



DARK SIDES TO DATING

RELATIONSHIP TALK FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS



my **CWA**
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WHAT ARE RELATIONSHIPS

A relationship is an emotional connection between you and other people.

There are many different types of relationships, which can be healthy or unhealthy.

You might have relationships with your...



Family members

Mums, dads, grandmas, grandads, aunts, uncles, sisters and brothers



Friends

Others your age, peers at school



Romantic partners

Boyfriends, girlfriends, lovers, husbands, wives



Acquaintances

Someone you know but wouldn't describe as a friend

We can tell whether or not our relationships are healthy or unhealthy by their characteristics.

Healthy relationships involve respect, trust and consideration for each other.

Unhealthy relationships involve things like mistreatment, disrespect, intense jealousy, controlling behaviour and/or physical violence. Abuse can happen in all different types of relationships.

Healthy Relationship

Mutual respect

In healthy relationships, you value each other and respect each other's boundaries.

Trust

Healthy relationships involve being trusted and being trustworthy. You give each other the benefit of the doubt.

Good communication

Within healthy relationships, you'll be able to speak honestly and openly to avoid miscommunication.

Individuality

You shouldn't have to compromise who you are. In healthy relationships, you accept people for who they are – and they do the same.

Unhealthy Relationship

Disrespect

In an unhealthy relationship, one partner might not value the other or respect their boundaries. In some cases, this applies to both partners.

Distrust

Trust issues might involve one or both partners not trusting the other – or not behaving in a trustworthy way.

Miscommunication

Problems or issues are not discussed openly and honestly and there are either arguments or issues are not discussed at all.

Co-dependence

Within unhealthy relationships one or both partners might feel a lack of freedom to express individuality. They might feel unable to be themselves.

Abuse

Verbal

If your partner has ever used language to hurt you – shouting, giving you the silent treatment, swearing or threatening you – they've verbally abused you.

Emotional

If your partner has ever manipulated you, humiliated you or made you feel scared of leaving them, they could be emotionally abusing you.

Financial

If your partner controls your finances, stops you from earning or forces you to depend on them financially, it's likely you're being financially abused.

Physical

Physical abuse usually forms part of an ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour. It rarely happens as a one-off when a partner lashes out without warning.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any form of sexual activity (involving physical contact, words or photos) that takes place without the other person's consent.



WHAT IS PHYSICAL ABUSE?

When someone is hurting you or another person. This could be with their hands, their feet or an object.

Some examples of physical abuse are:

- Hitting, smacking or slapping you
- Punching or kicking you
- Using objects to hit, burn or harm you
- Pinching, scratching or biting you
- Shaking or suffocating you
- Scalding or burning you
- Pulling your hair
- Spitting or throwing things at you
- Making you swallow something that hurts or makes you feel ill, including giving you medicine when you're not ill or don't need it

These are just examples, but if someone's behaviour doesn't feel right to you it could be physically abusive.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

Behaviour that is psychologically harmful, rather than physically harmful. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism, to intimidation and manipulation

Emotional abuse can include things like...

- Calling you names or putting you down
- Shouting at you – even though you haven't done anything wrong
- Ignoring you or leaving you out of things
- Saying or doing things that make you feel bad about yourself
- Making you take responsibility for things you shouldn't have to do until you're older
- Trying to control you
- Putting pressure on you to do things you're not ready to do
- Treating you differently to other people
- Putting you in dangerous situations
- Stopping you from having friends

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

“The use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any individual to engage in – or assist any other person to engage in – any sexually explicit conduct.”

Sexual abuse can include...

- Any unwanted touching
- Forced sexual activity (oral, anal or vaginal)
- Sexually-orientated insults
- Unwanted painful or degrading acts during intercourse
- Forced photography or prostitution
- Incest (sexual acts with immediate family members)
- Engaging in sexual activity with you while you’re too drunk/high to consent



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSENT IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Consent occurs when one person voluntarily agrees to a proposal or desire from another person.

It's a commonly used word, but it may have more specific definitions in areas such as the law, medicine, research and sexual relationships.

If you're unsure about consent, remember:

- When asking for consent, no means no
- Saying yes to one thing doesn't mean consenting to other things
- Consenting once doesn't mean you have to consent again
- If someone doesn't respond with a yes or no, it's better to assume they haven't consented
- Everyone has the right to change their mind – even if they've already started doing something
- Someone under 16 cannot legally give consent to sexual acts

KEEPING SAFE IN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

If you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, figuring out the next step can be really difficult. You have feelings for this person and have developed a history with them. It isn't always as easy or straightforward as walking away, no hard feelings.

Try to focus on the future, not the past. Will you be happy with them? Will you be able to achieve your goals? Will you feel safe? Whatever decision you make, there are things you can do to help you plan for your safety.

If you decide to stay, make sure you're honest with yourself about the decision. While an unhealthy relationship can become healthy with enough time and dedication, it's unrealistic to think you can 'fix' an abusive relationship.

You can only change your own behaviour – not your partner's. Nobody deserves to be abused. If you don't want to leave – or you're not ready yet – make sure you have a good friend or family member that will listen and support you no matter what.



PREPARING FOR A BREAK UP

You may decide you want to move on from your relationship or you may feel pressured from other people to break up and move on, but it's not always that simple.

The person you're dating has probably become a huge part of your life, so being scared about feeling lonely is normal. Talking to your friends or finding new activities can make filling your new free time easier.

You'll probably miss your partner after you break up. Maybe a lot. It's normal. Try writing down your reasons for ending the relationship as a reminder for later on.

If ending your relationship feels frightening, take that fear seriously and make sure you're safe.



BREAKING UP

Ending an unhealthy or abusive relationship isn't like ending a healthy one. If you're thinking of ending your relationship, remember:

- 1 If you don't feel safe, don't break up in person. It might seem cruel to break up over the phone or by text, but it could be the safest way.
- 2 If you break up in person, do it in a public place. Have friends or your parents wait nearby and take your phone with you.
- 3 If your ex comes to your house, don't go to the door.
- 4 Trust your instincts. If you feel afraid, there's probably a good reason for that.
- 5 Ask for help. Chat with someone who is trained to answer your questions.

AFTER BREAK UP

The risk of violence doesn't necessarily end when your unhealthy or abusive relationship is over. To stay safe after ending your relationship, remember to:

- 1 Talk to your family, friends and parents so they can support you.
- 2 Avoid isolated areas at school and local hangouts. Try not to walk alone or wear earphones.
- 3 Call 999 if you feel like you're in immediate danger.
- 4 Memorise important phone numbers in case you don't have access to your own phone.





If you're experiencing relationship abuse, call My CWA on our 24/7 helpline **01270 250390**

If you need to talk to someone about abuse, call Childline **0800 1111**

IMPORTANT MESSAGES

- 1** It's not ok for anyone to hurt or frighten you or anyone in your family.
- 2** It's always ok to tell someone you trust if you're worried or frightened.
- 3** It's always ok to keep yourself safe if you're afraid.



LINKS FOR EXTRA HELP AND SUPPORT

My CWA

-  info@mycwa.org.uk
-  01270 250390
-  www.mycwa.org.uk

Healthy Teen Relationships

-  www.actonitnow.co.uk

Live Well Cheshire East

-  www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Starting Well Cheshire East & Chester

-  www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Safety Guide & Visual Guide - Bullying

-  www.safetyguide.co.uk

Kooth - Free Safe Advice for Children & Young People

-  www.kooth.com

Childline

-  0800 1111
-  www.childline.org.uk

Anti-Bullying – Including Cyber Bullying Information

-  www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

24 hour helpline 0300 123 5101

www.mycwa.org.uk

#myCWAAlivefree



Lily Jones Support Centre
Mill House, Brook St,
Crewe, CW2 7DE



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