



one1love

# BEHIND THE POST

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR USE WITH ONE LOVE'S "BEHIND THE POST" VIDEOS



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# ABOUT ONE LOVE

*We created this guide to help you talk to the people in your life about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. You can use this guide with anyone! No, really, anyone – be it a friend, a sibling, your class, your team, etc.*

Founded in 2010 to honor the memory of Yeardley Love, One Love's mission is to end relationship abuse by educating young people about healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors, how to #LOVEBETTER and empowering them to be leaders driving change in their communities.

When she was killed by her ex-boyfriend, Yeardley's friends and family were shocked to learn that she had been in an abusive relationship. Today, One Love exists for one reason: Yeardley was killed and her death may have been prevented if those around her, including herself, recognized the signs and knew how to intervene. One Love works to ensure that everyone has the information about healthy and unhealthy behaviors that Yeardley and those around her did not. Most people do not realize how widespread this issue is. In fact, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience relationship abuse at some point in their lives.<sup>1</sup> We know that by educating young people at a young age about the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, as well as the early warning signs of unhealthy relationships, we can be a part of the solution that saves lives.

All of the work we do at the One Love Foundation celebrates and honors the positive spirit and kindness that Yeardley personified. We are committed not only to honoring Yeardley's memory, but also to ensuring that everyone has the healthy relationships that they deserve. Our work is rooted in our honest belief that relationship abuse is an epidemic that can be stopped when young adults are educated and empowered to affect change in their communities.

Our journey as an organization started with educating young people about the elements of unhealthy relationships. As the work grew, we began to hear more questions from teachers and students alike asking "How can I make my relationship healthier?" Thus the #LoveBetter campaign was designed to answer this question. In a world dominated by stories of how we're not treating each other well, #LoveBetter helps us focus on how we can build a healthier world by looking at the quality and health of our own relationships. This guide includes questions to help participants identify signs of an abusive relationship and also explore and discuss ways to have healthy relationships.

For more information about us, visit [www.joinonelove.org](http://www.joinonelove.org).

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey - 2010 Summary Report. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

## REVIEW VIDEO AND MATERIALS

This guide was designed to accompany the One Love Foundations' educational "Behind the Post" videos, which can be found at [www.joinonelove.org/behind-post-discussion-guide](http://www.joinonelove.org/behind-post-discussion-guide). For complete instructions on how to use this guide, please consult the Lesson Plan on page 7.

## PREPARE RESOURCES

Everyone has different experiences coming into this discussion. If you find that someone is triggered by this content, it is best to refer them to a counselor or a trained professional. As you set up to conduct this discussion, you should create a list of local and national resources (domestic violence agencies, counseling options, etc.). There's a great national resource list in the appendix of this guide. We also encourage you to invite an advocate from the local direct service providers (domestic violence resources) to be there as support should anyone need immediate help. Before beginning the discussion, be sure to read the trigger warning below out loud.

## TRIGGER WARNING

"The film that we are about to watch depicts examples of relationship abuse. This is a very heavy film and can be difficult to watch, even if you have not been in a similar situation. Please take care of yourself and feel free to leave the room or put your head down at any time. You can seek help from a counselor or one of the national resources on the Resource handout. Also, this film portrays just one example of relationship abuse, an issue that is prevalent amongst all types of relationships, no matter the gender, sexuality, class, ability, religion or race. The film is to be used as a catalyst to start a conversation about relationship abuse in many different types of relationships, whether it's someone you just met, are dating, talking to, hooking up with or in a committed relationship with."

## FACILITATOR NOTE

Before beginning this discussion, you should review the 10 Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship, the 10 Signs of a Healthy Relationship, and the How to Help a Friend Who May Be in an Abusive Relationship handouts in the appendix. The discussion points reference the information shared in those handouts. An abbreviated version of these can be found on page 6. If you would like activities to accompany the discussion questions, check out the Lesson Plan on page 7.

## SHARE FEEDBACK WITH ONE LOVE

Evaluation is very important to us at One Love. After watching the video and completing this discussion, please have each workshop participant visit [www.joinonelove.org/feedback](http://www.joinonelove.org/feedback) to quickly provide feedback and learn more about getting involved.

After this discussion, you must notify the One Love Foundation of its completion, as well as key pieces of information such as where the workshop was held, who participated, and how many folks were in attendance. This information helps One Love understand the impact of this curriculum and continue offering best in class programs and content. You should also fill out this survey to tell us how the experience went for you as a facilitator: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TNLFacilitator>



This discussion guide and accompanying lesson plan are designed to help support the social and emotional development of participants. Listed below are the core Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies the video and tools are designed to address.

## CORE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

### Self Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

### Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

### Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

### Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

### Responsible Decision Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.

Source: "Core SEL Competencies." Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2018, [casel.org/core-competencies/](https://casel.org/core-competencies/).



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## A QUICK OVERVIEW BEFORE YOU START

For the full version of these resources, please visit the appendix on page 37.

### 10 SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

EQUALITY  
LOYALTY  
HONESTY  
TAKING RESPONSIBILITY  
INDEPENDENCE  
COMFORTABLE PACE  
COMPASSION  
RESPECT  
TRUST  
COMMUNICATION

### 10 SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

INTENSITY  
JEALOUSY  
MANIPULATION  
ISOLATION  
SABOTAGE  
BELITTLING  
GUILTING  
VOLATILITY  
DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY  
BETRAYAL

### INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS, TRY SAYING THAT

Instead of saying something like...

Try saying something like...

"You guys are #goals"

"You seem really happy! How is the relationship going?"

"Ugh so jealous of your life"

"Can't wait to hear all about your awesome trip!"

"I never see you anymore. You're always with your new partner."

"How do you feel about the pace your relationship is moving at?"

"You should just break up with them! They treat you badly."

"How does it make you feel when they get mad at you over that?"

"You got into a fight *again*?!"

"Do you want to talk about what happened?"

### HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

Start by opening the conversation on a positive note. Once your friend feels comfortable, you can begin calmly voicing your concern for them. Listen to your friend and let them open up about the situation on their own terms. Don't force the conversation and don't panic or blame your friend. Sometimes, our instinct is to immediately label the relationship as "abusive" to drive home the severity of the situation. This instinct, however, can cause your friend to retreat and shut down. Instead, focus on the specific behaviors you're seeing and how that behavior makes them feel. Help your friend understand that the behaviors they are experiencing are not normal, and that it is NOT their fault their partner is acting this way. If your friend is in an abusive relationship, refrain from telling them to "just break up!" Your friend is already dealing with a controlling and manipulative partner and the last thing they need is for you to mimic those behaviors by forcefully telling them what to do. Instead, offer options to your friend -- like talking to a counselor or a hotline. Lastly, expect to have more talks with your friend in the future as it's unlikely to resolve the situation after one conversation.

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# LESSON PLAN

For grades 9 and above (ages 13+)

*Understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors.*

## BIG IDEA

Using the "Behind the Post" videos from One Love's #That'sNotLove campaign, students will understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships and the role that technology can play in these relationships.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this discussion guide are:

- + To help young people understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships and what can be done to stop unhealthy behaviors from escalating to abuse.
- + To provide a framework for young people to talk about healthy and unhealthy behaviors that they may experience in their own lives.
- + To open young peoples' eyes to the role that social media often plays in unhealthy relationships, and to help them better navigate their use of social media in their own relationships and those of their friends'.
- + To help young people understand what healthy relationships look like and begin to practice these behaviors in their lives.

High-achievement goal:

- + To inspire students to get involved in One Love's greater movement to end relationship abuse and to empower them to work for healthier relationships in their communities.

## LESSON STEPS

### Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Before starting off, we strongly recommend giving an introduction for the students which covers the following:

- + Necessary Intro: Remember that the videos and the conversation may be triggering for some students -- before going through the discussion guide(s), you should remind students that anyone who feels uncomfortable with the material that you are covering has the option to be excused at any point during the lesson to seek the school counselor.
- + Statement of Inclusivity: "This film portrays just one example of relationship abuse, an issue that is prevalent amongst all types of relationships, no matter the gender, sexuality, class, ability, religion or race. The film is to be used as a catalyst to start a conversation about relationship abuse in many different types of relationships, whether it's someone you just met, are dating, talking to, hooking up with or in a committed relationship with."
- + About One Love + This Lesson: "One Love is a non-profit organization that was created in 2010 after Yeardley Love, a college student at the University of Virginia, was killed by her ex-boyfriend. After she was killed, Yeardley's friends and family realized that they had seen some warning signs,

but they didn't understand how serious they were or know what to do about them. They believe that Yeardley's death was preventable, so they created One Love to provide education that helps others recognize warning signs of relationship abuse and empowers them to take action if they see those signs."

**Step 2: Optional Student Worksheet (3 minutes)**

Hand out a follow-along worksheet to each student. This worksheet consists of the 10 unhealthy and 10 healthy relationship behaviors and a practice exercise. Students can use the worksheet to practice identifying and understanding examples of healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

**Step 3: Behind the Post (8 minutes)**

Play the video. Feel free to play the video more than once if students would like to see it again to process.

NOTE: If your school does not permit access to YouTube or social media, you will need to email the One Love Foundation at [info@joinonelove.org](mailto:info@joinonelove.org) so that we can provide another link to the videos.

**Step 4: Discussion Questions (30 - 45 minutes)**

Go through the discussion guide question by question. Remember to read out the teaching points if the students don't naturally say them.

**STUDENT PRACTICE + CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

To check for student understanding, complete one or more of the following practice pieces after going through the discussion guide.

- + **Stick it to love:** Draw a line down the middle of the front board in your classroom. On one side, write #ThatsNotLove and on the other side write #ThatsLove. Give students sticky notes and instruct them to write an example of a healthy and an unhealthy behavior on the notes. Then let each student take turns putting the unhealthy relationship behaviors under #ThatsNotLove and the healthy relationship behaviors under #ThatsLove!
- + **Act it out:** Break the students into small groups of 3-4 and have them come up with examples of healthy or unhealthy relationships and how each should be handled. Have each student make a sign on a sheet of paper that says "That's Love!" and one that says "That's Not Love!" Then have each group act out the example that they come up with. As each scene is performed, ask the remaining students to hold up the sign that they feel better fits the situation. This will help students identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors and think through how they should act when they are in these situations.
- + **How to Support a Friend:** Have students read the following example and respond with how they would handle the following situation.
  - » Your best friend Alex begins dating someone new named Dana. Alex seems really happy with how things are going and is spending lots of time with Dana. As the relationship progresses, you begin to notice things: Alex posts a lot of happy photos with Dana, and ditches plans with



you and your friends to hang with Dana instead. For the first time in weeks, Alex comes out to the movies with you and a group of friends. However, they keep getting texts on their phone. At one point they step out to take a call. When they come back they look stressed but then start to smile and engage in conversation again. How would you approach Alex? What are some specific things that you would do or say?

### **CLOSING STATEMENT**

"Before we wrap up today, I want to first thank you all for participating in this discussion. We can all play a positive role in changing the statistics around relationship abuse, and it starts by having conversations like the one we had today about healthy and unhealthy relationships. For homework tonight, please take this sheet (handout Student Worksheet) with the 10 signs of a healthy and unhealthy relationship. For each sign, please write out an example. Additionally, go to [www.joinonelove.org/feedback](http://www.joinonelove.org/feedback) and let us know what you thought about this workshop. This feedback is incredibly helpful to One Love and at the end you will find an opportunity to provide your information and get involved."

### **CONCLUSION**

Now that students have been exposed to both healthy and unhealthy scenarios, they should be equipped with the tools they need to spot unhealthy behaviors and differentiate between a healthy and unhealthy relationship. They should also understand what they can do if they see or experience unhealthy behavior in their own relationship or that of a friend. To further reinforce the lesson, you can give students the worksheet to complete for homework. After finishing this discussion, please take a moment to visit: [www.joinonelove.org/feedback](http://www.joinonelove.org/feedback) and tell us what you thought.

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# STUDENT WORKSHEET

## #BehindThePost Film

### Exercise in Defining Love for Yourself

Take the time to write down what love means to you. How do you want to be treated in a relationship? What is and is not okay in your opinion?

### Defining Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Below is a list of the 10 signs of a healthy relationship and the 10 signs of an unhealthy relationship. Ask students to fill in their own examples of each behavior.

#### 10 Signs of Healthy Relationship

COMFORTABLE PACE

TRUST

HONESTY

INDEPENDENCE

RESPECT

EQUALITY

COMPASSION

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

LOYALTY

COMMUNICATION

#### 10 Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship

INTENSITY

JEALOUSY

MANIPULATION

ISOLATION

SABOTAGE

BELITTling

GUILTING

VOLATILITY

DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY

BETRAYAL

*For more information on these topics, visit [www.joinonelove.org](http://www.joinonelove.org) or tell us what you thought at [www.joinonelove.org/feedback!](http://www.joinonelove.org/feedback!)*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**PLAY "EDUCATIONAL VIDEO" THEN LEAD A GUIDED DISCUSSION USING THE QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT FEW PAGES**

### "EDUCATIONAL VIDEO" OVERVIEW

Many times, what we see on social media is not a real representation of what's going on behind the post. We might see a couple that looks picture-perfect online, but amazing social posts are not what makes or breaks a relationship. As you can see in this film, healthy relationships involve a lot more than that. The behaviors we see in Zoe and Will's relationship mirror many behaviors we see in everyday life, but it's important to know what qualifies as unhealthy and healthy in a relationship. The following questions will break down each of the 10 signs of an unhealthy relationship and ask participants to thoughtfully consider how the characters could have acted in a healthier way.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- + To help participants understand the impact of technology and social media on relationships and how it can be used to control a partner or disguise an unhealthy relationship.
- + To help participants understand the warning signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships.
- + To give participants the tools they need to intervene if they see unhealthy behavior exhibited by a friend or in a friend's relationship.
- + To enable participants to explore healthy ways to handle emotions in a relationship.

## QUESTION 1

### A. What are your first thoughts about Will and Zoe's relationship?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + In the beginning, Zoe and Will's relationship seems really great, but we can't ignore the negative times that follow. **Unhealthy and abusive relationships have their happy times too -- especially in the beginning of the relationship.**
- + Will uses apologies and attempts to be "sweet" to keep Zoe from possibly breaking up with him after he has done something hurtful. In an unhealthy relationship, you often feel like you are walking on eggshells around your partner to avoid getting them upset or angry.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus

- + **In a healthy relationship, you are able to talk honestly with your partner about how you feel without worrying about how they will react.** You feel respected and unafraid of your partner, and are able to come to a solution that feels good for both of you if there is a disagreement.

### B. Most of us use social media and often share only the best versions of our lives online. What role can social media play in unhealthy relationships?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + **We often feel pressure to put our best face forward on social media but what we see online is a highlight reel and does not represent the full reality.** Just because someone is posting amazing photos, it does not mean that they are happy or that their relationship is going well behind the post.
- + On top of pressure to look happy all the time, there can be additional pressure from a partner to make them appear to be the perfect partner or you all as the perfect couple.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus

- + **The idea of #relationshipgoals is based off what we see from the outside and what people project or want us to see, but healthy relationships are based off more than that: trust, healthy communication, equality, and respect, just to name a few.** These are things that you often can't see in a social media post, so it's important to think about how you define real #goals in a relationship.
- + **Talking to your partner about what you are and aren't comfortable with is part of a healthy relationship.** Some people like their privacy, some like to over-share. When the posts involve the two of you, it's important to understand each other's wishes and agree to how shared posts will be handled.
- + In a healthy relationship, you're able to calmly express to your partner when things make you uncomfortable and reach a mutual conclusion about what works for both of you without either person feeling like they are making sacrifices for the sake of the relationship.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- + Getting possessive when they see someone else is Snapchatting you
- + Getting jealous when they see that you've liked someone's post on Instagram
- + Posting photos that intentionally make you look bad to embarrass you
- + Making passive-aggressive comments like, "Why did you ignore my text, but post a Snap?"

## C. As a friend, what should you be aware of when looking at your friend's relationships on social media?

### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + **Be mindful of what you say on social media, because your comments may affect the way your friend sees their relationship whether you intend them to or not.** Commenting things like, "You guys are the best couple ever!!" or, "Ugh, so jealous!!" might make your friend think that they should feel lucky to be in their relationship, even if that relationship doesn't make them feel good.
- + **Ask genuine, open-ended questions like, "How is the relationship is going?" and do not assume that because it looks great on social media everything is perfect.**

## QUESTION 2

### A. Do you think it's okay for Zoe to ask Will to skip practice and stay with her when they are in her room together? Do you think it was okay for Will to go to practice, even though Zoe asks him to stay?

### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: SABOTAGE

- + **Repeated pressure to sacrifice things you love or hobbies that help you get ahead in life is a sign of an unhealthy relationship because in a healthy relationship, your partner has your best interest and does not pressure you to miss school, practice, or other plans that you have.**
- + **It's natural to want to spend a lot of time with your partner, but asking Will to skip practice and guilt him when he doesn't comply is unhealthy because it's asking him to sacrifice for the sake of their relationship and to skip something that she knows he enjoys.**
- + **There are healthy and unhealthy ways to express your emotions to your partner.** While it's appropriate for Will to tell Zoe that he has to go to practice, the way he tells her is very unhealthy. He raises his voice and gets aggressive with her instead of calmly explaining to her that practice is important and that he will spend time with her later. It's never okay to yell or get aggressive for the sake of getting your point across.
- + **Zoe may be reflecting the unhealthy behaviors Will is perpetrating in how he controls who she can and cannot hang out with.**

### Healthy Behavior Focus: INDEPENDENCE + COMMUNICATION

- + **Independence is an important part of having a healthy relationship - having space and freedom in your relationship is crucial.**
- + **Having friends and a life outside of your relationship, while finding ways together to participate and include each other in each of your lives, is important for a healthy relationship. Your relationship should feel balanced - not like your partner is taking up all your time.**
- + **Whatever the underlying feeling is for why Zoe doesn't want Will to go to practice, or why Will does want to go, how they communicate is not healthy. Communication isn't just about expressing yourself freely, it's also how you go about expressing those feelings.**



### QUESTION 3

**A. When Zoe tells Will that she has plans with Leah, Will responds by saying, "You know what I think about Leah," and insists that Zoe cancel her plans. Why do you think Will responds this way?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: ISOLATION

- + In an unhealthy or abusive relationship, your partner may try to isolate you from friends and family to make you more dependent on them -- isolation is one of the earliest warning signs of an abusive relationship.
- + Will may feel the need to control Zoe and who she hangs out with, but that isn't okay. In an unhealthy relationship, it crosses the line from "we are excited to spend time together" to "I need you to spend all of your time with me."

Healthy Behavior Focus: INDEPENDENCE

- + In a healthy relationship, your partner wants to get to know the people who are important to you and will understand and respect your independence. They encourage you to pursue your interests and hang out with friends that make you happy.

**B. Do you think it's ever okay for your partner to tell you who you can and cannot hang out with?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: CONTROL

- + Making demands about who your partner can and cannot see is unhealthy and indicates a lack of trust. Will demands that Zoe stay in with him instead of going to see Leah like she planned. Then, he acts erratically when she doesn't want to change her plans. He doesn't give any reason for why he doesn't like Leah or why Zoe shouldn't be hanging out with her, he just demands she stop.

Healthy Behavior Focus: RESPECT

- + Your partner doesn't need to be best friends with your friends and family, but they do need to respect the friendships that you choose to have. If Will feels that Leah is a bad influence, he can bring that up to Zoe in a healthy way. For instance, he could say: "Usually when you hang out with Leah, she makes you feel really insecure about yourself or pressures you into drinking. Your friendships are your choice but how is that friendship actually making you feel?" At the end of the day, in a healthy relationship you can communicate with your partner about any concerns, but ultimately, you trust their judgment and respect the decisions that they make.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF ISOLATION

- + Belittling or blaming your friends or family for problems in the relationship
- + Discouraging you from trusting your friends or hanging out with other people
- + Having an "us against the world" mentality or insisting that the relationship would be better if you only hung out with them
- + Telling you to stay away from specific people because "they are only trying to get with you"

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Motivating your partner to pursue a sport or hobby that they enjoy doing
- + Encouraging your partner to make new friends and meet new people

### QUESTION 4

**A. Why do you think that Zoe pulls her leg away from Will when they are in the car with their friends?**

- + Zoe has a right to her own body. Whether in a relationship or not, she gets to choose who she has physical contact with and when.
- + It is always a partner's right to not be physically touched even if they agreed to that type of intimacy previously. It is always healthy to explain why you are not comfortable being touched in that moment. **If it is a healthy relationship, your partner will respect that decision and not act erratically to assert their dominance in response to you.**

**B. Why do you think Will drove dangerously fast during this scene?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: VOLATILITY

- + **Anger is an emotion that all people experience, but the difference is in how it's handled -- if someone becomes volatile to assert their dominance, that's a big red flag.** A big myth is that people who have anger issues can't control themselves, but trouble with anger management should never excuse unsafe behavior. Everyone is responsible for their own actions, and if a person lashes out or becomes volatile emotionally or physically to show their power or control over you, that is abuse.
- + Whether Will is jealous that Zoe is having fun with their friends in the back seat, or upset that she pulled her leg away from him when he touched her, driving fast to scare her and grab her attention is an irrational and controlling way to react. In an abusive relationship, your partner will assert their power by demonstrating that they could hurt you if they wanted to "teach you a lesson." If your partner reacts in a way that scares you or puts you in danger, that is something to take very seriously.
- + **Always trust your gut; if your partner does something that scares you, embarrasses you, or makes you feel uncomfortable, do not ignore this gut feeling.** We get these reactions for a reason and we should always listen to them. If you sense something is off, talk to someone you trust about the situation or consult one of the resources in the appendix.

Healthy Behavior Focus: COMMUNICATION

- + **If Will was angry with Zoe, he should have discussed the problem with her when they were alone in a calm and reasonable way.** Better yet, he should ask "Why didn't you want me to touch you?" or "How were you feeling in the car when you pulled your leg away?" and try to better understand Zoe's feelings.
- + **Regardless of how Zoe is feeling, Will should not act angrily toward her when she doesn't want to be touched and respect her boundaries.** Healthy partners stay calm and will listen to the other person's perspective before reacting.

## QUESTION 5

**A. In one scene, we see Will surprise Zoe when she is walking home after yoga in the dark, after having sent countless text messages asking where she was. While it may seem sweet when your partner shows up and surprises you, when can that behavior be unhealthy?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: INTENSITY

- + **If the relationship feels too intense, that's a sign that something is off.** Always trust your gut and pay attention to the intent of the surprise and how it makes you feel. Is Will surprising Zoe to excite her? Or is he showing up to check in on her because he thinks she might be intentionally ignoring him?
- + Surprises need to be something that you and your partner are both comfortable with. If you find that your partner continues to check up on you, this may be a sign that they are stalking you and keep tabs on your whereabouts -- **stalking is common in abusive relationships.**
- + **Many unhealthy relationships start off very fast.** If you feel that your partner has extreme feelings or the relationship feels like too much too soon, this is a red flag that your relationship could become abusive.

Healthy Behavior Focus: COMFORTABLE PACE

- + **In a healthy relationship, you're happy with how quickly or slowly your relationship is moving and how much time you spend with the other person.** Your partner should respect your comfort level when it comes to when, or how often you want to see them, and you should both feel comfortable with the pace of the relationship.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF INTENSITY

- + Giving you gifts in a public and showy way to show others that you are "theirs." For example, a partner decorating your locker before a big game and putting photos of you together all over with the intent of showing everyone you're a couple, or sending flowers to your workplace or classroom to hint to others that you are taken.
- + Having a "If I can't have you, no one can" mentality.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Your partner decorates your locker before a big game to wish you luck, and you're really happy and excited when you see it!
- + Your partner offers to pick you up from a party so you don't have to walk home alone because they are genuinely worried about your safety.

**B. If your partner constantly texts you over and over in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, how would you approach it with them?**

Healthy Behavior Focus: RESPECT

- + **In a healthy relationship, there is mutual comfort around how often you communicate and text;** Your partner is respectful of what you are and aren't comfortable with. If two people want to text all day—and they are both enjoying it—that's great!

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: INTENSITY

- + It becomes unhealthy if one person assumes that they can text all the time regardless of what the other person wants, and expects a response of some type. Oftentimes, "I was worried and just wanted to be sure that you were safe" is used as an excuse to justify the constant contact or lack of trust.
- + Being attentive means being considerate of your partner's feelings, whereas being controlling is a way of dominating your partner and neglecting their feelings.
- + If someone is unwilling to respect their partner's boundaries regarding texting and social media, it's likely they won't be able to respect their boundaries in other areas of the relationship. This should be treated as a warning sign, as communication should be comfortable for both partners in all aspects.

### QUESTION 6

**A. When Will and Zoe are getting coffee, Zoe watches Will and the barista make eye contact. She then goes on to say, "She was cute." If Zoe was feeling jealous, what should she have done?**

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: JEALOUSY

- + Jealousy is an emotion that everyone experiences from time to time, but it becomes unhealthy if you find yourself lashing out or trying to control someone because of it. Whether you think your partner is cheating on you or not, if you do not trust them, that is a sign that this relationship may not be the best fit for you.
- + Do you feel the need to check your partner's texts? Or get jealous when they like someone else's post on social media? These are strong signs that you don't trust your partner. It's important to understand why you're feeling jealous, and take steps to ease your feelings by communicating honestly with your partner when you feel that something is off.
- + If you are afraid to approach your partner, or if you approach them but they are not listening to you, that is a sign that the relationship is not healthy.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus: TRUST

- + Instead of reacting impulsively to an emotion, such as jealousy, it is important to take a moment to think about how you're feeling and to be thoughtful about how you react before doing anything impulsive.
- + In a healthy relationship, you believe that your partner won't do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship. You let your partner do things without them, have faith that they won't cheat on you, and respect their privacy (like who they text and Snapchat). In a healthy relationship, your partner will never make you go out of your way or work hard to "earn" their trust.
- + Also remember if you don't trust your partner it is important to consider breaking up with them and starting over fresh with someone you can and do trust when you feel ready. Staying in a relationship with someone you don't fully trust is never a good thing.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Instead of passive aggressively letting Will know she felt bothered by his interaction with the barista, Zoe could say, "What was that about? That interaction made me feel uncomfortable."

**B. We see that both Zoe and Will get jealous at times. Do you think the fact that they both act in unhealthy ways makes the relationship okay?**

- + **If two people do unhealthy things, it doesn't cancel out abuse.** Oftentimes, a person experiencing abuse will not recognize that their relationship is abusive because they feel that *they* do unhealthy things as well.
- + Everyone does unhealthy things from time to time, and everyone can work toward healthier relationships by recognizing and confronting these unhealthy behaviors before they escalate or turn into a pattern.

**QUESTION 7**

**A. We learn that Will is cheating on Zoe with the barista from the coffee shop. In your honest opinion, is there ever a time when cheating is abusive?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: BETRAYAL

- + **If you feel that you want to cheat on your partner, it is best to address those feelings before doing anything that could damage the trust in your relationship.** Movies, music and TV shows often glamorize cheating in a relationship, and make it appear that this is something "everyone does." While pop culture normalizes this behavior, it is unhealthy to betray your partner's trust by cheating on them.

Healthy Behavior Focus: LOYALTY

- + **You and your partner should communicate honestly about and feel mutually comfortable with the terms of your relationship.** You should be able to openly discuss what you want and need in your relationship, whether it's monogamous, polyamorous, an open relationship, or whatever works best for you both! Talk to your partner about what you each consider cheating to be, as everyone defines it differently and the definition needs to be mutual. When both people feel comfortable with the status of the relationship, both partners should feel trustful that the other is going to stick to the agreement.
- + It is okay for one type of relationship to feel more natural or appropriate to you than another. The key is to be on the same page with your partner.

**B. How can cheating and betrayal affect a relationship?**

Unhealthy Relationship Focus: BETRAYAL

- + Cheating can lead to many major problems in a relationship, for instance:
  - » **It harms the trust.** If you've been cheated on by your partner, it can be really hard to trust them again. Additionally, your partner may make you feel that their cheating was *your* fault (i.e. because you hadn't been giving them enough attention), but there is no excuse for this behavior and it is never your fault. It is common to feel that you can never trust your partner again, and you should not feel obligated to "forgive and forget" or to be someone's "ride or die."
  - » **It affects a person's ability to trust future partners.** However, if your partner has been cheated on by an ex, that is no excuse for them to mistrust and abuse you.
  - » **It may be used as an excuse for abuse.** If you've cheated on your partner, building their trust back takes time, but it should never come at the expense of abuse. Your partner can't cite



- » unfaithfulness as a reason to keep tabs on you and check your phone behind your back, and it can't be a reason that they make you go above and beyond to win their trust back or hold it against you. It also doesn't mean that they can cheat on you to get even.

#### Healthy Relationship Focus: INDEPENDENCE

- + **As an individual, you need to decide what you are and aren't comfortable in a relationship before entering one.** How do you want to be loved? What does cheating mean to you? What are your deal breakers in a relationship? These are important things for you to decide on by yourself so that when you are in a relationship, you can (a) clearly communicate with your partner about these values, and (b) never feel like you are giving up a part of yourself for your relationship.
- + **No one is required to be in a relationship—it's not a sign of success.** There may be pressure from society, friends or family to be in a relationship. Too often, people feel like they need to stay in unhealthy or abusive relationships because they're afraid to be alone or feel that being single is looked down on. But this is not the case—a relationship is not a sign of success or prestige. The most important thing is that you feel comfortable and happy, and that when you choose to have a relationship, it is a healthy one.
- + Also, If you have been in an unhealthy relationship in the past, or if you have been cheated on, it may take time to work through those feelings and to feel comfortable being part of a relationship again. It's okay to take time to figure out what you need in a relationship before jumping back into one.
- + **When choosing to stay with a partner who has cheated, be sure to think about your motivation for staying.** Is it because you want to prove something to them, to your friends or to yourself? Is it so that you can get back at them by cheating too? Take the time to evaluate if it is truly worth it for you to stay in this relationship.

#### OTHER EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Having an honest conversation with your partner about whether you want to be in a monogamous relationship (you choose to sexually and/or romantically commit to one person) or an "open relationship" where you can hook up with other people.



## QUESTION 8

**A. When Zoe and Will are at the bonfire, Zoe's phone goes off and Will asks who is calling her. He tells Zoe that the person calling "wants one thing and you're too foolish to even realize." Why do you think what Will says to Zoe is damaging?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: BELITTling

- + **Emotional abuse can be just as harmful and traumatic as physical violence.** When Will yells, he both belittles Zoe and infers that the person calling Zoe is only trying to hook up with her. Because of Will's insult, Zoe may start to feel guilty or feel that Will is right about her friend (which may not be the case!).
- + **Belittling is a form of emotional abuse that is used to break down a person's confidence so that they can be controlled more easily.** If you are being belittled in a relationship, it can cause you to feel like the negative things being said about you are true, which makes you believe that you are lucky to be with your partner and that no one else will ever love you.

Healthy Relationship Focus: COMPASSION

- + If you have compassion for your partner, you would never demean them or try to change them.
- + In a healthy relationship, your partner will care about you and not do things to intentionally put you down or hurt you. You will never feel like your partner is taking advantage of your kindness.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF BELITTling

- + Comparing you to others in a negative way
- + Telling you that your goals for the future are too ambitious
- + Making controlling comments that are disguised as concern (i.e. if you wear that shirt, you're going to get creeped on so you should change)
- + Making jokes at your expense and then telling you that you are being too sensitive when you try to explain how it bothers you

**B. Do you think Zoe should have just shown Will her phone? If Will really thought Zoe was cheating on him, what do you think he could've done to respond in a healthy way?**

Healthy Relationship Focus: TRUST

- + **In healthy relationships, people feel free and unpressured -- Zoe has the right to choose whether or not she shows Will her phone.** If there is genuine trust in the relationship, Will shouldn't feel the need to see Zoe's phone, even if she offers it up. There's a difference between your partner changing the music you're both listening to on your phone, or turning off an alarm, and checking your texts or social media.
- + **In a healthy relationship, you realize other people will be attracted to their partner, but you trust your partner to handle the situation appropriately.** We can't cut our partner off from being liked by other people. The positive traits you see in them will be seen by others. How you handle your emotions around that is important.
- + **If you do think your partner is cheating on you, that should be a conversation, not an invasion of their privacy.** See question 6 for more on this topic.
- + **No one has to be in a relationship.** If you are feeling distrustful of your partner because of a previous relationship, or you feel like having a partner is stressing you out, it's totally fine to take a break from dating or relationships! Take some time to practice self-care, think through what you

want in a relationship, and spend some quality time alone. Even though it can feel like there's a lot of pressure to be in a relationship, it's not a sign of success or prestige. The most important thing is that you feel comfortable and happy, and when you choose to have a relationship, your relationship is healthy.

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: CONTROL

- + If you feel that someone is demanding to know who is calling you, or implies that you "owe" them information about what you're doing or why, those are signs of an unhealthy relationship. Will's demanding actions are an invasion of privacy, and getting physical with Zoe qualifies as physical abuse, even if she wasn't left with a bruise.
- + If you don't fully trust your partner, take the time to evaluate why. Has your partner ever given you a reason to not trust them? If so, perhaps that relationship isn't the best thing for you. Are you predisposed to not trust people? If so, it is vital that you take time away from the relationship to work on yourself, as a relationship cannot be healthy if one (or both) partners are unable to fully trust.

### QUESTION 9

**A. Will becomes verbally and physically violent after he drags Zoe away from the party. He also yells, "Stop making me seem like I'm the bad guy," and "You're lying right now." After this scene, we see Zoe scroll through her social media feed and look at all the pictures of her and Will. She then texts him saying, "Come back. I love you." Why do you think Zoe responds by texting Will to come back, instead of breaking up with him?**

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: GUILT

- + In an unhealthy relationship, your partner may blame you for their own mistakes and inappropriate behavior. If your partner makes you feel responsible for their unhealthy actions or their happiness, that is a red flag for emotional abuse.
- + Gaslighting is form of emotional abuse where a person makes you doubt yourself or question your account of an incident to gain power over you and avoid responsibility for the abuse. When experiencing gaslighting, it's common to wonder if you are being too dramatic or overly sensitive after an argument with your partner. You walk away from a conversation or argument feeling more confused and wondering if you did something wrong.
- + If you are hesitant to speak with loved ones about what is happening in your relationship, then that is a red flag. If you think you might be experiencing gaslighting, take time to evaluate what others in your life have said about your partner or consult a close friend or family member about the incident.
- + Social media can make us forget the bad times and only focus on the good. We see Zoe scroll through her social media feed, reading her friend's positive comments and reflecting on all of the great times in her relationship, which causes her to minimize the bad times in the relationship.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF GASLIGHTING

- + Saying things like, "You're making that up," or, "Stop making everything such a big deal" to make you feel like you need to apologize for something that is not your fault
- + Telling you that you remember a situation incorrectly
- + Accusing you of doing or saying things that you never actually did



## Healthy Behavior Focus: HONESTY

- + In a healthy relationship, you can talk to your partner about something that is bothering you **without judgement or shame**. Your partner won't get overly defensive or deny that the conflict exists.
- + An important part of any relationship is being able to evaluate how your actions may have impacted your partner. In a healthy relationship, partners accept responsibility for any wrongdoing and work to find a middle ground where they both feel comfortable moving forward together.
- + If you feel that you've lost touch of reality or you can't trust your own feelings, it may be time for a gut check. Talk to a loved one for advice on your relationship or check in with a professional as a reference, and always remember to safety plan before a break up.

### B. Why can leaving an abusive relationship be hard, and how could Zoe have safely broken up with Will?

- + People stay in unhealthy relationships for many reasons. In an abusive relationship, it's common to believe that you are at fault for the problems in the relationship, feel that your partner's behavior is normal, or have lower self-esteem due to emotional abuse and feel like no one else will love you. You may also feel embarrassed to admit what is happening, believe that your partner will change, or feel that it is your job to fix your partner. There may also be practical reasons for not wanting to leave a partner, such as living together or having a mutual friend group.
- + Leaving an abusive relationship is very difficult and dangerous. **The most dangerous time in an unhealthy or abusive relationship is during and post breakup.** In fact, in the six weeks following a breakup from an abusive relationship, someone is 70x more likely to be killed by their partner than at any other point of the relationship.
- + **Whether you feel that breaking up will be easy, or could be life threatening, you need to prepare for the breakup with a safety plan.** Safety planning means that you think of a strategy for when and how you'll break up with your partner, and what you can do to keep yourself safe in the hours and days following the break up. This includes letting friends or other supports in your life know what you're planning so they can help.

*Note: See resources in the appendix for help creating a safety plan.*

## QUESTION 10

**A. There are two instances where Will and Zoe's friends witness unhealthy behaviors in their relationship: In the car when Will drives dangerously fast, and when Zoe is dancing with her friends by the fire and Will pulls her away. In each of these scenes, why don't they intervene?**

- + People often feel like it's not their place to step in, but as a friend, it's important to talk about what you see happening.
- + You might be assuming that if the relationship was that bad, your friend would leave. But, it's very common in abusive relationships for a person to not realize it's unhealthy. Even if you're worried that talking to your friend might push them away, you could save their life by starting a conversation. It's better to play it safe than be sorry that you didn't speak up.
- + **Try not to isolate your friend because of their partner.** You may not always like the person that your friend is dating, but be careful not to stop talking to your friend because of this as that will make them more dependent on their partner.

## QUESTION 10

### B. How can someone who is concerned about a friend help them? What can they say?

- + **Start the conversation on a friendly note.** Tell them, "You're always so fun to be around! I've missed you" or another positive affirmation. Once your friend feels comfortable, you can address your concerns with them.
- + **Instead of labeling their partner as bad or abusive, point out a specific unhealthy behavior you've seen their partner do and ask your friend how they felt when it happened.** Remember that your friend cares about their partner, so it will be hard for them to see them in a negative light. Instead of saying, "Your partner is abusive," try saying, "How does it make you feel when they check your phone every night, or when they don't let you go to a party?"
- + **Your friend will never leave a relationship because you tell them to; they will leave a relationship when they make the decision for themselves and feel ready.** Be *gentle, kind, and persistent* with your friend and you will accomplish a lot more by setting a healthy example for how people should treat each other.
- + **Trying to force your friend to admit that they are in an unhealthy relationship, or force them to break up with their partner, mimics what their partner is doing to them: trying to control them.**
- + **Emphasize that you are there for your friend whenever they are ready to talk, without any pressure or deadline.** Bear in mind that you will need to follow up on these conversations – it will likely take many of these talks before your friend opens up or chooses to leave their partner. Remember that social media is not an accurate representation of our friends' relationships! Be sure to ask friendly questions about how the relationship is going.

*Note: Feel free to pause the conversation to go through a few additional comments from the "Say This Instead of That" or How to Help a Friend Who May Be in an Abusive Relationship" handouts in the appendix.*

### C. What are some actions you could take if you saw your friend act in a way that disrespected or hurt another person?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + **Trust your gut and know that if something felt off to you, it likely felt off to others. Take the lead in saying something** – even something small like, "why would you do that?" or "stop acting weird" – to let that person know that what they did or said was not socially acceptable. Don't worry about compromising your own status or how people will view you for speaking out when you see something that doesn't sit right with you. You will feel better that you said something rather than kept it to yourself.
- + **Not acting when someone is disrespectful contributes to a culture where abuse is tolerated.** If you don't say anything when someone acts in a way that is disrespectful or objectifies another person, you are contributing to a cycle of disrespect. Even a simple "Are you sure you want to be doing that?" will get the message across. By letting the small things slide, we allow unhealthy behavior to persist and potentially escalate to a point of violence or assault.
- + **When talking to someone about their behavior, be sure to call out the behavior instead of labeling the person.** Many people don't want to label their friend as a "bully" or "abusive," so it can be helpful to label their behavior as unhealthy instead of labeling the person. The best thing you can do as a friend or loved one is to encourage them to get help from a professional. If you



don't feel comfortable intervening alone, talk to another close friend for help approaching the situation. You and your friend can be two sets of eyes on the situation and can intervene together if need be, but be sure to do so in a non-judgmental and supportive way. Also, always think of your own safety first, as it might be dangerous to confront someone who you know has been physically aggressive.

## QUESTION 11

**A. At one point in the video we see Will apologize to Zoe by saying, "I'm sorry. I got drunk and I was stupid." Do you think Zoe should forgive Will? Why or why not?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY

- + **People are responsible for their actions. Alcohol and other stressors don't cause a person to exhibit an unhealthy behavior that they weren't capable of to begin with.** This is true whether they are drunk, sober, stressed out, or going through tough times.
- + Alcohol may have been one of the *reasons* that a situation got out of hand, but alcohol is not an excuse for unhealthy behavior. In this scene, we see Will blame his actions on alcohol. People who do abusive or unhealthy things often offer excuses for unhealthy behaviors, but that's all they are: excuses.
- + Whether your partner has previously suffered abuse, is struggling with mental health issues, or was cheated on in the past, there is nothing that makes their abusive behaviors okay. **There are plenty of people going through difficult times who don't harm their partners. No matter the reason, there is never an excuse for abuse.**

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY

- + While drunk, your partner makes inappropriate jokes about your relationship in front of their friends that make you feel uncomfortable and offended. The next day, they brush off your concerns when you bring them up by saying, "Everyone says stupid things when they're drunk."

Healthy Behavior Focus: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

- + **While all of us will be unhealthy in our relationships at some point, the important thing is that we take steps to prevent unhealthy behaviors from happening again.** In a healthy relationship, a partner apologizes for their actions, takes responsibility for their behavior, AND changes their behavior. It isn't enough for someone to keep saying they're sorry for blowing up at you over their jealous tendencies.
- + You are not responsible for fixing your partner or their problems, and you have a right to safety and comfort in a healthy relationship. **No one should ever stay in a relationship in which they hope someone will change.**
- + **It is not the responsibility of a significant other to fix their partner's problems; this is a job for a trained counselor or expert.** You're not a bad person if you walk away or abandon an unhealthy or abusive situation. And remember to create a safety plan!

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

- + Your partner makes inappropriate comments to their friends while they were drunk, and you bring up your concern to your partner when you're both sober. Your partner apologizes and works to prevent it from happening again. Steps could include drinking less, not hanging out with friends who make them feel pressured to act in unhealthy ways or seeking therapy for their feelings.
- + You get frustrated with your partner because they had to reschedule plans with you for a last minute group meeting. You express your frustration in an unhealthy way, and your partner gets upset by how you handled the situation. You apologize and take full responsibility for how you reacted, understanding that your partner has other responsibilities. You actively work to control your temper and be more respectful of your partner.

## QUESTION 12

**A. Will sends Zoe flowers and an apology note that says, "I'm sorry. I don't know what I would do without you." Why do you think Will does this?**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus: MANIPULATION

- + Oftentimes when an abusive situation happens in an unhealthy relationship, it is followed by your partner doing something really nice, which makes you then minimize the original abusive behavior. This is called the Cycle of Abuse. Will is trying to influence Zoe's decision to get back together or stay in the relationship by sending her flowers and making her feel responsible for his well being. These are forms of manipulation.
- + Manipulation happens when a partner tries to influence your decisions, actions or emotions. We see this in how Will sends Zoe flowers after doing something hurtful. If you are feeling torn over your relationship, it's important to evaluate how much you are willing to sacrifice to make it work.
- + In an unhealthy relationship, you may feel as though you are the only one who can "save" your partner. This may especially be the case if your partner says things like "I would kill myself if you ever left me." You might feel responsible for your partner and understand why they act in unhealthy ways, so you want to be the one to help them end their unhealthy behavior. **But it is never your job to save someone else, especially at your own expense.**
- + The sentiment that "it's Zoe's fault because she keeps forgiving Will" is victim blaming. There are many reasons why someone may stay in an unhealthy relationship -- manipulation is one of those reasons.

Healthy Behavior Focus: EQUALITY

- + In a healthy relationship, you won't feel like you need to make sacrifices or give up a part of yourself in exchange for affection, kindness, or love. This leads to both partners feeling empowered by challenges in the relationship and that their experiences and feelings are validated.
- + Equal partners don't try to manipulate each other or control their feelings. Both partners feel free to experience their own feelings without interference from their partner, and are able to share their feelings with the partner without fear of rejection or blame.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF MANIPULATION

- + After seeing their partner talking to someone else, the abuser acts out of jealousy, pulls their partner away and yells at them. Later, they apologize and set up a romantic date that includes their partner's favorite activities. The partner feels reassured by the nice gesture and thinks things will get better after the bad fight.

## B. Why is it a warning sign of an unhealthy relationship if two people keep breaking up and getting back together?

- + On again/off again relationships are one of the clearest signs from the outside that a relationship is unhealthy. It may also be the outward sign of the Cycle of Abuse, as a couple may break up after a violent incident, and then get back together when the person who abuses has promised to change. They will be “on their best behavior” for a while, but without professional help and intervention counseling, they will most likely do something hurtful again. This cycle can occur even if both partners are exhibiting abusive behaviors.
- + It’s a warning sign if a couple is constantly breaking up and getting back together because conflict is not dealt with in a healthy way. This also can mean that there is a battle for control between partners within the relationship.
- + Emotional withdrawal is often used as a manipulation tactic in an unhealthy relationship. In an unhealthy or abusive relationships, your partner will pull away emotionally as a way to prove a point or punish, or threaten a breakup to get their way. It’s important to look at whether someone is neglecting affection as a way to control you.
- + On average, it takes seven break ups for an abusive relationship to finally end for good.<sup>1</sup> It’s normal for people in abusive relationships to end up going back to their partner several times before the break up really sticks. Oftentimes, people will post a loving photo with their partner during these on and off times as a way to portray their relationship in a positive light to others.
- + While society normalizes and sometimes even romanticizes on-and-off relationships, they are usually a sign that something isn’t right. We can all think of examples from our favorite TV shows and movies where this happens. *Feel free to come up with your own examples! (Ross and Rachel from Friends is a great one to start with.)*
- + It’s important in these cases to safety plan. Again, the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is after a breakup because this is when your partner's control over you is threatened. It is never too late to make a safety plan, even if you originally broke up without one. Putting together a safety plan can help an on again/off again relationship end for good.

Note: See resources in the appendix for help creating a safety plan.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Robinson, K. (2013, June 10). 50 Obstacles to Leaving: 1-10. Retrieved August 09, 2016, from <http://www.thehotline.org/2013/06/50-obstacles-to-leaving-1-10/>

## QUESTION 13

### A. We see that both Will and Zoe do unhealthy things in the relationship. Is this relationship abusive or unhealthy?

- + There is a difference between an unhealthy relationship and an abusive one. Unhealthy behaviors become abusive when a person is being controlled, is constantly conforming to their partner’s wishes and demands, or is afraid of what will happen if they don’t do what their partner wants.
- + We all do unhealthy things from time to time, but what is important is that we recognize the behavior as unhealthy and take measures to stop. If you find that confronting the behaviors doesn’t lead to change, that is a warning sign that the relationship is escalating into abuse.
- + There are a few main things to think about when defining abuse:
  - » A partner’s actions are consciously or unconsciously done to gain power and control. They are forcing their partner to do things they don’t want to do or keeping them from doing things they want to do.

- » A partner's behavior has a negative impact on the day-to-day life of the person they are dating, changing the way they look at themselves or feel.
- » When the person experiencing abuse feels that they can't speak up, or they try to say something, but their partner doesn't react in a healthy way (i.e. ignores them, belittles them, or lashes out).
- » Any form of physical violence, such as pushing, putting hands on your throat, throwing things, kicking, blocking you from leaving a room, or making you feel that your physical wellbeing is in danger.
- » Important to note partners who don't respect your boundaries during intimate acts are huge red flags for abuse. Each partner should feel safe and comfortable with the kind of physical intimacy you're having (or not having!).

## B. What should Zoe and/or Will have done about their relationship?

- + We see that both Zoe and Will do unhealthy things, and that Will's behavior escalates to abuse. **Two partners doing unhealthy or abusive things doesn't cancel the behaviors out or make the relationship healthy**, and still has detrimental effects on a person's wellbeing.
- + **Will should take time away from the relationship to seek professional counseling or help for his abusive behavior.** Simply breaking up with Zoe and finding a new partner will not solve Will's trust issues or need for control. Many times, people who do unhealthy or abusive things act in such a way because of deep-seeded issues. This behavior can stem from a number of different risk factors, including past trauma, codependency, a sense of abandonment, familial rejection or neglect, inability to handle emotions, lack of validation from outside parties, objectification of women, etc. But the bottom line is that **no matter the reason, there is never an excuse for unhealthy or abusive behavior.** Never stay in a relationship that brings out these unhealthy or abusive tendencies, and seek help before jumping into another intimate relationship.
- + **Zoe should create a safety plan for her breakup with Will.** Zoe might do unhealthy things toward Will, but regardless of her actions or her decision to stay in the relationship, **no one deserves abuse - even if they aren't the perfect partner.** Also, staying in an abusive relationship may cause her to adopt some of the unhealthy behavior she sees her partner exhibit. Never stay in an unhealthy relationship because they usually escalate to abuse, and at that point the relationship becomes not just dangerous but also life-threatening.
- + If you and your partner truly love each other, you will take time away from the relationship to work on yourselves. If you are right for one another, you might return to that relationship down the road when you both are in a better place and neither partner exhibits unhealthy behavior.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**PLAY "DATE NIGHT" VIDEO THEN LEAD A GUIDED DISCUSSION USING THE QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT FEW PAGES**

### "DATE NIGHT" OVERVIEW

Many times, what we see on social media is not a real representation of what's going on behind the post. We might see a couple that looks picture-perfect online, but amazing social posts are not what makes or breaks a relationship. As you can see in this film, healthy relationships involve a lot more than that. The behaviors we see in Brad and Bryan's relationship mirror many behaviors we see in every day life, but it's important to know what qualifies as unhealthy and healthy in a relationship. The following questions will break down each of the 10 signs of an unhealthy relationship and ask participants to thoughtfully consider how relationship abuse might affect people from the LGBTQIA\* community.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- + To help participants understand the impact of technology and social media on relationships and how it can be used to control a partner or disguise an unhealthy relationship.
- + To help participants understand the warning signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships, specifically as they relate to LGBTQIA\* relationships.
- + To give participants the tools they need to intervene if they see unhealthy behavior exhibited by a friend or in a friend's relationship.
- + To enable participants to explore healthy ways to handle emotions in a relationship.



## QUESTION 1

### A. Most of us use social media and often share only the best versions of our lives online. What role can social media play in unhealthy relationships?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + We often feel pressure to put your best face forward on social media, but what you see online is a highlight reel and does not represent the full reality. Just because someone is posting amazing photos, it does not mean that they are happy or that their relationship is going well behind the post.
- + On top of pressure to look happy all the time, there is additional pressure from your partner to make them appear to be the perfect partner, or you as the perfect couple.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus

- + The idea of #relationshipgoals is based off what we see from the outside and what people project or want us to see, but healthy relationships are based off more than that: trust, healthy communication, equality, and respect, just to name a few. These are things that you often can't see in a social media post, so it's important to think about how you define real #goals in a relationship.
- + Talking to your partner about what you are and aren't comfortable with is part of a healthy relationship. Some people like their privacy, some like to over-share. When the posts involve the two of you, it's important to understand each other's wishes and agree to how shared posts will be handled.
- + In a healthy relationship, you're able to calmly express to your partner when things make you uncomfortable, and reach a mutual conclusion about what works for both of you without either person feeling like they are making sacrifices for the sake of the relationship.

### B. As a friend, what should you be aware of when looking at your friend's relationships on social media?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + Be mindful of what you say on social media, because your comments may affect the way your friend sees their relationship whether you intend them to or not. Commenting things like, "You guys are the best couple ever!!" or, "Ugh, so jealous!!" might make your friend think that they should feel lucky to be in their relationship, even if that relationship doesn't make them feel good.
- + Ask genuine, open-ended questions like, "How is the relationship going?" and do not assume that because it looks great on social media everything is perfect.

## QUESTION 2

### A. What unhealthy behavior did you see in this video?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus: VOLATILITY + BELITTLING

- + We see that Bryan has smashed wine glasses, pushed over chairs, and acted out in a violent way toward his partner, Brad. **Anger is an emotion that all people experience, but the difference is in how it's handled.** While it is natural to sometimes get angry, upset or frustrated with a partner, it is important to keep your cool and address the situation in a calm manner.
- + **If someone becomes volatile to assert their dominance, that's a big red flag.** If your partner reacts in a way that scares you or puts you in danger that is a big problem. When a person lashes out (physically or verbally) and becomes volatile to show their power or control over you, that is abuse. No matter what caused Bryan to get upset, this type of reaction is never justified.
- + A big myth is that people who have anger issues can't control themselves, but **trouble with anger management should never excuse unsafe, aggressive behavior.** Everyone is responsible for their own actions.
- + Physical violence comes in many forms, and may not always leave you with bruises or scratches. The bottom line is that if your partner acts out aggressively, whether that's throwing things, shoving you, threatening to out you to friends and family, or doing anything that scares you, that is abuse.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus: COMMUNICATION + RESPECT

- + Whatever the reason for Brad and Bryan's argument, how Bryan communicates is not healthy. Communication isn't just about expressing yourself freely, it's also how you go about expressing those feelings.
- + **In a healthy relationship, your partner will support and respect you.** They will never put you down or take their anger out on you.
- + **Always trust your gut; if your partner does something that scares you, embarrasses you, or makes you feel uncomfortable, do not ignore this gut-feeling.** We get these reactions for a reason, and we should always listen to them, so if you sense something is off, talk to someone you trust about the situation or consult one of the resources in the appendix.

### OTHER EXAMPLES OF UNHEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Getting possessive of you because they feel threatened by your friends
- + Getting jealous when they see that you've liked someone's post on Instagram or someone else is Shapchatting you
- + Posting photos that intentionally make you look bad to embarrass you
- + Making passive-aggressive comments like, "why did you ignore my text, but post a Snap?"
- + Demanding that you share your location with them
- + Dismissing your feelings or downplaying something that upsets you by saying, "it's not that big of a deal"

### QUESTION 3

#### A. Why might Brad not recognize that his relationship with Bryan is abusive?

Abusive relationships can be hard to spot regardless of gender(s) or sexual orientation. However, there is an extra layer of complexity that comes with identifying abuse in LGBTQIA\* relationships. **No matter your gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation, abuse is never okay.**

Unhealthy Behavior Focus:

- + **Unhealthy behavior is normalized in society.** Because some forms of violence are normalized by pop-culture and the media, many people have trouble recognizing unhealthy behaviors as abuse. Drama is often glorified in relationships, so many of us misinterpret behaviors like jealousy, intensity, possessiveness and anger to be signs that your partner cares about you.
- + **Many people dismiss or downplay emotional abuse because they don't think it's as bad as physical abuse, but that's not true -- emotional abuse is incredibly harmful.** Emotional abuse is a tactic that a person uses to control and manipulate their partner. Oftentimes in LGBTQIA\* relationships, emotional abuse may include homophobic insults and making you feel as though you deserve abuse because of your gender identity and/or gender expression. It can also include using gender expression as a form of belittling and shaming, for example, "Man up, you're acting like a girl."
- + **Sometimes, people who get angry and lash out will make you think that you are at fault or you caused them to react this way. But we are all responsible for our own actions and if someone is abusive or unhealthy toward you, it is never your fault.** We see this when Bryan yells, "You are so pathetic" and blames Brad for whatever their argument is about. Insults such as this have serious consequences – they not only break down a person's confidence, but can also cause a person to believe that these things being said about them are actually true.
- + **Brad may feel that it doesn't count as abuse because there are no physical bruises or scratches involved.** No matter the circumstances, if your relationship doesn't make you feel happy and is negatively impacting your day to day life, that's a problem. Remember, every relationship -- even abusive relationships -- have happy times. But **you can't discount the unhealthy times, even if there are great times in your relationship.** Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported in their relationship, 100% of the time.
- + Some people might think that because they identify as cis-gender male, they cannot be a "victim" or feel that they need extra proof that their partner is abusive toward them because their partner is of the same gender.

Healthy Behavior Focus: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

- + An important part of any relationship is being able to evaluate how your actions may have impacted your partner. In a healthy relationship, partners accept responsibility for any wrongs and work to find a middle ground where they both feel comfortable moving forward together.

#### OTHER EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- + Using your gender expression as a way to demean you (i.e. telling you to "act like a man" or "you're such an overdramatic girl")
- + Blackmailing you with private photos
- + Threatening to out you by reveal your LGBTQIA\* identity
- + Making jokes about your gender expression, gender identity or sexual orientation
- + Telling you that no one else will love you and that you should feel lucky to be with them

## QUESTION 4

### A. What are some factors that can make leaving an unhealthy or abusive LGBTQIA\* relationship difficult?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus:

- + If in an abusive relationship, you may be afraid of what will happen if you try to leave. You may believe that you are at fault for the problems in the relationship, feel that your partner's behavior is normal, or have had your self-esteem lowered due to emotional abuse. You could also feel embarrassed to admit what is happening, believe that your partner will change, or feel that it is your job to fix your partner.
- + **Leaving an abusive relationship is very dangerous, so remember to safety plan.** Safety planning means that you create a plan for when and how you'll break up with your partner, including how to remove yourself from a dangerous situation. Whether you feel that breaking up will be easy or could be life threatening, it's important to safety plan because **the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is during and after a breakup.**
- + If you feel afraid or have a sense that a breakup would "push someone over the edge," that's a sign that you may be in danger and that a safety plan should be created for the breakup. Homelessness is a concern for some people who experience abuse, but can be particularly heightened for someone who is LGBTQIA\* and living with their partner due to rejection from their family. So finding an alternate place to live should be prioritized.

*Note: Use this link to access a resource designed for LGBTQIA survivors*

*<http://forge-forward.org/wp-content/docs/safety-planning-tool.pdf>*

- + Among many marginalized groups, there are many factors that may make it more difficult to leave an unhealthy or abusive relationship.
  - » **There is a pressure to assimilate to mainstream culture.** This can make it harder to discuss or address problems when they occur. People of marginalized groups may feel as though they need to maintain a façade of perfection in order to be accepted by their peers or family.
  - » **People may try to overcompensate for any predisposed stigma that people have against their group to protect the image of all its members.** For example, a lesbian woman may be seeking acceptance of her relationship from her friends and hide her partner's abuse so that her friends do not form a negative perception of all lesbians.
  - » **Homophobia and transphobia make it harder to speak out.** LGBTQIA\* individuals may not feel safe reporting their experience to authorities because they fear they won't be believed or they won't be taken seriously. In addition, people may feel that support resources may not be able to meet their needs or that people in positions of authority are homophobic, transphobic or have their own biases.
  - » **Threatening to "out" someone.** Threatening to reveal a person as LGBTQIA\* or their gender identity is a common tactic used to control a partner in abusive relationships. This tactic is prevalent among relationships where one partner might not be fully public with their identity as a trans, gender nonconforming or queer person.
  - » **Feeling like the burden of "proof" is higher.** Sometimes, people from marginalized communities feel as though they need to provide extra "proof" that they are being abused or they won't be believed.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus:

- + You are not responsible for fixing your partner or their problems, and you have a right to safety and comfort in a healthy relationship. **No one should ever stay in a relationship in which they hope someone will change.**
- + It is not the responsibility of a significant other to fix their partner's problems; this is a job for a **trained counselor or expert**. You're not a bad person if you walk away or abandon an unhealthy or abusive situation. And remember to create a safety plan!

## QUESTION 5

**A. Why is it unhealthy that Bryan walked out after his argument with Brad? How could he have handled his emotions in a healthier way?**

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus:

- + **On again/off again relationships are one of the clearest signs from the outside that a relationship is unhealthy.** Oftentimes when an abusive situation happens in an unhealthy relationship, it is followed by your partner doing something really nice, which makes you then minimize the original abusive behavior. This is called the Cycle of Abuse. But without professional help and intervention counseling, Bryan will most likely do something hurtful again.
- + **It's a warning sign if a couple is constantly breaking up and getting back together because conflict is not dealt with in a healthy way.** This also can mean that there is a battle for control between partners within the relationship.
- + **Emotional withdrawal is often used as a manipulation tactic in an unhealthy relationship.** In some unhealthy or abusive relationships, one partner will pull away emotionally as a way to prove a point or punish, or threaten a breakup to get their way. It's important to look at whether someone is neglecting affection as a way to control you.

#### Healthy Behavior Focus:

- + **In a healthy relationship, you're able to be honest with your partner without worrying about how they will react.** You feel respected and unafraid of your partner, and if there is a disagreement, you're able to come to a solution that feels good for both of you. Your partner won't belittle or yell at you and confrontations are resolved in a calm, respectful manner.
- + **While we might do unhealthy things in our relationships at some point, the important thing is that we take steps to prevent unhealthy behaviors from happening again.** In a healthy relationship, a partner apologizes for their actions, takes responsibility for their behavior, AND changes their behavior. It isn't enough for someone to keep saying they're sorry and then repeat their unhealthy behavior.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- + Keeping things that are meant to be a secret just between you two
- + Encouraging you to have a life outside of your relationship
- + Being considerate of your feelings in respect to how fast or slow the relationship moves
- + Supporting your relationships with friends and family



## QUESTION 6

### A. How do you think stereotypes about bisexuality play into bisexual relationships?

Unhealthy Behavior Focus:

- + No matter who you're in a relationship with, being bisexual is a valid identity and you deserve to be treated respectfully.
- + There are cultural stereotypes that a person who identifies as bisexual is more promiscuous or is attracted to everyone. This stereotype may cause a partner to feel the need to control this person or to get jealous. **While jealousy is an emotion that everyone experiences from time to time, it becomes unhealthy if you find yourself lashing out or trying to control someone because of it.** Instead of reacting impulsively to an emotion, such as jealousy, it is important to take a moment to think about how you're feeling and to be thoughtful about you react before doing anything impulsive. It's important to understand why you're feeling jealous, and take steps to ease your feelings by communicating honestly with your partner when you feel that something is off.
- + Lack of **trust is no excuse for abuse**. If your partner is using their lack of trust or past experiences, like a cheating ex or divorced parents, as an excuse to control you, question you or make you feel as though you need to earn their trust, that is an unhealthy sign. Regardless of what either partner has experienced in the past, in a healthy relationship your partner will trust you completely and vice versa.

*Note: Bisexual women are at greatest risk of experiencing physical abuse and sexual assault. Based on data from the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), this CDC report found the lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner is extremely high in the lesbian, gay and bisexual community with lesbian women (43.8%), gay men (26%), bisexual women (61.1%), and bisexual men (37.3%) reporting experiencing this violence, compared to heterosexual women (35%) and heterosexual men (29%). Among women who experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking in the context of an intimate relationship, the majority of bisexual and heterosexual women (89.5% and 98.7%, respectively) reported only male perpetrators while self-identified lesbians (67.4%) reported having only female perpetrators.*



## QUESTION 7

### A. How can someone who is concerned about a friend's relationship help them? What can they say?

- + **Start the conversation on a friendly note.** Tell them, "You're always so fun to be around! I've missed you" or another positive affirmation. Once your friend feels comfortable, you can address your concerns with them.
- + **Instead of labeling their partner as bad or abusive, point out a specific unhealthy behavior you've seen their partner do and ask your friend how they felt when it happened.** Remember that your friend cares about their partner, so it will be hard for them to see them in a negative light. Instead of saying, "Your partner is abusive," try saying, "How does it make you feel when they check your phone every night, or when they don't let you go to a party?"
- + **Your friend will never leave a relationship because you tell them to; they will leave a relationship when they make the decision for themselves and feel ready.** Be *gentle, kind, and persistent* with your friend and you will accomplish a lot more by setting a healthy example for how people should treat each other.
- + **Trying to force your friend to admit that they are in an unhealthy relationship, or force them to break up with their partner, mimics what their partner is doing to them: trying to control them.**
- + **Emphasize that you are there for your friend whenever they are ready to talk, without any pressure or deadline.** Bear in mind that you will need to follow up on these conversations – it will likely take many of these talks before your friend opens up or chooses to leave their partner. And remember that social media is not an accurate representation of our friends' relationships! Be sure to ask friendly questions about how the relationship is going.

*Note: Feel free to pause the conversation to go through a few additional comments from the "Say This Instead of That" or How to Help a Friend Who May Be in an Abusive Relationship" handouts in the appendix.*

### B. As a friend, what should you be aware of when looking at your friend's relationships on social media?

#### Unhealthy Behavior Focus

- + **People often feel like it's not their place to step in, but as a friend, it's important to talk about what you see happening.**
- + **You might be assuming that if the relationship was that bad, your friend would leave.** But, it's very common in abusive relationships for a person to not realize it's unhealthy. Even if you're worried that talking to your friend might push them away, you could save their life by starting a conversation. It's better to play it safe than be sorry that you didn't speak up.
- + **Try not to isolate your friend because of their partner.** You may not always like the person that your friend is dating, but be careful not to stop talking to your friend because of this as that will make them more dependent on their partner.
- + **Social media may prevent us from trusting our gut when we feel that something is off in a friend's relationship.** There is incredible pressure to be in a seemingly perfect relationship, and social media only accentuates this pressure. As a friend, even if you are seeing the happiest posts, that may not be a true representation of your friend's relationship. So be sure to ask your friend genuine questions about how the relationship is going and do not assume that because it looks great on social media everything is perfect.

## WRAP UP + ACTIVATION

"Throughout this discussion, we've covered both healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors. Before we end, let's take a final look at the healthy relationship signs handout. Which of those traits stand out to you?"

To wrap up, feel free to use the below script or personalize to your group:

"Before we wrap up today, I want to first thank you all for participating in this discussion. One Love believes that by learning about healthy and unhealthy relationships and having more conversations like the one we had today, we can ultimately change the statistics around relationship abuse. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience an abusive relationship in their lifetimes, so we need people like you to take action. If you are inspired by what you learned today, we want you to join us.

I became a One Love facilitator – and there are so many ways you can get involved with One Love too! This workshop is just the beginning. One Love has lots of campaigns, activations, and leadership opportunities. But the easiest thing I can ask you to do today is to take the pledge to #LoveBetter. By pledging to #LoveBetter, you are committing to bring more healthy behaviors into your relationships and to do your part to create a healthier and safer world. (Take out your own phone) Go to [joinonlove.org/lovebetter](https://joinonlove.org/lovebetter) to take the pledge now.

While you have your phones out, please fill out One Love's survey! They want to make sure this workshop stays relevant and effective for students like you, so please give good or bad feedback at [joinonlove.org/feedback](https://joinonlove.org/feedback).

Thank you again for participating. If you would like to learn more about getting involved with One Love, please stay after and we can chat!"



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## TAKE AWAY POINTS

### 1. Social media does not always show the reality of a situation.

Don't assume that because someone posts great photos online that their relationship is great in real life. Take time to ask your friend questions about their relationship and be mindful of what you say and comment, keeping in mind that comments like “#RelationshipGoals” could influence a friend to stay in an unhealthy relationship. Social media can also make us forget the bad times and only focus on the good, but remember, great relationships are based off of more than picture perfect photos.

### 2. Unhealthy and abusive relationships have their good times too.

It's one of the reasons people stay in bad relationships! But, it is important to remember that if someone doesn't hold to your standards of how you define love and how you want to be treated, that relationship may not be healthy for you. Always trust your gut and don't make excuses for unhealthy behaviors.

**3. We can all do our part to have healthier relationships, but never stay in an unhealthy relationship where you count on someone to change or where you're staying in it because you think you can save them.** It is not your job to fix your partner- that is a job for a trained counselor or expert. Leaving an abusive relationship can be very difficult and dangerous, so be sure to safety plan.

**4. Regardless of what causes someone to act in an unhealthy way, we are all accountable for our own actions.** We are all human and experience feelings like anger, sadness, jealousy, and hurt. A healthy way to respond when something makes you feel these things is to take a moment to identify your emotion and then communicate about it to your partner in a healthy way. If you feel you cannot express your feelings or opinions safely, consider talking with a trained counselor or expert.

**5. Always be mindful of the 10 signs of an unhealthy relationship (jealousy, volatility, deflecting responsibility, intensity, isolation, sabotage, betrayal, belittling, guilt, manipulation).** If you experience unhealthy behaviors in your own relationship or see it in friend's, seek help before these behaviors escalate to abuse.

### 6. Explore and practice the 10 characteristics of a healthy relationship.

Ultimately, healthy relationships make you feel good and bring you up. It can be challenging to always act in healthy ways, but that is part of growing and learning to #LoveBetter. Talk to your partner on where you both would like to improve. Remember it takes two people to make a healthy relationship!



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# BREAKUP PLANNING GUIDE

## WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

A safety plan is a personalized strategy to remove yourself from potentially dangerous situations. Since **the most dangerous time in an unhealthy relationship is during and after a breakup**, you need to tell multiple people in your community before you break up with an unhealthy or abusive partner. They can become your eyes and ears to help limit your partner's access to you. You should include advocates, community organizations, friends, and family as people you can talk to. Each plan is designed to fit your relationship and make sure that you are leaving the relationship in a safe and healthy way.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It is crucial that you create a breakup plan whether you are planning to leave or stay in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is during a breakup and after you have left your partner. During this period, your partner might escalate their aggression to keep you from leaving. It is very important that you take precautionary measures to keep yourself as safe as possible.

## REMEMBER

Breakup plans can be altered and changed as time goes on. Even if you are not leaving an abusive relationship, creating a plan for your safety is important. If you are concerned about how your partner might react to a breakup, you can start your plan by answering a few basic questions and add more safety measures if you feel increasingly threatened.

## ONE MORE THING

If you are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, you should know that the abuse is not your fault and that you deserve to feel safe. Asking for help to leave a relationship that no longer makes you happy or threatens your safety is a sign of strength, and there is no weakness in leaning on the people and resources around you. **You do not have to be in immediate crisis to use these resources.** Preparation is key in keeping yourself as safe as possible.

For more help creating a safety plan, please visit: [joinonelove.org/my\\_plan\\_app](https://joinonelove.org/my_plan_app), or refer to the National Resources on page 24 for hotlines that can assist you in building your safety plan.

## TIPS ON BREAKING UP WITH YOUR PARTNER

- » Identify your support system early and lean on them when necessary.
- » Let your friends, parents, or a trusted adult\* know that you are ending your relationship, especially if you think your ex will try to confront you when you're alone.
- » It is normal to miss your partner after a breakup, even if they have been abusive. Write down your reasons for ending the relationship, and keep them as a reminder for later on. Give a copy to a trusted friend who you have identified to be part of your support system.
- » If you don't feel safe, don't break up in person. Sometimes the safest way to break up is by phone or social media, even if it feels impersonal or mean.
- » If you break up in person, always do it in a public place. Have friends or your parents wait nearby, and take a cell phone with you if you have one.

\*For LGBTQ+ students, you might be concerned about being outed. It's okay and important to find a trusted adult is crucial if your parents are not supportive.

## **PRE-BREAKUP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

*How to leave an unhealthy or abusive partner for students in high school.*

Questions to consider:

- » Do I need to have my locker or class schedule changed? Who do I go to for this?
- » What teachers, counselors, administrators or coaches do I need to tell about the breakup to make my safety at school a priority?
- » Am I walking to my car/driving home/walking from the bus by myself at any point throughout the day? Who can I ask to accompany me during these times?
- » Do I spend any time at home alone before my parents/guardians/siblings get home?
- » Do I have a place I can go if I feel that my house isn't safe - a neighbor, grandparent, or friend?
- » Do I live in a state that allows teens to acquire restraining orders? (Check with your local DV agency for the latest updates on the law)
- » What public area can I go to instead during this time?
- » What is the safest way to get to/from school?
- » Who do I go to if my partner has threatened to physically harm themselves or me?
- » Do I have a list of phone numbers written and stored somewhere safe? Do I have some numbers memorized?
- » Will they contact my family or friends to find out where I am?
- » Do they have access to my virtual location - SnapMaps, FindMyFriends, FindMyiPhone. Do they know any of my online passwords?
- » Where can I save documentation of abusive, threatening, or harassing comments/posts/texts, and photos of physical abuse?\*\*
- » What steps can I take to minimize being blackmailed with sexted photos?
- » Who are the counselors at my school, and where are their offices located?
- » Who can I call if I feel overwhelmed or need additional support?

\*\*Be sure to save any screenshots of threatening communication from your partner, police reports, ER visits related to injuries caused by your partner, etc. to support any claims you may need to make later.

## **PRE-BREAKUP FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

*How to create a safety plan while studying at a university.*

Questions to consider:

- » Do I have the numbers for campus security and local police stored somewhere safe?
- » What is the safest way to get in/out of my dorm or apartment?
- » Do I have a safe place I can stay if I feel my home is not safe?
- » Do I have a place I can leave extra keys/clothes/money?
- » Who do I need to alert to my situation so they can be on the lookout for suspicious activity or sounds - roommates, neighbors, RA's, campus security?
- » What is the safest way to get from my dorm or apartment to classes/job?
- » Do I need someone to walk me to class?
- » Where on campus can I go if I feel I need to switch my class schedule or switch dorm rooms?
- » Who can help me obtain a restraining order?
- » What is the Title IX policy at my university related to issues of student safety? How does my university handle cases of domestic violence?

- » Where can I save documentation of abusive, threatening or harassing comments/posts/texts, and photos of physical abuse?
- » Where can I go to get my locks changed?
- » Will they contact my friends or family to find out where I am?
- » Do they have access to my virtual location - SnapMaps, FindMyFriends, FindMyiPhone? Do they know any of my online passwords?
- » Is there a free self-defense class offered on campus you can take to empower yourself?
- » Do I have a whistle, pepper spray, or an alarm to alert police that I can carry with me?

### **PRE-BREAKUP FOR ADULTS**

*How to leave an unhealthy or abusive partner for young adults not enrolled in school or university.*

Questions to consider:

- » Who do I call to get the locks on doors and windows changed?
- » Who do I call if I need a safe place to stay?
- » Who can I ride to/from work with?
- » What are the local community and legal resources available to me?
- » Is a restraining order a viable option? (include workplace in language)
- » Do I have a trusted friend or neighbor you can leave clothes/money/keys with?
- » Where can I save documentation of abusive, threatening, or harassing comments/posts/texts, and photos of physical abuse?
- » Do they have access to my virtual location - SnapMaps, FindMyFriends, FindMyiPhone? Do they know any of my online passwords?
- » Where is security located at my job and what help can they offer me? Provide a picture to them.
- » If living alone, who can you ask to stay with you or who can you stay with?
- » Do they know your personal routine? (where I park my car, where I grocery shop, etc.)
- » Do they know your route to/from work?
- » Do they know the building code to where you stay, or where to find the spare key?

### **PRE-BREAKUP PLANNING WITH A FAMILY**

*How to leave an unhealthy or abusive partner when you live together or children are involved.*

Questions to consider:

- » Where are the safe areas of my house where there are no weapons and have easy ways to escape? If arguments occur, how will I get to that space? Practice how to leave safely from this spot ahead of time.
- » Is it possible to have a burner phone hidden and programmed with important numbers?
- » Do children have access to a 911/burner phone and know how to use it?
- » Where can I safely save documentation of abusive, threatening, or harassing comments/posts/texts, and photos of physical abuse?
- » Where is a safe place in the house the children can go?
- » Do I have a code word with my children so they know when to call or implement the safety plan?
- » Where is a safe place I can take the children if we need to leave the house in a rush?
- » Where can I begin setting aside money, or what trusted friend or family member will keep it hidden for me?
- » What trusted friend or family member will keep extra clothes, keys, and important documents (or copies of these documents)?

Examples: driver's license, credit cards and checkbooks, passports or green cards, medical records, birth certificates, social security, welfare information, valued pictures/jewelry?

- » Who at my children's school can I alert to the situation?
- » Do I need to remove or add a person (parent or non-parent) from the emergency pick up list?
- » What ways can I change my routes to/from work or children's school?
- » What frequented places do I need to change - grocery stores, dry cleaners, etc.?
- » Do they know the building code to where you stay, or where to find the spare key?

## **POST BREAKUP PLANNING**

Most of the questions posed above apply during the post break up phase as well. You should keep those measures in place as long as necessary to remain safe. Below are a few additional questions that you should consider as you get further away from the initial breakup.

Questions to consider:

- » Is there a support group of other survivors I can join?
- » What do I have to do to make sure the restraining order remains enforced?
- » Have I checked my devices for electronic spying?  
*Note: Check out this resource for help [www.techsafety.org/technology-safety-quick-tips](http://www.techsafety.org/technology-safety-quick-tips)*
- » If I share children with someone who is abusive, have I retained a lawyer to determine what next steps to take regarding custody?

*Note: There is often free legal support through domestic violence agencies.*

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## HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO MAY BE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

If you think that a friend or someone you know is in an abusive or unhealthy relationship, it can be difficult to know what to do. You may want to help, but be scared to lose them as a friend or feel as though it is not your place to step in. All of these feelings are normal, but at One Love we believe the most important thing you can do as friend is start a conversation. Here are a few tips to help you talk to your friend.

### 1. Calmly start a conversation on a positive note

Find time to talk to your friend one-on-one in a private setting. Start by giving your friend positive affirmations and complimentary statements like, “You’re always so fun to be around. I’ve missed you!” Once your friend feels comfortable, you can begin calmly voicing your concern for your friend. It is likely that they feel as though things are already chaotic enough in their life, so to best help them, you will need to be a steady support with whom they can talk openly and peacefully. If you don’t panic and do your best to make them feel safe, then it is pretty likely that they will continue to seek your advice. You don’t want to scare your friend by worrying, starting an argument or blaming them.

### 2. Be supportive

Listen to your friend and let them open up about the situation on their own terms. Don’t be forceful with the conversation. It may be very hard for your friend to talk about their relationship, but remind them that they are not alone and that you want to help.

### 3. Focus on the unhealthy behaviors

The focus of the conversation should be on the unhealthy behaviors in the relationship and to provide your friend with a safe space to talk about it. Sometimes, our instinct is to immediately label the relationship as “abusive” to drive home the severity of the situation. This instinct, however, can cause your friend to retreat and shut down. Instead, focus on the specific behaviors you’re seeing and how that behavior makes them feel. For example, saying something like “It seems like your partner wants to know where you are a lot and is always texting and calling – how does that make you feel?” pinpoints the specific behavior and gets your friend to think about how it makes them feel. You can also gently point out that certain behaviors seem unhealthy and be honest about how you would feel if someone did it to you. This is one of the first steps in getting your friend to understand what is and is not an appropriate behavior in a relationship. Help them to understand for themselves that something is off about the relationship, and acknowledge that their feelings are legitimate.

### 4. Keep the conversation friendly, not preachy

Very few people in abusive relationships recognize themselves as victims and it is likely that they do not want to be viewed that way. If you want to be helpful, make yourself emotionally accessible and available to your friend. One way to reassure your friend that you are not judging them is to normalize the situation. Talking openly about your own experiences with relationship troubles will help them feel as though they are not alone. Be careful not to derail the conversation and keep the focus on your friend’s situation. Try to make it feel like an equal exchange between two friends — not like a therapist and a patient or a crisis counselor and a victim.



**5. Don't place the blame on your friend**

Help your friend understand that the behaviors they are experiencing are not normal, and that it is NOT their fault their partner is acting this way. They may feel personally responsible for their partner's behavior or as though they brought on the abuse, but assure them that this is not the case. Everyone is responsible for their own behavior, and no matter what the reason, abuse is never okay.

**6. Allow your friend to make their own decision**

If your friend is in an abusive relationship, the last thing you want to do is tell them to "just break up!" Relationship abuse is very complex, and your friend may be experiencing some form of trauma bonding— or loyalty to the person who is abusing them. Also, your friend is already dealing with a controlling and manipulative partner and the last thing that they need is for you to mimic those behaviors by forcefully telling them what to do.

**7. Offer options to your friend**

The best way for you to help your friend is to offer them options. Don't push any one of them in particular, but instead let your friend know that you will support them no matter what they decide to do. Some of these options include visiting the campus violence prevention center or behavioral health center, talking to a R.A. or faculty member, or even calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Depending on how ready your friend is to open up, they may feel more comfortable vetting the situation with someone anonymously over the phone, or they may want to have the conversation in person with someone on campus who can help. If your friend is planning to end things with their partner, you should create a safety plan with them because the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is post-break up.

Maintain a calm approach when dealing with the situation and be open to what your friend is most comfortable with. At the suggestion of seeking help, it is possible that your friend may try to cover up or down play the abuse. Reassure your friend that they are the expert in their own life and make them feel as though they are in control of the situation.

The only exception here is if someone is in imminent danger – whether it is self-harm or harm inflicted by another person. If your friend is in immediate danger, you should alert authorities (i.e., campus safety or 911) right away. Even if you think your friend will feel betrayed or angry with you for going to the police, saving someone's life is the most important thing. Relationship abuse can be fatal and you should not hesitate to take serious action if you think that anyone is at risk for physical or sexual harm.

**8. Expect more conversations in the future**

The first time you have this conversation with your friend, they may admit a few things that have happened and then suddenly pull away or take it back. You do not have to get your friend to change their mind completely about their partner and you don't need them to "admit" that they are being abused. The goal of the conversation is to let them know that you care and that you are available for them when they need to talk. It is not likely for the situation to be resolved neatly after one conversation, so you should expect to have more talks like this. Be patient through the process, and know that you are doing the right thing by talking to them about this difficult topic. Let your friend know that you support them and that you are there for them should they need you.



## **NATIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERRAL PAGE**

*\*Please keep in mind that many abusive partners check their partner's electronic devices, so if you want to go on a website or call a hotline, you may want to do it from a friend's device or public device.*

### **LOVE IS RESPECT**

[www.LovelsRespect.org](http://www.LovelsRespect.org) | 1-866-331-9474 or 1-866-331-8453 | text "loveis" to 22522

Contact LovelsRespect if you want to talk to someone, need advice about your relationship or a loved one's relationship, or if you have legal questions.

### **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | Canada: 1-800-363-9010 | [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

NDV Hotline provides lifesaving tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free of abuse. Call if you would like more resources or information, or if you are questioning unhealthy aspects of your relationship. On the website, you can also find a helpful chat feature in English and Spanish.

### **ONE LOVE MY PLAN APP**

Can be found in the app store | [www.joinonelove.org/my\\_plan\\_app](http://www.joinonelove.org/my_plan_app)

This app helps you determine if a relationship is unsafe and it helps create the best action plan by weighing an individual's unique characteristics. Additionally, a friend or family member can use this app to assess the danger of a loved one.

### **NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE**

1-800-656-HOPE | [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

The National Sexual Assault Hotline provides basic information for victims or friends/family of victims, short-term crisis intervention and support, answers to questions about recovering from sexual assault, and resources to assist with the reporting process via hotline or chat.

### **HELPLINE**

[www.stopitnow.org/help-inquiry](http://www.stopitnow.org/help-inquiry) | 1-888-PREVENT

The 1-888-PREVENT number provides support, guidance and information to adults who wish to speak confidentially with the Helpline staff. You can also schedule a 30-minute phone consultation with Helpline Associates.

### **CENTER FOR RELATIONSHIP ABUSE AWARENESS**

[stoprelationshipabuse.org/get-help/resources](http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/get-help/resources)

This site provides a plethora of resources of all types (legal, seeking help, basic information, help in your area, etc.).

### **THE TREVOR PROJECT**

[www.thetrevorproject.org/](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/) | 1-866-488-7386

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people.

### **STATE-WIDE COALITIONS**

Google your state-wide coalition (such as: "New York State-Wide Coalition") to find a list of all the domestic violence support centers in your state.



## RECURSOS NACIONALES Y PÁGINA DE REFERENCIA

*\* Tenga en cuenta que muchos socios abusivos revisan los dispositivos electrónicos de tus socios, por lo que si desea ir a un sitio web o llamar a una línea directa, puede hacerlo desde el dispositivo o dispositivo público de un amigo.*

### LOVE IS RESPECT

[www.LovelsRespect.org](http://www.LovelsRespect.org) | 1-866-331-9474 or 1-866-331-8453 | text "loveis" to 22522

Póngase en contacto con LovelsRespect si deseas hablar con alguien, necesita consejos sobre su relación o la relación de un ser querido, o si tiene preguntas legales.

### NATIONAL LATIN@ NETWORK

[www.nationallatinonetwork.org](http://www.nationallatinonetwork.org) | 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

La Red Nacional Latina para Familias y Comunidades Saludables es un proyecto de Casa de Esperanza que construye puentes y conexiones entre investigación, práctica y política para promover respuestas efectivas para eliminar la violencia doméstica y promover relaciones saludables dentro de las familias y comunidades Latinas.

### NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org) | 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

NDV Hotline brinda herramientas para salvar vidas y apoyo inmediato para permitir que las víctimas encuentren seguridad y vivan vidas libres de abuso. Llame si desea más recursos o información, o si está cuestionando aspectos no saludables de su relación. En el sitio web, también puede encontrar una función de chat útil en inglés y español.

### ONE LOVE MY PLAN APP

[joinonelove.org/my\\_plan\\_app](http://joinonelove.org/my_plan_app)

Se puede encontrar en la tienda de aplicaciones. Esta aplicación te ayuda a determinar si una relación no es segura y te ayuda a crear el mejor plan de acción pesando las características únicas de una persona. Además, un amigo o un familiar puede usar esta aplicación para evaluar el peligro de un ser querido.

### NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) | 1-800-656-HOPE

La Línea nacional de agresión sexual proporciona información básica para víctimas o amigos / familiares de víctimas, intervención y apoyo en crisis a corto plazo, respuestas a preguntas sobre cómo recuperarse de un ataque sexual y recursos para ayudar con el proceso de denuncia a través de la línea directa o chat.

### HELPLINE

[www.stopitnow.org/help-inquiry](http://www.stopitnow.org/help-inquiry) | 1-888-PREVENT

Número proporciona apoyo, orientación e información a los adultos que desean hablar confidencialmente con el personal de la línea de ayuda. También puede programar una consulta telefónica de 30 minutos con Helpline Associates.

### THE TREVOR PROJECT

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org) | 1-866-488-7386 | text "Trevor" to 1-202-304-1200

Este recurso proporciona servicios de intervención en crisis y prevención del suicidio a jóvenes lesbianas, homosexuales, bisexuales, transexuales y en cuestionamiento (LGBTQ) a través de la línea directa, mensajes de texto o chat.

### CRISIS TEXT LINE

[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org) | text 741741

Este recurso proporciona soporte gratuito las 24 horas, los 7 días de la semana para cualquier persona en crisis.

### COALICIONES DE TODO EL ESTADO

Busque en Google su coalición estatal (como: "Coalición de todo el Estado de Nueva York") para encontrar una lista de todos los centros de apoyo a la violencia doméstica en su estado.

## 10 SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Healthy relationships are ones that bring out the best in you. Even though no relationship is perfect, healthy relationships make you feel good almost all of the time and generally bring you up and not down. Here are some characteristics and behaviors of a healthy relationship. Keep in mind that with all of these behaviors, there's a threshold for when it becomes unhealthy. For instance, loyalty is great, but at a certain point it can be unhealthy if you are being loyal to a partner who continuously disrespects you. At the end of the day, the below characteristics in a healthy relationships make you feel confident and supported.

**EQUALITY** You and your partner have the same say and put equal effort into the relationship (instead of feeling like one person has more say than the other). Examples are feeling like you are heard in your relationship or feel comfortable speaking up, making decisions together as opposed to one person calling all the shots, and equally compromising on decisions in your relationship to make the other person feel important or respected.

**LOYALTY** When your partner is reliable and you feel confident that they have your back. Some examples are when your partner is respectful and faithful, sticks up for you, doesn't take sides against you but helps you see the middle ground, and keeps your secrets safe. In a healthy relationship, you don't have to test the other person's loyalty, because you just know it's there. Sometimes people say, "We all make mistakes" and, "Nobody's perfect" to make excuses for disloyalty. If you find yourself saying that often, it's a red flag that the relationship may not be healthy.

**HONESTY** Being truthful and open with your partner. It's important to be able to talk together about what you both want. In a healthy relationship, you can talk to your partner without fearing how they'll respond or if you'll be judged. They may not like what you have to say, but in a healthy relationship, a partner will respond to disappointing news in a considerate way. Some examples are having good communication about what you both want and expect, and never feeling like you have to hide who you talk to or hang with from your partner.

**TAKING RESPONSIBILITY** You and your partner are both responsible for your own actions and words. You both avoid putting blame on each other and own up to your actions when you do something wrong. Examples are when your partner genuinely apologizes for their mistakes, avoids taking things out on you when they're upset, and tries to make positive changes to better your relationship.

**INDEPENDENCE** Having space and freedom in your relationship to do you. Examples are when your partner supports you having friends and a life outside of your relationship and not needing to be attached at the hip or know every little detail about your life.

**COMFORTABLE PACE** You and your partner allow the relationship to happen at a pace that feels comfortable for both of you. Oftentimes, when you begin dating someone, you may feel that you're spending all of your time with them because you want to – that is great! But be sure that nothing feels imbalanced or rushed in the relationship. In a healthy relationship, nobody pressures the other to have sex, make the relationship exclusive, move in together, meet their family and friends, get married, or have a baby. When you do choose to take these steps, you both feel happy and excited about it—no mixed feelings.

**COMPASSION** Feeling a sense of care and concern from your partner and knowing that they will be there to support you, too. If you're in a healthy relationship, your partner will be kind to you, they will understand and be supportive of you when you're going through tough times, and they will lend a helping hand in times of need. An important caveat is that it has to be two-sided and displayed equally. You should never feel like someone is taking advantage of your kindness.

**RESPECT** If respect is present in your relationship, your partner will value your beliefs, opinions and who you are as a person. Examples are complimenting you, supporting your hard work and dreams, not trying to push or overstep your boundaries, and sticking up for you.

**TRUST** Believing your partner won't do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship. Examples are when your partner lets you do things without them, has faith that you won't cheat on them, respects your privacy online (like who you text and Snapchat), and doesn't make you go out of your way or work hard to "earn" their trust.

**COMMUNICATION** If you can talk to your partner about anything—the good and the bad—this is a sign of a healthy relationship. Examples include feeling like your partner will listen to you when you need to talk, they are open to discussing further, and not feeling judged for your words or opinions.



## 10 SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Understanding these behaviors can help you figure out if you're in an unhealthy or dangerous relationship. Many times, these behaviors are used to gain power or control and can have a negative impact on your well-being or day to day life. In some cases, these unhealthy behaviors can escalate to violence. If you feel like something might be off in your relationship, trust your gut and get help from [joinonelove.org/real\\_time\\_resources](https://joinonelove.org/real_time_resources)!

**INTENSITY** Having really extreme feelings or over-the-top behavior that feels like too much. Examples are rushing the pace of a relationship, always wanting to see you and talk to you, and feeling like someone is obsessed with you.

**JEALOUSY** An emotion that everyone experiences, jealousy becomes unhealthy when someone lashes out or tries to control you because of it. Examples can be getting upset when you text or hang out with people your partner feels threatened by, accusing you of flirting or cheating, being possessive over you or even going so far as to stalk you.

**MANIPULATION** When a partner tries to influence your decisions, actions or emotions. Manipulation is not always easy to spot, but some examples are convincing you to do things you wouldn't normally feel comfortable with, ignoring you until they get their way, and using gifts and apologies to influence your decisions or get back in your good graces.

**ISOLATION** Keeping you away from friends, family, or other people. Examples can be when your partner makes you choose between them and your friends, insisting you spend all your time with them, making you question your own judgment of friends and family, and making you feel dependent on them for money, love or acceptance.

**SABOTAGE** Purposely ruining your reputation, achievements or success. Examples can be making you miss work, school or practice, keeping you from getting school work done, talking about you behind your back or starting rumors, and threatening to share private information about you.

**BELITTling** Making you feel bad about yourself. Examples can be calling you names, making rude remarks about who you hang out with, your family or what you look like, and making fun of you – even if it's played off as just a joke.

**GUILTING** Making you feel guilty or responsible for your partner's actions. Examples can be making you feel responsible for their happiness, making you feel like everything is your fault, threatening to hurt themselves or others if you don't do as they say or stay with them, pressuring you to do anything sexual you're not comfortable with.

**VOLATILITY** Unpredictable overreactions that make you feel like you need to walk on eggshells around them or do things to keep them from lashing out. Examples can be mood swings, losing control of themselves by getting violent or yelling, threatening to hurt you or destroy things, and making you feel afraid of them. This can also be lots of drama or ups and downs in a relationship.

**DEFLECTING RESPONSIBILITY** Making excuses for their behavior. Examples can be blaming you, other people or past experiences for their actions, using alcohol or drugs as an excuse, using mental health issues or past experiences (like a cheating ex or divorced parents) as a reason for unhealthy behavior.

**BETRAYAL** When your partner acts differently with you versus how they act when you're not around. Examples can be lying to you, purposely leaving you out or not telling you things, being two-faced, acting differently around friends, or cheating while in a relationship with you.



## INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS, SAY THAT

### IF YOUR FRIEND IS DATING SOMEONE NEW...

When we tell our friends that their relationship is “perfect,” or that they are “so cute together,” they are more likely to ignore negative things that happen and blow them off as not a big deal. They also will be less likely to share details of their relationship with you that aren’t perfect because they don’t want to let you down, burden you, or feel like they need to live up to your expectations. So...

INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS	SAY THAT
“They’re SO great! You guys are perfect together.”	“You seem really happy! How are you feeling about them?”
“Why do you keep ditching us for them?”	“It seems like you’re spending a lot of time with them. How’s everything going?”
“OMG you guys are fi-nal-ly together. We’ve all been waiting for this!”	“We thought you liked them for a while. How do you feel now that it’s official?”
“Ew, why would you date them?”	“What is it about them that you like?”

### ON SOCIAL MEDIA...

There is already incredible pressure to be in a seemingly perfect relationship, and social media only accentuates this pressure. Remember as a friend that even if you are seeing the happiest posts on social media, that is not the only representation of your friend’s relationship. So as a friend, continue to ask genuine questions about how the relationship is going and do not assume that because it looks great on social media that everything is perfect. So...

INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS	SAY THAT
When’s the wedding?	You seem so happy! Catch up soon?
#relationshipgoals/Couple of the Year/Favs	So cute!
Jealous - ur so lucky/I want your life/Where do I get one?	Always wanted to visit there - can’t wait to hear about it!
Hi Mom & Dad	Love this/Love you both!

## IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND...

Though it may be true, it's important not to label your friend's partner as abusive, as that will likely cause your friend to shut down. To help them open up to you, talk about the specific behaviors you've seen and ask your friend how those behaviors make them *feel*. By focusing on unhealthy *behaviors* rather than the *people* exhibiting those behaviors, the conversation will feel less judgmental and more about the genuine care you have for your friend. If your friend is the person you care about, your conversation should focus on that friend, not their abusive partner. So...

INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS	SAY THAT
"We never see you anymore, you're always with them. Are we even friends?"	"I've noticed they always show up unexpectedly. How do you feel about that?"
"Where have you been? Hanging out with ___ again?"	"I've missed you at practice. Is there a reason you haven't been here?"
"Why are you still with them? They treat you like crap."	"I'm your friend first and here if you need to talk."
"Stop answering that. Just tell them you're busy."	"I've noticed you're always on your phone. Is there anything going on that you want to talk about?"
"I'm done. You're not dragging me through this anymore."	"You seem really stressed out lately. What's been going on?"
"Why do you always listen to everything they say? I don't get it."	"They seem to get mad when you hang out with us/ ___. What's your gut reaction to that?"

## IF YOUR FRIEND GETS DEFENSIVE...

If you know that your friend is in an unhealthy relationship but they don't see it, it's okay to be angry at the situation, but getting angry at them won't solve that problem. Your friend will never leave a relationship because you tell them to; they will leave a relationship when they make the decision for themselves and feel ready. In order to help your friend be honest with themselves, be patient yet persistent and offer gentle, steadfast support – be an example of healthy behaviors! So...

INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS	SAY THAT
"I was only trying to help you - sorry I won't make an effort anymore."	"Just checking in - I'm here if you ever want to talk about it."

"This is the last time I'm trying. I'm sick of putting up with them."	"There's no time limit on when you can come to me to talk."
"Fine. Don't tell me I didn't warn you about them."	"Let's go to lunch this week. I promise I won't pester you about your relationship during it."
"I know you like them, but they're such a jerk. How do you not see that?"	"I'm sorry if I came across as intrusive. I was truly worried for your safety and just really wanted to check in. I won't bring it up again unless you feel ready to talk."
"You guys got in a fight agaaain?"	"Do you want to talk about what happened last night?"
"Wait, I thought you all broke up. What are they doing here?"	"What made you change your mind?"

## IF YOU SEE A FRIEND DOING SOMETHING UNHEALTHY...

If you see your friend exhibiting unhealthy behaviors, you can help them recognize that their behavior is not okay without saying that they're a bad or abusive person. Starting with gentle questions to learn more about your friend's relationship is key. Someone exhibiting these behaviors is unlikely to respond well to being told that they are an abuser, but genuinely showing that you care about them might get them to accept help faster. If you can get your friend to admit that they are "stressed," due to the relationship or to anything else, offer to go with them to a counselor and help normalize mental health treatment. So...

INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS	SAY THAT
Ignore it.	"You seem really angry/stressed. Anything you want to talk about?"
Take a video/Snapchat it/egg them on	"You and ___ seem to be fighting a lot lately. How are you feeling about them?"
"You've got them whipped!"	"Why do you feel like you need to know where they are all the time?/Do they always know where you are too?"
*Laugh*	How do you think they felt when you said that?

If you find that these conversations are not going in the direction you hoped, here are additional action items to consider --

- Talk to another friend about what you've seen and ask if they've noticed anything
- Talk to a trusted adult - parent, coach, counselor, teacher
- Connect with [local or national resources](https://joinonlove.org) in real time

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# HOW TO BRING ONE LOVE TO A SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY

There are so many ways that you can bring One Love to a school or community. From educational workshops to fundraising for the cause, the opportunities are endless! Below are a few options to get more involved.

## BRINGING ONE LOVE CURRICULUM TO A SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY

One Love has workshops for people of every age. Below is a list of One Love's educational workshops and the recommended age range. Reach out to [info@joinonelove.org](mailto:info@joinonelove.org) to connect with a One Love staff member for help getting started.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS: COUPLETS CURRICULUM

We know that the choices young people make today will shape the adults that they become, and this curriculum provides them with a framework to understand and evaluate behaviors that they see or do in their everyday lives. One Love's Couplets curriculum teaches students about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors. We believe that these behaviors are learned at a young age and we hope that by providing young people with this education, we can help to prevent unhealthy behavior from becoming abusive. Abuse can take many forms, whether it involves physical violence or emotional manipulation, but it always begins the same—with unhealthy behavior. This curriculum consists of eight chapters, using fifteen-second clips and discussion questions that dissect the following unhealthy behaviors: Intensity, Put-Downs, Anger, Disrespect, Guilt, Control, Obsession and Isolation.

### HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE-AGED STUDENTS: ESCALATION WORKSHOP

The *Escalation* Workshop is a 90-minute, film-based experience that educates about the warning signs of an abusive relationship, creating a safe zone for discussing an all-too-common problem. Here's what to expect:

- + 40 Mins. The film, *Escalation*, introduces us to Page and Chase, a college-aged couple whose relationship starts as exciting and fun, but ends in tragedy. The film enables students to understand the more nuanced signs of relationship abuse, as well as how important it is for friends to step in if they see these behaviors.
- + 40 Mins. Following the film, the audience breaks into small discussion groups (about 15-30 per 1-2 facilitators) led by One Love trained facilitators to discuss key scenes from the film. Groups talk about the warning signs, actions that could have been taken, and how the film relates to their lives.
- + 10 Mins. In the last 10 minutes, students can join Team One Love where they will be provided with additional messaging around healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as receive activation ideas they can bring back to their friends and campus community.

\*Many high schools and colleges will make this workshop mandatory for an entire grade of students, or an entire department (such as all student athletes or all Greek students).

### #THATSNOTLOVE DISCUSSION GUIDES

In addition to the above, One Love also has curriculum around our "Because I Love You," "Love Labyrinth," and "Behind the Post" films. Each of these workshops consist of a short video(s) followed by a guided discussion that further explores the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships using examples from the video(s). Each of these workshops can be held in a flexible time period (30 minutes - 90 minutes).

## HOLD A FUNDRAISER FOR ONE LOVE

You can help grow the One Love mission by hosting a fundraiser and raising dollars to support education around healthy and unhealthy relationships. It's a great way to get involved in One Love's work because you can pick the fundraiser and do it on your own time! Every dollar helps One Love reach more people. Please contact us if you need help. We have tools to help you plan and hold your fundraiser. We will help you make it successful — and fun!

For more information, visit [joinonelove.org/act/fundraise](http://joinonelove.org/act/fundraise) or email [fundraising@joinonelove.org](mailto:fundraising@joinonelove.org).