

How can I tell if my relationship is healthy, unhealthy or abusive?

Look at the chart that follows. For each relationship factor, think about your relationship. Then ask yourself this question: Is my relationship most like the healthy, unhealthy or abusive relationship?

	HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP	UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP	ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP
Sharing Feelings	You feel safe and strong enough to tell your partner how you really feel.	You feel awkward telling your partner how you really feel.	You are afraid to tell your partner how you really feel because you fear getting put down or threatened.
Communicating	You respect and listen to each other even when you have differing opinions on a topic.	Your partner ignores you and does not respect your opinions when there is a difference of opinion.	Your partner treats you with disrespect and ignores or makes fun of your ideas and feelings.
Disagreements	You can have disagreements and still talk respectfully to each other. You resolve your disagreements.	Your disagreements often turn into fights.	You are afraid to disagree because you do not want to unleash your partner's anger and violence. The disagreement is an excuse for abuse.
Intimacy and Sex	Both of you can be honest about your feelings about physical affection and sex. Neither of you feels pressured to do anything you do not want to do.	You are embarrassed to say how you feel because you think your partner may not listen or care. You "go along" with some things.	Your partner ignores your needs and wants. Your partner pushes you into situations that make you uncomfortable, frighten or degrade you.
Trust	You trust each other. You are comfortable with your partner spending time with another woman.	Your partner feels jealous every time you talk to another woman. You feel jealous every time your partner talks to another man or woman.	Your partner accuses you of flirting or having an affair, and orders you not to talk to another woman.
Time Alone	You can each spend time alone and consider this a healthy part of your relationship.	You think there may be something wrong if you want to do things without your partner. Your partner tries to keep you to herself.	Your partner does not allow you to spend time doing things on your own. Your partner sees this as a challenge or threat to your relationship.
Violence	You and your partner take care not to speak harsh words or make mean comments. There is no physical violence in your relationship.	There have been a few incidents of emotional abuse or controlling behaviour in your relationship. There is no pattern of abuse or violence.	There is a pattern of increasing, ongoing abuse in your relationship: emotional, physical, sexual and/or intimidation.