

Whether you are dating someone new or have been married for decades, you always deserve to be loved and respected for being you.

What is a HEALTHY relationship?

No matter how long you have been together, you and your partner listen to one another and only engage in sexual activity that you both agree to.

Even if you disagree or have a fight, you always treat each other with respect.

Your partner supports you through tough times.

You trust each other to do what is right for the other person.

You are honest with each other.

You have your own friends and activities separate from one another, as well as those that you share.

You can be open and direct without fear of retaliation or manipulation.

You and your partner are equals and make decisions together about finances, big life changes, and family matters.

Community resources are here to help. Rape crisis centers offer crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, and legal services.

Resources

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)
www.mcasa.org/survivors
301-328-7023

Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI)
301-565-2277 or
Toll-Free: 1-877-496-7254

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)
www.mnadv.org
1-800-MD-HELPS (634-3577)

National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
www.nnedv.org

National Domestic Violence 24/7 Hotline
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)
TTY: 1-800-787-3224
Text 'START' to 88788



Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

mcasa.org | 301-328-7023 | info@mcasa.org

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

Preparation of this document was supported by the CDC under grant number #PHPA-G2093 and reprinting was supported by grant #PHPA-G1372. Both grants were awarded by the Center for Injury and Sexual Assault Prevention, Maryland Department of Health. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Healthy Relationships Throughout Life



MCASA
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault



What is an UNHEALTHY relationship?

It involves any kind of physical or emotional abuse. This also includes any abuse of children or pets.

It includes any type of non-consensual or forced sexual activity.

You focus all your time and energy on your partner and neglect yourself.

Your partner demands that you change yourself for them, even if you have decided that you don't want to.

You have to justify what you do, where you go, who you see, and what you do online.

One of you makes all the decisions and controls everything.

You always make excuses for your partner.

One of you manipulates the other, including using children, finances, physical or mental illness, or emotional connections to control the other's behavior.

At every age, we deserve respect, love, and safety in our relationships.

Relationships change.

Relationships evolve over time, and partners' needs and desires may change as they grow older. It is important that partners be attuned to one another. Being direct and honest about changes in sexuality, mental health, and other needs is essential.

Recognize warning signs.

Some relationships are just unhealthy, they are not necessarily dangerous or abusive. However, it is important to understand unhealthy relationships can easily spiral into abusive relationships. The unhealthy behaviors may not seem like a big deal at first, but they are often extensions of power and control. Physical, mental, emotional, and financial abuse are unacceptable.

Help a friend in an unhealthy relationship.

Your friend may not ask you for help. You may be thinking *it's none of my business*, or, *if it were that bad, wouldn't they already have done something?* Sexual and domestic violence is everyone's business. Ending an unhealthy relationship can be dangerous, and survivors often aren't able to ask for the support they may need. Take the first step by reaching out privately to your friend about your concerns.



If a friend confides in you, listen and offer support.

Do not place blame on your friend, and never underestimate the danger they may be in. Your friend may be keeping quiet to stay safe, or to keep children or pets safe. It is important to listen to concerns about avoiding danger.

Support your friend. Remind them of what makes them special and stress that they deserve a life free from sexual and domestic violence. If they decline your help, tell them you'll always be there for them.

Set children up for successful, healthy futures by teaching them to ask before touching others, and that others should get their permission to touch them.

Healthy relationships start young.