Healthy relationships vary depending on culture and other factors. This isn’t a checklist — just some suggestions.

What can healthy friendships and romantic relationships look like?

- Feeling good about oneself with the other person
- Respecting each other’s feelings, opinions, and interests
- Mutual understanding, encouragement, and appreciation
- Celebrating each other’s strengths and accepting weaknesses
- Dealing with change and conflict in constructive ways
- Apologizing when wrong
- Maintaining relationships with other friends and family too

Conflict is a normal part of relationships, and even healthy relationships take work.

Causes for concern:

- Feeling less confident or liking oneself less with the other person
- When someone makes repeated, unwanted attempts to contact someone else
- When someone makes threats, uses force or violence, or breaks things
- When someone is controlling, puts their friend or partner down in front of others, or limits their friends or partners’ relationships with family and friends

If a friendship or romantic relationship feels unhealthy, you are free to end it or to get support for deciding what to do. You do not need to feel guilty for taking care of yourself.

Healthy relationships:

- Focus on supporting your friend (make them feel safe and comfortable) and avoid arguing about their choices or behavior.
- Say things like, “I’ve noticed — and I am concerned for your safety” and “I am here to support you now or in the future.”
- Avoid judgmental statements, like, “You should dump them!” or “Can’t you see they don’t treat you well enough?”, which might make your friend feel unheard or defensive.
- Say things like, “I’ve noticed ___ and am concerned for your safety” and “I am here to support you now or in the future.”
- Encourage them to get professional support (see below).
- Listen, believe them, and assure them they are not alone.
- Ask what’s wrong (even if they don’t share, they know you care).
- If you think someone may have experienced violence, try this:

Help establish positive culture norms at UVa! Together we can prevent violence. Sign up to attend Green Dot Bystander Training at notonourgrounds.virginia.edu.

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Resources for You and Friends

- Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS): Support with relationships, concern for friends, or help resolving potentially unsafe situations. Afterhours support available.
- Sexual Violence Education & Resources: virginia.edu/sexualviolence/- Guidance for addressing relationship violence, including emergency resources.
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Call to see how CAPS can best support you. Afterhours support available.
- Maxine Platzer Lynn Women’s Center: Counseling plus gender violence and social change programming.
- Madison House HELP Line: (434) 295-TALK - No issue is too big or too small. They’re here to listen.
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