

Ulliance
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Healthy Relationships

YOUR 101 GUIDE



Healthy relationships all share a few key elements: good communication, healthy boundaries, mutual respect, and support for one another. While these elements are extremely important, it's not always that simple. All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive to somewhere in between.

How do you know if your relationship is healthy, unhealthy, or abusive?

Healthy relationship means that both you and your partner are:

- **Communicating:** You talk openly about problems, listen to one another and respect each other's opinions.
- **Respectful:** You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital, and sexual boundaries.
- **Trusting:** You believe what your partner has to say. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.
- **Honest:** You are honest with one another but can still keep some things private.
- **Equal:** You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.
- **Enjoying personal time:** You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.



You may be in an **Unhealthy** relationship if one or both partners is:

- **Not communicating:** When problems arise, you fight, or you don't discuss them at all.
- **Disrespectful:** One or both partners are not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.
- **Not trusting:** One partner doesn't believe what the other says or feels entitled to invade their privacy.
- **Dishonest:** One or both partners tell lies.
- **Trying to take control:** One partner feels their desires and choices are more important.
- **Only spending time with your partner:** Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.

Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one or both partners:

- **Communicates in a way that is hurtful**, threatening, insulting or demeaning.
- **Disrespects** the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.
- **Physically hurts** or injures the other partner by hitting, slapping, choking, pushing or shoving.
- **Blames the other partner for their harmful actions**, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.
- **Isolates the other partner** by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.
- **Pressures or forces the other partner** to do things they don't want to do; threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they resist or say no.

Does Any Conflict Mean a Relationship is Unhealthy?



There is some conflict in all relationships. Verbal disagreements and arguments are common occurrences. In fact, everyone has the right to a different opinion from their partner. In a *healthy* relationship, communication is key. When partners communicate effectively, they can understand each other better which can serve to make a relationship stronger. When they can resolve conflicts successfully, they are developing a healthy, mature relationship. But, while conflict is normal, it can also be a sign that parts of the relationship aren't working.

What is Dating Abuse?

Dating abuse is a **pattern of destructive behaviors used to exert power and control** over a dating partner. Although dating violence can be seen as a pattern, one instance can constitute abuse. **Dating Abuse can happen to anyone**, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background. **Drugs and**

alcohol can affect a person's judgment and behavior, but they **do not excuse abuse or violence**.

Alternatively, if a person uses drugs/alcohol it does not mean they deserve abuse or assault.

Dating Abuse Can Be:

- **Physical:** hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, grabbing, pulling hair, pushing, shoving
- **Emotional/Verbal:** putting you down; embarrassing you in public (online or off); threatening you in any way; telling you what to do or what to wear; threatening suicide; accusing you of cheating
- **Sexual:** pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual you're not comfortable with and/or do not consent to, including sexting; restricting access to birth control; unwanted kissing or touching
- **Financial:** demanding access to your money; preventing you from working; insisting that if they pay for you, you'll owe them something in return
- **Digital:** sending threats via text, social media or email; stalking or embarrassing you on social media; hacking your social media or email accounts without permission; forcing you to share passwords; constantly texting or calling to check up on you; frequently looking through your phone or monitoring your texts/call log

Behavioral Warning Signs of a Relationship That Could Be Headed in An Unhealthy Direction:

- Constantly putting someone down
- Extreme jealousy, insecurity or possessiveness
- Explosive temper
- Isolating someone from their family or friends, dictating who they can see or hang out with
- Mood swings (nice one minute and angry the next)
- Checking someone's cell phone, social media or email without permission
- Physically hurting someone in any way
- Telling someone what to do or what to wear

Planning Ahead and Accessing Support

If you are evaluating your relationship, and have questions or need support, please reach out for help. Support can come from a trusted friend, a family member or a licensed counselor. Resources are available that can also provide confidential support, for help navigating emotions, and keeping you safe, including a safety plan.

What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan to improve your safety if you are experiencing abuse, preparing to leave an abusive situation, or after you leave. This plan includes information tailored to your unique situation and will help you prepare for and respond to different scenarios, including telling your friends and family about your situation, coping with emotions, and various other resources that can help ensure your safety. See below resources for more information about safety planning.



How You Can Help a Friend?

- Don't be afraid to reach out to a friend who you think needs help. Tell them you're concerned for their safety and want to help.
- Be supportive and listen patiently. Acknowledge their feelings and be respectful of their decisions.
- Help your friend recognize that the abuse is not "normal" and is NOT their fault.
- Focus on your friend, not the abusive partner. Even if your friend stays with their partner, it's important they still feel comfortable talking to you about it.
- Connect your friend to resources in their community that can give them information and guidance **(see resources below)**.
- Help them develop a safety plan if you believe that they are in an abusive relationship. If they break up with the abusive partner, continue to be supportive after the relationship is over.
- Don't contact their abuser or publicly post negative things about them online. It'll only worsen the situation for your friend.
- Even when you feel like there's nothing you can do, don't forget that by being supportive and caring, you're already doing a lot

Helpful Resources:

National Domestic Violence Hotline **800.799.7233**

Crisis Text Line provides free, 24/7 support for those in crisis.

Text 741741 any time to connect with a crisis counselor, [or visit crisistextline.org](https://www.crisistextline.org)

Love is Respect - www.loveisrespect.org - offers crisis support and [resources, including safety planning for](#) teens and young adults.

- **Online Chat** at Loveisrespect.org
- **Call** 866.331.9474- For 24/7 personalized assistance with advocates, including safety planning.
- **Text** loveis to 22522
- [Interactive Safety Planning Online](#)



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential,
short term counseling.**
Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**