

Healthy Relationships in Grad School

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Thoughts?

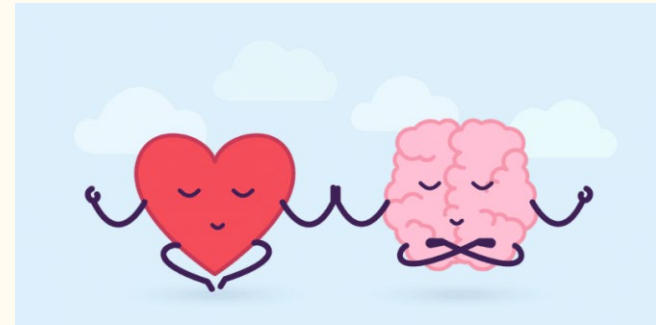
- What are you hoping to gain from this presentation?
- What are you most curious about?





Some facets of a relationship....

- Physical
- Emotional
- Communication
- Finances
- Fun
- Children/pets
- Living situations
- Families
- Health
- Social media
- Future goals/careers/schooling
- Interests/hobbies
- Friendships
- Spirituality
- Substance use
- Travel interests
- Division of household responsibilities
- Past trauma





Types of relationships we'll discuss

- Healthy
- Difficult
- Toxic / Unhealthy
- Abusive

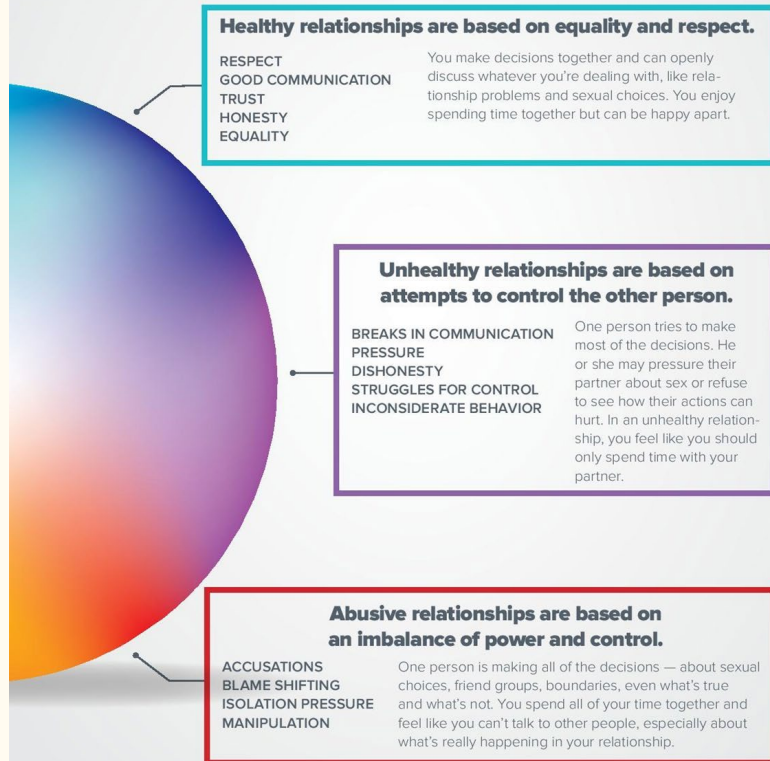


*Keep in mind: YOU are the only person that can decide what to label your relationship and how to feel about it



THE RELATIONSHIP SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive with unhealthy somewhere in the middle





Difficult Relationships

- Area between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Just because a relationship is difficult doesn't mean it is always toxic
- Difficult relationships aren't “doomed”
- All relationships have challenges and hurdles
 - Living in different locations
 - Cultural differences
 - One member in school
 - Single income household
 - Illness/ Disability
 - Child care
 - Etc...





Toxic Relationships

- Mentally, emotionally, and/ or physically damaging
- Damages or drains self-esteem or energy
- Characterized by insecurity, self-centeredness, dominance, and control
- Absence of care, respect, and compassion
- Absence of safety, trust, comfort, and security





The Person I'm With (Often, Sometimes or Never)

1. Is very supportive of things that I do and encourages me to try new things.
2. Likes to listen when I have something on my mind.
3. Talks to me when they're unhappy with something in the relationship.
4. Is willing to compromise.
5. Understands that we have separate interests and can spend time apart.
6. Is mean or rude to my friends.
7. Criticizes or distracts me when I'm doing things that don't involve them.
8. Gets extremely jealous or possessive.
9. Accuses me of flirting or cheating when I'm not.
10. Constantly checks up on me or makes me check in.
11. Breaks or throws things when we fight.
12. Threatens to destroy my things.
13. Tries to control what I do, who I see, what I wear, how I look or who I talk to.
14. Makes me feel nervous or like I'm "walking on eggshells."
15. Blames me for problems, puts me down, calls me names or criticizes me.
16. Makes me feel like no one else would want me.
17. Threatens to hurt themselves, me, my friends, pets or family.
18. Grabs, pushes, shoves, chokes, punches, slaps, holds me down, throws things or hurts me in some way.
19. Yells, screams or humiliates me in front of other people.
20. Pressures, guilts or forces me into having sex or going farther than I want to.



Abusive Relationships

What are the different types of abuse?

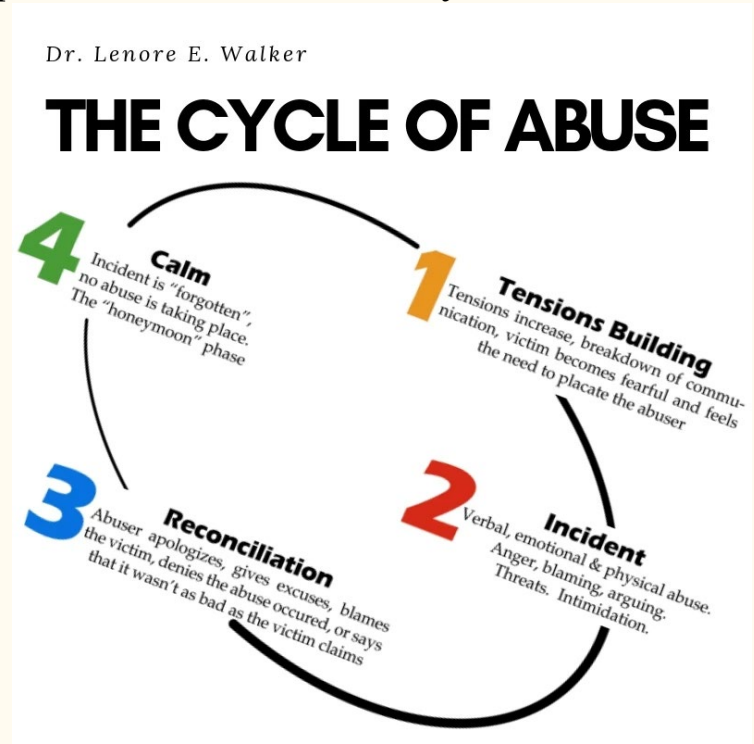
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional / Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Digital Abuse
- Stalking





Cycle of Abuse

- Explains *patterns of behavior* in abusive relationships
- Describes *set of conditions* present that perpetuate abusive and dysfunctional relationships
- Contains cyclical pattern of calm, violence, and reconciliation
- Phases:
 - a. Tension Building
 - b. Acute Violence
 - c. Reconciliation / “Honeymoon”
 - d. Calm





Healthy Relationships

1. Communication

- a. Allows two or more people to have a deep understanding of one another and connect to each other
- b. Good communication entails:
 - i. Respect
 - ii. Openness and Honesty
 - iii. Feeling heard
 - iv. Listening and compromise
 - v. Not using criticism or judgement
 - vi. Support of things each partner enjoys
 - vii. Celebration of accomplishments and successes

1. Boundaries

- a. Allows two or more people to define comfort zones such as sex, finances, family and friends, personal space and time.
- b. Good boundaries entail:
 - i. Time for family and friends
 - ii. Not abusing technology to “check” on each other
 - iii. Trusting without “checking in”
 - iv. Not pressuring the other to do things they don’t want to.
 - v. Not using accusation (cheating, being unfaithful, not caring enough)





Grad School Impacts

A relationship is simultaneously a source of support and a source of demanding responsibilities

- Financial
- Time Restrictions
- Energy
- Planning
- Fears and Insecurities
- Change in identity (worker to student)





Action step: Setting boundaries

- Know your limits
- Know your values
- Listen to your emotions
- Have self-respect
- Have respect for others
- Be assertive
- Consider the long view
 - How much you're giving vs. taking - flexibility and balance

Tips for Healthy Boundaries



Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say "no" to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.

Know your limits.

Before becoming involved in a situation, know what's acceptable to you, and what isn't. It's best to be *as specific as possible*, or you might be pulled into the trap of giving just a little bit more, over and over, until you've given far too much.

Know your values.

Every person's limits are different, and they're often determined by their personal values. For example, if you value family above all else, this might lead to stricter limits on how late you will stay at work, away from family. Know what's most important to you, and protect it.

Listen to your emotions.

If you notice feelings of discomfort or resentment, don't bury them. Try to understand what your feelings are telling you. Resentment, for example, can often be traced to feelings of being taken advantage of.

Have self-respect.

If you always give in to others, ask if you are showing as much respect to yourself as you show to others. Boundaries that are too open might be due to misguided attempts to be liked by elevating other people's needs above one's own.

Have respect for others.

Be sure that your actions are not self-serving, at the expense of others. Interactions should not be about winning, or taking as much as possible. Instead, consider what's fair to everyone, given the setting and relationship. You might "win", but at the cost of a relationship's long-term health.

Be assertive.

When you know it's time to set a boundary, don't be shy. Say "no" respectfully, but without ambiguity. If you can make a compromise while respecting your own boundaries, try it. This is a good way to soften the "no", while showing respect to everyone involved.

Consider the long view.

Some days you will give more than you take, and other days you will take more than you give. Be willing to take a longer view of relationships, when appropriate. But if you're *always* the one who's giving or taking, there might be a problem.



Setting Boundaries



Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say “no” to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.

Know Your Boundaries

Boundaries should be based on your values, or the things that are important to you. For example, if you value spending time with family, set firm boundaries about working late.

Your boundaries are yours, and yours alone. Many of your boundaries might align with those who are close to you, but others will be unique.

Know your boundaries *before* entering a situation. This will make it less likely you’ll do something you’re not comfortable with.

What to Say

You always have the right to say “no”. When doing so, express yourself clearly and without ambiguity so there is no doubt about what you want.

“I’m not comfortable with this”	“Please don’t do that”	“Not at this time”
“I can’t do that for you”	“This doesn’t work for me”	“I’ve decided not to”
“This is not acceptable”	“I’m drawing the line at ____”	“I don’t want to do that”

What to Do

Use Confident Body Language

Face the other person, make eye contact, and use a steady tone of voice at an appropriate volume (not too quiet, and not too loud).

Be Respectful

Avoid yelling, using put-downs, or giving the silent treatment. It’s okay to be firm, but your message will be better received if you are respectful.

Plan Ahead

Think about what you want to say, and how you will say it, before entering a difficult discussion. This can help you feel more confident about your position.

Compromise

When appropriate, listen and consider the needs of the other person. You never *have* to compromise, but give-and-take is part of any healthy relationship.



Action step: Assertive communication

Assertive Communication



Assertive Communication: A communication style in which a person stands up for their own needs and wants, while also taking into consideration the needs and wants of others, without behaving passively or aggressively.

Traits of Assertive Communicators

- Clearly state needs and wants
- Eye contact
- Listens to others without interruption
- Appropriate speaking volume
- Steady tone of voice
- Confident body language

Assertiveness Tips

Respect yourself. Your needs, wants, and rights are as important as anyone else's. It's fine to express what you want, so long as you are respectful toward the rights of others.

Express your thoughts and feelings calmly. Giving the silent treatment, yelling, threatening, and shaming are all great examples of what not to do. Take responsibility for your emotions, and express them in a calm and factual manner. Try starting sentences with "I feel...".

Plan what you're going to say. Know your wants and needs, and how you can express them, before entering a conversation. Come up with specific sentences and words you can use.

Say "no" when you need to. You can't make everyone happy all the time. When you need to say "no", do so clearly, without lying about the reasons. Offer to help find another solution.

Action step: Self-care

Self-care is not selfish. You must fill your own cup before you pour into others

- “Self-care is important to maintaining a healthy relationship with yourself. It means doing things to take care of our minds, bodies, and souls by engaging in activities that promote well-being and reduce stress. Doing so enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care also reminds both you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.” Active Minds, 2020





Physical self-care	Psychological self-care	Emotional self-care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise• Get regular health check-up• Get medical care when required• Take time off when you are sick• Get enough sleep• Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)• Eat healthily• Take vacations• Do physical activities which you think are fun (e.g. dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make time for self-reflection• Notice your inner experience – listen to your thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and feelings• Write a journal• Make art• Take day trips or mini vacations• Make time away from your mobile phone, email and the internet• Read literature that's unrelated to work• Engage your intelligence in new area, e.g. go to an art show, sports event, theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give yourself affirmations• Praise yourself• Love yourself• Spend time with others whose company you enjoy• Stay in contact with important people in your life• Re-visit your favourite books, movies, etc.• Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out• Allow yourself to cry• Find things that make you laugh
Spiritual self-care	Personal self-care	Professional self-care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make time for reflection• Spend time in nature• Find a spiritual connection or community• Identify what's meaningful to you and notice its place in life• Meditate• Pray• Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music• Volunteer for a cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule regular dates with your partner or spouse• Schedule regular activities with your children• Make time to see friends• Spend time with your pets• Make time to reply to personal emails and letters or send holiday cards• Allow others to do things for you• Enlarge your social circle• Ask for help when you need it• Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone you trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a break during the workday (e.g. lunch)• Take time to chat with co-workers• Make quiet time to complete tasks• Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding• Leave work at work• Balance your workload• Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting• Get regular supervision or consultation



Resources

- *Loveisrespect.org - Many useful information and resources
- TherapistAid.com - Information, worksheets, videos, tools and guides
- *Thehotline.com - National Domestic Violence Hotline
- Datingadvice.com - Advice, Forums, Studies, Experts and Reviews
- *A Woman's Place - <https://www.awpdv.org/>
 - Provides survivors a space and resources to help, aims to shelter and empower survivors
- *Red Rover - redrover.org
 - Helps domestic violence survivors find safety for their pets

*All websites marked with an asterisk have a quick exit option to leave the page if necessary



Intimate Partner Violence Apps

🍏 Compatible with iPhone

🤖 Compatible with Android



Aspire News 🍏

- Designed to look like a news feed app with summaries of top news stories
- Can send an alert and current location to Trusted Contacts (need Location Services On to work)
- Press the X button to go to random news page
- The HELP section contains domestic violence resources



Pevo 🍏

- Provides discrete, untraceable method for you to find available resources, including local shelters
- Internet connection not required once the app is downloaded



My Plan 🍏 🤖

- Press the power button 3 times to send a custom message, your location, and current battery level to 2 emergency contacts
- Shake your phone to send an emergency alert if you cannot press the button
- Alerts will be sent periodically, updating your contacts on your location



ICE Black Box 🍏

- Hit the emergency button to start recording video, audio, and your GPS location
- Information is uploaded automatically to a secure cloud server where it cannot be deleted
- The alert will be directly sent to local police and a custom list of emergency contacts



Secret Calculator 🍏

- Works and looks like a calculator - enter your passcode to access private storage of photos, videos, notes, files, and contacts
- Private web browser that does not save any search history on your phone



Circle of 6 🍏 🤖

- Choose up to 6 trusted friends to add to your circle
- If you feel uncomfortable/unsafe, tap the button twice to notify your Circle of 6 with a pre-programmed SMS alert message with your exact location
- Connects you with 24 hour hotlines for safety and information



Assault Survivors
Advocacy Program

24/7 Crisis: (970) 351 4040



Contact sources

- **UNC Counseling Center:** 970-351-2496, <https://www.unc.edu/counseling-center/> for COVID-19 remote work and services offered
- **UNC ASAP :** 970-351-1490, <https://www.unco.edu/assault-survivors-advocacy-program/>
- **UNC Police Department :** 970-351-2245, [unco.edu/police](https://www.unco.edu/police)
- **Domestic Violence Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-799-7233, thehotline.org
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline :** 1-800-273-8255, suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **North Range Behavioral Services:** 970-347-2120 (emergency services 24/7), northrange.org
- **UNC Student Health Center:** 970-351-2412, [unco.edu/student-health-center](https://www.unco.edu/student-health-center)

