

# How Healthy is Your Dating Relationship?

## Objective

To identify healthy and unhealthy characteristics of your romantic relationship.

## What to Know

Romantic and dating relationships can be hard at any age, but figuring out how to manage dating relationships as a teen can be particularly tough because you don't have experience. You might not understand what makes a healthy relationship, and what characteristics indicate an unhealthy relationship.

Building and maintaining healthy romantic relationships is a skill you build over time, developing as you grow up and learn more about yourself and others.

The added stress of academic expectations, peer pressure, and life changes places you (and other teens) at a higher risk of being in unhealthy relationships. Even though there might be lots of things that feel scary and overwhelming, your relationship shouldn't be one of them.

Most relationships have a combination of healthy and unhealthy characteristics. This exercise will help you figure out what things in your relationship are healthy or unhealthy so you can appreciate the best things and decide what you want to change.

## What to Do

First answer the following questions.

I am evaluating my relationship with: \_\_\_\_\_

I think my relationship is healthy because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am worried about the following things: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The lists below describe healthy and unhealthy relationship characteristics. Read both lists and check the statements that are true about your relationship.

**Is it healthy?** You and this person...

- Have fun together most of the time.
- Are always respectful.
- Allow each other space.
- Trust each other.
- Each control your own money.
- Are proud to be with each other.
- Always feel supported by one another.
- Encourage each other's interests.
- Don't pressure each other for sex.
- Talk about sex.
- Offer each other privacy.
- Are faithful if you've made this commitment to each other.
- Support each other's life goals.
- Have equal decision-making power about what you do in your relationship.
- Can each be completely yourself.
- Both apologize and admit wrongdoing.
- Respect each other's opinions even when they're different.
- Always feel safe with each other.
- Solve conflicts without putting each other down, cursing, or making threats.
- Both accept responsibility for choices.
- Each enjoy spending time separately with your own friends.

**Is it unhealthy? One of you...**

- Gets extremely jealous.
- Depends completely on the other to meet social or emotional needs.
- Calls names, curses, or makes the other feel bad.
- Yells at and treats the other like a child.
- Doesn't take the other person seriously.
- Makes fun of things that are important to the other person.
- Doesn't listen when the other person talks.
- Ignores or withholds affection.
- Abuses alcohol or drugs.
- Acts controlling or possessive.
- Breaks promises.
- Tries to make the other feel crazy or plays mind games.
- Makes all relationship-related decisions.
- Frequently criticizes the other person's friends or family.
- Tries to keep the other person from achieving life goals.
- Blames - doesn't take responsibility.
- Embarrasses or humiliates the other person.
- Smashes, throws, or destroys things.
- Has grabbed, pushed, hit, or hurt the other person.
- Tells the other person how to behave, look, or dress.
- Cheats or threatens to cheat.
- Has threatened to hurt him/herself or commit suicide to manipulate the other person.
- Pressures the other for sex, or makes sex hurt or feel humiliating.
- Tracks or controls social media usage, or has strict rules for what the other person can/can't post or view.

- Threatens to "out" or expose an LGBTQ+ partner to humiliate him/her.
- Isolates the other person from family, friends, or others.

These lists might not cover all healthy and unhealthy characteristics. Can you think of others?

Healthy characteristics:

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Unhealthy characteristics:

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What changes would you like to make in your relationship?

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How can you begin to make these changes?

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You might want to share this worksheet with a trusted adult. Who can you talk to about your dating relationship?

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