

## What is a healthy relationship?

Throughout our lives, we are involved in many different kinds of relationships. We have relationships with parents, siblings, relatives, friends, girlfriends, boyfriends, teachers and classmates. Relationships have the potential to make us happier people and add to our feelings of self-worth. These are healthy relationships.

Unfortunately, we can also be in unhealthy relationships. Unhealthy relationships may make us feel uncomfortable. It can be difficult to come to the realization that someone is not treating you with the respect that you deserve. It is important to remember that some disagreement is normal within relationships and usually compromise is required. This does not necessarily mean that a relationship is unhealthy. Here are some points to consider when thinking about whether a particular relationship is healthy or unhealthy:

### In a healthy relationship, you:

- Treat each other with respect
- Feel comfortable and secure
- Support one another
- Communicate openly
- Encourage other friendships
- Use fair fighting techniques (no name calling)
- Take interest in each other's lives
- Are not violent with each other
- Are dependable
- Trust one another
- Can be yourself
- Can have different opinions and interests
- Listen to one another
- Both compromise, say sorry and talk arguments out
- Have fun together

### **In an unhealthy relationship, one or both of you:**

- Try to control the other
- Are afraid of disagreeing with the other
- Discourage one another from being close with anyone else
- Are overly possessive or jealous
- Prevent one another from doing things you enjoy
- Criticize or humiliate one another in front of others
- Push, shove, grab, hit or throw objects
- Harm or threaten to harm children, family, pets, or objects of personal value
- Criticize the others friends
- Ridicule or call names
- Make the other feel bad about themselves
- Cannot be yourself
- Control the others money or resources (i.e. car)
- Use physical force or threats to prevent the other from leaving
- Do not make time for each other
- Control how the other dresses

### **What about jealousy, is this love?**

Jealousy is about real or imagined fears; fear of being alone, fear of loss of love, fear of being dishonest in a relationship, fear of being embarrassed. The source of jealousy is usually insecurity within the relationship. The jealousy does not necessarily come from any action of your current partner, but rather from bad experiences in past relationships and imagined fears about potential pain in this relationship. Jealousy can ruin a relationship. Whether the jealousy is your own, or your partners, both of you must talk about it. For a relationship to grow, jealousy has to be dealt with. Communicating honestly with your partner is the best way to deal with jealousy.

Jealousy might seem like a sign of love, but when someone uses anger or jealousy to try to control what you do, where you go, who you talk to, what you wear, or acts like they own you, this is not love it is control. You have the right to talk to who you want to, wear what you want to wear, and go places you want to go to.

## **Your Rights in a Relationship**

Healthy relationships are honest, respectful, and responsible. In a healthy relationship, partners don't pressure each other to go against their personal values and they communicate openly about their feelings. Healthy relationships involve people who decide together how they will take responsibility for their relationships, and for the outcomes of the decisions they make.

If a partner, friend, family member, relative, or teacher is harming you physically, emotionally or sexually, tell someone you trust. This type of behaviour is against the law and needs to stop. There are many resources available to help you. If they encourage other harmful behaviours, like abusing alcohol or drugs, unsafe sexual behaviour, or other activities that make you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to leave the relationship. Trust your instincts and the people close to you whose opinions you trust and value. Everyone deserves to feel safe, valued and cared for. Remember; in a healthy relationship both people involved feel good about themselves. By treating yourself with self-respect and believing in your right to be treated well, you are taking important steps to developing healthy relationships.

**For more information please contact The Clinic at 519-663-5446.**