Creating Healthy Relationships

What is a Healthy Relationship?
A healthy relationship is one that contains mutual understanding, respect and shared goals. Individuals can trust each other, are honest and supportive, and allow each other to have their own identity. There is positive communication, fairness and an element of fun and enjoyment. While disagreements do occur, they are settled quickly and without physical or emotional harm.

What is NOT a Healthy Relationship?
An unhealthy relationship brings more stress than happiness and makes at least one person feel worse about themselves. One person may pressure the other to make unrealistic changes, attempt to control the person's dress, who they see, or what activities they engage in. There may be lack of respect, the use of force or intimidation to have sex, or the general disregard of one's feelings. In an unhealthy relationship, one partner may be fearful of how the other will react to a situation or conversation, or believe that arguments are not settled fairly or at all.

Physical or emotional abuse in a relationship is always unhealthy and warrants immediate attention.

What to do if you are in an Unhealthy Relationship?
There are options for people in an unhealthy relationship to explore. Options can include the couple or an individual. A good counselor or advocate will discuss choices and help individuals make plans for the future. Needing to leave the relationship but, feeling guilty, not wanting to be alone or staying because of the children are common and a professional can help.

An NIU student who can identify with any of the descriptions above and believes their relationship is unhealthy is strongly encouraged to seek professional, confidential help. At NIU,

Counseling and Consultation Services
Campus Life Building 200
815-753-1206

Counseling and Consultation Services makes available walk-in consultation services, individual counseling, advocacy and crisis support. Professionals will help a student determine their options for the future of the relationship and assist with the complaint process if necessary.

An NIU employee identifying with any of the descriptions above and believes their relationship is unhealthy is strongly encouraged to seek professional, confidential help at

Employee Assistance Program
Holmes Student Center—7th Floor
815-753-9191

Employee Assistance Program provides guidance on options, services or brief counseling. For issues determined to require more in-depth assistance, an EAP professional may make a referral to a community provider.

If an unhealthy relationship develops, seek assistance right away before the relationship gets worse. If you need a confidential support person please contact one of the options above.

If you are in fear for your life or bodily harm call 911 immediately.

Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a resource promoting equality, fairness, non-discrimination at NIU. For more information see our website at www.niu.edu/diversity or contact us at adei-training@niu.edu.