



Student Wellness Centre

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Qualities of a Healthy Relationship

Typically, healthy relationships share at least five qualities that can easily be remembered as **SHARE**. These qualities should be present in all your relationships, including friendships.

S – Safe

You should feel completely free to be yourself without worrying about being harmed or ridiculed in any way.

H – Honest

This one goes hand in hand with trust because it is tough to trust someone if they are not being honest. Have you ever caught your partner in a lie that you were never meant to find out?

A – Acceptance

Your partner should be accepting and supportive of the decisions you make and any imperfections you have.

Maybe you laugh loudly or snore. A healthy relationship lets you be your own person without needing to change.

R – Respect

Respect means that each person respects the other's comfort zones and boundaries and would never try to push past them. Does your partner understand why you are such an awesome person? Do they care about

you for who you are, not who they would like you to be? Do they listen to you when you are not comfortable doing something?

E – Enjoyment

A good relationship is not just about how two people treat each other – it also has to be enjoyable (why bother otherwise). You feel energized and alive in your partner's presence. You can play and laugh together and even enjoy their corny jokes.

Other important qualities include: **equality, good communication, and similar values and beliefs.**

Try the Healthy Relationship quiz at

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/quiz-healthy-relationship>

Red Flags of an Unhealthy Relationship

If your partner, friend, prof, or family member behaves in any of the following ways, you may be in an unhealthy relationship.

J – Jealousy

- Calls you repeatedly or
- Gets angry when you spend time with other people.

A – Abuse (physical and sexual)

- Grabs or pushes you,
- Throws or breaks objects, or
- Forces you to have sex or do sexual things.

I – Isolation

- Makes you “pay” for spending time with others,
- Persuades you to give up activities you enjoy, or
- Makes all the decisions in the relationship.

C – Coercion

- Ignores your wishes and needs or
- Manipulates or forces you to do something against your will.

E – Emotional abuse (victim blaming)

- Uses derogatory language to describe you,
- Constantly points out your faults, or
- Makes you feel bad about yourself.

S – Stalking

- Harasses you to the point of fear,
- Repeatedly follows you, uninvited, or
- Frequently sends you unwanted messages, either directly or through a friend.

These are just examples of red flag behaviours and not a comprehensive list. Anything that makes you feel uncomfortable might be a red flag.

If you see a red flag in your own or your friend's relationship, do something, say something!

Cycle of Abuse

A relationship cycle that is typical of many abusive relationships. This includes:

- **Honeymoon stage:** the loving and romantic part of the relationship. The abuser will act sweet and kind, express a lot of love and make their partner feel special and loved.
- **Tension building stage:** tension begins to build in the relationship. There are many arguments, emotional abuse, or physical abuse like grabbing or pushing.
- **Explosive stage:** this is when the abuse is at its worst and may include extreme verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual violence.
- **Back to honeymoon stage:** after exploding, the abuser may apologize, become very loving and kind again, and promise that it will not happen again.

The longer you stay with an abusive person, the harder it is to leave.

How to Help a Survivor of an Unhealthy or Abusive Relationship

- Believe them,
- Emphasize that they are not to blame,
- Be there to listen to their feelings and respect their space when they want to be alone,
- Offer encouragement, support, and respect,
- Emphasize their strengths, and
- Use the term “survivor,” a word that conveys strength, instead of “victim.”

Fighting Fair

Fighting does not mean the relationship is unhealthy, but it can be a sign if it is abusive or it is unresolved. Here are tips to help maintain a healthy relationship by improving the quality and outcome of your disagreements or arguments.

- **Be calm.** Take time to settle down. Clarify what you are angry about and what you hope to get out of the

discussion (e.g., have a professor explain why you received a lower mark than you expected). If possible, have the discussion when you and the other person have privacy and time to talk.

- **Accept responsibility** for your part in the conflict (e.g., yelling back).
- **Avoid “losing it.”** Do not say things that are hurtful or that you might feel in the moment, but not in the long run (e.g., “I hate you!” or “I can’t stand living with you!”).
- **Stick to the point and stay in the present.** Do not raise past issues.
- **Respect feeling.** Avoid the temptation to tell the other person that what they feel or think does not make sense or is not justified. We all have the right to feel the way we do.
- **Listen.** As difficult as it is, often the most helpful thing you can do in a disagreement is work to really listen to what the other person has to say. Communicating that you understand (without necessarily agreeing) often diffuses anger and helps people work toward a shared resolution.
- **Agree to disagree.** In many circumstances it is reasonable to express an opinion without needing

the other person to agree or change their position.

- **Recognize that there might not have to be a winner or a loser.** The outcome could be a compromise or it could involve both parties admitting some fault. If you get your way, do not gloat or rub it in. Respect the strength it took for the other person to concede.
- **Allow the discussion to end.** When the discussion is finished, resist the temptation to add comments or have the last word. Know when to put it to rest.

Saying You Are Sorry

Sometimes the situation calls for an apology on your part. Do it. Say you are sorry and mean it. Here are some tips:

- **Acknowledge** that you have done something wrong and say what you did. Do not make excuses. Accept responsibility.
- **Express your regret.** Apologies have little meaning when they are offered without an expression of sincere remorse. Telling someone you have wronged (“I’m sorry you feel hurt”) removes blame from you and leaves the other person feeling

even more offended. Say, “I’m really sorry for my hurtful actions. I shouldn’t have done that and I won’t do it again.”

- **Make amends.** Once you have apologized ask, “What else can I do?” When an injured party feels listened to and valued, you have gone a long way toward repairing relationship damage.

Offering a sincere apology should help you feel better about yourself because you have been honest and committed to making a relationship work. You have also shown a willingness to accept your own imperfections and a desire to do better next time. Forgive yourself and move on. Remember, though, that no matter how real the apology, the person who has been wronged always retains the right to forgive or not.

Healthy Ways to Share Space

Living in close quarters with someone will always have its difficulties. Stressors include chores, school/work schedules, significant others, visitors, and hygiene.

Making House Rules

- Work together to set and revise rules,
- Write them down so they aren't forgotten so that you can refer to i
- Get an impartial person to look over your house rules and act as an impartial judge for your disputes in living in residence.

Sharing Space

Guidelines – whether it's family or roommates you these are common non-negotiable house rules

- Keep your space clean and organized,
- Do not leave your belongings in communal areas (e.g., living room or kitchen),
- Ask permission before entering another's space,
- Wear headphones when listening to music, watching videos, or listening to lectures, and
- Take out the trash/recycling when it gets full. Do not wait for your roommate to do it.

Visitors

- Always give your roommate enough notice before a visitor arrives. It gives your roommate time to clean their space and dress appropriately,
- Tell your roommate who the visitor is, how long the visitor will stay, and what they might expect, and
- Check out if your residence or lease has policies about overnight visitors.

Food and Cooking

- If cooking meals in the household, decide who will cook what and when and if these meals will be communal or individual. Find out if a communal cooking schedule would be viable and
- Work together to make a grocery list, share staple items like milk, bread, and eggs unless dietary restrictions require you to have separate food.
- If you cook or bake, clean up, unless you've made an different agreement together.

Advice from Students on Living with Roommates

- Wear clothes or a robe in all common living spaces,
- Always wash your dishes before going to bed,
- Living with a roommate never feels like it is 50/50,
- Clean your hair out of the sink or shower. Nothing is worse than hairballs,
- Understand that cleaning should be done at least once a month, not once a term, and
- Do not be distracting when your roommate is trying to study.

Additional Resources

Protective Services: 306-966-5555

USSU Women's Centre: 306-966-6980

Sexual Assault Centre 24-hour Crisis Line: 306-244-2224

Saskatoon City Police: 306-975-8300

Download the Usafe App



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