



## Characteristics Of Healthy And Abusive Relationships

### **Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship**

A healthy relationship is one in which there is equality between the two partners. There is no manipulation of one partner by the other to gain power and control, physically, psychologically, emotionally, financially, and/or sexually. People in a healthy relationship have the following traits:

- They bring out the best qualities in a partner
- They allow for your own identity.
- They accept endings.
- They invite growth in the other partner.
- They are open to change and self-study.
- They feel true intimacy.
- They feel freedom to ask honestly for what is wanted.
- They support self-sufficiency of both partners.
- They do not attempt to change or control the other.
- They accept commitment.
- They have a high self-esteem
- They enjoy being alone at times.
- They welcome closeness; risk vulnerability.
- They express feelings spontaneously.
- They affirm equality and personal power of self and partner.

### **Characteristics of an Abusive Relationship**

Abuse is about control. Abuse can be emotional, sexual, physical, and economic. It is one person scaring another person into doing what he/she wants her/him to do. It is a pattern. It is usually a whole series of behaviors used to get and keep control. A partner in an abusive relationship may have:

- Called you names, made you feel ashamed of yourself, humiliated you.
- Tried to isolate you from family and friends.
- Put you down in front of your friends, your colleagues, your family members.
- Destroyed or broken your possessions.
- Threatened to hurt or kill you or someone close to you.
- Threatened to hurt or kill himself/herself if you don't do something.
- Hit, held, or squeezed so hard it left a bruise.
- Hit, grabbed, bitten, slapped, pushed, or choked you.
- Used some kind of weapon against you.
- Hit you with an object like a pan or a belt.
- Forced you to have sex when you did not want to.
- Forced you to perform sexual acts you did not want to.

Remaining in an unhealthy relationship causes continuous stress. The tensions and chemical changes caused by the constant stress can drain energy and lower resistance to physical illness. Continuing in bad relationships can lead to unhealthy escapes such as alcohol and drug abuse. Continuing in an abusive relationship can lead to death.

Adapted from the Center for Domestic Violence Training Manual