

HEALTHY VS UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Sometimes it is hard to know whether what you are experiencing in a relationship is normal or not.

Healthy relationships are based on equality, fairness, trust and partnership, whilst unhealthy relationships can involve the use of various tactics to achieve power, control and dominance.

What is a healthy relationship?

While all relationships are different, there are a few key aspects of healthy relationships:

- They are based on equality, respect and trust.
- There is a power balance in the relationship.
- Both people in the relationship work to address any imbalances in the relationship.

No relationship is perfect and there are always things that you can work on. Some of these elements take time to establish, such as good communication. However, you should always feel safe in a relationship and feel that you are equal with your partner and you both respect each other. This also applies in relationships with family and friends.

Important Aspects of a Healthy Relationship

Non-threatening behaviour

You have a right to always feel safe in your relationship. You should never have to worry that your partner is going to intentionally harm you. Neither partner should try to maintain power and control over the other (this includes relationships with friends and family).

Equality

You and your partner, family and friends should view each other as equals.

Respect

You and your partner respect each other as unique individuals including respecting of dignity and seeing value in each other.

Communication

You should feel comfortable expressing your thoughts, ideas and feelings. You should be able to agree to disagree in a constructive way.

Trust

Being able to trust others is key to a healthy relationship. Trust is established over the course of a relationship through showing consistency in words and actions.

Responsibility & Accountability

- Being responsible and accountable to others.
- Not placing blame on others and owning up to mistakes.
- Doesn't mean having to constantly check in or report to the other person.

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Support

- Encourage others to grow separately and together.
- Have enthusiasm for your dreams and goals and for those in your circle.
- Be supportive in good and difficult times.

Honesty

Honesty is important in a healthy relationship. You can't build a good foundation on lies.

Boundaries

Boundaries should be respected at all times.

- Establishing what you are comfortable and uncomfortable with.
- Includes personal/physical boundaries and being able to say no.
- Includes giving consent.

Maintaining your own friends and separate interests can be a form of having boundaries.

Aspects of an Unhealthy Relationship

In unhealthy relationships, people may feel anxious, confused, uncertain and even unsafe. While it's common to fight or bicker in most relationships, sometimes relationships can be toxic or become abusive.

Here are some signs of an unhealthy relationship:

You feel unsafe

When fear is present and a person is worried for their own emotional and physical safety this is an indication that the relationship is unhealthy and potentially dangerous.

Lack of Communication

Without communication there is no foundation to build a healthy relationship. In your relationship:

- Are you unable to talk about difficult topics?
- Is there are a lot of misunderstandings that never to get worked out?
- Are there arguments versus discussions?

Dishonesty

Continual and repeated dishonesty is not a good foundation for any relationship.

Disrespect

Disrespect includes name calling, breaking boundaries, and constantly questioning and criticizing the other person's choices and decisions.

Dependence

Every person deserves a certain level of independence. If someone is dependent on someone financially, emotionally, or psychologically that could indicate an unhealthy relationship.

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Jealousy

Jealousy becomes unhealthy when its constant or excessive and becomes about one partner possessing the other.

Manipulation

Manipulation can take many forms including: mind games, convincing a partner to ignore their wants/ desires/needs and using guilt to manipulate others.

Criticism

Using criticism to tear the other person down could be a form of emotional abuse.

Isolation

Isolation is an often used tactic by abusers to make the victims/survivor dependent on them by cutting off their ties to support networks, thus increasing their power and control in the relationship.

Constant fighting

While all relationships will have some conflict in them, if there is a pattern of constantly fighting, this could be a bad sign. You shouldn't have to feel combative when you're with your partner, family or friends.

Controlling behaviour

Domestic violence is about power and control. Behaviour includes controlling where others go, what they see and do. Other examples include demanding social media passwords, checking text messages, and using intimidation or coercion to get their way. Emotional, verbal and physical abuse are also forms of control.

If someone who has a close personal relationship with you makes you feel afraid, powerless, or unsafe, or if you are afraid to disagree or negotiate for what you want, this may be a sign of abuse.

All individuals have the right to be free from violence. If you are experiencing abuse it is not your fault, it is the abuser who is responsible. Domestic and family violence is a crime. It is ok to reach out and ask for help!

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, PHONE 000 AND ASK FOR THE POLICE AND/OR AN AMBULANCE

1800RESPECT

is the 24-hour national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service. Call 1800 737 732.

LIFELINE

is a non-profit organisation that provides free, 24-hour telephone crisis support service in Australia. Call 13 11 14.

Call **GOT YOUR BACK SISTA** on **02 4989 2777** during business hours to book an appointment with our Support Team or receive information and advice.

