

Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Patterns

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**What does a healthy relationship:
look like?
feel like?
sound like?**

Foundations of a Healthy Relationship

Healthy Relationship Wheel



Honesty & Accountability Accepts responsibility for self

Trust-Trust just isn't about keeping secrets; it is also about feeling safe and having security within your relationship. Respecting your rights, feelings, friendships with others, and opinions.

Communication-Communicating openly and honestly with each other.

Individuality-Respects your rights to have other relationships with friends, family members, co-workers, groups, etc.

Respect-Listens to you without judging. Values your opinions. Being emotionally supportive of you.

Non-Threatening Behavior-words and actions make you feel safe.

Ways of Promoting a Healthy Relationship



Be aware of and take care of your own needs



Have realistic expectations



Prioritize



Be flexible



Seek the positive - The Magic 5:1 Ratio



“Fight fair” during conflicts



Communicate

Rules of Fighting Fair

Take time to
cool down

Use “I”
statements

Problem vs
person
focused

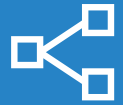
Avoid
generalizing

Take
responsibility

Know what is
changeable

How Do I know If My
Relationship is
unhealthy?

Questions to ask yourself?



Do you feel safe and respected by your partner?



If you had a problem or concern, are you able to discuss it with your partner without feeling like you are putting yourself at risk?



Do you feel like both you and your partner have equal power and control?

Defining an Unhealthy or Abusive Romantic Relationship

There are many ways a relationship can be unhealthy.

Most relationships do not start out as abusive; it's not how the relationship that started that matters. It is how it **EVOLVES**

Abuse may involve physical acts, but it could also include verbal or emotional abusive

Differentiating Abuse from Relationship Troubles

Heartache or discomfort; can be a normal part of relationship difficulties

- Arguments in a typical relationship:
 - Each person is allowed to make a point and to talk
 - You feel respected by your partner, even if they are upset with you
 - The focus is on the problem, not on character insults, demeaning comments, or threats
 - You feel able to express your needs or concerns, without fearing retaliation, name-calling, or gaslighting
 - Both partners want to reach a solution and want to forgive
- You do NOT feel afraid of your partner
- You do NOT feel powerless or controlled
- Efforts made to correct a problem are not punished.

1. Look at the Intensity

Relationships generally start out intense and exciting. This is often referred to as the Honeymoon period

- Butterflies in your stomach. Grinning from Ear to Ear. Everything seem perfect about your new love, you agree on everything. The sky is blue and the birds are singing. Fighting? What's that? All you want to do is be around each other.
- After a few weeks or a few months, this period of intensity should develop into a more comfortable, richer, more mature connection. The connection should & must become less intense.
- What can it look like if things are too intense? It can look very different across different couples. What's important is how it feels. Ask yourself.
 - *Does this feel overwhelming, chaotic, suffocating, or scary?*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JYyHa03x-U>

Examples of concerning intensity

Your partner drops the LOVE word, early and before you feel ready.

Your partner defines the relationship early on, without consideration for what you're feeling

Your partner is annoyed that you're unavailable or has a delayed responses to texts, even when you've told them you have a busy day.

Your partner calls to check on you when you've been out of contact briefly

Your partner makes over the top gestures that make you feel uncomfortable

Your partner bombards you with obsessive emails

2. Examine the extent to which you feel isolated

- Most relationships start out with an intense desire to spend time together. Even when couples decide to spend much of their time together, both partners should hold on to a sense of autonomy and feel that they are able to make individual choices.
- As a relationship becomes more established and comfortable, members of a couple should regain interest in spending time with friends and family.
- Respect the needs for privacy and space.
 - Your partner should encourage you to spend time with friends without them, and to participate in activities that you enjoy.
- Time spent together should generally feel good.
 - If you feel scared or uncomfortable when you are with your partner, that could be a strong sign that you are in an unhealthy relationship
- Your partner should know your “people”
 - In healthy relationships, your partner should make an effort to get to know the important people in your life

Warning Signs of Isolation

Making you feel like your family/friends are against them- “Your family doesn’t want us to be together. Let’s hang out at my house from now on”

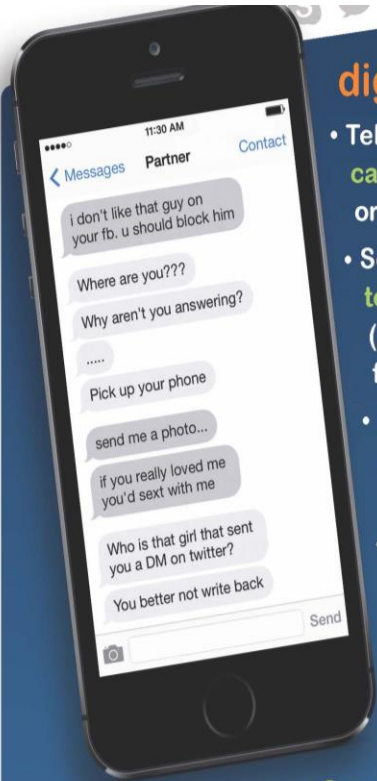
Causing you to question your friendships- “Why do you hang-out with those losers anyway?”

Guiltting you into staying with them- “You were out there having so much fun, while I was here bored with no one to talk to.”

Showing up uninvited to “check-in” on you

Reducing your time with friends by picking you up early or insisting you leave with them

Claiming that they are the only one who really cares about you



digital abuse:

- Tells partner who they can/can't be friends with or follow on social media
- Sends insulting, threatening texts or is constantly texting (partner can't be away from phone)
- Demands partner send explicit pictures or sends unwanted, explicit pictures
- Steals or insists to be given passwords and/or looks through phone frequently

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Sound familiar? If you want to talk about your digital relationship, call, text or chat with a peer advocate. Everyone deserves a healthy relationship.

connect now!

chat at loveisrespect.org

text love to 22522

call 1-866-331-9474
(1.866.331.8453 TTY)

free.
confidential.
24/7.



3. Extreme Jealousy

- Some jealousy in a relationship is normal, but extreme Jealousy is NOT and is a sign of an unhealthy relationship
- Signs
 - Your partner repeatedly accuses you of cheating on them
 - Tries to **control** how you interact with others or present yourself, such as telling you to smile more, talk less, laugh differently, or change how you dress
 - Keeps close tabs on you on social media, insists that you share your GPS location, or asks friends to report on what you're doing
 - Insists you share passwords, checks your phone, reads your message/emails
- Reflect on your inner experience-
 - Do you feel like you're walking on eggshells? Are you fearful that your partner will act irrationally? Do you try to avoid triggers for their jealousy, such as hiding your phone, avoid speaking to certain people, minimizing your closeness to friends?

4. Beware of Emotional Manipulation

Being made to keeping the relationship or aspects of the relationship a secret

- In a healthy relationship, there is no reason to hide. If you're hooking up with someone in secret, and it feels bad to you, you should feel free enough to express this to your partner.
- Relationships should not be hidden from the people closest to you in your life.
- Both partners get to dictate how much to share with their friends and family about the relationship.

Guilt-tripping or Manipulation

- <https://time.com/5411624/how-to-tell-if-being-manipulated/>
- Feeling guilted into doing things that make you feel uncomfortable.
- You should not feel pressured or coerced into doing something that makes you feel uncomfortable or violates your rights.
- You have no obligation to engage in sex with your partner. You have the right to declined sex or certain sex acts. It isn't fair for your partner to claim that you don't care about them because you won't have sex or engage in certain sex act.
- Even if you've done it before, you are never required to do anything that makes you uncomfortable. Your partner should respect your sexual needs, preferences, and be interested in making you comfortable.
- The same holds true for sexting. 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.

5. Respect

- Your partner should be your biggest fan and one of your greatest supports.
 - Your partner's words should build you up, not break you down.
 - In an unhealthy relationship, words can be used as weapons to make the other person feel powerless, unattractive, stupid or worthless.
- Be aware about whether your partner acts in ways that communicate respect.
 - Your partner should not put you down, make fun of you, or tell stories to make others laugh at your expense
- Reflect on your experience:**
 - Do you feel ashamed or embarrassed about how you and your partner communicate (yelling, screaming, jokes that aren't jokes)
 - If you were to share this concern, would your partner understand, or would they shut you down or accuse you of overreacting?
 - Gaslighting**- to manipulate someone into thinking they are wrong or crazy
 - “You're over-reacting; You're way too sensitive; You're just being dramatic; It didn't happen that way; This is your problem; you're crazy”

6. Beware of Volitivity

- Relationships have ups and downs, but they should not be characterized by high highs and low lows, frequent break-ups and make-ups, or intense arguments.
- <https://www.facebook.com/JoinOneLove/videos/1718540951520610/>
- You should not feel afraid of your partner or worry that your partner's moods are unpredictable.
- Violate relationships often involve tearful, intense arguments, where partners make hateful and harsh comments
- These arguments may also involve physical abuse, aggression, threats of harm, or sexual abuse

What are my options if I'm recognizing unhealthy relationship patterns?

Setting
boundaries

Mediation or
couples/family
counseling

Ending the
relationship

Setting Boundaries

Be thoughtful: take time to think about what the stressor is and what solutions might be in advance

Be specific: name the issue and name a replacement behavior for you and/or the other person to take

Enforce the boundary: this most often allows for some opportunity for correction and reminders

Consider consequences: decide what you're willing to do if boundaries aren't adhered to. Be mindful of what consequences may exist before and after setting boundaries.

What might healthy boundaries look like?

“When you do X, I feel Y. It’s important to me that you/me/we do Z instead.”

“I want to have this conversation with you, but I need to study now. Let’s find a time to talk about it after my exam tomorrow.”

“No name calling or belittling during an argument”

“I have work on my thesis, so I need you take on X household or childcare responsibilities tonight”

“I can only come to X event for an hour this weekend” or “I would love to help/be there, but is there another time?”

Reflect on what boundaries feel right to you

Physical: Are you okay with public displays of affection? Does affection make you uncomfortable?

Emotional: Are you able to share what you are feeling right away or do you need some time to think about it? Would you prefer that your partner be available when you have a crisis? When are you ready to say I love you?

Sexual: Do you need to get to know your partner a while before engaging in any kind of sexual activity, or are you okay getting physical right away? What sexual activity are you okay with?

Digital: Are you posting your relationship status? Is it okay if your partner uses your phone? Do you want to share passwords?

Material: Do you like sharing your stuff? Are you okay paying for your partner or vice versa?

Spiritual: Do you like to practice your religion with a partner or alone? Does your partner need to have the same beliefs as you or can they be different as long as yours are respected?

In a healthy relationship, boundaries should be discussed and respected.

Why is it so hard to end things?

Love

- Romantic relationships involve matters of the heart; people can love their partner even in the face of abuse or mistreatment.
- It is very hard to separate from someone you love.
- The relationship may have started out positively. One partner may hope that the other partner will go back to being kind, charming, caring etc.

Fear of Being Outed

- If someone is in an LGBTQ relationship and has not yet come out to everyone, their partner may threaten to reveal this secret.

Shame

- It's often difficult for someone to admit that they are being abused or mistreated.
- They may feel they've done something wrong by being in an unhealthy relationship.
- They may also worry that their friends and family will judge them.

Low Self-Esteem

- Believing that they cannot be in a better relationship, fear that they deserve this abuse or mistreatment, or feeling as though their needs and feelings don't matter.
- When an abusive partner constantly puts someone down, it can be easy to believe that they are at fault or can be convinced that the relationship is not unhealthy (gaslighting).

Why is it so hard to end things?

Fear of public humiliation, rumors, or physical attack

- A person may be afraid of what will happen if they decide to leave the relationship.
- Fear of stalking, harassment, rumors, or bullying on social media
- These fears may be based in reality; leaving a physical abusive relationship is can be a time of high risk.
- It may be wise to work with a counselor around developing a safe way to leave

Fear that their partner will commit suicide or hurt themselves

- If a partner regularly threatens suicide whenever their partner is trying to leave the relationship, this is form of emotional abuse and manipulation.
- If a partner says they're going to kill themselves when things aren't going their way, they're not showing you love – they're likely trying to control your actions.
- Tips:
 - Tell your partner you care about them, but stick to your boundaries;
 - Remember the choice to live or die is on them, not on you;
 - Don't Go it Alone-
 - Seek consultation with a therapist;
 - Call friends, a family member, university resources, crisis resources or 911 if necessary

Believing abuse is normal

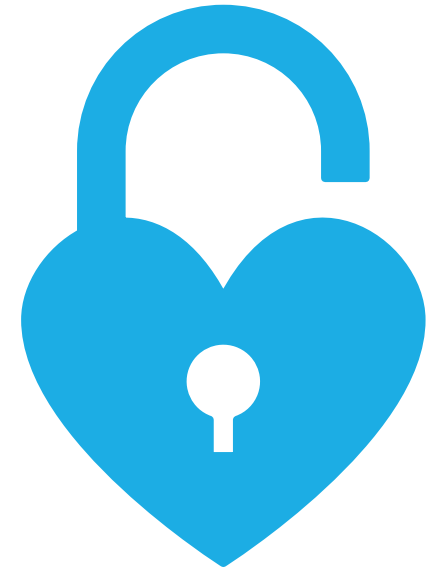
- A person may not know what a healthy relationship looks like, perhaps from growing up in an environment where abuse was common, and they may not recognize that their relationship is unhealthy.
- History of Trauma: Individuals with developmental trauma or early relational trauma may be more likely to enter into a later abusive relationships.

Trust your inner wisdom

How you feel in relationship is **essential**.

If you feel that something is off, talk to your partner about it. If you are unable to approach your partner or if they are not listening to you, that may be a sign that the relationship is unhealthy.

Pay attention to your “gut feeling” if you feel that something is off in the relationship, talk to a friend, family member, or counselor.



Getting Help

Don't make excuses for abuse

- There are reasons that people exhibit abusive behaviors, but there is no excuse for these behaviors
- Intoxication, school/work stress, or jealousy are not grounds for abusive behavior

Be committed to looking at the reality of the relationship

- Work to accept that your relationship is Not just going to spontaneously improve and become healthy.
- In order to live a healthy life, you must be honest with yourself with respect to the relationship.
- Practice encouraging yourself to see the truth and feel strong enough to make a change.

Be kind and compassionate toward yourself

- You cannot heal yourself without having a compassionate inner voice and encouraging inner dialogue. You do not need any more abuse in your life – from others or from yourself.

Remember it is never too late to leave or make a change

Know the importance of a safety plan.

- Keep in mind: breaking up can be hard to do safely.
- If someone is a serious aggressor they might lash out violently during or after the breakup, so it's not a good idea to breakup in the spur of the moment.
- The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is often after a breakup. If you feel afraid or have a sense that a breakup would “push someone over the edge,” that's a sign that you may be in danger and that a safety plan should be created for the breakup.
- The plan should be carefully thought out (i.e., not in an isolated place) and friends, family, or counselors should be informed of the plan ahead of time for support throughout

Seeking Help from the University Counseling Center



■ Health Services Building, Room 206

Office Hours Monday –Friday 9:00am. – 5:00 p.m.

Services at the UCC are **Free & Confidential**

Our center has a private waiting area

Urgent/ Same-day appointments are available if needed

Virtual and in person appointments available

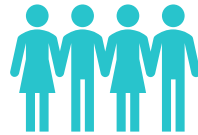
What services do we offer students?



Individual Personal Counseling

Individual counseling provides a space for students to discuss personal issues in a confidential, private setting.

Individual counseling permits students the opportunity to receive feedback from a caring and experienced professional who can help them identify stressors and constructive ways to cope.



Counseling Groups

Each semester there are several groups offered during which one or two psychologists meet with a group of 5-10 students sharing a common concern.

Examples of such groups include Survivors of Sexual Assault, Loss of a Loved One, and Adjusting to Freshman Year.



Psychiatric Consultations

Students who are currently in treatment with a counselor at UCC may be referred for a consultation with one of our psychiatric consultants.

What services do we offer students?



Referrals

Referrals are often made for more difficult psychological challenges or those not typical of the normal developmental process.

A referral may also be made for students who need to be seen more than once a week, need to be seen for more than a semester, or if the need for services extends beyond the scope of the Counseling Center.

When a referral is made psychologists will assist students in finding a practitioner in the community who can best meet their needs.



Consultation

Psychologists are available to parents, students, faculty, and administrators who are concerned about another person's psychological wellbeing.

Confidentiality and privacy prevents our psychologists from discussing a student we have seen in counseling unless we have the student's permission. However, by hearing a description of the conditions that have caused concern and by asking you a series of questions we can get a good sense of the severity of situation and help you determine the best course of actions.



Take care of
yourself and
your neighbor

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)