

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 14: Handout A WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?</p>

What does a healthy relationship look like? What does it feel like?

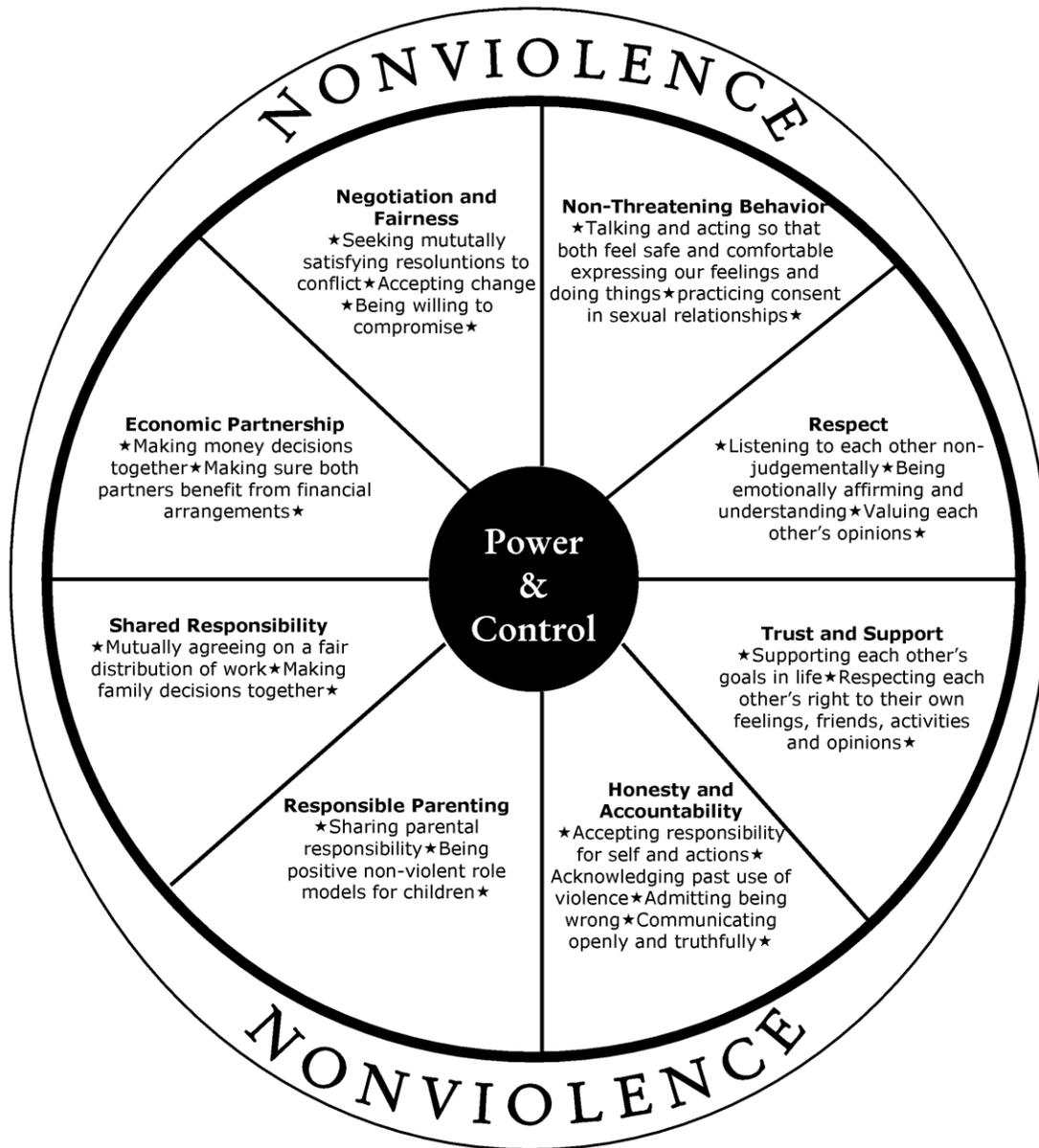
You know you are in a healthy, intimate relationship when you and your partner have created an environment where:

- You can be you.
 - We can be us.
 - You can grow.
 - We can grow together.
1. A healthy relationship is one where intimacy develops slowly from a friendship to commitment. You participate with a partner who is capable of fulfilling an intimate relationship. Your partner is capable of trusting and being trusted.
 2. A healthy relationship is based on commitment. You have a respectful, mutual understanding about the future of the relationship. There is no confusion or fear of abandonment. You do not have to cling to your partner for fear that your partner will want to pull away. You feel relaxed and are not anxious about losing the relationship.
 3. A healthy relationship is one where two people do not need each other. They are already individually strong and the relationship enhances their lives. There is consistent sharing of pleasurable activities. You and your partner do not have destructive patterns such as alcoholism, affairs, drug abuse, or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
 4. A healthy relationship is a partnership that is based on friendship and respect. Your partner is your good friend, who encourages you to become your best self. Neither partner acts superior to the other; each partner is equal. Parenting philosophies about discipline are collaborative and negotiated with the other.
 5. A healthy relationship is one where there is a true intimacy and each partner reveals and shares themselves with the other. There is trust and concern about each other's welfare and happiness. You can talk openly about your needs and you are listened to.
 6. A healthy relationship is one where two individuals can resolve conflict in a peaceful and calm manner. Feelings can be openly expressed. Conflicts are resolved by coming to a compatible agreement. There is no right or wrong person if the agreed resolution does not work out satisfactorily.

7. A healthy relationship is one where both individuals see themselves as partners. There is good communication; there are feelings of closeness and joy. There is no need to dominate and compete with each other.
8. A healthy relationship is one where two people maintain enthusiasm about the other's hobbies, work, and friends. You are not isolated. Each partner has a circle of friends and interests outside the relationship.

From: Woitiz, Janet G. (1985). *Struggle for Intimacy*. Pompano Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.

Equality Wheel



*Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, Minnesota*

Week 14: Handout C

COMPONENTS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Safety: In a healthy relationship, your safety will not be at risk. A healthy relationship should provide a safe environment in which people are encouraged to have individual opinions, pursuits, and interests that can be expressed.

Accountability: In healthy relationships, both people take responsibility for their behavior, attitudes, growth, satisfaction, and expectations. They accept responsibility for communicating their feelings, thoughts, and desires in appropriate, non-abusive ways. They make and keep honest agreements and practice responsible behavior.

Adaptability and Compromise: Healthy relationships are flexible; they support the ability to adapt and change in positive ways. They involve compromise on many matters, but they do not ask or require you to compromise your basic emotional or physical safety.

Communication: Maintaining healthy relationships means learning positive, non-abusive, effective ways to communicate. It means agreeing to discuss uncomfortable subjects and seeking help if partners need to learn better communication methods.

Emotional Expression: Acknowledging and expressing emotions appropriately promotes health in relationships. Joy, sadness, disappointment, Playfulness, unhappiness, and anger all have a place in healthy relationships.

Logical Thinking: Healthy relationships involve clear and logical thinking as well as emotional expression. It is important to use logical, realistic thinking when considering getting into a relationship. If a relationship is overloaded with liabilities brought by either or both partners, or if it is filled with unrealistic expectations and thinking, it will run into difficulty.

Outside Interests: Healthy relationships support outside interests; having interests different from your partner's is part of what keeps relationships alive and interesting. Healthy people remain connected to other healthy people.

Personal Growth: Healthy relationships encourage people to grow; they support new learning. Part of your personal growth can be to examine your past and how it relates to your future. You can accomplish that with help or on your own. Learning, diversity, and growth go hand in hand in healthy relationships.

Positive Patterns of Behavior: In healthy relationships, partners develop positive patterns of behavior. They learn from mistakes, are aware of their weaknesses as well as their strengths, and maintain non-abusive behavior.

Beliefs and Values: In healthy relationships, people have compatible belief systems and values. At the same time, each person has room for their individuality and is tolerant of individual differences.

Consistency: Healthy relationships involve consistency in caring and positive behavior. They rely on open and honest efforts and communication.

Commitment: The healthiest relationships involve mutual commitment to the health and well-being of each partner as an individual as well as to the couple's common goals, values, and beliefs.

Realistic Expectations: Healthy relationships are realistic. Realistic people understand that perfection is not possible. In fact, it is often the imperfections that they love about each other. Realistic people do not depend on being able to change a partner's negative ways once they live together or are married; instead, they accept and love the qualities the partner has.

Respect: The foundation on which healthy relationships are built is all forms of respect. Respectful partners model for each other how they want to be treated. Respect allows for differences and diversity without requiring others to "think or act like me."

Social and Community Relationships: People in healthy relationships encourage positive involvement with others in the community. They encourage personal fulfillment and growth. Having positive social interests such as sports, volunteering, clubs, community action groups, and others, can be important to healthy relationships.

Spiritual and Religious Beliefs: Many healthy relationships include aspects of spirituality. People in healthy relationships respect the other person's beliefs and allow individuality in religious practices.

Taking Time: In healthy relationships, people spend time together and time apart. Healthy people form new relationships carefully; they know that forming healthy romantic relationships takes time-time to build trust; time to learn about another person's habits, behaviors, values, and ethics; time to understand how that person handles stress, success, sickness, health, and loss. Building healthy romantic relationships involves watching a partner's long-term behavior as the relationship grows out of the courtship phase and becomes more realistic.

Trust: Healthy relationships give trust as it is earned and maintain healthy limits and boundaries. Healthy friends do not violate personal limits or

boundaries or coerce others to do so. They promote equality and values that show respect. They value trust and honor agreements made without coercion.

Work: Healthy relationships usually require a certain amount of work. They can be easy and fun much of the time, but most relationships involve change and flexibility to remain healthy.

From: *Free Yourself from an Abusive Relationship* by Andrea Lissette & Richard Kraus