

## *How Do I Know If I Am in a Healthy Relationship?*

Everyone thinks of Valentine's Day as being about mutual loving and respectful relationships, but the day may also be a reminder of difficulties in our relationships. We all learn patterns of relating in the family system we grow up in, and we tend to be in relationships with people who have similar patterns. If there is verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse in your family, you may not even recognize the warning signs.

### **Healthy relationships are built on:**

1. ***Commitment and acceptance.*** People in healthy relationships want to be in the relationship. They are supportive of the other person and accept that person's similarities and differences.
2. ***Trust and honesty.*** In order for a relationship to work, both people must agree to be open and honest about their needs, goals, and wishes.
3. ***Love and respect.*** People in healthy relationships care about and respect each other, feel good about themselves and the relationship, and work to understand the other person's needs.
4. ***Safety and security.*** Relationships will only work if both people are comfortable, feel safe, and can express themselves without fear of shame, blame, teasing, or other harmful behaviors.
5. ***Equality and compromise.*** Knowing when and how to have fun, apologize, ask for or offer help, and give or ask for space are all part of compromising in a relationship. Both people should have equal say in when and how much compromise will occur.

### **If you can answer yes to any of the warning signs below, please talk to someone safe:**

1. ***Are you experiencing verbal abuse?*** It is not acceptable and needs to be stopped if someone is calling you names, putting you down, insulting, intimidating, humiliating, isolating, or threatening to harm you.
2. ***Are you experiencing physical abuse?*** It is very dangerous if someone is hitting, pinching, shaking, shoving, choking, or pushing you, or is throwing things, pulling your hair, or using a weapon.
3. ***Are you experiencing sexual abuse?*** Sexual abuse is not only forcing you to have sex, but also forcing you to do other sexual things that you don't want to do.
4. ***Are you experiencing emotional abuse?*** Emotional abuse can include things like making you feel afraid, ignoring your feelings, isolating you or having to know where you are and who you are with, being wrongfully accused of flirting with other people, or checking your phone or messages.

If you are questioning whether or not you are in a healthy relationship, we encourage you to call someone. If you are in a relationship where you can identify with the verbal, emotional, or physical abuse warning signs, call St. Agnes Hospital **Domestic Violence Program** at (920) 926-4207 or (920) 926-4290 (crisis line). If you are experiencing any form of sexual abuse, call **ASTOP Sexual Abuse Center** at (920) 926-5395 or 1-800-418-0270 (crisis line).

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With the support of Fond du Lac and North Fond du Lac School Districts and community partners, CSI is families, schools and community working together to support children as they grow. Meeting their physical, social and emotional needs now will result in healthy adults and a safe community for everyone. For more information or to get involved in the CSI Project, visit [www.csifdl.org](http://www.csifdl.org).