

AM I IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?



What's a relationship?

Relationships are about the connections between people. In life we have many different relationships, such as those with family members, friends, and romantic partners.

Because we as individuals are always growing and changing, our relationships are also always growing and changing. In many ways, our relationships influence who we are. Therefore we want our relationships to grow and change in ways that are positive and healthy.

This brochure is about romantic relationships. It will help you to identify some things that make a relationship positive and healthy. It will also help you to identify signs of an unhealthy relationship.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

Below you'll find a list of things that might be part of a romantic relationship. Rate each one based on importance. You and your partner can work on this separately and then compare your results.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
1. Appreciation for each other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Caring about each other's feelings.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Treating each other with respect.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Feeling comfortable talking with each other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Trust.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Honesty.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Helping each other through difficult times.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. What your family/friends think of your partner.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Who your partner's friends are.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Sharing the same values.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Sharing the same interests/hobbies.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Feeling and showing affection for each other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Spending time with each other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

Now look at your list. Which things were important to you? Which things are important to your partner? Any similarities? Any differences? This activity offers an opportunity for you and your partner to start talking about what you both need and want from a relationship. You might also want to ask a parent or another trusted adult which things they think are most important in a relationship.

What's healthy?

Having a healthy and long-lasting relationship means work for both partners. Some qualities that are an important part of building a healthy romantic relationship are:

RESPECT

Respect means acting in ways that show that you value your partner. Listening to your partner's ideas even when they are different from yours is one way to show that you respect him or her.

UNDERSTANDING

Being understanding means that you think about your partner's feelings and care about how your behavior might affect him or her.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility means that your partner can count on you to look out for his/her best interests. For example, being responsible means not doing things that might put yourself or your partner at risk for sexually transmitted infections or unintended pregnancy.

These are just a few of the things that can help to build a healthy and positive relationship. Some others are honesty, open communication, trust, and emotional support.

What's unhealthy?

Unhealthy relationships often involve abuse. Abuse is when a person uses power to control his or her partner. Abuse can be physical and/or emotional. For example, abusive relationships can include any of the following:

- Jealousy, lack of trust
- Lack of respect for a partner's right to privacy
- One partner always doing what the other partner wants because of fear of what might happen if he or she doesn't do what the other partner wants
- Physical violence like hitting, kicking, stabbing, punching, biting, or pushing
- Sexual abuse or harassment, including forcing someone to have sex, touching someone in ways he or she doesn't like, and not respecting someone's physical space

Often, after the abuse happens, the abuser will apologize and treat his or her partner with special care. However, the abuser usually will abuse again. If you are in a relationship that includes the types of behaviors listed above, it is important to get help. Try speaking to a parent, family member, friend, teacher, or counselor.

Am I in a healthy relationship?

Now that you know the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, you can figure out if your relationship is good for you. It is often very useful to talk to someone who has experience with relationships and who can help you to decide if your relationship is positive and healthy.

Resources

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, call one of the hotlines or visit one of the websites below:

NYC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
1-800-621-HOPE (4673)

NYC GAY AND LESBIAN ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT HOTLINE
212-714-1141

SAFE HORIZON
www.safehorizon.org

ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT
www.avp.org

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY
www.ppnyc.org

PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S "FACTS OF LIFE" LINE 212-965-7015
A 24-hour hotline offering pre-recorded messages in English and Spanish on more than 100 topics concerning sexuality and reproductive health.

For more information, contact:

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY
Margaret Sanger Square, 26 Bleecker Street, New York, New York 10012-2413
Tel: 212-274-7200 Fax: 212-274-7300
www.ppnyc.org

ABOUT PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY: At Planned Parenthood of New York City, we have more than 90 years of experience providing quality reproductive health care in a safe, supportive environment. We offer services to women, men, and teens throughout New York City, regardless of age, income, or immigration status. When you talk to us, it's always confidential. To make an appointment at any one of our three health centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, call 212-965-7000 or 800-230-PLAN.