



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS\*

## WHY WE NEED THEM & HOW TO BUILD THEM

\*of all kinds!

Pre (she/her)

Preventionist | Sexual Assault Service Center

**Guardian Angel Community Services**

**24-Hr Hotline: (815)730-8984**

# GUARDIAN ANGEL

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Guardian Angel has different programs that**  
Help survivors of violence and their loved ones heal  
Strive to prevent violence and abuse from happening

**Why are we here today?**

To educate

To support

# WHAT IS ERIN'S LAW?

Erin's Law educates on sexual abuse, so that we all know what to do if we feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or if abuse has happened.

Erin's Law reminds us that:

- if someone makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you can ask a trusted adult or resource like Guardian Angel for help feeling safe again, and
- you deserve to feel safe and comfortable in all your relationships!



**Erin Merryn**  
**creator of Erin's Law**

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Sexual Assault Service

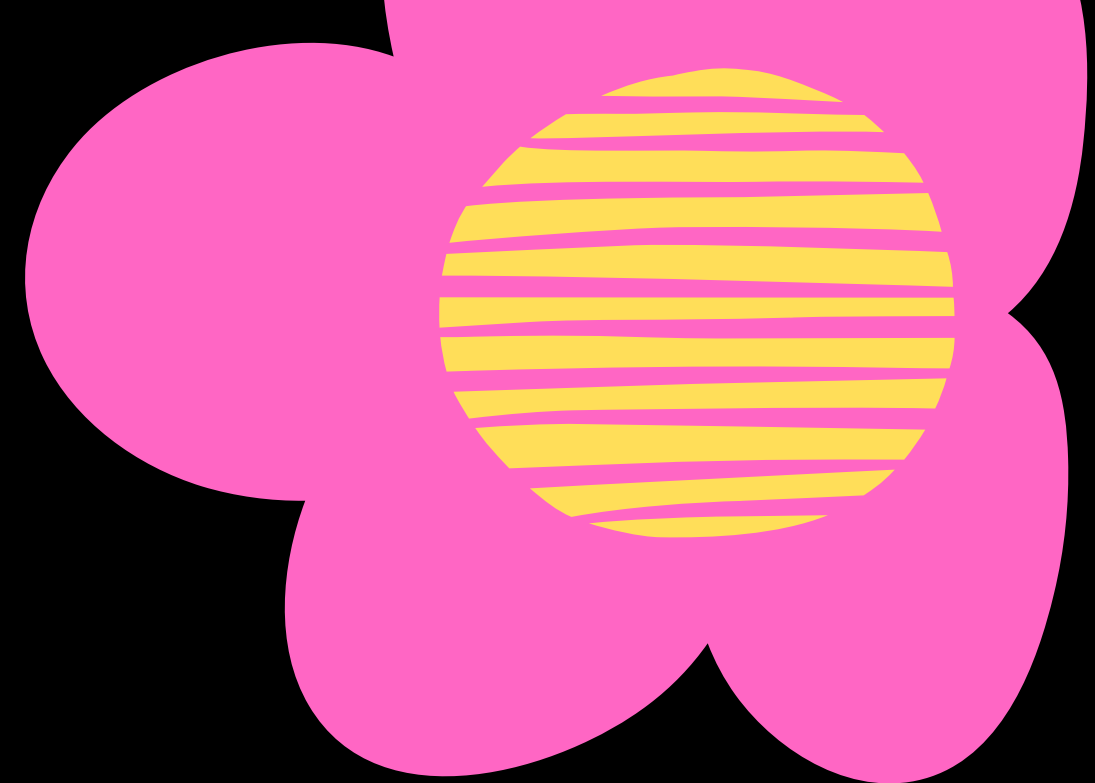
**CONTENT WARNING.**

**SELF-CARE INVITATION, &**

**NOTES ON CONFIDENTIALITY**



# WHAT'S A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP ANYWAY?



What makes a relationship healthy?  
What do you look for in a friend?

RESPECT

TRUST

EQUALITY

SAFETY



FORGIVENESS

SHARED INTERESTS

ABILITY TO HAVE FUN

COMFORT

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SUPPORT

VALIDATION

HEALING

HUMOR & HAPPINESS

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS:

WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

GREATER SELF-WORTH

PROTECTION\*

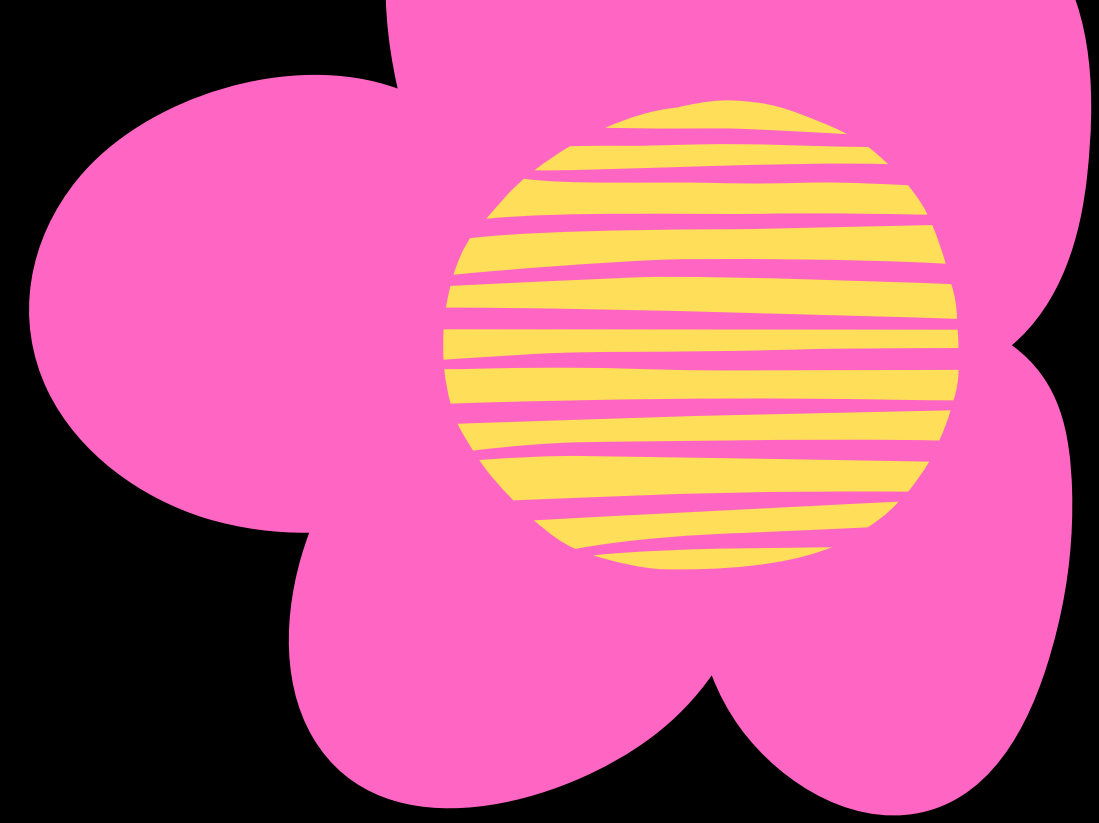
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# THE RELATIONSHIP SPECTRUM



It's normal for relationships to "slide" between healthy and unhealthy

# HOW DO WE BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?



**Relationships are healthy when we feel safe & comfortable.**

To build a healthy relationship, or correct an unhealthy behavior, we may need to:

- set boundaries,
- practice healthy conflict and communication when something unhealthy happens, and/or
- make sure there is consent and respect in the relationship.

# BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are those invisible lines we draw, limits we set, or rules we make.

They help us define who we are opposite other people and things.

PHYSICAL

EMOTIONAL

SOCIAL

TIME

FINANCIAL

AND MORE!



# HOW DO YOU SET A BOUNDARY?

PRACTICE  
HEALTHY CONFLICT &  
COMMUNICATION

TALK IT OUT  
USING "I-STATEMENTS"

SAY "NO" WITH YOUR  
WORDS, BODY, OR  
EXPRESSION  
ASK A TRUSTED ADULT  
OR RESOURCE FOR HELP





# WHAT IS CONSENT?

Building a healthy relationship requires  
respecting and asking for consent.

Consent is an informed agreement or permission.

Consent is NOT waiting to hear someone say "No."  
It's waiting to hear someone say "Yes."

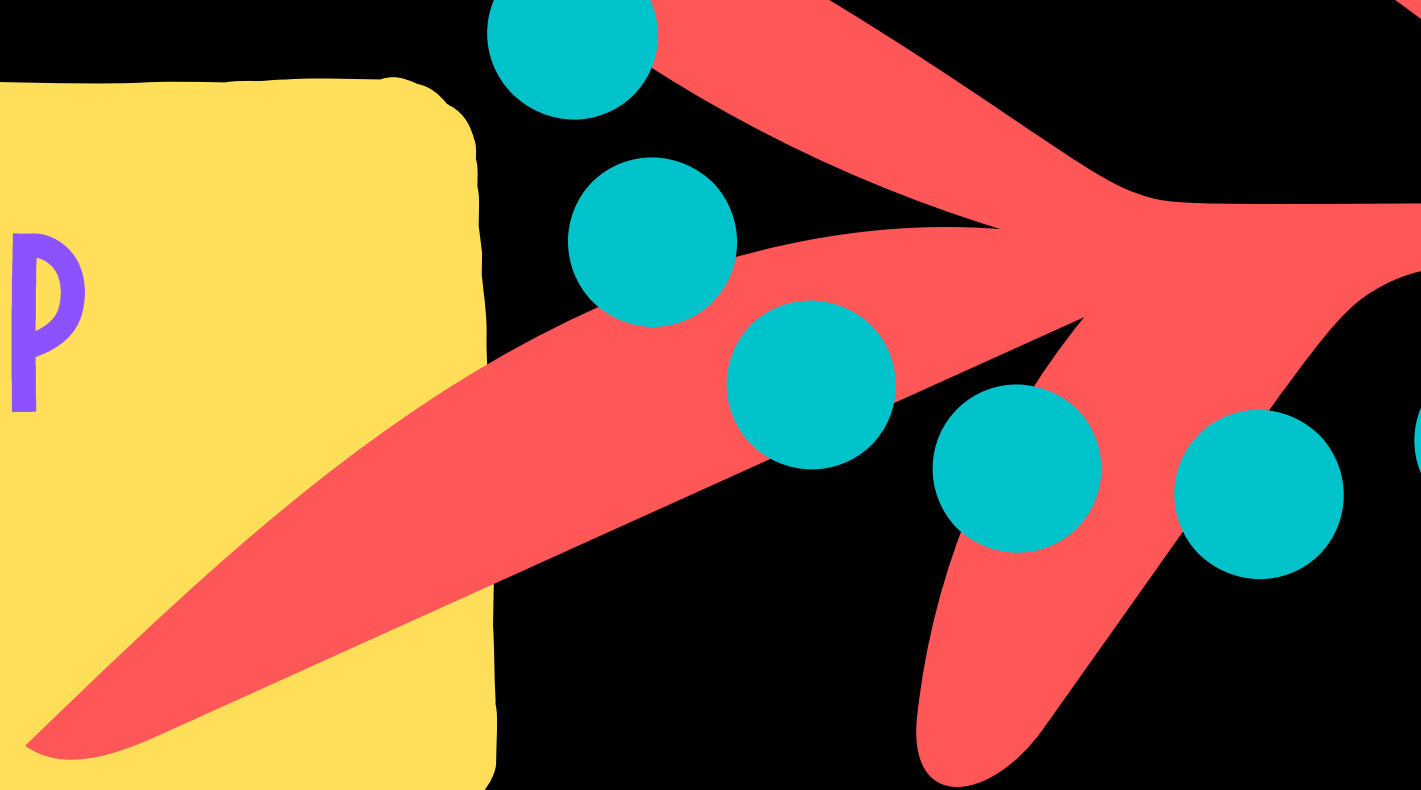


# WHEN DOES A RELATIONSHIP BECOME UNHEALTHY?

**Think about your relationships. Have you ever felt**

- pressured to do something you didn't want to do?
- like you had to go along with something you didn't believe in?
- like you're having the same problem over and over with someone?
- unsafe, uncomfortable, bad about yourself?

**These are unhealthy signs.**





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# WHAT IS ABUSE?

## WHO EXPERIENCES IT? WHO ABUSES?

# UNSAFE ADULTS

Adults on your trusted adult team are there to help you feel safe and comfortable.

If an adult is abusive, or tries to have an unhealthy or inappropriate relationship with a young person, they are an unsafe adult.

Unsafe adults might use a process called "grooming" to get close to a young person to abuse them in a number of ways.

# GROOMING

The process by which an unsafe adult builds up trust with a young person and their community so that they are able to abuse them in a way that is never recognized as abuse.

The unsafe adult tries to make everyone comfortable so that nobody thinks their behavior with a young person is inappropriate.

Spending a lot  
of time alone

Testing  
boundaries

Isolation; only  
turning to  
them

Having a secret  
relationship

Sexualization  
and/or  
touches

# IS THIS GROOMING?

Remember, healthy relationships will feel  
safe and comfortable

Your relationships with adults should feel appropriate and normal.  
If you get a bad feeling or aren't sure,  
talk to a trusted adult or resource like Guardian Angel.

# SEXUAL ABUSE

Any unwanted sexual  
contact OR behaviors  
without consent



# WHAT ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT?

It's all about power and control. It is never the survivor's fault.

CONTACT

BEHAVIORS

SEXUAL ASSAULT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

INTIMIDATION, COERCION

UNWANTED TOUCHING

THREATS

**Sexual abuse** can be any contact or behaviors without consent that **make us feel unsafe or uncomfortable.**



# DIGITAL ABUSE



**Abuse can happen anywhere - even online.**

cyberbullying  
spamming, trolling  
catfishing or being deceived by someone online



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# DIGITAL ABUSE

**Sexual abuse** happens online too.

being pressured into sending sexts or nude photos  
being photographed without knowledge or  
consent  
receiving a sext or nude photo unexpectedly  
or when not desired



# WHAT ABOUT **SEXTING**?

Sexting is the sending, receiving, or forwarding of any sexually suggestive messages, images, videos, or other materials via phones, computers, social media, or other devices.

## Is it illegal?

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# WHEN SEXTING BECOMES ABUSE

Yes, it's illegal for those under 17-years-old to send or receive a sext, and for adults to receive sexts from minors.

The law is strict to try and protect minors from **sexual abuse** and "**sextortion**."

**Sextortion** is blackmail or manipulation – and it's abusive.

Blackmail, controlling behavior, and pressure have no place in your relationships.

If you feel pressured, uncomfortable, unsafe – you can talk to an adult you trust or resource like Guardian Angel.



# WHAT IF I'M IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

\*and how to help a friend!

ASK FOR HELP  
FROM A  
TRUSTED ADULT



ASK FOR HELP  
FROM A  
RESOURCE

# WHY IS IT HARD TO ASK FOR HELP?

## **Survivors of any abuse may**

- fear nobody will believe them
- feel like what happened is their fault,
- feel scared of the abusive person or what other people will do or say,
- feel embarrassed or ashamed,
- love or care about the person who harmed them, and
- feel confused about who to talk to.



IDENTIFY  
5 TRUSTED  
ADULTS

TALK TO A  
SUPPORTIVE  
FRIEND FIRST

TALK TO A PET  
OR JOURNAL  
ABOUT IT

CALL AN  
ANONYMOUS  
HOTLINE

SO, HOW CAN I MAKE IT EASIER TO  
ASK FOR HELP?



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# WRAPPING UP

It's okay to feel awkward or embarrassed – whether abuse has happened for you or not.

If it has happened – it wasn't your fault.  
You did nothing wrong, and you deserve to feel safe and comfortable all the time.



# YOU DESERVE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Building healthy relationships is hard work – and  
navigating abusive ones is even harder.

Remember that you're not alone!

Your trusted adult team and Guardian Angel are  
here to help you feel safe and comfortable.



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

## THANK YOU!

CALL GUARDIAN ANGEL'S  
SEXUAL ASSAULT  
HOTLINE ANYTIME AT  
(815)730-8984

TELL US HOW WE DID  
& ASK FOR  
FOLLOW-UP HERE



SCAN ME



A friend touched you in  
a way that made you  
feel uncomfortable.  
At home, you tried to tell  
your guardian about it,  
but they looked busy  
with the dishes and said,  
"I'm sure they were just  
playing around."

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For the past couple days, you notice a classmate you don't know very well has been coming to school crying. Later, your best friend shows you a nude photo of the classmate that's been going around.

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Lately, your friend hasn't been talking to you as much as normal. When you hang out, they spend most of their time texting a much older family friend.

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Community Services

Your best friend tells you  
that they've barely seen  
you since you started  
dating someone. They  
seem really upset.

# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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