

Relationships

One of the most exciting things about coming to college is the opportunity to meet people with whom you might want to create a romantic relationship. This is a part of your college life that should be enjoyable and enhance your self-esteem. Sometimes, however, college students find themselves in romantic relationships that make them unhappy, that do not enhance their self-esteem, and that contain a lot of fighting and conflict.

A first step in figuring out how to create a healthy relationship, or to know whether you are in an unhealthy relationship, is to be clear about the characteristics of both. Therefore, we offer the following lists of characteristics to help you clearly distinguish between when you are in a healthy relationship and when you are in an unhealthy relationship.

Signs of a Healthy Relationship:

- There is very little emotional pain in your relationship.
- Your life is better with your partner in it.
- You never try to control or manipulate each other.
- You trust and respect each other.
- You are never violent with each other -- no pushing, shoving, grabbing, hitting or punching.

Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship:

- Your partner tries to control or manipulate you.
- Your partner is very possessive and jealous.
- Your partner excessively drinks or abuses drugs around you.
- Your partner makes you feel bad about yourself.
- Your partner calls you names and yells at you.

Relationship Violence can be defined as a pattern of physical or psychological control which one person exerts over the other in order to get his or her way. Their behavior physically or emotionally harms the other person, creates anxiety and fear, demeans the person, prevents the person from doing what he or she wants, or makes them behave in ways that they have not freely chosen.

What Can You Do?

- Recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship, such as unexplained bruises and injuries, chronic depression, low self-esteem, and/or anxiety or jumpiness. And, be willing to seek help, for yourself or a friend.
- Counseling services are available on campus.

Source: Iona College Counseling Center