

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE IN AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Not all relationships are healthy. One fourth to one half of all dating relationships involve violence of some kind. Dating violence can have many forms. It may start out with mild forms and escalate as the relationship develops. VERY RARELY does the violence stop once a couple gets married. In fact it often gets worse. An exception is verbal/physical violence related to alcohol misuse since drinking responsibly or not at all will often eliminate the violence. The problem is that “serious dating” or marriage does not instantly make you or your partner more mature, wiser, self-controlled or more responsible (including changes in their drinking). See what is in front of your nose regardless of what your heart tells you or what you want to see.

Emotional/Psychological abuse. Jealousy, possessiveness, controlling behavior, verbal put downs, name calling, criticism, intimidation, threats.

Physical abuse. Pushing, shoving, slapping, pulling hair, excessive tickling, hitting, punching, threatening with a weapon, physically confining.

Sexual abuse. Any sexual relations without the consent of the other person. Touching, humiliating sexual activity, coercion, rape.

Does your partner (or do you):

- Call you names, put you down, and/or embarrass you?
- Leave you feeling stupid or put down?
- Say that no one else would ever go out with you?
- Drink too much (more than four drinks when drinking) or use drugs?
- Have two sets of "rules" for behaving (one person has more freedom than the other)?
- Tell you where you can go, who you can see and talk to, and/or what you can wear?
- Somehow alienated you from your prior friends so your partner is all you have?
- Want to know where you are, who you are with and what you are doing all the time?
- Accuse you of flirting or sleeping around (when chances are they are)?
- Get so jealous you feel uncomfortable and stop you from doing or saying things?
- Need constant reassurance, praise or ego building?
- Try directly or indirectly to cut you off from your friends and family?
- Leave you constantly making excuses for their behavior?
- Expect you to consistently accept excuses for their moody, angry, or selfish behavior?
- Make you afraid of how your partner will react to what you say or do?

- ___ Leave you finding yourself in a relationship dance with repeated tension – violence – intense apologies and romance, over and over again?
- ___ Often lose his or her temper and throw or break things when angry?
- ___ Revealed violent acts towards others?
- ___ Forced or coerced you to have sex or do uncomfortable sexual activity?
- ___ Has your partner ever pushed, slapped, punched, kicked or hurt you?
- ___ Are you afraid that he or she will?

If this information describes your relationship you may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. You may “love” the other person but either you or they may not be equipped to be in a loving, healthy relationship at this time. Change your self or ask them to change before the marriage. If your feelings and needs are really important then they and you will act now. Later will be too late! Please call to talk to a professional who can help you. Contact the Counseling and Guidance Center at 963-6852, or Family Advocacy at 963-6972.