

Healthy Relationships & Intimacy

A Quick Guide for Safe Relationships and Sexual Decision-Making

The Relationship Spectrum

Understanding Healthy vs Toxic Relationship Behaviours

HEALTHY	UNHEALTHY	TOXIC	ABUSIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect boundaries • Mutual consent • Open communication • Encourages independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jealousy framed as love • Pressure to reply constantly • Passive-aggressive behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking someone's phone • Controlling clothing or friendships • Guilt-tripping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats or intimidation • Repeated sexual pressure • Sharing private images • Isolation

Relationships often move gradually along this spectrum. Recognizing early warning signs helps protect safety, consent, and emotional wellbeing.

The Intimacy Safety Model

Healthy sexual intimacy grows when three things are present



When pressure, fear, or control replace any of these — intimacy stops being safe.

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WATCH FOR PRESSURE

- 'If you loved me you would...!'
- 'Everyone else is doing it.'
- 'Real men always want sex.' (toxic masculinity pressure)

CULTURE & VALUES

- What relationship values did you grow up hearing?
- Which ones matter to you today?
- What values do you want to carry forward?

SUPPORTING FRIENDS

- Listen without judgment
- Remind them they deserve respect
- Encourage support and stay connected

YOUR BOTTOM LINES

- Examples: No sexual pressure • Respect boundaries • Honest communication

INTIMACY DECISION CHECK

- Do I feel safe?
- Am I choosing this freely?
- Can I change my mind?



Do I feel respected?

Toronto Community Youth Support

Shanti Psychotherapy - Affordable, culturally relevant, multilingual and expert mental health care for youth and families.

(437) 747-0692 | intake.shantipsychotherapy@gmail.com

If You Need Support Right Now

What's Up Walk In - 416 967 1773: Free short term counselling for youth 24 years and younger

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto, Phone: 416-408-4357 (HELP):

<https://www.dcoft.com/>

Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511 or #7233 (mobile):

<https://www.awhl.org/>

211 Ontario: 211: <https://211ontario.ca/>

Kids Help: 1-800-668-6868 | Text: CONNECT to 686868:

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

If You're Questioning a Relationship

WomanACT: <https://womanact.ca/>

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (TRCC): 24/7 Crisis Line: 416-597-8808:

<https://trccmwar.ca/>

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic: 416-323-9149: <https://schliferclinic.com/>

Planned Parenthood Toronto (PPT): 416-961-0113: <https://ppt.on.ca/>

If Identity, Culture, or Safety Feels Complicated

The 519: 416-392-6874: <https://www.the519.org/>

Sherbourne Health: 416-324-4180: <https://sherbourne.on.ca/>

South Asian Women's Centre (SAWC): 416-537-2276: <https://www.sawc.org/>

Naseeha Mental Health: 1-866-627-3342: <https://naseeha.org/>

Access Alliance Multicultural Health: 416-324-8677: <https://accessalliance.ca/>

If something in your relationship feels like pressure, confusion, or fear — you deserve support.

You don't have to figure it out alone.



Shanti
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