

# Healthy Relationships

## WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

A healthy relationship requires honest communication, trust, safety, and respect. This applies to all relationships, regardless of each person's sexual orientation. While different people may define relationships in different ways, there are a few key ingredients that must be present in all relationships for the relationship to have a healthy foundation.

### LOOK FOR SOMEONE WHO

- Treats you with respect.
- Doesn't make fun of things you like or want to do.
- Never puts you down.
- Doesn't get angry if you spend time with your friends or family.
- Listens to your ideas and is able to compromise with you.
- Isn't excessively negative.
- Shares some of your interests and supports you in pursuing what you love.
- Isn't afraid to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Is comfortable around your friends and family.
- Is proud of your accomplishments and successes.
- Respects your boundaries and does not abuse technology.
- Doesn't require you to "check in" or need to know where you are all the time.
- Is caring and honest.
- Doesn't pressure you to do things that you don't want to do.
- Doesn't constantly accuse you of cheating or being unfaithful.
- Encourages you to do well in school or at work.
- Doesn't threaten you or make you feel scared.
- Understands the importance of healthy relationships.

## CONSENT

### WHAT DOES CONSENT MEAN?

People typically talk about consent in the context of some kind of sexual or physical activity with a partner. In a healthy relationship, all partners are able to openly talk about and agree on what kind of activity they want to engage in. Whether it's holding hands, kissing, touching, or anything else, it's really important for everyone in the relationship to feel comfortable with what's happening.

### WHAT DOES CONSENT LOOKS LIKE?

- Communicate every step of the way. For example, during a date, ask if it's okay to hold your partner's hand. Don't just assume that they are comfortable with it.
- Respecting that when they don't say "no," it doesn't mean "yes." Consent is a clear and enthusiastic "yes!" If someone seems unsure, stays silent, doesn't respond, or says "maybe..." then they are not saying "yes". Remember: The absence of a "no" does not equal "yes."
- It's not okay to assume that once someone consents to an activity, it means they are consenting to it anytime in the future as well.
- A person can decide to stop an activity at any time, even if they agreed to it earlier.
- Above all, everyone has a right to their own body and to feel comfortable with how they use it.

## Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

### HERE ARE SOME RED FLAGS THAT INDICATE YOUR PARTNER DOESN'T RESPECT CONSENT

- They pressure or guilt you into doing things you may not want to do.
- They make you feel like you “owe” them— because you’re dating, or they gave you a gift, etc.
- They react negatively (with sadness, anger or resentment) if you say “no” to something, or don’t immediately consent.
- They ignore your wishes and don’t pay attention to nonverbal cues that could show you’re not consenting (ex: pulling/pushing away).

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## TRUST

### WHAT DOES TRUST MEAN?

Trusting someone means that you think they are reliable, you have confidence in them and you feel safe with them physically and emotionally. Trust is something you build.

### HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING IF TRUST IS PRESENT IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

- Do you and your partner believe each other at face value?
- Do you and your partner respect each other's space and privacy boundaries?
- Do you and your partner feel comfortable spending time apart without worrying the other is being dishonest or cheating?

## BOUNDARIES

### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS SETTING BOUNDARIES IN A RELATIONSHIP

Whether you’re casually dating or have been going out for a while, setting boundaries is an important part of any relationship. To have the healthiest relationship, partners should know each other’s wants, goals, fears and limits. Talking about boundaries is a great way to make sure that each person’s needs are being met and you feel safe in the relationship. Here are some things to think about when setting boundaries in your relationship:

#### EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

**THE L WORD:** Saying “I love you” can happen for different people at different times in a relationship. If your partner says it and you don’t feel that way yet, don’t feel bad — you may not be ready yet. Let your partner know how it made you feel when they said it and tell them about your own goals for the relationship.

**TIME APART:** As great as it is to want to spend a lot of time with your partner, remember that it’s important to have some time away from each other, too. Both you and your partner should be free to hang out with friends (of any gender) or family without having to get permission. It’s also healthy to spend time by yourself doing things that you enjoy or that help you relax. You should be able to tell your partner when you need to do things on your own instead of feeling trapped into spending all your time together.

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### PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

**TAKE YOUR TIME:** Getting physical with your partner doesn't have to happen all at once if you're not ready. In a healthy relationship, both partners know how far each other wants to go and they communicate with each other if something changes.

**SEX ISN'T CURRENCY:** You don't owe your partner favors. Just because your partner takes you out to dinner, buys you a gift or says "I love you" doesn't mean you owe them anything in return. It isn't okay for your partner to claim that you don't care about them because you won't "go all the way." Even if you've done it before, you are never required to do it just because your partner is pressuring you. Remember, no means no, and it's essential that your partner respect this completely.

### DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

It can be hard to know where the line between healthy and unhealthy is once a relationship goes online. What are the rules for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat? What should your digital relationship look like? Before you talk to your partner about your online relationship, check in with yourself to see what makes you feel comfortable.

**PASSWORDS ARE PRIVATE:** If you and your partner trust each other, neither person will want or need to look through the other person's phone or social media. Even if you have nothing to hide, personal privacy and boundaries are still valuable.

**PHOTOS AND SEXTING:** Similar to your physical boundaries, it's important to have digital boundaries about what you're comfortable sending via text message. Once you've hit send on a photo or text, you lose control over who sees it. If your partner sexts you and demands that you sext back, you should be able to tell them you aren't comfortable doing that, and they shouldn't get angry or threaten you.

## THE RELATIONSHIP SPECTRUM

### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED ON EQUALITY AND RESPECT.

RESPECT

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

TRUST

You make decisions together and can openly discuss whatever you're dealing with, like relationship problems and sexual choices. You enjoy spending time together but can be happy apart.

### UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED ON ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE OTHER PERSON.

BREAKS IN COMMUNICATION

PRESSURE

DISHONESTY

STRUGGLES FOR CONTROL

INCONSIDERATE BEHAVIOR

One person tries to make most of the decisions. He or she may pressure their partner about sex or refuse to see how their actions can hurt. In an unhealthy relationship, you feel like you should only spend time with your partner.

### ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED ON AN IMBALANCE OF POWER AND CONTROL.

ACCUSATIONS

BLAME SHIFTING

ISOLATION PRESSURE

MANIPULATION

One person is making all the decisions about sexual choices, friend groups, boundaries, even what's true and what's not. You spend all your time together and feel like you can't talk to other people, especially about what's really happening in your relationship.

# Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

## DATING ABUSE

### DID YOU KNOW DATING ABUSE IS COMMON?

Dating abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, financial status, race, gender, sexual orientation, or background, and if we want to raise awareness about it and help prevent it, we need to go back to basics!

Dating abuse is rooted in power and control. Dating abuse is a pattern of behaviors one person uses to gain and maintain power and control over their partner.

Many people assume abuse means that physical violence is happening, but that's not always the case. Abuse comes in many forms—it's not just physical.

Young people who abuse their partners do so because they feel they need to exercise power and control over the other person—and that's never OK.

Every day, loveisrespect receives hundreds of calls, chats and texts from young people across the country who are experiencing abuse in their relationship. We know that in a single year, nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner.

When college-aged students were asked to consider if they have ever been in an abusive relationship, 29% of women and 17% of men reported that they had. College students are not equipped to deal with dating abuse - 57% say it is difficult to identify and 58% say they don't know how to help someone who's experiencing it.

One in three (36%) dating college students has given a dating partner their computer, online access, email or social network passwords and these students are more likely to experience digital dating abuse.

### WHAT DOES DATING ABUSE LOOK LIKE?

#### PHYSICAL

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Choking
- Kicking
- Shoving
- Biting
- Force-feeding
- Assaulting

#### EMOTIONAL & VERBAL

- Putting you down
- Embarrassing you in public,
- threatening you in any way
- Telling you what to do, telling you what to wear

#### FINANCIAL

- Taking your paychecks
- Not paying bills
- Preventing you from working
- Controlling where and how you work

#### DIGITAL

- Sending threats via text, social media or email
- Stalking or humiliating you on social media
- Logging into your social media or email accounts without permission
- Forcing you to share passwords

#### SEXUAL

- Pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual without your consent like forcing you to have sex or perform sexual acts that you are not comfortable with
- Restricting access to birth control
- Forcing you to watch pornography or participate in pornographic videos, sexting



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

### PARENT TIP SHEET

#### HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD?

Knowing or even suspecting that your child is in an unhealthy relationship can be both frustrating and frightening. But as a parent, you're critical in helping your child develop healthy relationships and you can provide life-saving support if they are in an abusive relationship. Remember dating abuse can occur in any relationship regardless of the gender identities involved. As a parent, your instinct is to help your child in whatever way you can. Here are some tips to keep in mind when trying to help your child who is experiencing dating abuse:

**LISTEN AND GIVE SUPPORT:** It can be difficult to open up about abuse, and many teens fear that their parents will overreact, blame them, or be angry. Try to be supportive and non-accusatory. Ask your child how they want to be supported and how you can help.

**ACCEPT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS TELLING YOU:** Showing skepticism or disbelief can make your child feel unsupported and isolated. Believe them when they share their experience.

**SHOW CONCERN:** Try saying something like, "You don't deserve to be treated like this, and I want you to know this is not 'normal' relationship behavior. I am concerned for your safety."

**TALK ABOUT THE BEHAVIORS, NOT THE PERSON:** Instead of saying, "Your partner is controlling, and I don't like them," you

can say, "I don't like that your partner texts you to see where you are so often. How do you feel when you get those back-to-back messages asking where you are?"

**AVOID ULTIMATUMS:** Resist the urge to say, "If you don't break up with them now, you are grounded." This cuts them off from support, and they may be less likely to trust that you're a safe person to talk to in the future.

**BE PREPARED:** Educate yourself on dating abuse and ask your child to learn about abuse dynamics with you. Read articles together and then ask for their thoughts.

**DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS TOGETHER:** Ultimately, the decision about next steps will need to come from them, but you can still play a role in helping them identify safe options. Help them find additional support, like a counselor or a loveisrespect advocate.



Almost **1.5 MILLION**

high school students in the U. S. are subjected to

**Physical abuse**

by their dating partner in one year

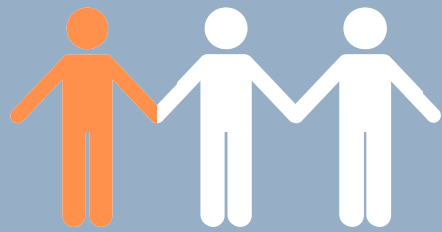
Between the ages of

**16 and 24,**

girls and young women experience the

**HIGHEST RATES**

of dating violence.

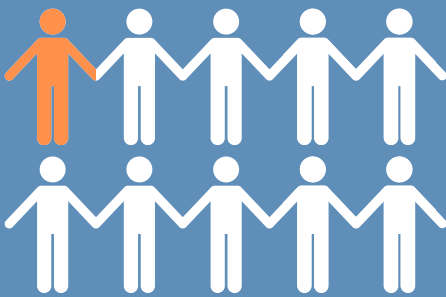


**1 in 3**

adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of

**Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse**

from a dating partner



**1 IN 10**

high school students have been

**Physically hurt, slapped or hit on purpose**

by a dating partner.

**Only 1/3**



of teens in a violent relationship

**EVER** tells anyone about the abuse they experienced.

LGBT youth are

**more likely**

than their heterosexual peers to experience

**Physical, psychological, cyber dating abuse and sexual coercion.**

## Sources

Love is Respect

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/datingviolence-statistics/>

Break the Cycle

<https://www.breakthecycle.org>