

# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



# Information for 6<sup>th</sup> grade

- Focus on building friendships
- Good vs. destructive relationships



# *How Do I Know If A Relationship Is NOT Healthy?*

## **Do I:**

- Sometimes feel scared of how your friend will react?
- Constantly make excuses for other people or your friend's behavior?
- Believe that you can help your friend change if only you changed something about yourself?
- Try not to do anything that would cause conflict or make your friend unhappy?
- Feel like no matter what you do, your friend is never happy with you?
- Always do what your friend wants you to do, instead of what you want to do?
- Stay with your friend because you're afraid of what he/she would do if you broke off the relationship or friendship?

If you said "yes" to any of these, consider talking to someone. Confide in a trustworthy advisor, mentor, friend, parent or relative. You do not have to suffer in silence. You don't have to be trapped in any relationship where you are not comfortable.

(6,7)

## Suggested Action Steps for Teens: When your friend is being abused

- Remember that he/she is probably feeling very isolated and alone.
- Let her know that you are worried about her/him.
- Listen to what he/she has to say.
- Don't be judgmental.
- Let her/him know you are there for her/him whenever they need to talk.
- Let him/her know that you won't tell anyone they don't want you to about his/her situation—and then keep your word (unless you fear for their physical safety).

# **Suggested Action Steps for Teens:** **When your friend is being *abusive***

- **Be specific about what you saw and how it made you feel.**
- **Make sure he/she realizes that their actions have consequences, and he/she could get into serious trouble—from getting expelled from school to going to jail.**
- **Urge them to get help, from a counselor, coach, or any trusted adult, and offer to go with him/her if they want support.**
- **Let him/her know that you care about them, and that you know he/she has it in him/her to change. (6,7)**

# Suggested Action Steps for Teens:

## Consider Talking With an Adult

- Write down what you need from the adult, what you want them to be like (their personality).
- Choose an adult who has your best interests at heart. It might be a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, a coach, or a friend's parent.
- Chart out all the adults you know and figure out who is your best ally.

(6,7)

- Dana Rubin-Remer, MD & Susan Sugerman, MD, MPH, Girls to Women Health and Wellness, Dallas, TX

# WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE

## **A Healthy Relationship consists of:**

- RESPECT
- TRUST
- SUPPORT
- NEGOTIATIONS AND FAIRNESS
- NON-THREATENING BEHAVIORS
- NON-JUDGEMENTAL COMMUNICATION
- SHARING OF FEELINGS
- FUN
- FREEDOM OF FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHERS
- BEING HAPPY

(6,7,8)

# **TEEN RELATIONSHIP BILL OF RIGHTS**

## **I have the right:**

- To be treated with respect always
  - To my own body, thoughts, opinions, and property
  - To choose and keep my friends
  - To change my mind – at any time
  - To not be abused – physically or emotionally
  - To leave a relationship
  - To say no
  - To be treated as an equal
  - To disagree
  - To live without fear and confusion from my friends' anger
- (6,7,8)

# Information for 7<sup>th</sup> grade

- Focus on building friendships
- Add different gender relationships
- Good vs. destructive relationships



# *Friendship, Love, and Commitment*

- **Friendship** is the foundation for love and commitment
- **Love** reflects the positive factors that draw people together
- **Commitment** reflects the stable factors that help maintain relationships for better or worse

**All Closely linked**

(7)

# Falling Hard and Fast

- Comes on strong
  - “You’re the only person I could ever talk to.”
  - “I’ve never felt like this about anyone.”
- Pressure to commit quickly
- Controlling behavior
  - Claims it comes from concern
  - Wants explanations for all times, locations or actions
  - Begins to make personal decisions for the other person (what they can or can’t wear, whom they can or can’t see, kinds of activities they can participate in, what they can spend)
  - Wants them to ask permission to do things
- Makes you feel guilty for wanting more time to decide about the relationship or to slow things down

(7)

# It's Not My Fault!

- Blames other people
  - For his or her problems
  - Feels people are out to get him/her
  - Makes mistakes and blames partner
- Blames partner for everything that goes wrong
  - *You* hurt my feelings
  - *You're* hurting me by not doing it my way
  - *You* make me happy when you do it my way

(7)

## For Teens:

### Your friend in trouble when...

- You've seen him lose his temper, break things when he's mad.
- She seems worried about upsetting him or making him angry.
- He/She is giving things up that used to be important to him/her, such as spending time with friends or other activities, and is becoming more isolated.
- His/Her weight, grades, and appearance are changing, possible signs of depression.
- She has injuries she can't explain or the explanations don't make sense.

(7)

# Information for 8<sup>th</sup> grade

- Focus on different gender relationships
- Good vs. destructive relationships



## *Love and Friendship*

- Two categories or clusters distinguishing love from friendship
- **Caring Cluster**
  - Advocacy for partner
  - Giving the utmost
- **Passion Cluster**
  - Fascination
  - Desire
  - Exclusiveness
- ***Abusive behaviors in relationships can often be mistaken for passionate behaviors in a person!***

*Davis and Todd, 1985*

# WARNING SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Is trouble coming? Look at these questions, and then think about how you're being treated..... and how you treat your partner/friend in return.

## **Are you in a relationship (male/female) who:**

- Embarrasses or makes fun of you in front of your friends and family?
- Puts down your accomplishments or goals?
- Makes you feel like you're unable to make decisions?
- Uses intimidation or threats to get you to agree with them?
- Tells you that you're nothing without them?
- Treats you roughly – grabs, pushes, pinches, shoves, or hits you?
- Calls you several times a night or show up to make sure you are where you said you'd be?
- Uses drugs or alcohol as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- Blames you for how they feel or act?
- Pressures you sexually for things you aren't ready for?
- Makes you feel like there "is no way out" of the relationship?
- Prevent you from doing things you want, like spending time with your friends or family?
- Tries to keep you from leaving after a fight or leaves you somewhere after a fight to "teach you a lesson"?

# Expectations and Isolation

- Expects you to meet all their needs
  - Be the perfect friend, boyfriend, girlfriend
  - “If you love me, I’m all you need—you’re all I need.”
- Eventually expects partner to take care of everything, from emotional needs, homework, problems at home
- Cuts partner off from all resources, saying they are causing trouble
  - Family, friends, religion, counseling, school, work

# Absolute WARNING Signs

- Past history of battering/abuse
  - “He/she made me do it!”
- Threats of violence
  - “I’ll hurt or kill you”
- Breaking things
  - Sometimes done as a punishment
  - Danger when someone else feels the right to punish you
- **ANY FORCE** during an argument

# Modern Technology: Violence by Cell Phone

- Constant Contact (cell phone calls and text messages)
  - 24 % communicated with their partner via their cell phones HOURLY between midnight and 5:00am.
- Constant Control
  - 25% have been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner through cell phones and text messages.
  - 30% say they are text messaged up to 30 times an hour by a partner inquiring where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.
- Constant Pressure
  - One in five teens in a relationship have been asked to engage in sex by cell phone or the Internet when they do not want to.

# *RECOGNIZING SIGNS*

- A teen experiencing abuse may:
  - make changes in their daily rituals
  - retreat from school or activities
  - experience isolation from friends
  - make changes in clothing
  - wear clothing inappropriate for the weather in order to hide marks
  - have visible marks or bruises
  - spend excessive amounts of time with the person they're dating

# HOW HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIPS EVOLVE

- Here are seven steps that describe how healthy dating relationships develop:
- **Step 1 - Same-Gender Friendships:** Learning to be a real friend is the basis of all relationships. In same-sex friendships, we learn and practice fundamental social skills that are necessary to successfully relate to members of the opposite gender.
- **Step 2 – Opposite –Gender Friendships:** These are platonic friendships that help us learn how to appreciate the other gender. Hopefully, we realize that we can enjoy other people’s company without having to “hook-up”.
- **Step 3 – Friendly Dating:** This step includes group and single dating. This is an important time because it provides a chance to meet many different people and enjoy different experiences. Out options are wide open because we’re not committing ourselves to exclusive relationships.
- **Step 4 – Steady Friendly Dating:** steady friendly dating occurs between people who want to get to know each other better and hang out more often. The temptation to become physically closer intensifies as our emotional connection strengthens. However, we need to maintain appropriate personal boundaries. We don’t want to get hurt physically or emotionally. We also need to maintain other friendships and relationships.
- **Step 5 - Serious Steady Dating:** This type of relationship usually occurs among mature young adults. Couples begin to examine their relationships through the lens of marriage. Again, it is important that clear and appropriate sexual, emotional, physical and spiritual boundaries are maintained so thoughtful decisions are made.
- **Step 6 – Engagement:** At this step, we are prepared to make a commitment to one another. However, engagement is not the same as marriage. Many engagements break off before marriage. That’s why couples need to continue to maintain clear and firm boundaries. Now is when discussions about the future, including finances, in-laws, conflict resolution, child rearing, etc., should occur.
- **Step 7 - Marriage:** For most people, marriage is the ultimate goal of dating. If we learn the proper skills and maintain appropriate boundaries throughout the dating process, we have an excellent chance of achieving a lasting, loving, marriage.