

Relationships Exist on a Spectrum

Every relationship exists on a spectrum, that ranges from healthy to abusive. Here are highlights of some behaviors that fall on each part of the spectrum – the good (healthy), the concerning (unhealthy), and the harmful (abusive).

Healthy

You make decisions together and can openly discuss whatever you're dealing with, like relationship problems and sexual choices. You enjoy spending time together but can be happy apart.

Respect

Partner's value one another's beliefs, feelings, and opinions, and care about one another for who they are.

Healthy Communication

You and your partner talk openly and honestly about your thoughts and feelings.

Trust

Trust is built over time. Trusting your partner means feeling safe with them physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually.

Honesty

Partners feel as though they can share the full truth about their life and feelings with each other - they may not always like what is said but respond in a kind and considerate way.

Individuality

Each partner is comfortable spending time together and apart and respect one another's need for space and time apart.

Equality

The relationship feels balanced, and everyone puts the same effort into the success of the relationship and each person's is valued.

Unhealthy

One person tries to make most of the decisions. They may pressure their partner about sex or refuse to see how their actions can hurt. You feel like you should only spend time with your partner.

Inconsiderate Behavior

One or both partners are not considerate of and ignores one another's feelings, personal boundaries, and time/space.

Breaks in Communication

Conversations may be challenging or may lack openness and honesty that leads to misunderstandings.

Dishonesty

One or both partners lie or hide things from one another.

Pressure

One or both partners feels their desires, choices, and feelings are more important and pushes to do what they want.

Little/No Trust

Doubt and/or insecurity exists in your relationship that may erode the trust in your partner and your relationship.

Struggle for Control

One or both partners view their needs and/or decisions as more important and are focused on getting your own way.

Abusive

One person is making all decisions. You spend all of your time together and feel like you can't talk to other people, especially about what's really happening in your relationship.

Manipulation

One partner controls all decisions and actions. They try to convince their partner to do things they don't feel comfortable with and ignores boundaries.

Blame Shifting

One partner blames the other for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abuse, and/or minimizes behaviors and feelings.

Accusations

One partner accuses the other of flirting and/or cheating without reason.

Control

One partner tells the other what to wear, who they can hang out with, where to go, and what activities/things they can participate in.

Isolation

This behavior often starts slowly with one partner asking to spend more 1:1 time and making their partner feel dependent on them.

Mistreatment

One partner talks poorly about the other- how they look or feel, their friends or family, and makes them feel bad about themselves.