

Healthy Relationships and Consent

An Interactive Presentation

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■ Why We Are Here

To promote a culture of **confident communication** and **mutual understanding** regarding:

1. Positive healthy relationships practices;
2. Boundaries and consent in romantic relationships; and
3. Communities of support that empower victims of abuse to seek help.

Remember: This is a brave space, not a safe space. Make space and give space. Always seek to understand (*consider the intent of the speaker*).

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In your opinion, what factors are included in a Healthy Relationship?

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■ Healthy Relationships

A **relationship** is any kind of association or connection between people, whether intimate, platonic, positive, or negative. To include familial, romantic, acquaintanceship and friendships.

Research shows the factors of a Healthy Relationship are:

- Communication;
- Honesty;
- Autonomy & Privacy;
- Compromise;
- Respect; and
- Support

Couples that self identify their relationships as healthy are **35% times less likely** to experience health concerns over their lifetime.

67% of couples in healthy relationships value mutual respect for their partner in the relationship.

■ Healthy Relationships

Examples of Sexual Health External Dialogue:

- Are we monogamous?
- What is your sexual history?
- Are you willing to be tested?
- How do you feel about sex?
- How do you feel about contraceptives?

Factors: Communication; Honesty; Respect; and Privacy

■ Healthy Relationships

Examples of Relational Health Internal Dialogue:

- How well do my partner and I listen to each other?
- How willing are my partner and I to take responsibility for our roles in the relationship?
- Have my partner and I been willing to make compromises for one another?
- When my partner and I disagree, am I able to express my emotions without worry of my partner's reaction or being cut off?

Factors: Communication; Honesty and Autonomy & Privacy

■ Healthy Relationships

Campus Culture:

- We are not trying to define your relationships for you.
- Situationships and hookups happen.
- Nothing wrong with saying “no thanks”.
- *“Students face interesting new problems when engaging in hookups rather than typical relationships or dating, as they might deal with emotional confusion, concerns about reputation, or hookups fueled by alcohol or drugs – which could lead to a whole other host of issues, such as forgetting to use a condom or doing things that might lead to embarrassment in the harsh light of day.”*

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In your opinion, what factors trigger an Unhealthy Relationship?

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■ **Unhealthy Relationships**

Warning signs of an Unhealthy Relationship are:

- Isolation;
- Control;
- Unhealthy Communication;
- Violating Boundaries;
- Lack of Trust;
- Verbal, Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse;
- Constant Criticism;
- Extreme Mood Swings; and
- Uncontrollable Jealousy

■ **Unhealthy Relationships**

Research shows:

- 1 in 10 high school students say they have been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- An average of 24 people per minute are victims of sexual assault, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a single year.
- Almost half of all women and men in the US have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (48.4% and 48.8%, respectively).

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In your own words, what is Consent?

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■ Boundaries and Consent

Boundaries are the emotional, physical, or even digital barriers implemented to honor one's needs, goals, feelings and values. Boundaries differ person to person.

7 Types of Boundaries:

1. **Emotional** – How emotionally available you are to others.
2. **Physical** – Privacy, personal space; and your body.
3. **Material** – Monetary decisions, giving or lending to others.
4. **Internal** – Self regulation of energy spent on others v. self.
5. **Conversational** - Topics that you do and do not feel comfortable discussing with others.
6. **Time** – How much time you spend with someone.
7. **Mental** – Freedom to have your own thoughts, values, and opinions.

■ **Boundaries and Consent**

Steps to establish personal boundaries:

1. Define, or identify, the desired boundary.
2. Communicate what you need.
3. Don't over explain.
4. Say why it's important for you.
5. Utilize the factors from Healthy Relationships when engaging in dialogue.

■ Boundaries and Consent

All four elements of consent must be present throughout all sexual interactions for it to be consensual.

- **Informed:** Being aware of what is going to happen.
- **Freely and actively given:** Consent is given of someone's own free will.
- **Mutually understandable:** Consent is given clearly and unambiguously, so that all partners understand each other, without any doubts or uncertainty.
- **Specific to a given situation:** Consenting to something in the past doesn't imply that you're consenting to it now.

■ **Boundaries and Consent**

Barriers to consent include:

- Age
- Power Dynamic Within the Law Center
- Force
- Coercion
- Incapacitation

■ Rules for the Road

1

- Always use protection
- Be cautious about anonymous encounters
- Let a friend know where you are
- Trust yourself
- Don't have expectations
- Remember that you don't owe anyone anything
- The person desiring to initiate sexual activity is responsible for obtaining effective consent.
- To obtain consent, permission must be given prior to or simultaneously with the sexual activity in question.

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- Effective consent should never be assumed. Lack of protest or resistance does not constitute effective consent. "No" means no, but nothing (silence, passivity, inertia) also means no. An oral "No," even if it sounds indecisive or insincere, should always be treated as a denial of effective consent.
- If there is confusion as to whether effective consent is present (e.g., words, gestures, or other indications of hesitation or reluctance), the parties should stop the sexual activity immediately and verbally communicate with each other to resolve the confusion.
- A prior sexual relationship or prior sexual activity does not constitute consent to subsequent sexual activity. Past consent does not imply future consent.

A red speech bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing downwards. The word "Discussion" is written in white, sans-serif font in the center of the bubble. The background features faint, concentric circles and dashed lines in light gray.

Discussion

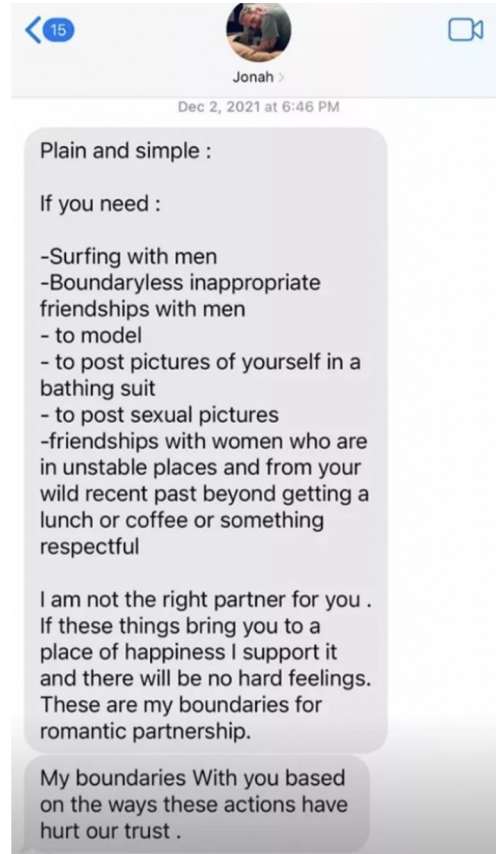
■ Community Definitions

Boundaries: Emotional, physical, or even digital barriers implemented to honor one's needs, goals, feelings and values.

Delusional "Delulu": When an individual holds onto beliefs and expectation of their partner or the relationship that are not based in reality.

Toxic Relationship: A relationship that lacks mutual understanding, healthy communication practices, and regard for either party's personal boundaries.

Do you believe this text is an example of reasonable or unreasonable personal boundaries? How would you utilize the factors of a healthy relationship and establishing boundaries to respond to this message?



Was consent by parties present? Why or why not?

John and Alex are partners in a romantic relationship. One day, John invites Alex over to their apartment to study. While studying, John and Alex engage in a consensual sexual encounter. John begins to intensify the level of contact and moves quickly from touching and kissing to removing Alex's clothing. Alex responds by pulling away slightly, moving John's hands and saying, "**Hey, hold on; I'm not sure.**" John cooperates briefly but then intensifies the contact once more. Alex inches backwards and then becomes still. Nonetheless, John proceeds to have sex with Alex.

Questions?

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