Healthy Relationships

Some common signs of healthy friendships and romantic relationships:

- Prioritizing open, honest communication.
- Sharing mutual encouragement and support.
- Feeling good about oneself with the other person.
- Dealing with change and conflict in constructive ways.
- Respecting each other’s feelings, thoughts, and interests.
- Balancing other priorities, including relationships with other people.

Even healthy relationships take work, and no one is perfect. Relationships usually involve some apologizing, forgiving, and compromising.

Some causes for concern:

- Lack of confidence or liking oneself less around a friend or partner.
- Control of a friend or partner, such as limiting their relationships with family and friends.
- Use of threats, force, or violence, or breaking things.
- Repeated, unwanted attempts to contact someone else.

Worried about a friend?

If you feel concerned about a friend’s relationship, checking in with them can offer a new perspective and let them know you care.

1. State what you’ve noticed (like this: I see ____), and express your care and concern for them.
2. Focus on supporting your friend.
3. Avoid judgmental statements and criticism of your friend’s choices or actions, which can lead to your friend feeling unheard or becoming defensive.

Remember, your role is to be a supportive friend. That can include connecting them to other sources of care (see Resources below), keeping up with your self care, or calling 911 if there is an emergency.

If a friend is hurt by another person, consider seeking confidential advice (see Resources below) about how to help your friend stay safe.

Resources

Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS): Support with relationship concerns (you or a friend), including help resolving potentially unsafe situations. Afterhours help available.
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Confidential consultations related to relationships of all types.
Women’s Center: Confidential counseling about relationships. Now located in Emmet House.
Madison House HELP Line: (434) 295-TALK No problem is too big or too small. They’re here to talk. They serve all.
UVA’s Sexual Violence Education and Resources Website: virginia.edu/sexualviolence/ Guidance for identifying and addressing power-based personal violence. In urgent situations, select ‘Confidential Resources’ to locate several 24-hour support services.