

Healthy Relationships

Relationships can develop with a number of people: family members, friends, co-workers, and people you are dating. Everyone has the right to be involved in healthy relationships, and these relationships can have a lot of qualities including:

1. Respect
2. Honesty
3. Trust
4. Mutual as well as separate goals and interests
5. Doing things together and apart
6. Emotional companionship/closeness
7. Intimacy
8. Assertiveness
9. Positive self-esteem
10. Communication in all directions
11. Equality: No one is the boss
12. Safety: physical, sexual, and emotional
13. Acts of kindness, caring and support



What About Me?

- You are the most important person in your life. Before you get into a new relationship or even if you are in one, take a few moments and think about yourself.
- It is important for you to be the **best you** that you can be.

To be in a healthy relationship you need to feel good about yourself.

- You have the right to be in a relationship that is free from danger, risk or injury. You should feel safe.
- You are a special person, with many talents and qualities. Believe in yourself and accept yourself for who you are – we all have faults and no one is perfect.
- You have the right to feel like you are ‘getting’ as well as ‘giving’.
- Good communication, decision-making skills, and problem solving skills are key to healthy relationships. Take the time to evaluate your skills and feel free to ask for help.
- Be aware of your strong points: write down your successes, both large and small.
- You have the right to seek help from a respected, trusted support person if you do not feel safe and supported.

When you have worked to be the best you can be, it is important to spend time with special people:

- People who don’t make you feel unsafe or upset by putting you down or hurting you.
- People who listen to your point of view and respect it, even if they don’t agree.

Here are some **ideas on how to keep your relationships healthy:**

- Talk to the other person about how you feel and listen to what he or she has to say.
- Expect some 'up' and 'down' days - But remember the 'up' days should outnumber the 'down' days. Talk about 'down' days together.
- Take care of yourself and make time for yourself. Your partner should add to your life, not take away or be 'all of your life'.
- Keep in touch with your family and friends and make time for them; they are important.
- Do things that you both enjoy.
- Talk about sex and respect each other's limits and choices, including saying NO.



When A Relationship Is Not Working

A relationship that doesn't work out has not been a waste of time or a failure – each person has a role in making a relationship work. It is not up to you to 'fix' the other person. Every relationship that you have teaches you something and helps you to grow as an individual. You may walk away from a relationship with clearer ideas of what sort of qualities you want or don't want in a partner. Remember to trust your instincts about whether or not to stay in a relationship, and that *having no relationship is better than having a bad relationship*.

How To End A Relationship

- Make a definite decision and follow through with it – in the moment it may be easy to say that you aren't sure or to be persuaded to stay with the individual, especially if they become upset. Remember why you made the decision and stick with it; you are doing what is best for you. Be firm. Make the end final.
- Make a safety plan: choose a safe location for the break-up and brainstorm other ways to help keep you safe. See your SAVIS counsellor for a plan.
- Be prepared for uncomfortable feelings. Preparing yourself for them will increase your ability to deal with them.

Tips To Make "Breaking Up" Easier

No one ever said that breaking up is easy, even if you are certain your decision was the right one. You may still feel upset about not having a special someone in your life. Here are some tips on making the time after a break-up easier:

- Don't feel guilty for deciding that the relationship is no longer right for you.
- Take care of yourself though rest, healthy eating, physical activity, and mindfulness.
- Expect 'up' days and 'down' days. Use a support system to help get you through both.
- Find new ways to enjoy the extra time and take time to rediscover yourself.