

# Relationships

One of the most exciting parts of coming to college is the opportunity to meet people with whom you might want to create a romantic relationship. This is a part of your college life that should be enjoyable and enhancing to your self esteem. However, sometimes college students find themselves in romantic relationships that make them unhappy, that do not enhance their self-esteem, and contain a lot of fighting and / or conflict.

A first step in identifying how to create a healthy relationship, or to know whether you are in an unhealthy relationship, is to be clear about the characteristics of both. Therefore, the following is a list of characteristics of both a healthy relationship and an unhealthy relationship to help you clearly distinguish between the two.

## **Signs of a healthy relationship:**

- There is very little emotional pain in your relationship
- You are each other's best friend
- You never try to control or manipulate each other
- You never cheat on each other
- You are never violent with each other; i.e. Pushing, shoving, grabbing, hitting, or punching

## **Signs of an unhealthy relationship:**

- Your partner tries to control or manipulate you
- Your partner is very possessive or jealous
- Your partner excessively drinks or abuses drugs
- Your partner makes you feel bad about yourself
- Your partner calls you names and / or yells at you

Relationship violence can be defined as a pattern of physical or psychological control which one person exerts over the other in order to get his or her way. Their behavior harms the other person, either physically or emotionally, by creating anxiety and fear and prevents the person from doing what he or she wants, or makes them behave in ways that they have not freely chosen.

## **What can you do?**

- Recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship, such as unexplained bruises and injuries, chronic depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, or jumpiness.
- Be willing to seek help for yourself or your friend.
- Counseling services are available on campus free of charge.

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