



## Healthy Relationships



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## What is a healthy relationship?

Healthy relationships can be hard to define. Everyone loves differently, and there isn't an easy guidebook on how to be a good partner. The way that you define your relationship can be very specific to you and your partner, but ultimately the goal should be to offer each other support, respect, trust, and companionship.

In a healthy relationship, the following things should be true:

- You feel safe with your partner
- You feel that your partner respects who you are as a person
- You feel that you have equal say in the relationship
- Your partner supports your choices and respects your boundaries



## What does a healthy relationship look like?

*“A loving relationship is one in which the loved one is free to be himself — to laugh with me, but never at me; to cry with me, but never because of me; to love life, to love himself, to love being loved. Such a relationship is based upon freedom and can never grow in a jealous heart.”*

*- Leo F. Buscaglia*

The National Domestic Abuse Hotline says that in a healthy relationship, both partners should respect one another, have the freedom to be themselves, support each other, communicate, and trust each other. Unhealthy relationships, on the other hand, are relationships where partners don't feel supported or respected. It can be hard to determine when a relationship becomes unhealthy, especially if you've never been in a relationship before. Unhealthy behavior can include:

- Inconsiderate or disrespectful behavior
- Lack of communication
- Attempts to control you emotionally or financially
- Humiliation on social media or in person
- Threatening behavior to you or your family

It is important to be aware of when a relationship becomes unhealthy. Unhealthy relationships can escalate into abusive relationships, where one or both partners physically or emotionally harm the other partner. Abuse can take many forms, and in some cases doesn't even include physical violence.

# Consent Quiz

*Is this consent?  
True or false.*

If women dress provocatively, it means they want to have sex.

If you've slept with someone before, that means you don't have to ask if they want to have sex anymore.

If you are severely intoxicated or passed out, you can still consent.

If someone buys you dinner or drinks, it means you have to have sex with them

As long as someone isn't screaming or struggling, it means that they consent.

If you say yes to a sexual encounter initially, you can't change your mind later on.

**Discuss these questions with your friends, partner, and classmates.**

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*Answers:  
All statements are false.*

## What is consent?

You have probably heard the phrase “no means no,” but what does that really mean when it comes to social interactions?

**Consent** is defined as “voluntary, positive agreement between two partners before engaging in sexual activity.” At its core, consent is about communicating with your partner, understanding their boundaries **before** having a sexual encounter, and checking in with your partner to make sure that they don't feel pressured or uncomfortable at any point during sexual activity.

It is important that you make sure that your partner is consenting, rather than assuming that they are comfortable with a sexual interaction. Because of that, it's often best to get verbal consent from your partner.

### Consent looks like:

- Communicating every step of the way. For example, asking before you remove your partner's shirt, rather than assuming they are okay with it.
- Respecting a “no” without questioning or pressuring your partner.
- Breaking away from gender stereotypes. Women are not the only people who need to give consent. It is important to recognize that men might also want to take things slow.

### Consent doesn't look like:

- Assuming that flirtatious behavior, accepting a drink or a ride home, or dressing provocatively is consent.
- Saying yes (or nothing) when intoxicated.
- Saying yes, giving in when pressured, or being too afraid to say no.

## *How can I help prevent dating violence?*

Dating violence and domestic abuse happen because of an unequal power dynamic between partners.

There are many ways that you can help prevent dating violence and abuse in your everyday life. Here are some ways that you can make the world a safer and more loving place for everyone:

- **Challenge stereotypes: speak up against stereotypes and support everyone's equality.**
- **Define what you want in a healthy relationship, and encourage your friends to do the same.**
- **Believe and support victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse.**
- **Educate yourself and others about stereotypes. Be a positive role model for others.**
- **Donate time, money, or supplies to your local domestic violence and sexual assault center.**
- **Speak out. Write letters to your local editor or for online publications, write stories, make posters.**
- **Get consent and always communicate with your partner.**
- **Know that you have the power to make a difference.**

## **Staying Safe Online**

Dating violence doesn't just happen in person. Your partner should respect you online, too.

Here are some signs of the warning signs of online abuse or dating violence:

- Your partner obsessively contacts you via text or social media.
- Your partner frequently puts you down or makes you feel stupid online.
- Your partner accesses your email, phone, and social media accounts without your permission.
- Your partner pressures you to send or receive sexual pictures.

If you or a friend is experiencing any of these behaviors, you can get help. [loveisrespect](http://loveisrespect.org): Call 1-866-331-9474, chat at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) or text "loveis" to 22522, any time, 24/7/365.

# Girl Museum

We are the first and only online museum dedicated to girls.

We exhibit, educate, and raise awareness about the unique experience of being born and growing up female around the world in the past and present.

As a community of passionate and creative individuals, we acknowledge and advocate for girls as forces for collective responsibility and change in the global context, not as victims and consumers.

We are a registered 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization.

Learn more and get involved at [www.GirlMuseum.org](http://www.GirlMuseum.org)



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## Additional Resources



- Loveisrespect.org: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: <http://www.thehotline.org/>
- Teen Talk on Consent and Sexual Assault: <http://teentalk.ca/hot-topics/consent-2/>
- The Consensual Project: <http://www.theconsensualproject.com/?int=close>
- Anti-Violence Project (for LGBTQ and HIV+ safety): <http://www.avp.org/>