



Dating can be a great experience, especially when the person you're dating respects and cares for you. But this is not always the case. Some relationships are unhealthy and can even be abusive.

Knowing how to tell the difference between a healthy and unhealthy relationship is very important!

6 signs that your relationship is healthy

No relationship is the same so what makes a relationship healthy is different for everyone. Healthy relationships respect our rights. Here are some examples:

Respect: Your partner listens to and values your feelings, beliefs, and opinions.

Trust: You trust that your partner is being honest and won't do anything to hurt you or your relationship.

Support: You can depend on your partner for their help and encouragement in good and bad times.

Open communication: You can talk to your partner without worrying about being judged or not listened to. Even if you and your partner disagree on something, you are able to talk about it without hurting each other.

Understanding consent: Your partner never forces or pressures you to have sex or engage in any sexual activities if you don't want to.

Gender equality: Your partner doesn't force you to do anything against your will in general, and in exchange for money, gifts, or favours.

It takes two to tango! Having a healthy relationship is up to both you and your partner and not just your partner!

Remember

Even people in healthy relationships **have disagreements. But they handle conflict in a way that won't hurt each other!**



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Check out this video where our friends Lungi and Biza show us how to work through a disagreement in a healthy way.



Unhealthy relationships

Relationships can be unhealthy or even abusive.

If your partner does any of the following, these are warning signs:

- Controls where you go, what you wear, or what you do.
- Threatens or scares you.
- Tries to stop you from seeing or talking to family or friends.
- Uses physical force such as punching, kicking, slapping.
- Calls you insulting names or puts you down.
- Pressures you to have sex by saying things like, 'if you loved me, you would'.



What is abuse?

Abuse is when someone hurts you by being violent or causes you stress. Abuse can happen in different ways, and it's not limited to relationships between men and women.



Physical: This is when someone does something to you that hurts your body or leaves a mark like a bruise or scratch. Abusers will often act like it was an accident or by mistake that you got hurt.



Emotional: This is when someone shouts, swears, scares or even just ignores you. When someone uses emotional abuse on another person, they are hoping to hurt the person by putting them down. This can happen in-person or online.



Sexual: This happens when someone touches your body makes you touch theirs, makes you watch sex or naked people on TV, photos or on the internet, or even has sex with you without your consent (agreement). It is also when someone sends unwanted sexy texts, pictures, nudes, or forces you to send them.



Financial: This happens when someone steals your money, bribes you with money or other material things (like a blesser who uses gifts to pressure you to have sex), keeps you from going to work or school and tries to control what you do with your money.

Gender-based violence (GBV) and Intimate partner violence (IPV)

GBV is violence against a person because of their gender or violence that affects a specific gender more than others, like women.

IPV is a common type of GBV which happens between people who are in a relationship or marriage. Both GBV and IPV can be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial.



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Find out more about having a safety plan.

It's not always easy to immediately walk out of an abusive relationship. But working on a plan to make sure that you are safe and ready to go when it's time is a good first step.

Who can I talk to if I need help?

If you can see unhealthy patterns in your relationship or if your partner (or someone else) abuses you, it's very important to get help as soon as possible.

We know that it's not easy to ask for help but there are different ways you can get support.

Think of an adult or someone you trust and talk to them. You can talk to a nurse at your clinic, social worker, counsellor, or teacher. In situations where you are being abused, it's important to report the matter to the police. It may be easier to go to the police with someone you trust for support.

Trained counsellors at loveLife are also here for you.

Send them a **Please Call Me** on **083 323 1023** and they will call you back:



[Vodacom: *140*0833231023#]

[MTN: *121*0833231023#] [Cell C: *111*0833231023#]

[Telkom: *140*0833231023#]



You can also reach out to:

- Childline: Dial 116
- Lifeline: 0861 322 322
- GBV hotline: 0800 428 428 or dial *120*7867#
- Suicide Crisis line: 0800 567 567 or SMS 31393

These numbers are toll-free so you can speak to a counsellor for mahala and everything you say is confidential.

REMEMBER, ABUSE IS NEVER YOUR FAULT, even if the person abusing you tells you that it is! When someone cares for you, you will feel **SAFE, RESPECTED, and FREE TO BE YOURSELF**. You should never feel afraid of the person you are dating.