



What is a
Healthy Relationship???

Mutual respect

- Does he or she get how cool you are and why? (Answer yes only if you are being who you really are, not what you think they want you to be)
- The key is that your BF or GF is into you for who you are - for your great sense of humor, your love of reality TV, etc.
- Does your partner listen when you say you're not comfortable doing something and then back off right away?
- Respect in a relationship means that each person values who the other is and understands - and would never challenge - the other person's boundaries.

Boundaries

- **Expectations**
- **Consequences**

Trust

You're talking with a someone from French class, and your boyfriend/ girlfriend walks by. Do they completely lose their cool or keep walking because they know you'd never cheat on them? It's OK to get a little jealous sometimes - jealousy is a natural emotion. But how a person reacts when he or she feels jealous is what matters. There's no way you can have a healthy relationship if you don't trust each other.

Honesty

This one goes hand-in-hand with trust because it's tough to trust someone when one of you isn't being honest. Have you ever caught your partner in a major lie? Like they told you that they had to work on Friday night but it turned out they were at the movies with their friends? The next time they says they have to work, you'll have a lot more trouble believing them and the trust will be on shaky ground.

Support

It's not just in bad times that your partner should support you. Some people are great when your whole world is falling apart but can't take being there when things are going right (and vice versa). In a healthy relationship, your significant other is there with a shoulder to cry on when you find out your parents are getting divorced **and** to celebrate with you when you get the lead in a play.

Balance/Equality

You need to have give-and-take in your relationship, too. Do you take turns choosing which new movie to see? As a couple, do you hang out with your partner's friends as often as you hang out with yours? It's not like you have to keep a running count and make sure things are exactly even, of course. But you'll know if it isn't a pretty fair balance. Things get bad really fast when a relationship turns into a power struggle, with one person fighting to get his or her way all the time.

Separate Identities

In a healthy relationship, everyone needs to make compromises. But that doesn't mean you should feel like you're losing out on being yourself. When you started going out, you both had your own lives - your own families, friends, interests, hobbies, etc. - and that shouldn't change. Neither of you should have to pretend to like something you don't, or give up seeing your friends, or drop out of activities you love. And you also should feel free to keep developing new talents or interests, making new friends, and moving forward.

Good Communication

You've probably heard lots of stuff about how men and women don't seem to speak the same language. We all know how many different meanings the little phrase "no, nothing's wrong" can have, depending on who's saying it! But what's important is to ask if you're not sure what he or she means, and speak honestly and openly so that the miscommunication is avoided in the first place. Never keep a feeling bottled up because you're afraid it's not what your BF or GF wants to hear or because you worry about sounding silly. And if you need some time to think something through before you're ready to talk about it, the right person will give you some space to do that if you ask for it.

TALKERS & ISOLATORS

Positive Self image

Ever heard about how it's hard for someone to love you when you don't love yourself? It's a big relationship roadblock when one or both people struggle with self-esteem problems. Your girlfriend or boyfriend isn't there to make you feel good about yourself if you can't do that on your own. Focus on being happy with yourself, and don't take on the responsibility of worrying about someone else's happiness.

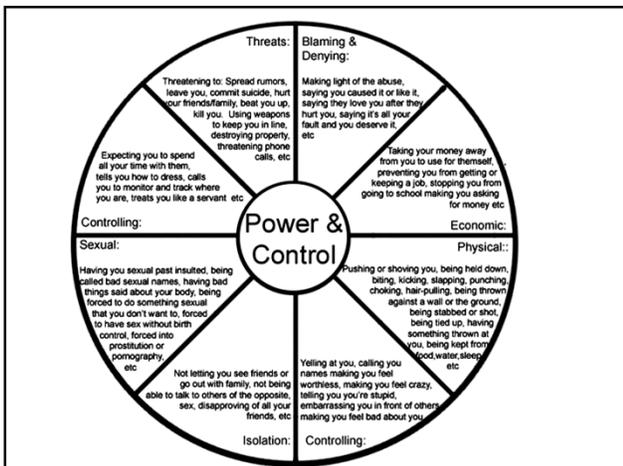
Five
Love
Languages

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Gifts
3. Acts of Service
4. Quality Time
5. Physical Touch

What is a
Unhealthy Relationship???

A relationship is unhealthy when it involves mean, disrespectful, controlling, or abusive behavior. Some people live in homes with parents who fight a lot or abuse each other - emotionally or physically. For some people who have grown up around this kind of behavior it can almost seem normal or OK. **It's not!** Many of us learn from watching and imitating the people close to us. So someone who has lived around violent or disrespectful behavior may not have learned how to treat others with kindness and respect or how to expect the same treatment.

Qualities like kindness and respect are absolute requirements for a healthy relationship. Someone who doesn't yet have this part down may need to work on it with a trained therapist before he or she is ready for a relationship. Meanwhile, even though you may feel bad or feel for someone who's been mistreated, you need to take care of yourself - it's not healthy to stay in a relationship that involves abusive behavior of any kind.



Warning Signs

Ask yourself, does my boyfriend or girlfriend:

- Get angry when I don't drop everything for him or her?
- Criticize the way I look or dress, and say I'll never be able to find anyone else who would date me?
- Keep me from seeing friends or from talking to any other guys or girls?
- Want me to quit an activity, even though I love it?
- Ever raise a hand when angry, like he or she is about to hit me?
- Try to force me to go further sexually than I want to?

Safety Planning for Teens

You should think ahead about ways to be safe if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship. Here are some things to consider in designing your own safety plan.

- What adults can you tell about the violence and abuse?
- What people at school can you tell in order to be safe--teachers, principal, counselors, security?
- Consider changing your school locker or lock or passwords on email etc
- Consider changing your route to/from school.
- Use a buddy system for going to school, classes and after school activities.
- What friends can you tell to help you remain safe?
- If stranded, who could you call for a ride home?
- Keep a journal describing the abuse.
- Get rid of or change the number to any beepers, pagers or cell phones.
- Keep spare change, calling cards, number of the local shelter, number of someone who could help you and restraining orders with you at all times.
- Where could you go quickly to get away from an abusive person?
- What other things can you do?

What can you do??

In an unhealthy relationship, you can:

- Work it out
- End the relationship
- Tell someone about the abuse

Helping your friend

- Do not make them feel bad about their choices
- Offer to go with them to get help
- Remember you cannot “rescue” them

Dating Bill of Rights

I have a right to:

ask for a date, refuse a date, suggest activities, refuse any activities - even if my date is excited about them, have my own feelings and be able to express them, say "I think you are wrong and your actions are inappropriate, tell someone not to interrupt me, have my limits and values respected, tell my partner when I need affection, refuse affection, be heard, refuse to lend money, refuse sex any time for any reason, and have friends and space aside from my partner.

I have the responsibility to:

determine my limits and values, respect the limits of others, communicate clearly and honestly, not violate the limits of others, ask for help when I need it, be considerate, check my actions and decisions to determine whether they are good or bad for me, and set high goals for myself.



Remember...

You need to take care of yourself - it's not healthy to stay in a relationship that involves abusive behavior of any kind. It is ok to get out of that relationship. You will NOT be alone forever, someone WILL love you for who you are, and IT IS NOT your fault.