

# MARKERS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## Trust

"Trust is the foundation of relationships because it allows you to be **vulnerable** and **open up** to the person without having to defensively protect yourself."<sup>1</sup>

Trust in a healthy relationship looks like:

1

Safely sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences with others

2

Building through conflict and hurts that get healed

3

Keeping each other's best interest in mind

4

Being reliable and responsible, doing what you have said you will do

5

Not sharing things with others told in confidence

**Broken trust: cheating, lying, gossip**

Rebuild **broken trust** by changing behavior and taking responsibility for mistakes

## Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“Are you both cool with spending time apart from each other?”

“Do you feel secure about the relationship?”

“Do you have faith in each other's decisions?”

“Do you feel like your partner shares things you told them in confidence with their friends?”

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## Respect

"The **freedom to be yourself** and to be loved for who you are."<sup>2</sup>

Respect in a healthy relationship looks like:

### Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“ Do you both treat each other with respect? ”

“ Are you proud of each other? ”

“ Are you kind to each other? ”

“ Do you listen to each other? ”

Affirmation and validation

Listening to what others say (and believing them), even if you do not understand or agree

Understanding each human possesses dignity

Allowing others their own choices

**Disrespect:** putdowns, criticism, gossip

1

2

3

4



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## Honesty

"The quality of always **speaking the truth** and being totally authentic, straightforward, and transparent in our words and actions."<sup>3</sup>

Honesty in a healthy relationship looks like:

1

Courage to express feelings & thoughts

2

Building trust

3

Helping people know the "real" you



**Dishonesty:**  
Deception, lying, doubt,  
insecurity, purposely  
omitting the truth

## Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“ Do you both admit when you are wrong? ”

“ Do you both feel like you can tell the truth? ”

“ Do you talk openly about feelings, even when it's hard? ”

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## Equality

"Each person's interests and desires are respected and met to a reasonable degree as opposed to just one partner's needs dominating the relationship."<sup>4</sup>

Equality in a healthy relationship looks like:

### Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“ Do you both get to make decisions about your relationship and how you spend time? ”

“ Do you give and take equally? ”

“ Do you consider both people's feelings when talking about making decisions? ”

“ Do you both compromise? ”

Using individual strengths

1

Each person contributing the same and their opinions are valued equally

2

Reciprocation with no need to keep score

3

**Inequality:**  
Imbalance of power, not having a say or voice



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## Good Communication

"The **exchange of ideas, thoughts, opinions, feelings, and knowledge** so that the message is received and understood."<sup>5</sup>

Communication in a healthy relationship looks like:

1

Listening and trying to understand what the other person is saying

2

Using "I statements" and taking responsibility for your own feelings

3

Allowing you to share feelings, opinions, and expectations

**Negative communication:**  
Name-calling, yelling, belittling

## Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“ Do you talk about your feelings with each other? ”

“ Can you disagree about something without disrespecting each other? ”

“ Do you listen without judgement? ”

“ Do you intentionally repair after conflict or tough moments/conversations? ”

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## Boundaries

"An invisible line that defines **what behaviors are acceptable** for an individual."<sup>6</sup>

Having boundaries in a healthy relationship looks like:

### Questions to ask Emerging Adults

“ Do you have a trusted adult to talk through boundaries with you and support your decision? ”

“ Have you stated the boundary as a fact, not a question or point for conversation? ”

“ Has your partner tried to talk you out of a boundary (as opposed to understanding them)? ”

“ Do you feel like you are able to make your own choices for yourself? ”

1 Having boundaries in all relationships, regardless of type

2 Helping each person figure out where one person ends and the other begins

3 Knowing your goals, dreams, values, and aspirations (and being able to keep them)

4 Every person having the right to change their mind about what their boundaries are at any given time

**Overstepping boundaries: manipulation, sharing personal information, lies or deception**



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When you help an **emerging adult** consider how **healthy** their **relationships** are, teach them their **ABCs!**

## Awareness

**Are you aware of what is happening (both good and bad)?**

**Look, See, and Think**

If we are not aware, it is easy to lose objectivity. We may not be able to see clearly what is happening in our relationship.

## Balance

**Is there a balance between individuals?**

**Listen, Ask, Consider**

- Consider needs/wants of both parties.
- No one person has control or dominates decisions.
- No one feels like they have to agree or give in to the other person.
- There is always give and take.
- Individuals are free to share their opinions and boundaries, even when they differ with the other person.
- Individuals understand power differentials due to: gender, sexuality, income, ability, race, etc.

## Creativity

**Are individuals free to be creative?**

**Develop, Learn, Grow**

- We change over the course of our relationships.
- We mature and learn from experiences both inside and outside the relationship.
- New interests and hobbies may emerge.
- Individuals allow themselves and their partners the freedom to explore interests of their own.
- Embrace change and support each other through the changes.