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Resources in Saskatoon

Family Service Saskatoon
506 25 St E, Saskatoon, SK
306-244-0127
familyservice.sk.ca

STOPS to Violence
stopstoviolence.com

Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre
24 Hour Crisis Line: 306-244-2224
Office: 306-244-6200
saskatoonsexualassaultcentre.com

OUTSaskatoon's Peer Support Line
800-358-1833



Find Us

Top Floor
Habitat Centre
201-320 21st Street West
Saskatoon, Sk S7M 4E6
Treaty 6 Territory

outsaskatoon.ca

**Healthy and
Unhealthy
Relationships**

An OUTSaskatoon Resource

Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Relationships are a central way that humans connect and form lasting, loving bonds, whether in family, friendship, or love relationships. Healthy relationships lead to feelings of belonging which boost confidence, prevent isolation, and add to quality of life while unhealthy relationships can exacerbate feelings of isolation and decrease health and well-being. A healthy relationship is one where you feel the safest to be yourself, exactly as you are, and for LGBTQ2S people this is especially important.

Signs of Healthy Relationships:

1. Mutual honesty and trust
2. Respect
3. Clear and open communication
4. Respect for boundaries, including sexual
5. Able to express yourself
6. Take an interest in one another's activities/hobbies/interests
7. Ability to feel secure and comfortable
8. Fairness and Equality
9. Conflict is resolved peacefully

Healthy relationships take effort, but they also carry the potential for deep fulfillment and joy.

A Note on language: People use many different words to self-identify their sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender identity. Some are more familiar such as lesbian or gay, while others are newer such as two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, or pansexual. The list also grows and changes every day, so in this pamphlet we use LGBTQ2S to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, asexual, genderqueer, transgender, intersex, two spirit, queer, and questioning individuals.

Violence and Unhealthy Relationships

More often we hear about domestic violence amongst heterosexual/cisgender individuals, but this doesn't mean that it doesn't exist in LGBTQ2S relationships. The possibility of violence and abuse exists in any relationship regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. In the LGBTQ2S community, domestic violence is compounded because of homo/trans/biphobia and heterosexism. Not all abuse within a relationship is physical, there is also emotional, psychological, verbal, mental, spiritual, and financial abuse.

Signs of Unhealthy Relationships:

1. Forced or pressured sexual activity
2. Hitting, punching, or striking
3. Inhibiting one's ability to leave a space or situation
4. Aggressive gestures, yelling, insults, or threats
5. Being overly critical or judgmental of each other
6. Isolating from other friends and family
7. Attempts to control or manipulate each other
8. Neglecting your own or your partner's needs
9. Being overly possessive or jealous
10. Making unreasonable demands on a partner's time
11. Controlling finances
12. Threatens to "out" you to family, coworkers, or others
13. Using vulnerabilities to obligate or coerce another into staying in the relationship
14. Questions or doubts your sexuality
15. Refusal to have safer sex
17. Discloses your HIV, mental health, or health status without consent

If you experience any of these factors in your relationship, in might be time to talk to someone about how you're feeling.

Consent

In any relationship, whether monogamous or poly, short-term or long-term, consent to sex and other physical acts of affection must be explicitly discussed and obtained. If not obtained, it's necessary that you stop. It is also important to remember that a person who is intoxicated by alcohol and/or drugs is not able to provide consent. Consent is practiced in healthy relationships, and should never be expected, forced, or pressured.

An example of consent in an LGBTQ2S relationship is if your partner(s) is asexual and does not want to have sex, that you respect their boundaries. Or if your partner (s) is transgender, you should be aware of sexual and relational triggers that may cause dysphoria and ensure that you do not pressure your partner in any way.

Navigating Relationships

All relationships are hard work and, depending on the situation, working through tough times can be productive and successful. If things escalate and a relationship feels unsafe, it may be wiser and more productive to leave a relationship. It is often easy to see unhealthy patterns in the relationships of others and to give our friends advice, but difficult to accept when it is time that we, ourselves, leave a destructive relationship.

Some tips for leaving an unhealthy relationship are:

- Talk through the decision to leave with supportive family and/or friends.
- Plan ahead. Create a safety plan. If you live with your partner(s), make sure you have somewhere to stay if need be.
- Cut off communication from the partner(s) you are leaving if it will help finalize the decision.
- When leaving, try not to dwell on old memories or old arguments. Make sure you remain focused on the situation at hand.
- Moving forward. Remain optimistic for your future and try not to dwell on negativity from the past.