



A program of



Program Overview for Parents

MVP for 9th Grade- Healthy Relationships

Overview:

Healthy relationships is an important topic, especially among young people. In our program, we use developmentally appropriate language to discuss how children can foster positive relationships and friendships. We cover the 10 signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships, the effects and cycle of dating violence and how to ask for help or end a harmful relationship in a safe way. Through interactive activities, students can practice applying the information. We also discuss how to help a friend who may be in a harmful relationship and how it may feel to be a bystander in this situation. We know this can be a difficult conversation to discuss, so our **24-hour helpline at 301-662-8800** is available for parents and students.

Ten Signs of a Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship

Healthy Signs

- Comfortable Pace
- Trust
- Honesty
- Independence
- Respect
- Equality
- Kindness
- Fun
- Healthy Conflict
- Taking Responsibility

Unhealthy Signs

- Intensity
- Possessiveness
- Betrayal
- Isolation
- Manipulation
- Sabotage
- Guilting
- Volatility
- Belittling
- Deflecting Responsibility



Cycle of Violence in Unhealthy Relationships

Tension-Building Phase: During this phase, tension and stress gradually increase within the relationship.

- May feel like walking on eggshells or waiting for something bad to happen.
- Example: minor conflicts, arguments, or misunderstandings may occur more frequently. The atmosphere becomes tense, and communication may become strained.

Abusive Phase: This is the phase where the actual abuse or violent incident occurs.

- The abusive behavior may be triggered by something small or perceived as a threat to the abuser's control. The intensity and severity of the abuse can vary, but it often leaves a significant impact on the victim's physical and emotional well-being.
- Example: physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse.

Honeymoon Phase: After the acute phase of violence, there is often a period of calm, remorse, and reconciliation.

- This phase can be confusing for the victim, as it may create hope that the abuse will not happen again.
- Example: The abuser may apologize, show affection, and promise to change their behavior. They may blame external factors or stress for their actions and make efforts to make up for the abuse.

Talking Points

Discussing these sensitive topics can be difficult, so here are some tips and talking points to make this easier for you and your child. By having these conversations, it can help to strengthen the parent-child relationship and motivate them to come to you for future encounters.

- **Encouraging open communication with your child-** it's important to keep an open mind when your child wants to share their experiences with you. Avoid being judgmental and creating an environment where your child feels comfortable to express themselves freely.
- **Be prepared-** your child might have been through hard experiences and it may be hard to hear. You can utilize our hotline number at 301-662-8800 or you can scan the QR code below for references and resources.
- **Do your research-** it's important that as the parent you are educated on these topics in case your child may have any questions. To better your understanding of these topics, scan the QR code below for references, resources, and tutorials on how to block other users on social media.
- **Offer reassurance and support-** making sure your child feels secure is essential, so be sure to let them know you're there for them and that coming to you was the right decision.
- **Use a soft tone of voice-** when addressing your child, try to maintain a gentle tone. Sounding accusatory can give the impression that they are in trouble, which may cause them to be defensive and shut down. By adopting a softer tone, you'll create a welcoming environment that encourages openness and honesty. Some examples of this would be, "I am so sorry this happened to you and thank you for sharing this with me" or "Thank you for coming to me, let's figure this out together."

Here are some talking points to have with your child to help the conversation:

- "What do you think about what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy?"
- "How do you feel about the way people treat each other in relationships?"
- "Have you ever seen or heard about someone being treated unfairly or unkindly in a relationship?"
- "Do you know what dating violence means?"
- "How do you think people should communicate with each other in relationships?"
- "What do you think about setting boundaries in relationships? How would you know if someone respected your boundaries?"
- "If you were worried about a friend's relationship, what would you do?"
- "Who do you think you could talk to if you had concerns about your own relationship or a friend's?"
- "What would you want from a boyfriend/girlfriend or friend to feel happy and respected?"
- "How do you think you should handle disagreements or arguments in a relationship?"

Where to Find Us!

- **24-Hour Helpline- 301-662-8800**
- youth@heartlyhouse.org
- Heartlyhouse.org

Scan Below for References and Resources

Grab your cellular device, click your camera app and press and hold the QR code to scan.



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