



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

A Relationship Reflection Guide

Healthy relationships are not perfect.

All relationships experience misunderstandings, disagreements and difficult moments.

However, healthy relationships should feel emotionally safe, respectful and supportive overall - not consistently fearful, controlling or emotionally exhausting.

This guide is designed to help reflect on common healthy and unhealthy relationship patterns.

1. Communication

Healthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Honest and respectful communication
- ☐ Both people feel able to express feelings safely
- ☐ Accountability after mistakes or conflict
- ☐ Listening without constant defensiveness
- ☐ Working through disagreements respectfully
- ☐ Feeling emotionally heard and considered

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Constant blame or criticism

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Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

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- ☐ Fear of expressing feelings honestly
- ☐ Silent treatment used as punishment
- ☐ Gaslighting or emotional manipulation
- ☐ Walking on eggshells during conversations
- ☐ Conflict leaving you feeling emotionally unsafe or drained

2. Emotional Safety

Healthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Feeling emotionally safe being yourself
- ☐ Feeling respected even during disagreements
- ☐ Being allowed emotional space and boundaries
- ☐ Feeling calm and secure most of the time
- ☐ Emotional support without fear or intimidation
- ☐ Mutual respect for needs and wellbeing

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Fear of upsetting the other person
- ☐ Feeling constantly anxious or hyper-alert

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- ☐ Monitoring moods or reactions constantly
- ☐ Feeling emotionally controlled or intimidated
- ☐ Feeling emotionally exhausted after interactions
- ☐ Feeling responsible for another person's emotions constantly

3. Boundaries & Respect

Healthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Respect for boundaries and personal space
- ☐ Accepting "no" without guilt or punishment
- ☐ Encouraging independence and individuality
- ☐ Respect for privacy and personal choices
- ☐ Support for friendships, hobbies and outside interests
- ☐ Mutual trust and respect

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Ignoring or pushing boundaries repeatedly
- ☐ Guilt or pressure after saying no
- ☐ Jealousy disguised as care or love

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- ☐ Monitoring communication, social activity or whereabouts
- ☐ Isolation from friends or family
- ☐ Feeling controlled rather than supported

4. Conflict & Accountability

Healthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Taking responsibility for mistakes
- ☐ Repairing conflict respectfully
- ☐ Allowing both people to speak openly
- ☐ Willingness to compromise fairly
- ☐ Emotional consistency after disagreements
- ☐ Problems discussed without fear or intimidation

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Constant blame-shifting
- ☐ Refusing accountability
- ☐ Emotional withdrawal used as control
- ☐ Threats, intimidation or emotional punishment

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- ☐ Making you feel “too sensitive” for expressing concerns
- ☐ Repeated emotional instability or unpredictability

5. Independence & Identity

Healthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Feeling free to be yourself
- ☐ Encouragement of personal growth and independence
- ☐ Feeling supported rather than emotionally trapped
- ☐ Maintaining confidence and identity over time
- ☐ Feeling emotionally balanced overall
- ☐ Space for individuality within the relationship

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

- ☐ Feeling like you are losing yourself over time
- ☐ Constantly changing yourself to avoid conflict
- ☐ Feeling emotionally dependent or trapped
- ☐ Loss of confidence or independence
- ☐ Feeling emotionally smaller around the other person

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☐ Feeling emotionally drained rather than supported

Reflection

No relationship is perfect.

However, consistently feeling:

- Unsafe
- Controlled
- Hypervigilant
- Emotionally exhausted
- Fearful of reactions
- Unable to express yourself honestly

may be signs that a relationship is affecting your emotional wellbeing.

Healthy relationships should support emotional safety, respect and mutual care - not constant survival mode.

Important Reminder

Control, fear, manipulation and emotional instability are not signs of healthy love.

You deserve relationships where your emotional wellbeing, boundaries and individuality are respected.

Support & Further Resources

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Understanding relationship patterns can help people recognise emotional safety, rebuild confidence and reduce self-doubt.

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Turning silence into understanding through lived experience.

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