

RELATIONSHIPS EXIST ON A SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive 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: Communication Style Quiz

1. Your partner asks if s/he can copy your math homework since s/he was really busy this week. You don't feel comfortable with this and want your partner to do the work on his/her own. You:

- A. Show the assignment to your partner anyway and hope he/she does most of the work on his/her own.
- B. Tell your partner absolutely not.
- C. Explain to your partner that though you want him/her to do well on the homework, you wouldn't feel comfortable giving him/her your work.

2. You and your partner decide to go to the movies; s/he says s/he'll pay you back. It's been a month and your partner still hasn't paid you back. What do you do?

- A. It's not worth mentioning, you're sure s/he'll pay for something in the future.
- B. Casually remind him/her about the money the next time you two are together and ask him/her to get it to you when he/she can.
- C. Text your partner immediately, saying that he/she owes you and should bring it to you right away. There's no excuse for this.

3. Your friend constantly wants to text and video chat until late at night on weeknights. You have a lot of studying and extra-curricular work to do and really need to go to bed early. How do you deal with this?

- A. Tell your friend that he/she has to stop texting you at night.
- B. Tell your friend your parents took your phone/laptop.
- C. Call your friend and talk about it, saying that you really love talking, but that you really want to focus on school and you need your sleep.

4. You've been assigned a group project in your English class. Your group members divided up the work evenly, but one member has not done her part and is constantly coming up with excuses as to why she hasn't gotten the work done. How do you handle the situation?

- A. Tell her that you feel that her lack of effort is not fair to the rest of the group.
- B. Tell the teacher what is happening. Threaten that you won't give her credit for the project if she doesn't finish everything by the deadline.

C. Divide up the work she's been neglecting amongst your other group members. Why waste time confronting her?

5. It's a Friday night and your partner wants you to stay in with him/her. A friend of yours is hosting a birthday party, and you were hoping to go out and celebrate. You:

A. Just stay in – you don't want to argue with him/her about it, and you would feel bad leaving your partner alone.

B. Tell your partner not to be so boring and threaten that you might meet someone else if s/he doesn't come with you to the party.

C. Remind your partner about the party and tell him/her that you still plan to go by yourself, but that if s/he would rather stay in you understand.

6. You would like to go to the football game, but you need a ride. Your parents can't take you and your partner has a car, but he/she isn't into going to games. You:

A. Inform your partner that s/he needs to take you to the game.

B. Ask your partner what s/he is up to on that day. Maybe she'll offer to give you a ride. It seems like a pretty big favor and you don't want to ask too much.

C. Tell your partner that you would really appreciate it if he/she would take you to the game and ask if that is possible.

7. At a restaurant, your waiter brings you the wrong meal. You:

A. Just eat the meal he brought. There is no point in causing a scene.

B. Give your waiter a piece of your mind and tell him to bring out your correct order immediately.

C. Politely let your waiter know that this is not what you ordered.

8. When meeting with a teacher about a test you didn't do so well on, and he cuts you off mid- sentence and keeps talking over you. You:

A. Tell him off for interrupting you. How can he help you when he isn't listening?

B. Let it go. He's the expert, anyway.

C. Finish asking your question if he doesn't answer it after he's finished talking. If it keeps happening, say something like "please let me finish my thought."

9. You are ready to get more serious with your partner and would like to make it "official." How do you make this clear?

A. Hint that your friend just changed her relationship status on Facebook. Maybe he/she is thinking about it, too.

B. Ask your partner if being an official couple is something he/she is ready for and be honest about how you are feeling.

C. Give your partner an ultimatum. You've been in a relationship for a long time and if s/he doesn't want to take this step, it's over.

10. Your partner has been acting distant since winter break. You're worried about him/her and want to know what is going on. You:

A. Tell your partner you are worried about him/her and explain the changed behaviors you have been seeing.

B. Decide to confront him/her about it by saying "why have you been so weird lately?"

C. Ask broad questions about his/her family, break, and friends, hoping he/she will make it clear if anything is upsetting him/her.

Points key: 1: A=1, B=3, C=2 2: A=1, B=2, C=3 3: A=3, B=1, C=2 4: A=2, B=3, C=1 5: A=1, B=3, C=2 6: A=3, B=1, C=2 7: A=1, B=3, C=2 8: A=3, B=1, C=2 9: A=1, B=2, C=3 10: A=2, B=3, C=1

If you scored:

10-16 points- You're a passive communicator! You tend to be timid when it comes to confronting others and you often hold things back in order to avoid conflict. In friendships and romantic relationships, you care deeply about the feelings and emotions of others, and you worry about how confrontation will affect these relationships.

17-23 points- You're an assertive communicator! You think about the feelings of your friends and romantic partners and balance your emotions with a desire to solve problems. You seek to be constructive and solve problems.

24-30 points- You're an aggressive communicator! You want to get things done and express what you need. You let others know exactly what you're thinking and assume they'll do the same.

Adapted from:



Passive



Can look like...

- Giving in and saying “yes” when you really don’t want to
- Not asking for what you want
- Acting in a particular way in order to be liked

Can make you feel...

- Taken advantage of
- Hurt
- Angry
- Less confident

Can make others dislike you, lowering your self-esteem.

Information modified from Amaze.org video *How to Talk to Girls, Boys and Everyone In Between* and SAFE Austin High School Advisory Lessons.



Aggressive

Can look like:

- Trying to get your own way by putting someone else down
- Leaving little room for others to talk or disagree
- Scowling facial features, large hand/body gestures
- Invading someone’s personal space

Communication Styles

Learning how to effectively communicate with others is an important skill. It can help you understand others, avoid problems and resolve conflicts.

Three Steps to Communicating Assertively

Step 1: I feel in this situation/ when you do this.

Tell the person how you’re feeling at the moment. Try to be honest and accurately describe your feelings about the situation.

Step 2: I want or need

Say what you want or need from the person. You may want the person to do something or simply listen to you. Be specific

Step 3: I will ...

Tell the person what you are prepared to do to get your needs met or resolve the problem.

Assertive



When you respect others’ needs as well as your own, it is easier to maintain healthy relationships.

Homework Assignment: Assertive Communication – 3 Scenarios

Scenario 1: Ash and Sam have been dating for a few months. Ash is home sick, and Sam comes over to check on Ash. Sam posts an unflattering video of Ash sleeping and snoring. Ash feels embarrassed and angry at Sam for posting it.

3. What boundary was compromised?

4. What could Ash say to Sam to communicate the issue and set the boundary for the future?

Scenario 2: Jo and Morgan have been dating for a few months, and Jo leaves for summer break to be a camp counselor at a sleepaway camp. Jo is busy with work, helping campers and making friends with other counselors, and feels irritated with Morgan, who calls every morning and every night and texts throughout the day. One day, Jo leaves the phone behind for a field trip and has over thirty texts from Morgan that night. Jo feels that Morgan has good intentions, but finds the communication excessive.

4. What boundary/boundaries were comprised?

5. What could Jo say to Morgan?

6. Morgan really wants to talk to Jo more than they are currently talking. What could Morgan say to communicate that need assertively?

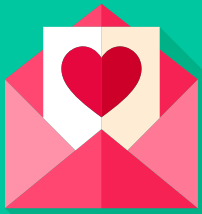
Scenario 3: Taylor and Jordan have been best friends for years and start dating in tenth grade. As soon as they decided to be a couple, Taylor started being very physical – Taylor is always initiating public displays of affection, touching and kissing Jordan. Whenever they're alone

together, Taylor starts putting the moves on. Jordan feels surprised and uncomfortable with all the physical attention.

4. What boundary is being violated?

5. How can Jordan communicate assertively about what s/he is feeling? What can Jordan say to start the conversation?

6. Taylor does want the relationship to be more physical. What could Taylor say that's assertive, but not aggressive?



THE SCIENCE OF LOVE

INFOGRAPHIC

1st PHASE: LUST AND PASSION

THE PRIMITIVE BRAIN

The primitive brain (limbic system) controls the sexual attraction and interpersonal bonding

DOPAMINE

Dopamine controls sexual arousal, pleasure, and reward. It makes us seek the presence of the loved person

SEROTONIN

Serotonin controls happiness and wellbeing. Changes in serotonin induce loss of concentration, day dreaming and obsessive behavior

ADRENALINE

Adrenaline gives an extra boost of energy to people in love. It is responsible for the loss of appetite and sleepless nights.

IN THE BRAIN

Serotonin levels return to normal levels. The initial stress is replaced by trust, safety and empathy.

OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin, the "love hormone" is essential for attraction and bonding with the partner

SEX HORMONES

Production of sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone) increases intensifying sexual desire

LOVE = STRESS

Falling in love is a stressful event. When we fall in love the levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, are increased

3RD PHASE: THE ATTACHEMENT

2ND PHASE: THE ATTRACTION

READ THE FULL STORY: <http://bit.ly/science-love>

Infographic by www.sciencebriefss.com - daily science news in brief.
Less to read more to learn!