

RELATIONSHIPS EXIST ON A SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to somewhere in between. Below, we outline behaviors that occur in healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.

HEALTHY

A **healthy relationship** means that both you and your partner are:

Communicating: You talk openly about problems, listen to each other 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 each other, 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.

UNHEALTHY

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 is 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 tells 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.

ABUSIVE

Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner:

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.

Controls and 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.

Worksheet: Boundaries Quiz

1) You're reading a new text message, and your partner asks, "Who is it?" You

A) Tell your partner who it is and what the text is about. Why wouldn't you?

B) Tell your partner it's none of his/her business.

2) You and your partner go see a movie. You're not a huge fan, but your partner loves the movie.

When another friend asks how the movie was, your partner says, "We both loved it!" You say

A) "Yeah, it was good."

B) "S/he liked it a lot better than I did."

3) You have plans with a cousin who's visiting from out of town. Your partner asks if s/he can tag along. You say

A) "Sure, why not – the more, the merrier! I'm sure my cousin would like to meet my partner."

B) "Sorry, I want to spend one-on-one time with my cousin."

4) You volunteer at a tutoring center every weekend, and your partner starts to come along, too. You say

A) "That's so sweet – now we can spend more time together while doing something I already love."

B) "Since when are you interested in that? Why don't you find your own hobbies."

5) Your partner is always touching you (holding your hand, putting arm around you, etc.) when you're hanging out with other friends. You think

A) That's nice – s/he wants to show the world you two are a couple, and can't keep his or her hands off you!

B) That's uncomfortable – you don't want your partner in your space all the time, especially when you're with other people.

6) Your partner asks for your passwords for your phone, e-mail and social media pages. You say

A) "Great idea – we're so close, we should share everything."

B) "Not happening – some things I need to keep personal. "

7) You're exhausted and half-asleep, but your partner wants you to come with him/her to go hang out with some friends. You say

A) "Okay, I'll go with you."

B) "I'm tired don't want to."

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