

NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre

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24-hour, Crisis Support and

Information Line:

Toll Free: 1-800-726-2743

St. John's: 726-1411

Understanding Abuse...

At times it may be difficult to determine if you are in an unhealthy relationship. This brochure provides some information which may help you to determine if you are being abused, or if you are abusive.

Unhealthy relationships can occur within families, between friends, spouses, or co-workers. Abuse is not restricted by age, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, or gender. Any type of relationship can potentially exhibit abusive behaviors. You are not alone if you are experiencing abuse. Help is available. For support or more information, please contact the NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre.

Relationships and Abuse

24-Hour Crisis Support

& Information Line:

1-800-726-2743

Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault
Crisis and Prevention Centre



Relationships and Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity that is forced on another person, through tactics like threats, manipulation, coercion or physical aggression. Victims of abuse may be unable to consent because of age or inability to understand what they are consenting to. The abuse can occur repeatedly over time, or it may be an isolated incident. Sexual abuse includes behaviours which are often referred to in relation to sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Examples:

- Sexual comments, jokes or gestures that make a person feel uncomfortable
- Forcing someone into sexual activity
- Forcing someone to participate in or watch pornography
- Any unwanted touching of a sexual nature

Emotional abuse involves making another person feel dependent, afraid, guilty, confused, embarrassed, unworthy, or helpless. Verbal harassment, put-downs, intimidation, and blame are common tactics used by emotional abusers.

Examples:

- Acting jealous
- Threatening to leave
- Criticizing
- Degrading or humiliating you
- Isolating you from friends
- Spreading rumors

Physical Abuse is the intentional bodily mistreatment or injury of another person. It is used to punish, harm, dominate, threaten, terrorize, and control others.

Examples:

- Biting or bruising
- Driving recklessly
- Shoving or pushing

Healthy or Unhealthy?

In a healthy relationship you feel good about yourself when you are around the other person. Unhealthy relationships can make you feel sad, angry, scared and/or worried.

Healthy relationships involve an equal amount of give and take. In unhealthy relationships, there is an unfair balance. You may feel like you are giving and not receiving.

In a healthy relationship you feel safe around the other person and know that you can trust him/her. Unhealthy relationships are suspicious and mistrustful.

In a healthy relationship you choose to spend time with the person instead of feeling pressured to spend time with him/her.

Most unhealthy relationships do not include trust and respect. However, trust and respect are very important for healthy family connections, friendships, and dating relationships.

No one should ever have to put up with an unhealthy relationship.

What is Love?

Love is...

- Responsibility
- Hard work
- Pleasure
- Commitment
- Caring
- Honesty
- Sex
- Trust
- Communication
- Comprising
- Closeness
- Recognition of differences
- Vulnerability
- Openness
- Respect

Love is not...

- Jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Pain
- Violence
- Only about sex
- Obsession
- Selfishness
- Cruelty
- Giving up yourself
- Intimidation
- Fear
- Having to prove yourself
- Manipulation
- Expecting only one person to meet all your needs

Think about your relationships...

do you feel respected?

Understanding relationships can be challenging. Caring relationships can cause excitement, confusion, happiness, intense feelings and occasional heartache too. In healthy relationships, each person feels valued, respected and free to be honest. Whether you're single or in a dating relationship, remember that it's good to be choosy about who you get close to. You are special and deserve to be treated as such.