



**January 2016**

# Healthy Relationships

**It's time to start the conversation!**

*Research is telling us more and more how truly important relationships are. Relationships have been found to directly impact brain development and thus is essential for positive child and youth development. They are also central to the well-being and safety of our schools and communities.*

*Most of us have an idea of what is healthy and unhealthy in relationships based on our experience: Many young people do as well. However, they may lack the words to describe those feelings or ideas.*

*Children and youth need help learning about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. By talking to your children and teens about respect, healthy relationships, and what your teen wants out of his/her relationship you can help them stay away from or get out of an unhealthy relationship.*

**So how do we get this conversation started? We simply ask questions.**

## **Conversation Starters:**

1. What does dating mean to you? Does anyone you know date? If not, what do they call it?
2. What are some things you like about your friends? What about how they treat you?
3. What are some things you don't like about how your friends act or how they treat you?
4. Let's say you are seeing someone. How would you like that person to treat you?
5. Do you think there is a good way to argue? Do you think there are unfair ways to argue? Have you ever argued unfairly? What could you have done to make it a fair argument?
6. What does it mean to stand up for yourself? When do you stand up for yourself? How does it make you feel? Do you think you are being strong, bossy or pushy? Why?
7. What should you do if someone you're dating threatens you? What if someone you are dating tells you to keep quiet and not tell anyone, even though you know it's wrong?

## **During the conversation:**

- Teach assertiveness not aggression
- Assist with problem solving; don't solve the problem
- Help recognize warning signs
- Give your undivided attention
- Check-in often
- Understand questions and respond honestly

It is important that we normalize and encourage help-seeking behaviours and encourage asking for help. Sometime we need help with learning how to communicate or act better in relationships. We all have things we struggle with when it comes to relationships, but there are numerous resources to help us... we

## What does a healthy relationship look like?



### In a healthy relationship, the other person will:

- Listen to you and take your feelings and ideas seriously
- Talk openly and honestly with you about what matters to them
- Never use threats of harm, violence or suicide to get his/her own way
- Never hit, punch, kick, bite, slap, push or otherwise strike out in anger or jealousy
- Not try to control what you do, where you go or who you talk to
- Respect yourself. Say good things to yourself and about yourself.
- Enjoy spending time with you, and show it whether alone with you or in a group
- Trust you, and earn your trust by keeping your confidences
- Allow you to enjoy the activities and people that matter to you
- Accept your limits about sexual activity, every time.

Retrieved from Healthy Relationship Tips (1999-2016) Canadian Red Cross. <http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/violence--bullying-and-abuse-prevention/youth/healthy-relationship-tips>

just have to look for them and access them. Remove the shame, fear and stigma of accessing supports and resources. Adults need help with relationships too.

## Healthy Relationships...

are imperative to HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT. They help you feel valued, supported, and protected from stressors that you will inevitably encounter.

The number of KIDS WITH HIGH-QUALITY relationships are DECLINING. SO? WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? ACTUALLY, IT'S A HUGE DEAL. Healthy relationships affect both mental and physical well-being.

### Eight domains affected by healthy relationship qualities:

1. **MENTAL HEALTH:** 38% more youth in high-quality relationships with their parents report good mental health than those with low-quality.
2. **STATISTICALLY:** Kids who have higher quality relationships with their peers have better overall health.
3. **HEALTHY EATING** increases as the quality of youth relationships with their neighborhood increases.
4. As **RELATIONSHIP QUALITY** increases with parents and schools, fighting decrease.
5. **QUALITY OF LIFE:** 25% more youth report a high-quality of life if they have a positive relationship with their parents.
6. **KIDS WITH A HIGH-QUALITY PARENT RELATIONSHIP** are almost 20% less likely to suffer injuries.
7. **THEY ALSO HAVE NEARLY** 20% reduction in cannabis use, more than 15% reduction in alcohol consumption, and over a 10% reduction in smoking and hard drug use.
8. **LAST BUT NOT LEAST:** Kids with Healthy relationships with peers and parents see a 20% and 15% decrease in victimization. Respectively.

**BUT LET'S NOT FORGET:** These types of relationships are declining. So fewer youth are experiencing benefits of healthy relationships.

All stats retrieved from the trends Analysis of Canada Data from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey from 2002, 2006, and 2010 (2014) Dr. Wendy Craig & Debra Pepler. <http://www.prevnet.ca/research/bullying-statistics/healthy-relationships>

