
- Listen and acknowledge how they are feeling.
- Let them know you are concerned. Focus on what their partner did that makes you concerned. They may still care about their partner, so stay away from criticizing or judging them.
- Respect their decisions! Let them know that you are there to support them regardless of what they decide to do.
- Tell them about resources such as the WCA, school counselors, and loveisrespect.com
- If they break up, continue to be supportive after the relationship is over.

[Challenge Yourself PSAs](#)

[It's On Us PSAs](#)