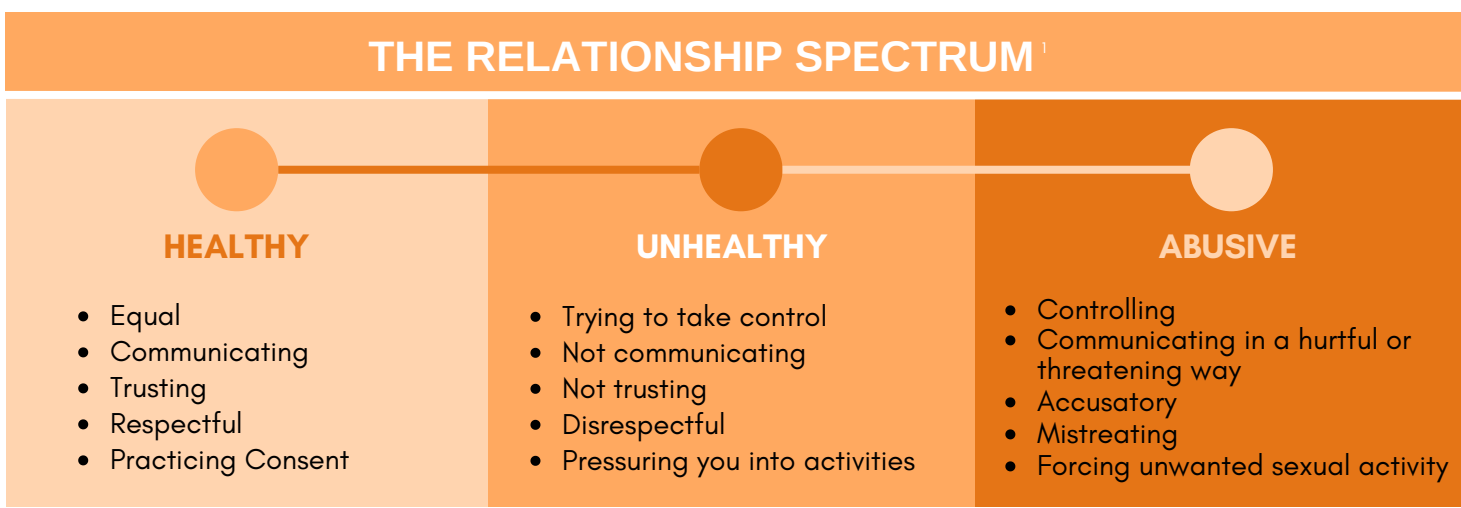


Healthy Relationships



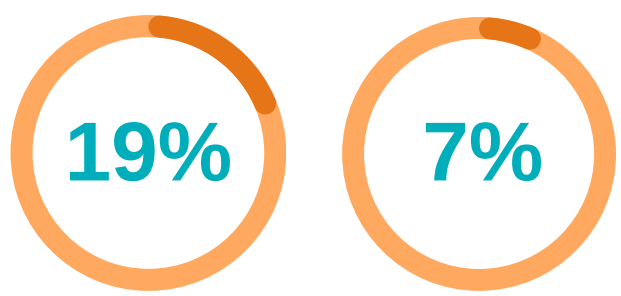
Relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive. Healthy relationships involve respect, trust, and honesty, among other positive characteristics. Unhealthy and abusive relationships consist of harmful dynamics and behaviors that negatively impact those involved. This could include intimate partner sexual violence.



WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) is a range of sexually abusive behaviors used to coerce or control a partner in a romantic relationship. IPSV occurs when an individual uses force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to control their partner and force them into unwanted sexual contact or activity.

Sexual violence in a relationship is rarely an isolated incident and often occurs alongside other forms of abusive behavior, such as physical and emotional abuse. It's important to understand what healthy relationships look like and to be able to identify potential unhealthy and abusive behaviors.



Over 19% of women and 7% of men reported experiencing contact sexual violence by an intimate partner.²

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The foundation of a healthy relationship includes:

- **Boundaries:** You and your partner(s) can communicate and honor each other's needs, values, and feelings in ways you both feel comfortable.
- **Communication:** You and your partner(s) can share your feelings and thoughts openly and honestly, making the other feel safe, heard, and not judged.
- **Trust:** You and your partner(s) can be vulnerable with each other, knowing that you can rely on and be honest with each other.
- **Consent:** Most used when you're being sexually active, you and your partner(s) check in with each other and agree to engage in what's happening, with no one forcing or guiltting you into doing anything that you don't want to do.³

WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is a clearly, freely, and enthusiastically communicated ongoing agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent can be given and taken back at any time, and giving consent once doesn't mean that you automatically give consent in the future. **Consent cannot be given by individuals who are below the age of consent, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious.**⁴

Consent can look like:

- Confirming that all parties are comfortable before initiating any physical touch.
- Explicitly agreeing to certain activities, either by saying "yes" or another affirmative statement like, "I'm open to trying."
- Using physical cues to let your partner(s) know you're comfortable taking things to the next level.
- Periodically checking in with your partner(s), such as asking, "Is this still OK?"
- Letting your partner(s) know that you can stop at any time.
- Responding positively and affirmingly when a partner says "no" to certain activities.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL PREVENTION

We all have a role in preventing sexual violence and creating safer communities. A combination of factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels impacts the prevalence of sexual violence. Identifying unhealthy and healthy practices in our relationships, the media, and social environments allows us to challenge harmful norms and prevent sexual violence. By promoting and engaging in healthy relationships, we can foster a culture of consent, respect, and equity for communities at large.

LEARN MORE

- **Love Is Respect:** www.loveisrespect.org
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** www.thehotline.org
- **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network:** www.rainn.org

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