

HEALTHY VERSUS UNHEALTHY

RELATIONSHIPS!

Developing Friendships

Your peers, in part, shape your identity. As you get older, the dynamics of social groups change and you will develop other peer relationships. **Friendships** are significant relationships built on caring, respect, loyalty, trust, and consideration. Some of the friendships you form in high school may last a lifetime.

Types of Friendships

- Casual friendships
- Close friendships
- Platonic friendships

Building and maintaining healthy friendships is an important social skill.

Types of Peer Relationships

There are **four** types of peer relationships that influence you in your life.

- **Platonic relationship** is a friendship with a member of the opposite gender in which there is affection, but no recognition as a couple.
- **Casual relationships** may be based on shared interests but not deep emotional bonds.
- **Close friendships** involve strong emotional ties.
- **Cliques** are a small circle of friends, usually with similar backgrounds or interests, who exclude people viewed as outsiders. They have negative influences if they exclude people based on prejudices and stereotypes.

Positive Signs and Signals in Relationships

Every relationship has both positive and negative elements. The following is a list of signs of a healthy relationship.

- Agreement on most values and things you believe to be important
- Mutual interests
- Shared experiences
- Similar goals in life
- Desire to spend lots of time with each other
- Recognition of each other's limitations
- Recognition of strengths and weaknesses of the relationship
- Belief that the strengths of the relationship far outweigh the weaknesses

Negative Signs and Signals

When a relationship is unhealthy, there will be many negative signs. Read over the following negative signs that you may recognize in an unhealthy relationship.

- A relationship of convenience
- A relationship based mostly on physical attraction
- A feeling that no one else is available
- A feeling that it's too difficult to be alone
- A desire or obligation to help out somebody who's having a rough time
- A fear that you might lose the other person if you don't get serious
- A desire to get away from home
- A desire to get away from problems in your life
- A need to know that the other person will always be around for you when you need someone
- A fear of breaking up
- A fear of the other person's temper or possible violence

Have you seen these signs in any of your relationships?

Building Character and Healthy Relationships

The way you think, feel, and act will have the greatest influence on your relationships. Your values, beliefs, and ideals will guide you in your life. The following traits are positive traits you should be able to identify in a healthy relationship.

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

Cliques

A **clique** is a small, narrow circle of friends, usually with similar backgrounds or tastes, that excludes people they view as outsiders.

Negative Aspects of Cliques

Two of the negative aspects of cliques are prejudice and stereotypes. They can cause a lot of pain and hurt to those outside the clique.

- **Prejudice** – A negative feeling toward someone or something that is based on stereotypes, not on experience.
- **Stereotypes** – An exaggerated and oversimplified belief about an entire group of people, such as an ethnic group, a religious group, or a certain gender.

Do you know of cliques in your life? How do they make you feel?

Dating Relationships

Dating provides opportunities to develop social skills such as communication and how to interact with others. An **infatuation** involves exaggerated feelings of passion for another person. **Affection** is a feeling of fondness that comes from knowing another person well. Friendship and caring are essential for building an affectionate, close relationship with a dating partner.

Dating may involve various activities, but it is important to avoid high-risk dating situations that may increase the chance of engaging in sexual activity or other high-risk behaviors. The teen years are a time for trying many roles and relationships and dating only one person may prevent you from developing other relationships.

As you mature, you'll set your own limits on dating. Until then, your parents will set limits such as insisting on **curfew**, or a set time at which you must be home at night. The following are benefits and experiences that you gain from dating:

- Dating is part of the process of learning interpersonal skills.
- Dating provides an opportunity for you to get to know yourself better, to recognize your strengths and weaknesses.
- Dating allows you a chance to feel comfortable with the opposite gender.
- Dating gives you a chance to practice your decision-making and communication skills.
- Dating often leads to an ongoing relationship with one person.

Be Aware of Unhealthy Relationships

Relationships are a necessary part of healthy living, but there is no such thing as a perfect relationship. Relationships—from acquaintances to romances—have the potential to enrich your life and add to your enjoyment of life. However, these same relationships can cause discomfort. Take time to learn more about how to protect yourself from developing unhealthy relationships.

What Makes a Healthy Dating Relationship?

Qualities of a healthy dating relationship include the following:

- Mutual respect
- Trust
- Honesty
- Support
- Fairness/equality
- Separate identities
- Good communication
- A sense of playfulness/fondness

What Is a Loving Relationship?

Loving and being loved adds richness to lives. When people feel close to others, they are happier and healthier. Love helps you feel important, understood, and secure. When you are in a healthy loving relationship, you are in an open love system that promotes individual growth and separateness along with mutual integrity, openness, and honesty.

Love (Open Love System)

- Encourages and gives room to grow, expand, with a desire for the other to grow as well
- Separate interests; other friends; maintain other meaningful relationships
- Trust; openness and honesty
- Mutual integrity preserved and respected
- Willingness to take risks and be real
- Ability to enjoy being alone
- Room for exploration of feelings in and outside of the relationship
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What Is an Addictive Relationship?

Love addiction is a closed system made out of desperate need and emotional despair. Usually love addiction is created from a fear of being alone or rejected. Love addicts endlessly search for that special someone—the person who will make the addict feel whole. Love addicts oftentimes have had numerous opportunities for the truly intimate experience they think they want, but they are more strongly attracted to the intense experience of “falling in love” than they are to the peaceful intimacy of healthy relationships. As a result, they spend much of their time hunting for “the one.” They base nearly all of their life choices on the desire and search for this perfect relationship.

Addiction (Closed System)

- Dependent, based on security and comfort; "proof" of love based on intensity of need and infatuation (which may really be fear, insecurity, and/or loneliness)
- Total involvement; limited social life; neglect old friends and interests
- Preoccupation with the other person's behavior; dependent on other's approval for own identity and self-worth
- Jealousy, possessiveness, and fear of competition from others such as friends and family
- One partner's needs are suspended for the other's; self-deprivation
- Reassurance through repeated, ritualized activity
- Intolerance – Unable to endure separations (even in conflict); hang on even tighter; undergo withdrawal, loss of appetite, restlessness; lethargy; disoriented agony

Breakups

Love Relationship

- Accepts breakup without feeling a loss of own adequacy and self-worth
- Wants what is best for their partner, though apart; can become friends again

Addictive Relationship

- Feels inadequate, worthless; often one-sided decision
- Violent ending – Often hate each other, try to inflict pain, manipulate to get back at each other.

One-Sided Addiction

- Denial, fantasy; overestimation of other partner's commitment.
- Seeks solutions outside self such as drugs, alcohol, new lover, and/or change of situation

Domestic Violence Victims of domestic abuse may experience feelings of fear, shame, guilt, and humiliation. They often feel powerless to change their circumstances.

The 10 Major Signs of Relationship Abuse

Domestic violence and relationship abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied. This is especially true when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical. Noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to ending it. No one should live in fear of the person they love. If someone you know is experiencing any of the following warning signs and/or descriptions of abuse, reach out to someone for help. There is help and no one deserves to be in a relationship of violence.

Here are some signs of relationship abuse:

- Isolation
- Jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Double Standards
- Name Calling
- Controlling Behavior
- Threats of Self-Harm
- Playing Rough
- Non-Consensual Sex
- Violence

Effects of Long-Term Domestic Abuse

When someone has been in a relationship where there is domestic abuse for a long period of time, they may experience the following:

- Depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and eating disorders
- Abuse of alcohol and other drugs
- Chronic pain
- Neglect of, or injury to, oneself, including possible suicide attempts
- An inability to trust or establish healthy relationships

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Once domestic violence starts in a relationship, a common cycle of abuse begins to take hold. Your partner apologizes, then you lower your guard, and over time, the violence again rears its ugly head. Understanding the signs of abuse are crucial to breaking the domestic violence cycle.

If you or someone you know is being abused, you can break the cycle of abuse by doing the following:

- Tell a trusted adult (parent, friend, family member, teacher, counselor).
- Contact an abuse hot line or crisis center and ask for help.
- Report the abuse to the police.
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Avoiding Domestic Violence

There are many different strategies that can help you avoid and prevent domestic violence. You can remember these strategies by remembering **the three R's**:

- **Recognize** – Become aware of the signs of abuse.
- **Resist** – If anyone tries to harm or abuse you in anyway, physically or sexually, run away and seek help.
- **Report** – If you are being abused in any way, tell someone about the situation as soon as you can. If you ever witness someone being abused, report it. Domestic abuse is unacceptable and most of the acts are illegal.

Dating Bill of Rights

The relationships you create in your teen years will be a very important part of your life. These relationships will teach you some of the most important lessons about who you are and what you stand for. Make communication, sharing, respect, and trust a part of every relationship. You deserve to be treated with respect and consideration.

The following is a **Dating Bill of Rights**:

- I deserve to be treated with consideration and respect.
- It's my right to be liked for who I am, not by the way I dress or the car I drive.
- I have a right to have my values recognized and respected.
- If pressured by my date, I can say no to drugs or other high-risk activities without apologizing or offering an explanation.
- No one has the right to force or pressure me to do anything that goes against my or my family's values.

You can make up your own bill of rights or add to this one. Know what you want in the people you choose to date.

Relationship Abuse

As they develop emotionally, teens are heavily influenced by their relationship experiences. Healthy relationship behaviors can have a positive effect on your emotional development, while unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships may contribute to negative consequences.

Research suggests that victims of teen dating violence are more likely to do the following:

- Do poorly in school or not attend school due to feeling unsafe.
- Engage in binge drinking, smoking, using drugs, or unhealthy diet behaviors, including anorexia or bulimia.
- Become pregnant or have STIs (sexually transmitted infections).
- Report feelings of hopelessness and sadness.
- Attempt suicide.
- Develop a negative body image and become uncomfortable with their sexuality.
- Be overly dependent on others and not achieve independence.
- Enter into violent adult relationships.

What Is Rape and Date Rape?

Too often, teens are introduced to sex through rape. More than 80 percent of reported rapes are committed by someone the victim knows.

Rape is sex you don't agree to, including forcing a body part or object into your vagina, rectum, or mouth.

Date rape is when you are raped by someone you know, like a boyfriend. Both types of rape are crimes. Rape is never about sex. It is an act of power by the rapist and it is always wrong.

Date rape drugs, which often have no smell or taste, can be given to you without your knowledge at parties, raves, or in a club, especially when alcohol is being served. Alcohol can decrease your inhibitions and ability to think clearly, which will make you less aware of the danger of sexual assault. If by chance you are given date rape drugs, you may not be able to say "no" to unwanted sex and you may not be able to clearly remember what happened.

Remember, even if you were drinking, it is **not** your fault if you are raped.

What Is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault and abuse is any kind of sexual activity that you do not agree to, including the following:

- Inappropriate touching
- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex
- Sex that you say "no" to
- Rape
- Attempted rape
- Child molestation

Sexual assault can be verbal, visual, or anything that forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention. Examples of this are **voyeurism** (when someone watches private sexual acts), **exhibitionism** (when someone exposes him/herself in public), **incest** (sexual contact between family members), and **sexual harassment**. Sexual assault can happen in different situations: by a stranger in an isolated place, on a date, or in the home by someone you know.

Preventing Date Rape

The Date Rape Center outlines steps you can take to prevent date rape:

- Be willing to communicate expectations for a date or social event to someone who pushes the limits.
- Don't drink because alcohol compromises your ability to make good decisions and recognize dangerous situations.
- Know your values regarding sexual behavior and set limits before you date.
- Communicate your values clearly. **No means no**. If your date does something you don't like, get mad, leave, or make a scene. Do not worry about being sensitive or polite.
- Go on a date prepared with suggestions in case your date wants to go somewhere that makes you uncomfortable.
- Be aware of messages you may be sending with posture, speech, tone of voice, and eye contact. Nonverbal or unintentional messages may be misinterpreted.
- Avoid isolated places and don't meet an acquaintance at either one of your homes. Agree to meet and date in a public place.

Challenges Faced by Date Rape Victims

Victims of teen dating violence may find it very challenging to do the following:

- Establish intimacy with a partner
- Become a positive member of society
- Develop a personal value system
- Establish an adult identity

Rape Awareness and Facts

Rape and sexual assault are serious problems in communities. Sexual violence is critically underreported, which prevents advocates from assisting survivors in need. The Rape Recovery Center reports the following information regarding rape:

- A rape occurs every **five** minutes in the United States.
- The number of rapes in Utah are the seventeenth highest in the nation. Nearly one in three females will be a victim of sexual assault. About one in seven males will be a victim of sexual assault.
- About 91 percent of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows.
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Who Are the Victims?

- One out of every six American women has been a victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. Among all victims, about nine out of ten are female.
- One out of every 33 American men has been a victim of an attempted or completed rape in his lifetime.
- At least ten percent of all victims of rape are male.

Age of Victims

- 15 percent are under age 12.
- 29 percent are age 12–17.
- 44 percent are under age 18.
- 80 percent are under age 30.
- Ages 12–34 are the years with the highest risk of sexual assault.
- Girls aged 16–19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of sexual assault.

Race of Victims

- **Women**

- 17.7 percent are white women.
- 18.8 percent are African-American women.
- 6.8 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander women.
- 34.1 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native women.
- 24.4 percent are mixed race women.
- 14.6 percent are Hispanic women.

- **Men**

- 2.8 percent are white men.
- 3.3 percent are African-American men.
- 4.4 percent are mixed race men.

The Effects of Rape on the Victim

Statistics from the Rape Recovery Center show the effects of rape.

Physical Injuries

- 100 percent of completed rapes, 39 percent of attempted rapes, and 17 percent of sexual assaults against females result in physically injured victims. (bruises and chipped teeth).
- Five percent of victims sustain major injuries (broken bones and gunshot wounds).
- 61 percent of victims sustain undetermined injuries.
- Only around 36 percent of injured victims receive medical care.
- 82 percent of those cared for use hospital services.
- 55 percent use physician services.
- 17 percent use dental services.
- 19 percent use ambulatory/paramedic services.
- 17 percent use physical therapy services.
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Survivors of Sexual Assault

- Three times more likely to suffer from depression.
- Six times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.
- 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol.
- 26 times more likely to abuse drugs.
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Occurrence of Sexual Assaults

- The number of rapes reported is spread fairly evenly throughout the year, with a slight increase in August (around nine percent) and the fewest in December (approximately seven percent).

When Sexual Assaults Occur

- 43 percent between 6:00 PM and midnight.
- 33 percent between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM.
- 24 percent between midnight and 6:00 AM.
- Nearly six out of ten sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred in their own home or at the home of a friend, relative, or neighbor.

Unhealthy Dating Relationships

Unhealthy relationships are marked by characteristics such as disrespect and control. It is important for youth to be able to recognize signs of unhealthy relationships before they escalate.

Some characteristics of unhealthy dating relationships include the following:

- **Control** – One dating partner makes all the decisions and tells the other what to do, what to wear, or who to spend time with. He or she is unreasonably jealous.
- **Hostility** – One dating partner picks fights and antagonizes the other dating partner. This may lead to one dating partner changing his or her behavior in order to avoid upsetting the other.
- **Dishonesty** – One dating partner lies to or keeps information from the other. One dating partner steals from the other.