

PARENT *alk*

Developing Healthy Relationships

Dating and relationships can be tricky for even the most experienced adult. It can be even more confusing for students who may be dating for the first time in college. Understanding what healthy dating relationships look like, as well as how to ask for and give consent, are two very powerful ways that students can engage in healthy and happy relationships both in college and beyond.

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships look different for every couple; however, the following list outlines many common healthy relationship behaviors:

- Treat each other with respect
- Speak openly to one another about thoughts and feelings
- Feel heard when expressing feelings
- Listen to each other and compromise
- Do not criticize each other
- Feel supported to do the things they like
- Celebrate each other's accomplishments and successes
- Allow each other to spend time separately with family and friends
- Do not abuse technology to check on a partner
- Trust each other and not require their partner to "check in"
- Do not pressure the other to do things they don't want to do, including engaging in sexual activity



Reference: www.thehotline.org

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Setting Boundaries

In dating relationships, it is important to set boundaries - emotional, physical, and especially in today's day and age, digital. Examples of boundaries are: letting your partner know if/when you are ready to engage in sexual activity, discussing how often you spend time together, or whether you are comfortable posting information about your relationship on social media.

Boundaries should be communicated to your partner, so that they are aware of what you may or may not be comfortable with in the relationship. It is common for boundaries to change as trust is built. Communicate these changes with your partner. In healthy relationships, your partner will respect your boundaries and not pressure you to change them.

Having a Conversation

College is a common time when students begin exploring dating and sexual relationships. It is important that parents take the time to discuss healthy relationship behaviors with their student to set them up for success.

1. Discuss what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like. Refer to the first page for healthy relationship behaviors.
2. If your student is in an unhealthy relationship and they feel scared or uncomfortable leaving their partner, you can refer them to any of the on or off campus resources listed below for assistance.
3. Talk about consent in relation to sexual activity. Make sure that your student understands what consent is and the importance of receiving it before engaging in any type of sexual activity.
4. Provide your student with examples of ways to ask for consent, such as “Would you like to do XYZ?” or “How does this sound?”
5. Give examples of what consent sounds like - “Yes!,” “Absolutely,” or “I’d love to.”
6. Explain that consent cannot be received in the absence of a “yes.” Silence or passivity does not imply consent.
7. Discuss how alcohol and drugs affect a person’s ability to give consent. If either party is intoxicated or incapacitated, then legally, they cannot provide consent.

What is Consent?

Consent is a verbal agreement given between two or more individuals that is clear, knowing, and voluntary, and it must be received before engaging in any type of sexual activity.

It is important to remember that, per WA state law, consent cannot be given if a person:

- is forced, coerced, or threatened into engaging in sexual activity;
- is intoxicated or incapacitated (under the influence of alcohol or drugs);
- is asleep or unconscious;
- or has a mental or physical disability that would keep them from being able to express consent.

Consent is important in any type of sexual encounter, whether in a short-term or long-term relationship.

Asking for and obtaining consent shows respect to your partner by promoting good communication and honesty within the relationship.

Community Resources

For immediate assistance, dial 9-1-1

EWU Student Support & Advocacy
509-359-7924

EWU Counseling and Psychological Services
Cheney Campus
509-359-2366

EWU Counseling and Psychological Services
Spokane Campus
509-828-1398

EWU Wellbeing Coaching
509-359-4279

National Domestic Abuse Hotline (24/7)
1-800-799-7233

YWCA Spokane
509-789-9297

Lutheran Community Services
866-751-7119