Relationship Violence. Throughout our lives, we encounter different kinds of relationships. We have friendships, romances, work and school-related connections, familial ties, and, some that defy categorization. Healthy relationships usually have the potential to enrich us, adding to our feelings of self-worth, enjoyment, and growth. In other instances, we may find ourselves feeling uncomfortable. Sometimes it can be difficult to come to the realization that a lover, friend, colleague, or family member is not treating us with the respect. Keep in mind certain kinds of kinship behaviors, where it is likely to have a disagreement, a need for compromise, and times of frustration. These alone are not unhealthy. Below are some things to think about when considering whether a particular bond is a healthy one or not:

In a healthy relationship:
- Treat each other with respect
- Feel secure and comfortable
- Are not violent with each other
- Can resolve conflicts satisfactorily
- Enjoy the time you spend together
- Support one another
- Take interest in one another's lives: health, family, work, etc.
- Have privacy in the relationship
- Can trust each other
- Are each sexual by choice
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Have letters, phone calls, and e-mail that are your own
- Make healthy decisions about alcohol or other drugs
- Encourage other friendships
- Are honest about your past and present sexual activity if the relationship is intimate
- Know that most people in your life are happy about the relationship
- Have more good times in the relationship than bad

In an unhealthy relationship, one or both:
- Try to control or manipulate the other
- Make the other feel bad about her/himself
- Ridicule or call names
- Dictate how the other dresses
- Do not make time for each other
- Criticize the other's friends
- Are afraid of the other's temper
- Discourage the other from being close with anyone else
- Ignore each other when one is speaking
- Are overly possessive or get jealous about ordinary behavior
- Criticize or support others in criticizing people with your gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other personal attribute
- Control the other's money or other resources (e.g., car)
- Harm or threaten to harm children, family, pets, or objects of personal value
- Push, grab, hit, punch, or throw objects
- Use physical force or threats to prevent the other from leaving

Sometimes it's not so easy to decide to maintain or end a troublesome tie before it goes any further. One consideration is if the relationship was ever different than it is now. Is there something happening that
could be impacting the way you interact? Maybe money is tight, a stressful situation, you've moved, looking for work, dealing with a difficult family circumstance, or are going through some other kind of transition. Or were there problems from a while back that never resolved, and are now resurfacing. What's bothering you, and what would you like to see change? Ask these questions with each other, or someone you trust, like a friend, teacher, or counselor. Reflect, if there is anything, you can each do to make the other feel more comfortable in the relationship.

If anyone (partner, friend, or colleague) is harming you or your loved ones physically, emotionally, or sexually, it's time to seek help. If s/he is encouraging other harmful behaviors, like abuse of alcohol or other drugs, unsafe sexual activity, or other activities that make you feel uncomfortable, you have a right to leave. There are a lot of resources available to help you. If you or someone you know needs help with an unhealthy relationship, the following organizations can provide information and support. At Hofstra University you can call The Health & Wellness Center @ 516-463-6745

- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  - 24-hour [http://www.theline.org/](http://www.theline.org/) (7 days a week)
  - National Bilingual Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233) (will translate into over 130 languages)
  - TTY: (800) 787-3224

- New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
  - [http://www.avp.org/](http://www.avp.org/)
  - 24-hour Bilingual Hotline: (212) 807-0197

- American Psychological Association (APA)
  - (offers a practice directory for referrals to psychological services)
  - (800) 374-2721 / (202) 336-5500
  - TTY: (800) 374-2721 (x6123)

Sometimes the most important thing to do is to trust your instincts and the people close whose opinions you trust and value. Everyone deserves to feel safe, valued, and cared for. Always remember that one of the strongest signs of a healthy relationship is that both people feel good about themselves. Always treat yourself with self-respect and believe in your right to be treated well, is an important step towards developing equitable, mutually fulfilling ties in the future.