

## **THRIVE Session 1-3 What is Teen Relationship Abuse and Violence?**

**The difference between abuse and violence** is that **abuse** is improper treatment or usage; an unjust, corrupt, or wrongful practice or custom while **violence** is extreme force.

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a pattern of behavior that includes physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse used by one person in an intimate relationship to exert power and control over another.

TDV is generally defined as occurring among individuals between the ages of 13-19 years old. Like intimate partner violence among adults, TDV occurs without respect to age, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

### **What does Teen Dating Violence look like?**

Approximately 25 percent of teens report experiencing TDV annually (Noonan & Charles, 2009). It can include emotional, verbal, physical and/or sexual abuse. In most cases of TDV, violence is used to get another to do what he/she wants, to gain power and control, to cause humiliation and to promote fear, and to retaliate against a partner (Foshee & Langwick, 2010). Remember-if 25% of teens are reporting abuse, the real number is far bigger because interpersonal violence and abuse tends to be very under-reported.

### **Here are some common misconception about Teen Relationship Abuse and Violence**

**Misconception:** "Abuse in teen relationships is not that common or serious."

**Reality:** Surveys show that violence is experienced in 28% of teen relationships and according to the FBI. 20% of homicide victims are between the ages of 15 and 24. One out of three women murdered in the US is killed by a husband or boyfriend.

**Productive Thinking:** *"Battering is not just an adult problem; it also happens with teens and we have to become more aware of the realities of relationship violence among young people."*

**Misconception:** *Girls like the abuse or else they wouldn't put up with it.*

**Reality:** Young women and girls stay in abusive relationships for several complex reasons, none of which includes liking the abuse.

**Productive Thinking:** *I have to recognize that no one stays in an abusive relationship because they like the abuse, but that leaving the relationship may be difficult."*

**Misconception:** **Guys yell and hit to show how much they care about their partners."**

**Reality:** Guys yell and hit because they are using violence to try and control another person and/or are unable to control their own behavior.

**Productive Thinking:** *The positive way of showing care for my partner is through understanding and respect—not violently or abusively acting out my emotions. "*

**Misconception:** **"A guy has the right to discipline his girlfriend to show her who's boss."**

**Reality:** Unhealthy discipline is used to exercise authority, such as a parent has over a child or a superior over subordinates. Unfortunately, many societies have taught and encouraged men to dominate women under the guise of discipline.

**Productive Thinking:** *"I do not have the right to try and control my girlfriend's or my boyfriend's behavior. The only person I have control over is I. If I want to have a good, healthy relationship, I need to develop respect for my partner. "*

**Misconception:** **"Alcohol and/or drugs are what cause people to become violent or abusive."**

**Reality:** Chemical substances are not the cause of violence but may act as enablers to violence by lowering inhibitions.

**Productive Thinking:** *" I realize that using alcohol may put me at risk for being a victim of rape or enable me to be a perpetrator of violence."*

**Misconception:** **"Violence only happens between people who are poor or members of a minority."**

**Reality:** Abuse in relationships exists among all classes, races, and cultural groups in society. It also happens within same-gender relationships.

**Productive Thinking:** *"An abusive relationship can happen to anyone; we are not exempt because we belong to a particular group. Beliefs about other groups may stem from racism. "*

**Misconception:** *Guys who batter are psycho-crazies."*

**Reality:** Batterers are "normal" people that we encounter in everyday life. They can be the smartest, quietest, coolest, or the best athlete on campus. What they have in common is their inability to control their anger and aggressive impulses.

**Productive Thinking:** *"I cannot recognize batterers by how they look or act in public, but by how they behave in a relationship over a period of time."*

**What are some examples of abusive/violent behavior?**

Relationships can be abusive in many ways. Most of us equate abusiveness with physical types of behavior. This session is going to explore the other forms that abusive behavior can have.

In the following categories list as many examples of each of the behaviors as you can think of.

**Isolation/Exclusion**

This is controlling what another person does, who they see/talk to, where they go. It also includes limiting the outside involvement of the person, and wanting to keep "tab's" on them all of the time.

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**Sexual Coercion**

This is manipulation to get sex, getting a partner pregnant, becoming pregnant, using drugs or drugs to get sex. It may also include threats of affairs as a method of getting sex. Unwanted or uncomfortable touching.

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**Threats**

This is making or carrying out threats that hurt another. Threats of leaving, of committing suicide to get one's way, using the threat of police, or a "secret" to force someone to do what you want them to do.

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**Minimization, Denial and Blame**

Not taking the concerns of another seriously, and making light of their needs. Denying that any abuse happened-"it is all in your mind". Not taking responsibility for damage that is done to another, saying that they caused it.

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**Intimidation**

Using size, looks, voice, gestures to make another person afraid. Destroying things of another such as objects, clothes. Harming or threatening to harm pets. Talk about or display of weapons.

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**Anger/Emotional Abuse**

This is keeping another person in check by the use of anger, by withdrawing affection, by calling names, telling personal things about them to others. Public humiliation is a form of this kind of abuse. Making some feel guilty for how you feel is another form of this kind of control.

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**Status**

Having someone believe that they "need" you to keep friends. Using the fear of the loss of status as a method of making them do what you want. Using the power of status to force or make decisions on someone else.

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## Peer Pressure

This is the threat of friends finding out something private or painful. It can also include using rumors to harm someone. Convincing others to "ostracize" someone is a form of this kind of abuse.

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Which ones of these have you used? With who and for how long? What happened to you? How did it change you?

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## How does Teen Dating Violence differ from Adult Intimate Partner Violence?

An article published by the National Institute of Justice discusses current research on TDV and concludes that there are three key differences between adult and teen dating relationships:

- Abusive teen relationships typically lack the same unequal power dynamic found in adult intimate partner violence relationships. Adolescent girls are not often dependent on their partner for financial support and do not typically have children to provide for and protect.
- Teens have limited experience with romantic relationships and negotiating conflict.
- Teen relationships are more readily affected by the influence of peers.
- The abuse and violence in teen relationships is more open than the abuse and violence in adult relationships. Friends are aware of what is going on. However, usually the adults in the teen's life are unaware of the situation. There are many reasons for this...afraid of being kept from a boy/girlfriend, fear of involvement from children's protective services, fear of punishment, loss of things such as car, scholarships, etc. In addition, often the adults do not take this seriously and consider it a "rite of passage".

Because the dynamics of intimate partner abuse are different in adolescent and adult relationships, it is important not to apply an adult framework of intimate partner violence to teen dating violence.

**Violent** behavior often begins between 6th and 12th grade. 72% of 13 and 14-year-olds are "**dating**." 50% of young people who experience rape, or physical or sexual **abuse** will attempt to commit suicide. Only 1/3 of the **teens** who were involved in an abusive **relationship** confided in someone about the **violence**.

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3ejEz7j>

### **Too Common**

- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year.
- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
- One in 10 high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

### **Why Focus on Young People?**

- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average.
- Among female victims of intimate partner violence, 94% of those age 16-19 and 70% of those age 20-24 were victimized by a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18.
- The severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.
- Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3ehyuIp>

### **Don't Forget About College Students**

- Nearly half (43%) of dating college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors.
- College students are not equipped to deal with dating abuse - 57% say it is difficult to identify and 58% say they don't know how to help someone who's experiencing it.

- One in three (36%) dating college students has given a dating partner their computer, online access, email or social network passwords and these students are more likely to experience digital dating abuse.
- One in six (16%) college women has been sexually abused in a dating relationship.

### **Long-Lasting Effects**

#### **Lack of Awareness**

- Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.
- Eighty-one (81) percent of parents believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue.
- Though 82% of parents feel confident that they could recognize the signs if their child were experiencing dating abuse, a majority of parents (58%) could not correctly identify all the warning signs of abuse.

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/2Cv51gM>

## **SOME TRUTHS ABOUT ABUSE IN RELATIONSHIPS**

### **1. Domestic violence affects only a small number of people.**

**FALSE**

\* According to the FBI, 1 out of every 4 women is a victim of domestic violence at least once in her lifetime.

\*In 55% of the cases where men are assaulting their partners, they are also assaulting their children. The battered mother may be suffering from such physical and psychological injuries that she cannot meet the needs of her children appropriately.

### **2. Battering is just a momentary loss of temper.**

**FALSE**

\*The Surgeon General of the United States reports that 1 out of 5 women battered by their partners have been victimized repeatedly by the same person. The American Medical Association defines domestic violence as an ongoing experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.

### **3. Domestic violence does not produce serious injuries.**

**FALSE**

- \*The leading cause of injury for women ages 15 to 44 is domestic violence.
- \* The Michigan State Police statistics show that a woman is killed by a partner or former partner every 5 days in Michigan.

**4. Leaving an abusive relationship is easy.**

FALSE

\*A study by the United States Department of Justice states that the most dangerous time for a woman who is being battered is when she leaves. This is the time in the relationship when most women-and men are killed by their partner.

**5. Battered women always stay in violent relationships.**

FALSE

\*Many battered women do leave their abusers permanently and succeed in building a life free of violence.

\*Almost all battered women leave at least once.

Leaving is not easy. On average, it takes a victim seven times to leave before staying away for good. Exiting the relationship is most unsafe time for a victim. As the abuser senses that they are losing power, they will often act in dangerous ways to regain control over their victim.

**6. Only poor and minority groups are victims of domestic violence.**

FALSE

\* People of all socio-economic classes, races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations can be victims of domestic violence.

**7. Only married women are victims of domestic violence.**

FALSE

\* People who are dating, separated, living together, divorced, have a child in common and/or are married, can be abused. Domestic violence can occur in any of these relationships.

**8. Women are just as violent as men.**



FALSE

\*In 84% of domestic assaults, the man is the perpetrator of the violence.

Teen dating violence is a serious public health issue. It is also more common than many believe - in part because it tends to be misunderstood and under-reported. Some teens, as well as some adults, hold beliefs about relationships that say "it's okay" or "normal" for emotional and physical abuse to happen within intimate relationships.

In addition, teens who are involved with abusive dating relationships are often afraid or reluctant to tell their parents or another adult for fear of being judged, not believed, or having their experiences minimized. When dating violence goes unnamed, unaddressed, and unreported, it often escalates and leads to serious lifelong consequences and health concerns.

For example, teens who are victims of dating abuse are more likely to be depressed, have eating disorders and perform poorly in school. They are at risk for abusing alcohol and drugs, and they are at higher risk for being victims of dating violence as young adults. About 70 percent of girls and 52 percent of boys who are victims of dating violence report physical injury from a violent relationship. Among adult victims of physical violence, stalking or rape by an intimate partner, 22 percent of women and 15 percent of men first experienced partner violence as young people between the ages of 11-17.

### **Summing Up:**

Dating violence is a pattern of verbal, physical, sexual, or emotional violence against a romantic partner.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), each year about one in 11 teens report being a victim of physical abuse - and one in five teens report being a victim of emotional abuse.

Physical abuse includes behaviors such as shoving, pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, and grabbing.

Emotional abuse includes behaviors such as name calling, threatening, insulting, shaming, manipulating, criticizing, controlling access to friends and family, expecting a partner to check in constantly, and using technology like texting to control and batter.

**Have you done any of the below to anyone you care about?**

When you did, did you think you were being abusive?

How did/do you explain these behaviors to yourself and to others?

What were/are the emotions that you experience when any of these behaviors happens?

What-in your mind gives you permission to treat people in these ways?

Have you seen any of your friends or boy/girlfriends of your friends being treated like this?

If you see someone being abused, what do you want to do? What do you want to do?

What should you do?

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3eeh8ME>



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Twitter, Snapchat, Spotify: breakthecycledev  
Instagram: breakthecycle  
Web: breakthecycle.org

# WARNING SIGNS

Being able to tell the difference between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships can be more difficult than you think. No two relationships are the same, so what's unhealthy in one relationship may be abusive in another. Although there are many signs to pay attention to, look for these common warning signs of dating abuse in a relationship:



If you or someone you know sees the warning signs in their relationship, text loveis to 22522. Learn more about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships at [breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org).

### Wrap up of Sessions 1-3

What is the most thing you learned about Teen Relationship Violence in this section?

What is the most important thing you learned about yourself in this session?

What are three things you need to change right now about yourself to not be/become an abusive person?

How can you help others not be abusive?

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Most people-the majority of people-do not want to be abusive or hurtful to their loved ones. Very often, they do not realize their abusiveness when it is going on. And both members of the relationship may display similar behaviors. As you read these signs, think about: have you ever done any of these behaviors?; are any of these behaviors common in your relationship?; if yes, who is the one who uses these behaviors the most?; what excuses are used to make these behaviors ok?;where do these behaviors come from?

### Key signs of abusive behavior

An abusive relationship is not just limited to physical violence. It can include sexual, emotional, and physical abuse, and may involve control of your finances. Here are some signs to look for.

## **Possessiveness**

- They check on you all the time to see where you are, what you are doing and who you're with.
- They try to control where you go and who you see and get angry if you do not do what they say.

## **Jealousy**

- They accuse you of being unfaithful or of flirting.
- They isolate you from family and friends, often by behaving rudely to them.

## **Put-downs**

- They put you down, either publicly or privately, by attacking your intelligence, looks, mental health or capabilities.
- They constantly compare you unfavorably to others.
- They blame you for all the problems in your relationship, and for their violent outbursts.
- They say things like, 'No one else will want you.'

## **Threats**

- They yell or sulk, and deliberately break things that you value.
- They threaten to use violence against you, your family, friends, or a pet.

## **Physical and sexual violence**

- They push, shove, hit or grab you, or make you have sex or do things you do not want to do.
- They harm you, your pets, or your family members.

Looking at the above list, what are the ones that are most common in your relationship?

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Are these behaviors that happen in all your relationships-or just this relationship?

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How long have these behaviors been tolerated in the relationship? How long have they been "normal" parts of the relationship?

Below are some of the common "reasons" given for violence/abusive behavior.

- Do you display extreme forms of jealousy?
- Does your partner disagree with you too often? If yes, do you take that personally?
- Do you take/give to your partner responsibility for all the problems in the relationship?
- Does your partner *always* want to know where you are, what you are doing, who you are with? Do you do the same with your partner?
- Has/does your partner call you hurtful names? Do you call your partner hurtful names? Does this continue to happen even after it has been asked to stop?
- Does your partner use force, on you, to get what they want? And vice versa?
- Has your partner ever threatened to hurt you, your things or someone you care about? Have you ever done the same to your partner?
- Has your partner been hurtful in other relationships? Have you?
- Are you afraid to say no to sex with your partner? Do you accept no to sex from your partner or do you pressure them for a yes?
- Has your partner ever: slapped, pushed, restrained, or pinched you? And you to your partner?
- Do you embarrass or hurt your partner's feelings in front of others? Has that ever happened to you from a partner? If yes, how did you handle it?
- Have you ever spied on your partner? Has your partner spied on you?
- Have you ever felt really bad about something you have done to hurt your partner?

If yes, what did you do?

- Have you ever made your partner account for their time, who they have been with, where they have gone and/or what they have done? Has/does this happened to you from your partner?
  - Have you ever gone through your partner's belongings to "check up" on them? Vice versa?
  - Have you ever: slapped, pushed, restrained or pinched your partner? Vice versa?
  - Do your relationships become serious very quickly? If yes, how quickly?
  - Have you ever (or tried to) kept your partner from spending time with certain people, or doing certain activities? Has your partner done that to you?
  - Have you ever had sex with your partner after they or you have said no?
  - Do you blame your partner for everything that goes wrong in your life?
- Use the following space to explain any yes answers you had to the above questions.

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Has this exercise changed any of your views on abuse/violence?

Watch this video and see if you recognize yourself or anyone you know in any of these behaviors.

<https://bit.ly/3jfh7f7>

Please share what you learned from this.

Now watch this video:

<https://bit.ly/2ONJ53L>

What did you learn from this video? How has it changed your thinking?

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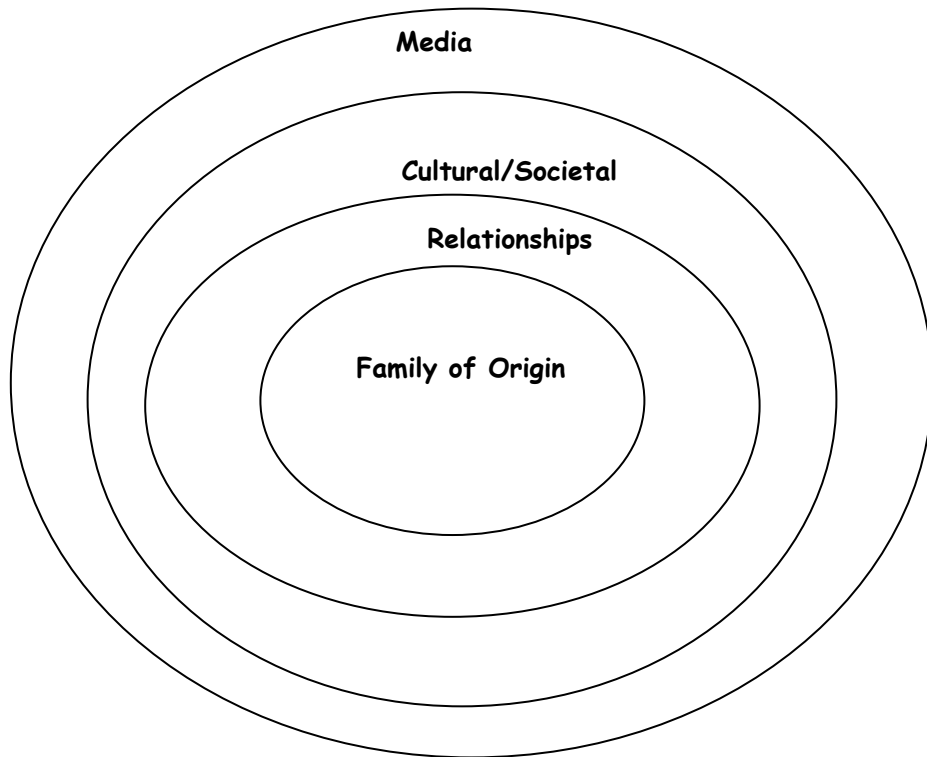
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**Thrive Sessions 7-9 How do we learn to be abusive and violent?**

We live in a world where there is violence and abuse all around us. There are many layers of abuse violence. Here are some of them.





The learning of abusiveness starts with our family of origin-going back many generations.

Think about how things were handled in your family. Were there discussions? Where things settled by group consensus or by one/two members? Was there physical violence in your family? Did things get settled/dealt with by force? Was there encouragement to hear everyone's side of an issue?

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What about messages about being a man/woman? Are the men/boys in your family allowed to cry or to be afraid? Are the girls allowed/encouraged to voice their opinions, to do "ungirl" things? What happens in your family when a boy or girl is "different" from what a boy/girl is expected to be? How are/were you encouraged to deal with conflicts with friends and relatives?

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How is/was your parent's relationship? How do/did they handle differences? Did you witness abuse/violence between your parents? If yes, what did you do about it-intervene, ignore, talk about it? Who was the abuser and who was the victim? How did they deal with the abuse-did the victim leave, call the police, just take it... Did the abuser apologize, change his/her behavior, take responsibility...

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What we see in our families of origin is what we learn about having a relationship. Many of us don't like what we see and so we make strong efforts to not repeat those behaviors when we have our own relationships. However, many of us believe that what we see in our families is how things are supposed to be and we then repeat those behaviors when we create our own personal behaviors. And sometimes, despite our best efforts, we repeat the patterns we don't want to have. What do you think about the relationship between your parents/stepparents? Is it healthy, unhealthy. Should they be together? Do you want to create a relationship with someone that is like the one between your parents?

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**Now think about your other relationships. Your friends, people you work with, girlfriends/boyfriends.**

Are these relationships like the ones you grew up with or are they different? Do you have friends who deal with problems in a different way than you do? If so, how?

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Do you have friends whose families deal with problems in a better way than your family? If so, what do you like that they do differently? How can you do that with a boy/girlfriend?

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If you have a job, does your supervisor treat you kindly or unkindly? How do you deal with either? Which kind of treatment helps you be a better employee?

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Do you have a person in your life that you admire for how they deal with others? If yes, what makes you admire them?

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**Cultural and Societal Abuse**

Culture means "The Way of Life" of a group of people .This means the way they do things. How they talk, what they believe, how they dress, what they eat, how they act in relationships.

We all live in many cultures-sometimes at the same time and sometimes we move thru cultures as life goes on.

We are born into a certain culture-this can be based on skin color, ethnicity, religious beliefs. All cultures have specific beliefs about how to live life, how to deal with problems with other cultures, and what is ok/no ok behavior.

In addition, we move thru a lot of different cultures as we go thru life. Very often, we have our feet in more than one culture at a time.

An example of this is being a teen. Your family is of a certain culture with beliefs, rules, and expectations. When we move out in the world and go to school, we interact with people of other cultures. As a teen, there are many things that are expected, accepted that would not be allowed in our "culture of origin"

What does your culture of origin believe about how relationships are conducted?

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How does this agree/differ from how you saw/see relationships in your family?

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What other "cultures" do you belong to right now? Gang, friends, school, other areas of interest?

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How do all of the "cultures" you belong to agree/differ on how to be in a relationship?

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How do these match with your culture of origin? What, if any, conflicts are you dealing with? How do these conflicts impact your relationships?

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Now, let's look at the media and how it influences learning how to abusive and violent. Think about how news is presented-how often do we see or hear "good" news? Not a lot. The media tends to present lots of violence and negative behavior all of the time. We hear about war, countries taking retribution on each other, race riots, destruction of parts of our and other's cultures and on and on and on.

Whether we know it or not, all of these messages have an impact on our brains. This information goes into our brain and helps abusiveness and violence become our default behaviors. Think about the music most of us listen to-much of it is very violent. Because we see and hear violence and abusiveness a lot of the time, we develop an "automatic" response to events-that response tends to be more negative than positive.

This kind of information gets our minds and bodies into a state of arousal and readiness to attack. So, we are more prone to be "ready to attack" if something uncomfortable happens in our life.

So, what is the cure? Spending less time on the news is the major answer. Staying away from social media that uses a lot of violence and negative behavior is another. Reading, listening, watching positive is another way to deal with the impact of the negative stuff around us.

What do you think about the way the media impacts how we live and how we behave?

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Think about how you feel after hearing something bad or horrible-What state of mind do you tend to get into? Do you react to situations differently than when you are feeling happy or content?

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Remember, it is much easier to deal with problems and issues when we are in a good state of mind, when we have few problems to deal with, and when our life is stable.

Wrap-up of this section: What changes have happened in your thinking due to this information? What have you learned about yourself in terms of relationships?

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## **THRIVE-SESSIONS 10-12: WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

Look at the following and see if you agree:

### **TRAITS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

Research that has been done has shown that the following qualities are especially important to enhancing continued growth and love in a relationship:

COMMUNICATION	DEPENDABILITY
AFFECTION	SENSE OF HUMOR
COMPASSION/FORGIVENESS	ROMANCE (INCLUDING SEX)
HONESTY	PATIENCE
ACCEPTANCE	FREEDOM
	FRIENDSHIP

The most mentioned qualities are communication, affection, forgiveness, friendship, and honesty.

**Communication** is defined as the desire to be open, to share, to relate, and to actively speak and listen to one another.

**Affection** is defined as the traits of caring, understanding, respect, physical and physiological closeness, nurturing, and kindness. Affection is considered different from sex and romance-although affection is hopefully part of a sexual relationship.

**Compassion/forgiveness** is defined as the ability to have empathy, be understanding, to be forgiving in a healthy way, to be supportive, and-again healthy selfless.

**Honesty** is defined as the quality of being able to reveal true feelings at the moment, to verbalize fears, angers, regrets, and expectations.

#### THE QUALITIES WHICH WERE SEEN TO DAMAGE RELATIONSHIPS ARE:

LACK OF COMMUNICATION	LACK OF FLEXIBILITY (NOT OPEN TO CHANGE)
SELFISHNESS/UNFORGIVING	LACK OF UNDERSTANDING
DISHONESTY	LACK OF RESPECT
JEALOUSY	APATHY
LACK OF TRUST	
PERFECTIONISM	

(TAKEN FROM LOVING EACH OTHER-THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS BY LEO BUSGAGLIA, PH. D.)

Please watch these videos: <https://bit.ly/2CyPuwV> <https://bit.ly/3hir1La>

Please list all of the positive and negative elements that you have had in your relationship;

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Now, let's look at what attracts YOU to someone else.

Physical attraction is the first thing that gets attention.

**What is the first thing that you notice about a person?**

1. Their smile
2. Their eyes
3. Their personality
4. Their body

Do you have a favorite hair color? \_\_\_\_\_

blonde	brunette
redhead	black
curly	straight
I don't know	I don't have a favorite

**The body type that is most appealing to you is:**

slim	curvy
tall	short
Fit/athletic	Big/small breasts/butt

**You would like to be with someone who is...**

fun	kind
A little crazy	Shy and hesitant
intelligent	smart

**Which of these is a deal breaker?**

jealousy	Self-centered/selfish
temperamental	Quick tempered
Bad hygiene	demanding
lying	Cheating

**What do your exes have in common?**

They cheated	They are all crazy	They are all hot	They were demanding
They were too mean	They are too insecure	They are all nice	I got tired of them

### How would you describe yourself?

Shy	Outgoing	Impulsive	Careful	A little crazy
serious	Playful/fun	conservative	intelligent	Live for the moment/plan for the future
Put in your own description	Put in your own description	Put in your own description	Put in your own description	Put in your own description

What are your interests? Is it important that someone you date has similar interests?  
Y/N


### How long do your relationships usually last?

1. Less than 6 months
2. 6 months to a year
3. Over a year
4. It varies.

Now, let us look at attraction.

What are the factors of attraction?

- **Psych2Go** shares with you 10 factors that contribute to attraction:

- **1. Similarity**

The more similar your beliefs and way of thinking are with a potential partner, the more likely you are to be attracted to them. This pertains to the saying, "Birds of a feather flock together." We find people who are similar to us more attractive because it is easier for us to trust those with similar mindsets.

- **2. Propinquity-Physical and Emotional Closeness**

We are more likely to be attracted to those who are in close proximity to us. This allows higher probability of running into each other more often than not. As we become more exposed to those around us, we think about them and it creates a stronger sense of familiarity that forms stronger attraction. This is often the case for people who fall in love over time with partners who they initially overlooked.



### **3. Desirable Characteristics**

The more characteristics your potential partner possesses that you find desirable, the more attractive you will find them. This pertains to both physical outer appearance and personality traits. While personality alone is unlikely to predict what makes a good long-term romantic match, personality is still very much a part of a person, and if a potential partner has characteristics you find irresistible, then it's no surprise that they'll catch your eye.

### **5. Reciprocal liking**

When someone likes you, it can increase your liking for them, too. Not all the time, but generally speaking, it does. *We tend to like people who like us. People who go the extra mile and show that they care.* Reciprocal liking is important in the initial stages of attraction. People naturally like to feel wanted and loved.

### **5. Social Influences**

When your family and friends accept and consider your potential partner as a good match, then you are more inclined to fall in love with them. This is why when people are heavily considering to be with someone long-term, they introduce their potential partner to their family and friends, because they want to see how they will fit in with their social network. For someone who values their friends' and family's opinions a lot, this can significantly impact whether or not they fall in or out of love with someone.

### **6. Filling Needs**

If a potential mate can fulfill your needs of companionship, sex, or mating, then there is a greater chance you can fall in love with them. You can be attracted to someone based on how well the both of you get along, but if the two of you want different things out of life, it's difficult to sustain the attraction when your needs aren't being fulfilled by the other person.

### **7. Specific Cues**

We all have specific things we look for in someone, whether that pertains to the outer physical appearance or certain mannerisms and quirks. There are specific cues most of us tend to look for. Everyone is unique, and what we find to be interesting or beautiful is essential to what attracts us in the first place.

## **8. Readiness**

The more you are seeking to build a meaningful relationship with someone, the more you are likely to fall in love with your potential partner. Attraction does not last as long if you're not looking for anything special, because you learn not to get attached. If you are in a time and place where you're constantly on the go, it leaves you less time to get to know someone more intimately.

## **9. Isolation**

Spending time alone with someone gives you two the chance to get to know each other on a deeper level. This helps form stronger attraction between the both of you. This is why planning dates in low key settings that offer more privacy is a good way to grow closer to someone.

## **10. Mystery**

Closed books are often more interesting than people who lay their cards down all at once. This is because being able to discover the different layers of someone over time helps sustain the passion. You never know what you are going to uncover, which adds to the excitement.

Which of these factors do you find most attractive?

References:

Brogaard, B. (2017, September 27). Can Scientists Forecast Attraction? *Psychology Today*. Retrieved October 4, 2017.

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

**The ability to resolve conflict**-there will always be some conflict in a relationship. Being willing and able to solve the conflicts fairly is an important ingredient of any relationship.

**Flexibility and willingness to compromise**

**Respect, consideration, and tolerance.**

**Commitment**-the relationship is a first priority for each partner.

**Personal growth and development**-each allows and supports the other in reaching their maximum level of personal and interpersonal growth.

**Time together and time alone**-in a healthy relationship both partners recognize that each needs time alone as well as time spent only with each other.

**Ability and willingness to deal with crisis and stresses**-these are the times when the true strength and commitment of a relationship are shown.

**Ability to handle financial problems**-another very strong test of any relationship.

**Open and honest lines of communication**

**Sense of humor**-being able to laugh at themselves and often even at difficult situations.

**Ability to play**-playfulness can bridge the gap between too much distance and too much intimacy.

**Mutual love and caring.**

**Expressions of appreciation**-saying thank you and telling one another what is liked about each other is strong cement in a relationship.

**Genuine liking for one another**-having a friendship as well as a lovership is particularly important in a relationship.

**Flexibility**-things are not "women's" or "men's" work. Things get done in a cooperative fashion.

**Common belief systems**-having similar beliefs and values can be a strength in a relationship.

**Compatible child-rearing philosophy and participation**-having the same viewpoint about child-rearing can bring a couple closer and certainly makes for better parenting.

(TAKEN FROM THE DYNAMICS OF RELATIONSHIPS BY PATRICIA KRAMER)

## TRAITS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Research that has been done has shown that the following qualities are particularly important to enhancing continued growth and love in a relationship:

COMMUNICATION  
AFFECTION

COMPASSION/FORGIVENESS  
HONESTY  
ACCEPTANCE

DEPENDABILITY  
SENSE OF HUMOR

ROMANCE (INCLUDING SEX)  
PATIENCE  
FREEDOM

The most mentioned qualities are communication, affection, forgiveness, and honesty.

**Communication** is defined as the desire to be open, to share, to relate, and to actively speak and listen to one another.

**Affection** is defined as the traits of caring, understanding, respect, physical and physiological closeness, nurturing, and kindness. Affection is differentiated from romance and sex.

**Compassion/forgiveness** is defined as the ability to have empathy, to forgive, to be supportive, and selfless.

**Honesty** is defined as the quality of being able to reveal true feelings at the moment, to verbalize fears, angers, regrets, and expectations.

**THE QUALITIES WHICH WERE SEEN TO DAMAGE RELATIONSHIPS ARE:**

LACK OF COMMUNICATION  
SELFISHNESS/UNFORGIVING  
DISHONESTY  
JEALOUSY  
LACK OF TRUST  
PERFECTIONISM  
LACK OF FLEXIBILITY (NOT OPEN TO CHANGE)  
LACK OF UNDERSTANDING  
LACK OF RESPECT  
APATHY

(Taken from "Loving Each Other-The Challenge of Human Relationships" by Leo Busgaglia Ph.D.)

When you look at all of this information-do you tend to be involved with people who match what you picked? What are/were the healthy/unhealthy parts of these relationships? Write a description of your last and current relationship. How are they alike/unlike? Are/were they different from what you believe you are attracted to? Do your relationships have a pattern? If, what is it?

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How do YOU think a relationship needs to be? Describe what would be the perfect relationship for you?

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Now what do YOU need to do to have that relationship?

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Wrap up of sessions 10-12:

What is the most important thing you learned from this session?

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**THRIVE-SESSIONS 13-14: WHAT DO I NEED TO CHANGE AND WHAT IS MY CHANGE PLAN?**

Using what has been learned so far, what is something that you have learned that you need to change in yourself?

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Why?

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Ok-we have a start. Now let's talk about why change is difficult.

Usually, what we want to change is a habit-that means that the thing we want to change is something we do automatically.

In addition, our behaviors serve a purpose. We do what we do because it works. And we need to understand that change has to happen when what we have been doing stops working.

Far too often, we attempt to make changes in BIG steps in a small amount of time. When the change we want does not happen quickly, we give up and go back to old behaviors. Sometimes, the new change is not liked by others and there is pressure to go back to old behaviors.

Let's look at the habits of TRULY HAPPY PEOPLE...they are

1. Getting enough sleep
2. Live in the moment-stop fretting about the mistakes of the past and the stress of the future. BE IN THE NOW as much as possible. There are a lot of lessons to be learned in the now.
3. Learn to love yourself-sounds simple-however it often isn't. The more you love yourself, the more able you are to love others in a healthy way.
4. Appreciate what you have---ah, that can sometimes be a challenge.
5. Exercise-it's good for the body and the mind and the soul.
6. Forgive, but don't forget. This is important because it helps us set boundaries for who gets to be in our life, and letting go of grudges.
7. Get in touch with your feelings...learn to understand and embrace them.
8. Concentrate on what you can control and let go of what you can't control. This means that you focus on yourself and your life and let others do the same.
9. Learn to love learning. Keep your mind open and active.
10. Surround yourself with people you want to be like and who you can learn from.
11. Make your own happiness and don't wait for someone else to do it. Learn to find happiness in the wonderful small everyday things.

How many of the above are part of your daily life? Make an effort to have all of them in your life.

Let's look at what you want to change.

### **MAKING CHANGES**

Change can be difficult. We all have things we want to make changes about in our lives, but sometimes do not get around to doing them, or say it won't work, or give up before we even begin.

Use the following guidelines to help you decide on changes you want to make, and then to decide what the steps will be in making those changes.

A tip about making changes. Tell others what you want to do. This will help give you support from many places. It will also show you where the resistance to your changing comes from-both inside of you and outside of you. When we make something public, it usually helps us work harder toward that goal.

What I want to change is:

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The reason I want to make this change is:

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The support I have for making this change is:

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The resistance I have to making this change is: (what will you lose, what will change)

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My life will change in the following positive ways if I make this change:

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My life will change in the following negative ways if I make this change:

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The steps to making this change are:

1. Knowing the change that needs to be made (awareness)
2. Wanting to make the change (desire)



3. Making a commitment to making the change-setting goals (plan)
4. Implementing steps to making the changes (working on it)
5. Who/what is the support I need to make this change. How am I going to make sure that I get this support?
6. Assessing if the change is working in the way I want it to work. (review and adjust as necessary)

Please remember, never make a change FOR ANYONE BUT YOURSELF!!!!

My first active goal in making this change is:

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If I get discouraged about making this change, I will: (talk to \_\_\_\_\_, read, pray, look at how far I have come, etc.)

The biggest/strongest support for making this change is:

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My biggest hurdle to making this change is:

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How am I going to check on my progress toward making the change I want?

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Work on making one change at a time. When we take on making a bunch of changes, it is easy to get overwhelmed, lost, and to give up. Working on and focusing on one change at a time helps make sure the change will happen. In addition, each change you makes changes other things. So the changes we make and want to make become easier and smoother as time goes by and we are successful in making changes.

GOOOOD LUCK!!!!!!

Wrap-up: What is the most important thing you have learned from this section? How will it help you in the future?

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**THRIVE Sessions 15-16: What are feelings and what do they have to do with love, violence, and abuse????**

**FEELINGS**

What are feelings? Feelings are a response that we have to things that happen to us. There are four major categories of feelings-everything that we feel falls into these categories. They are: happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. All of us use many words to describe our feelings, but they can be sorted into one of the above feelings. The words we use are often telling us the degree of the feeling. Let's make a list of how these feelings are expressed-from mild forms to extreme forms of the feeling.

<i>HAPPY</i>	<i>SAD</i>	<i>AFRAID</i>	<i>ANGRY</i>

Sometimes, we tend to use stronger forms to express the feeling than what we are really experiencing. We get so used to expressing a feeling in a strong form that we don't recognize when we are having a milder form of the feeling. And, of course, the opposite is also true. We may only express mild forms of the feeling even when we are truly feeling much stronger responses than we are excerpting. Either way, we have a problem because we are not sharing with ourselves or with anyone else what the true magnitude of the feelings are. When this happens, we and those around us, have a

difficult time dealing with the feelings and getting through whatever is causing those feelings.

Many of us use anger as a feeling to respond to all difficult and uncomfortable situations. Anger is more comfortable to many of us than feelings such as fear or sadness. If we decide to define our feeling as anger, then we don't have to deal with the negative consequences of fear or sadness. In addition, anger is a feeling that generates more action and activity than sadness or fear. Being active helps us not feel, express or deal with our feelings. When we allow ourselves to "own" a feeling, then we have to "deal" with it. This means that we have to accept that there may be consequences of those feelings and we will have to deal with those consequences.

For example, let's say that you are in a relationship and you find out that your partner has cheated on you. What do you think you may be feeling? Anger, sadness, hurt, betrayal? If you confront your partner, then the consequences of the confrontation may be that you and your partner will break up. Sometimes, we will find excuses for the behavior, blame the other person, and find a reason for this to have happened, just in order to not have to confront our partner and face the possibility that our relationship may end.

Another reason that feelings may be difficult for us is that current feelings may bring up memories of past pains. Because of the memories of the past pain, many people choose to "block" our feelings and decide just to not feel.

Sometimes, we don't want to feel feelings because it may not be safe to express what we are feeling. We may get hurt, be ridiculed, or lose someone if we express what we are really feeling. Also, we do not feel "safe" to express what we are feeling because of the consequences-from others or from ourselves.

**The benefits of allowing ourselves to feel are:**

1. Feelings give us valuable information about yourself, and your judgement of whatever situation you are in.
2. Feeling feelings helps us deal with the stress of the situation. Keeping feelings inside creates stress.
3. Feeling feelings is a form of self-protection. They allow us to see what is happening in our lives, tell us what we need to do to take care of ourselves, and what we need to do to make our lives better.
4. Expressing our feelings allows us to be effective and in control of our lives.

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3eRWFxz>

## FEELING WORDS

<b>ANGRY</b>	<b>SAD</b>	<b>CONFUSED</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>SCARED</b>
MAD	DEJECTED	DISCOMBOBULATED	JOYFUL	APPREHENSIVE
IRRITABLE	DOWNHEARTED	PERPLEXED	DELIGHTED	FEARFUL
HOSTILE	DESPONDENT	PUZZLED	GLAD	TERRIFIED
PIQUED	DEPRESSED	BEWILDERED	ELATED	TORTURED
ANNOYED	LOW	SCREWED-UP	JAZZED	ALARMED
BITTER	SORRY	MIXED-UP	HIGH	UNEASY
VICIOUS	BLUE	EMBARRASSED	JOVIAL	ATTACKED
ENRAGED	ROTTEN	DISCONCERTED	MELLOW	REJECTED
IRATE	UNHAPPY	BEFUDDLED	PLEASED	IMMOBILE
FURIOUS	DOWN	TROUBLED	OVERJOYED	THREATENED
UPSET	LONELY	BOTHERED	CHEERFUL	APPREHENSIVE
INCENSED	GLOOMY	FLUSTERED	EXCITED	CHALLENGED
DISPLEASED	TEARFUL	JUMBLED	WONDERFUL	UPTIGHT
IRASCIBLE	PITS	FRUSTRATED	THRILLED	AFRAID
FEROCIOUS	MISERABLE	HESITANT	GAY	SHUDDERING
VEHEMENT	SORROWFUL	AMBIVALENT	WARM	DREAD
VEXED	MELANCHOLY	TORN-UP	CAREFREE	LOCKED-IN
VIOLENT	TERRIBLE	CONFLICTED	CHEERY	PRESSURED
PISSED-OFF	HURT	FLOUNDERING	EXUBERANT	PARANOID
RESENTFUL	FORLORN	SNAFU-ED	ENERGETIC	ANXIOUS
HOT	DOLEFUL	SCATTERED	SUPER	CRAVEN
PROVOKED	GRIEVING	STRUGGLING	BUBBLY	NERVOUS
BOILING	DOWNCAST	LONELY	BLISSFUL	WARY
FEVERISH	MOROSE	DIVIDED	TICKLED	PANICKED
TICKED-OFF	BUMMED-OUT	LOST	OKAY	VULNERABLE
FRUSTRATED	SHITTY	DISORIENTED	PROUD	PETRIFIED
TORQUED	DISCOURAGED	CHAGRINED	ECSTATIC	INSECURE
SEETHING	GRIEVED	UNSETTLED	RELIEVED	OWERWHELMED
STEAMED.	TORN-UP	RATTLED	COZY	CORNERED
RAVING	ANGUISHED	ALONE	PEACEFUL	SINKING
UGLY	SICK	TWISTED	RELAXED	STARTLED
RAGING	HEADACHE	TORN	CONTENT	INTIMIDATED
RADICAL	LISTLESS	MUDDLED	COOL	INTENSE
THROBBING	FUNKY	UNCOMFORTABLE	UP	SICK
	UPSET	FUZZY	PLAYFUL	HYSTERICAL
	DISENCHANTED	TREMENDOUS		
	LOST	CONTENTED		

BLAH

JUBILANT

WELL-BEING  
PASSIONATE  
CONFIDENT  
VICTORIOUS  
TERRIFIC  
OUTRAGEOUS  
WHEW

### FEELINGS IDENTIFICATION EXERCISE

List some situations in the past when you have been aware of feelings. Take your time. Work to remember what your physical responses may have been in each situation.

**1. Identify three situations in the past month when you felt happy.**

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**2. Identify three situations in the past month when you felt sad.**

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**3. Identify three situations in the past month when you felt afraid.**

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**4. List three situations in the past month when you felt angry**

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**Which one of these was the easiest? The most difficult? Do you know why?**

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**Identify three things about your partner that you really like.**

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**Identify three things about your partner that you really do not like.**

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**Identify three things about your partner that remind you of yourself-are they things that you like or do not like?**

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How do you feel about the things about the things that remind you of yourself? Do you dislike or like them? Remember, sometimes the things that we dislike about others are the same things we dislike about ourselves.

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So, what do you do with all this information? The next step after becoming aware of feelings is to express them. We are always expressing our feelings-whether we are aware of it or not. Our body language, expressed in tone of voice, silence, body posture, facial expression, and others, tells others what we are feelings. When our words do not match our actions, confusion in-on both sides of the relationship. In relationships where there is confusion due to mixed messages, trust deteriorates, and the relationship is in deep trouble.

Remember! Feelings are a tool for understanding and for communication. You have the right to say how you feel—you do not have the right to expect others to change because of your feelings. And... the same goes for others in your life-it is important to respect our feelings and the feelings of others. Feelings are not wrong or right-they are indicators of things that are happening to us and they need to be paid attention.

### FEELINGS WORKSHEET

The feelings that I know I have  
are \_\_\_\_\_

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When I am with my boy/girl/friend, I feel (describe as many feelings that you can)

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The feelings that I have that get me into trouble  
are \_\_\_\_\_

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The reasons that they get me into trouble  
are \_\_\_\_\_

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The feelings that I wish I didn't have  
are \_\_\_\_\_

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Because \_\_\_\_\_

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My boy/girl/friend knows I feel happy, sad, afraid, mad, because

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I know my boy/girl/friend feels happy, sad, afraid, mad, because (s)  
he \_\_\_\_\_

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When I am in a relationship, I  
feel \_\_\_\_\_

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When I am not in a relationship, I feel

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Wrap of this section. What did you learn about feelings? What did you identify about yourself that you did not know before?

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Something I want my boy/girlfriend to know and understand about my feelings is:

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### **THRIVE Sessions 17-19: Let's Talk about Anger and Jealousy!!!**

Anger is a feeling. Feelings are not good or bad, wrong, or right. They are indicators of something going on in our lives. We need to pay attention to our feelings. If we don't pay attention to them, they will just get stronger until we pay attention.

#### **What Is Anger?**

Anger is one of the basic human emotions, as elemental as happiness, sadness, or fear. These emotions are tied to basic survival and were honed over the course of human history. Anger is related to the "fight, flight, or freeze" response of the sympathetic nervous system; it prepares humans to fight. But fighting doesn't necessarily mean throwing punches; it might motivate communities to combat injustice by changing laws or enforcing new behavioral norms.

Anger is not only a valid emotion, but one that can be a useful motivating force to incite positive change.

Lots of times we avoid feelings with other activities. Drugs, video games, things that distract us from paying attention to the feelings we are having. This is because there are some feelings that can be uncomfortable.

Anger is an interesting emotion because it can be a cover-up or uncomfortable emotions, and/or it can be because of impending danger. This makes it important to pay close attention to anger and to work to figure out what is really happening.

In addition, we all have feelings we don't want to experience. So, many times, we use anger as a substitute for those feelings. For example, sadness and fear are two emotions that are often extremely uncomfortable. Think about sometimes when you have shown or felt anger and really the emotion you were supposed to be dealing with was sadness or fear. An example of this can be a relationship breaking up.

Common **emotions** known to trigger **anger** are anxiety, shame, sadness, fear, frustration, guilt, disappointment, worry, embarrassment, jealousy, and hurt. All these **emotions** are experienced as negative and are perceived as threatening to our well-being.

Anger is also often called a secondary emotion because we tend to resort to anger in order to protect ourselves from or cover up other vulnerable feelings. A primary feeling is what is what is felt immediately before we feel anger. We almost always feel something else first before we get angry. That said, anger can also be a primary emotion.

We might first feel afraid, attacked, offended, disrespected, forced, trapped, or pressured. If any of these feelings are intense enough, we think of the emotion as anger.

As the drawing below illustrates, anger is like an iceberg in that only some of the emotions are visible. The other emotions exist "below the water line" where they are not immediately obvious to outside observers.



Image from Men For Change, The Online Healthy Relationships Project, 1998

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/39nHo6s>

There are four types of anger which help shape how we react in a situation where we are angry. These are: Passive Aggression, Open Aggression, Passive Aggression, and Assertive Anger. If you are angry, the best approach is Assertive Anger. However, there are times when it is best to use another approach—for example, if you are in fear of your life, it might be important to be aggressive instead of assertive.

**FOUR BEHAVIORS IN DEALING WITH OTHERS  
CHOOSE THE ONE WHICH GETS THE BEST RESULT**

**When you are: Passive**

**You are:**  
emotionally dishonest  
indirect, inhibited, reactive  
self-denying (silent martyr)  
blaming, apologetic

**Your feelings are:**  
I'm not okay, you're not okay  
I'm not okay, you're okay

hurt, anxious  
victimized  
possibly angry later  
**Beliefs about yourself:**  
I have to be perfect or I'm worthless  
I don't count  
Others are more important than I

### When you are: Passive-Aggressive

**You are:**  
emotionally dishonest  
indirect, self-denying at first  
self-enhancing at expense of others  
later on  
unwilling to take responsibility

**Your feelings are:**  
unconfident, fearful, then angry and  
vengeful

**Beliefs about yourself:**  
I can't trust anyone  
I can outsmart others to get what I  
need

### When you are: Aggressive

**You are:**  
inappropriately honest  
direct, expressive, attacking  
blaming, controlling, self-enhancing at  
the expense of others  
**Your feelings are:**  
I'm okay, you're not okay  
I'm not okay, you're not okay  
Righteous, superior

deprecatory at the time and possibly  
guilty later

**Beliefs about yourself:**  
I am entitled  
I must have control  
I have to look out for myself  
the world revolves around me

### When you are: Assertive

**You are:**  
appropriately honest  
direct, self-enhancing  
expressive, self-confident  
**Your feelings are:**

respectful of self and others at the  
time and later

**Beliefs about yourself:**  
I am happy because I can meet my  
own goals (take care of myself) while  
respecting the needs of others

**An example of different responses to the provocative statement "Your ideas are stupid and immature"**

**Passive**

"Uh, I guess you're right...I don't know too much"

**Passive/Aggressive**

You say nothing at the time but then stand up the person for an appointment, saying you "just forgot"

**Aggressive**

"Go to hell! We all know your IQ is below normal because your mother was a slut"

**Assertive**

"I don't feel you know me well enough to make that judgment. Perhaps if you listened some more, my ideas might be clearer to you than they are now"

We all have anger triggers. These come from our childhood, our life experiences, our culture. Each of us has their own unique set of triggers. It is important to be aware of as many of your triggers as possible. That way, you understand when you get triggered and you are prepared to deal with the feeling and change the behavior that you show.

**What are some of the more common anger triggers?**

- \***frustration**-from within ourselves and from outside ourselves.
- \***excessive stress**-everyone has a breaking point. When we are experiencing a lot of stress, we may become angry at situations that would not bother us at all if the stress were not there.

- \***rejection**-rejection hurts most of us a great deal. Pain is something we usually do not want to feel, and we often cover pain up with feelings of anger.

- \***learning and experience**-most of us have situations we get angry at-just because we get angry about them. We learned these responses by watching others, or by having an uncomfortable experience. Any experience that reminds us of these prior situations often gets the same response instead of being thought through and looking for a new alternative.

\***getting even**-someone does something bad to us-we often feel that we need to do something bad back. Isn't it ironic that most of us do not apply this same logic to something good happening to us?

\***words**-almost all of us have certain words that we respond to in an angry fashion.

**Look at these triggers and see if you can list as many as possible of your anger triggers**

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7.  |
| 2. | 8.  |
| 3. | 9.  |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

Remember, the more of your anger triggers you know the more control you will have over your anger!

Now, let's look at some of the other factors that influence anger.

1. **What you think of the situation.** Your anger depends on how you look at a situation. How what is going on involves you, what it does to you, and how much control you have are all important factors in how angry we get at situations.
2. **Your level of self-esteem.** Generally speaking, the higher one's self-esteem, the harder it is to provoke anger in that person. Low self-esteem individuals tend to personalize things and to feel that things that happen are aimed at them deliberately.  
Take a minute and assess your self-esteem on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being low and 10 being high. If your self-esteem is low, what can you do to build it up? If it is high, what can you do to keep it high?
3. **Your temperament and personality.** Some of us are mellow and some of us are quick tempered, and some of us are in the middle. The more mellow

individuals are usually slower to anger and vice versa for those of us who are quick tempered. Knowing what kind of personality you have gives you an edge on handling your anger because you can be aware of your propensity to anger and make efforts to decrease the level of anger you will experience.

Assess yourself honestly. Are you quick to anger, tend to take things personally, and find yourself angry more often than you would like? Or do you tend to not take things personally, let things go and find that it takes you a fair amount of time to become angry?

4. **The environment you are in.** The more secure we feel, the less likely we are to become angry. The more insecure we feel, the more likely we will react in an angry manner.
5. **How aware you are, and what your mood is.** It is much easier to become angry if you are already upset or in the early stages of anger. Remember, anger creates anger. If you are already angry and something else happens, it is quite easy to become even angrier. In addition, situations that are more personal to us have a greater chance of creating anger than do those situations that are not as important to us.
6. **When it works.** When you get what you think you want by being angry, then you will use anger again to get what you want. Unfortunately, when this happens, you don't look at what it costs you.

In addition, we all have many "built-in" responses to situations. These responses come from a variety of sources-childhood, past experiences, culture. It is important to learn to look at your responses to a situation, how you are interpreting the situation, and then think about what kind of healthy response you can give. Look at the responses-toxic thoughts-below and see how many apply to you.

**The All-or-Nothing Trap:** You see your partner as either always doing the wrong thing, or never doing the right thing. ("He always has to be right!")

**Catastrophic Conclusions:** One partner exaggerates negative actions and events concerning the other partner. ("She bounced that check and now we are definitely heading to the poor house!")

**The "Should" Bomb:** One partner assumes the other will meet one or more of his or her needs—just because he or she should know that need. ("You should know how much I hate my job, even though I tell everyone what a great opportunity it is.")

**Label Slinging:** You unfairly, and negatively, label your partner and lose sight of his or her positive qualities. ("You are so lazy!")

**The Blame Game:** You unfairly, and irrationally, blame your partner for relationship issues, or bigger issues. ("My life only sucks because of you!")

**Emotional Short Circuits:** Emotional short circuits occur when one partner becomes convinced that his or her partner's emotions can't be "handled. ("No one can possibly ever reason with her!")

**Overactive Imagination:** In this case, you reach negative conclusions about your partner that are not based in reality. ("She's so preoccupied lately; she must be having an affair.")

**Head Game Gamble:** You try to outsmart your partner by erroneously assuming he or she has certain motives. ("He's only being nice to me because he wants to play golf this weekend.")

**Disillusionment Doom:** This occurs when partners focus on idealized expectations of their partner that are rooted in the past. ("All he does now is worry about his job; he is just like all the other guys who never cared one bit about my needs.")

While there may certainly be kernels of truth underlying some of these types of toxic thoughts, it is the extent to which we distort, exaggerate, and overly focus on them that can suck the joy out of loving relationships. But being able to look for, and then dwell on, your partner's positive qualities and behaviors is the key to overcoming these toxic thoughts about him or her

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3OCOrUE>

Fill the sheets out below to get a better picture of your anger profile.



List the red flags that come up when you get truly angry or upset. Remember, the focus of this is you, your ways of acting, not your partner, children, parents, teachers, friends, etc.,). Look this list over at least once a week. When you see these red flags come up, it is time to take a **Time Out**.

Physical Flags: (what happens in my body?)

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Emotional Flags: (what do I feel?)

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Mental Flags: (what do I think?)

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Behavioral flags: (what do I do?)

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## Anger Worksheet

When I am angry, I feel

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When I am angry, my  
body

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(In this describe what happens in your body when you are angry, for example, your  
shoulders tighten up, breathing changes, muscles become tense)

My destructive anger actions are

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Some different actions that  
I could take when I am angry are

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When I am angry, my boy/ girlfriend

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When my partner is angry, I... (physical, emotional, mentally)

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(Describe your feelings and actions)

I am most like \_\_\_\_\_ in my family when I get angry. I don't like  
this

because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In my family, anger  
is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Are there members of the family who are "not allowed" to get angry, members who get angry all the time? Is it OK or not OK for you to get angry?)

Being or feeling angry protects me  
from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## JEALOUSY

Jealousy is the number one cause of abuse/violence in relationships. It can be deadly and devastating. It is soooo very important to understand what jealousy is, how it occurs, what it means and how to handle it.

Jealousy is a feeling-just like other feelings. Jealousy happens in all kinds of relationships. When it happens in intimate relationships, it can lead to problems, if it is not handled appropriately.

When we are jealous, we are usually feeling that we are not as important to our partner as they are to us, that someone else is more special to them than we are, that they are thinking about being with someone else, that they are cheating on us.

Sometimes, we have good reasons for being jealous, and sometimes we don't. If you are in a relationship where one of the partner's is always jealous about one thing or another, then it may not be a healthy relationship. If your partner does things to "get" you jealous, you may want to think about how good this relationship is for you.

All relationships go through time where there is some jealousy. That's normal. What isn't normal is a relationship where one or both partners are often

jealous, are often accusing the other one of “looking, cheating, or wanting to cheat”. Unhealthy jealousy is checking on your partner a lot, following them, going through their personal belongings, asking friends to check on them for you. That isn't love-it is unhealthy jealousy.

When you get jealous, take some time and think through the jealousy. What is your secret fantasy about what is happening? Is the fantasy possible? Has your partner given you any reason to think they would hurt you? Then look at your jealous behavior. Do you get angry and say mean things to your partner, do mean things to your partner, withdraw and shut your partner out? Does punishing your partner work? If not ( and it usually doesn't), maybe you should do something different.

### [The Poisonous Effect of Jealousy on Your Relationship](#)

By Kurt Smith, Psy.D., LMFT, LPCC, AFC

Last updated: 21 Aug 2018

Most of us have felt it at one time or another. It could be a mild annoyance or like a fire inside you, consuming you and making you feel like you might explode.

Although it is a common emotional reaction when a person is feeling threatened, jealousy is one of biggest relationship destroyers out there.

Jealousy can range from feeling bothered that that your husband is admiring another woman or that your wife is looking at another man, to imagining things that are not actually there. Either way jealousy will have a negative effect on your relationship.

#### **What Is Jealousy?**

Although feeling jealous is something most can relate to, the feeling is often confused with envy. Envy and jealousy are quite different, however. Envy is a reaction to lacking something and wanting what someone else has. You might be envious of someone's good looks, or their beautiful home, etc.

Jealousy on the other hand is the feeling that someone might try to take what is yours. For example, your husband becomes close friends with an attractive co-worker, and you may feel jealous of — and threatened by — their relationship.

At its most mild jealousy is considered an instinctual reaction that makes us want to protect what we feel is ours. Unlike simply being protective though, jealous feelings can balloon quickly into destructive behavior and cause us to act in ways that are selfish and controlling. It can even cause us to assume things are

happening that are not, like seeing a friendly exchange as the sign of an affair or working late as hiding a secret addiction.

Instinctual or not, jealousy is not productive. People who struggle with controlling, jealous feelings are often struggling with deeper issues as well. Uncontrolled jealous behavior is typically a symptom of one or more of the following:

- Insecurity
- Fear
- Low self-esteem

Understanding the root of the behavior can help you work toward controlling it. Any of those three, or combination of them, will not only allow feeling jealous to manifest in destructive behavior, but will also create other problems in a person's life.

### **What Jealousy Does to Your Relationship**

Jealous behavior can be extremely harmful to a relationship. At best the jealous partner is needy and constantly looking for reassurance that they are the only one and that no one is a threat to replace them. At its worst jealousy can manifest in controlling and distrustful behavior, and even physical or emotional abuse.

A jealous partner may try to control the actions of their partner, checking up on their whereabouts or monitoring their calls, texts or emails. This behavior sets up a pattern of distrust that is unhealthy and will eventually cause a relationship to collapse.

The foundation of any healthy and happy relationship is trust and respect. A person struggling with jealousy is unable to trust the person they are with or show respect for them as an individual or their boundaries.

Overtime this behavior will destroy the feelings of love and affection that once existed. It will also likely cause repeated arguing and a need for one partner to prove themselves and their loyalty over and over again. This can be exhausting and prevent a relationship from growing and establishing a solid foundation.

### **How Can You Control It?**

Jealous behavior can be tough to control. The underlying issues rarely go away on their own. If jealousy is a pattern of behavior that is repeated in relationship after relationship it may take the intervention of a professional therapist to help reign it in and provide tools to cope with the causes that are driving it.

Getting past jealousy in a relationship requires building trust. One partner must trust the other enough to know that, regardless of the circumstance, the love and

respect they share will prevent outside influences from threatening their relationship. This can be difficult if one partner is insecure and struggles with trusting overall.

If you have found that jealousy is a problem in your relationship, whether it is you that are jealous or your partner, it can be painful for both of you. Getting beyond it will take patience, communication and changing of beliefs.

To start controlling your jealousy, let's look at your jealousy patterns.

### **My Jealousy Patterns**

1. What kinds of things do you get jealous at? List as many as possible

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2. How do you show your jealousy?

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3. What are your jealousies in your current relationship? How do they compare with jealousies you had in past relationships?

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4. How do you use jealousy to control/manipulate your partner? How does your partner use jealousy to control you?

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Write about two times when you have been jealous. Write the incident, and then write what your jealous fantasy and behaviors were. Finally, write down what you could do to handle the situation better.

Example:

Incident: I saw my girlfriend (boyfriend) talking to her ex. She was smiling.

Fantasy: I got pissed because I was sure that she was planning on going back to him.

Behavior: I stormed up to them, told him to stay away from her and then grabbed her arm and told her she had better never do that again.

Better reaction: I could have taken a deep breath, waited until she was done talking to him, approached her, told her I had just seen her with him and I would like to know if anything is going on between them.

(the trick is changing the behavior is in asking for information about what is going on, not making guesses and then reacting as if your guesses are correct)

INCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

FANTASY \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BEHAVIOR \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BETTER  
REACTION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

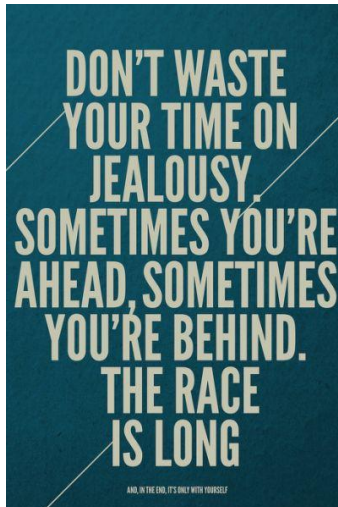
INCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

FANTASY \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BEHAVIOR \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

BETTER  
REACTION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





The **main reason** a person becomes **jealous** is low self-esteem, and that is something that the **jealous** person him/herself needs to work on. The excessive fear of losing the person we love indicates that we are not happy with ourselves and that we think that we need someone else to be happy. Nov 2, 2015

*Charlotte Bridge, 09.28.2016*

### **Overcoming jealousy: The 10 Dos and Don'ts**

To a certain extent, jealousy in relationships is inevitable. Put simply, when you care about someone you don't want to lose them and, ironically, jealousy often arises when a partner is happy in their relationship. The fact of the matter is that jealousy is natural but what's important is how you deal with it. Here are some good ways to emotionally handle jealousy so that you don't jeopardize a great relationship with irrational paranoia.

We've compiled a list of 10 Dos and Don'ts in order to help you overcome jealousy and let your relationship blossom harmoniously.

#### **Overcoming jealousy: The Dos:**

##### **DO recognize you have an issue**

The first step to overcoming something irrational is, as always, to acknowledge that you have an issue. Awareness will enable you to accept that your jealousy is most likely unjustified and therefore easier to conquer. It is how you deal with your jealousy that dictates how the relationship will continue. Recognizing your

irrationality towards normal situations will stand you in good stead to control your emotions.

### **DO actually trust them**

Many people who are happy in their relationship, still get really jealous. But ultimately you must ask yourself if you trust them - have they ever given you any reason to doubt their faithfulness in the past? Most likely they haven't and it's all in your mind. Remember the saying 'innocent until proven guilty'? Give them the benefit of the doubt and trust them - there are still plenty of good people out there who value monogamy.

### **DO keep yourself busy**

The best way of dealing with irrational doubts is to keep yourself busy so that you don't indulge your mind and let it run wild with jealous thoughts. While it's easy to allow your mind to come up with ridiculous scenarios that you imagine your partner to be in, you'll have more control over your thoughts if you surround yourself with people. Throwing yourself into projects or keeping your mind occupied by spending time with friends will help you with overcoming jealousy.

### **DO improve your self-esteem**

When trying to overcome jealousy, it might be worth also taking a look at yourself and considering perhaps why you become green-eyed easily. Often, it's down to a lack of self-esteem. Most likely, you have no reason not to trust your partner and the jealousy is coming from you being treated badly in the past or feeling like you're not worthy of them. Stop this! Your insecurities are not your partner's fault and if you're not careful you will scare them away. Have some faith in yourself - you're great and your partner is lucky to be with you!

### **DO communicate properly with your partner**

Jealousy often arises from miscommunication and misunderstandings. It's best to clear this up instantly by ensuring your communication with your partner is solid. Obviously don't behave like a crazy, jealous person with too many questions, but

clarifying certain things to give you peace of mind is no bad thing. This is better than letting your mind run wild with irrational thoughts that could easily be reined in. DO this within reason though; if it's irrational and likely to offend your partner, don't ask them.

## **Overcoming jealousy; The Don'ts**

### **DON'T compare yourself to others**

One of the best ways to deal with overcoming jealousy is to stop comparing yourselves to others. It's easy to become jealous of your partner's friends or colleagues if you're constantly finding fault in yourself and focusing on other people's better qualities. But it's this kind of thinking that will encourage jealous thoughts. Of course, there are always people in the world who are better looking or more intelligent than you, but you will have great qualities that others don't! That's probably what attracted your partner to you in the first place.

### **DON'T play games**

Many jealous people in relationships think the answer is to play games. Perhaps you want to make your partner feel how you're feeling? Whatever the reasoning, this is not the answer. Playing games will only makes things worse and ruin the trust between you. Fight your instinct when you feel like you want to make them feel bad or anxious and treat them fairly.

### **DON'T try to make them jealous**

Overcoming jealousy is not done by creating more jealousy. This is a dangerous path to go down and will end up causing more problems in your relationship. Many people think that by putting their partner through the same jealousy they're feeling, they're taking back the power somehow. This doesn't work. It will probably result in your partner having trust issues with you too and cause arguments and even more distance between you.

### **DON'T let your imagination overpower reality**

This is perhaps the most fundamental point when overcoming jealousy. The problem with jealousy is, predominantly, that it is all in your head. It is often based on unfounded irrational thoughts and you need to let your rational mind overpower them. As Robert L. Leahy Ph.D. suggests on Psychology Today, 'Recognize that jealous thoughts are not the same thing as a REALITY. You may think that your partner is interested in someone else, but that doesn't mean that he really is. Thinking and reality are different. It is very important then to decipher between the two and keep your rational side intact. Control your mind and you'll make your life a lot easier.

### **DON'T get swept up in the online world**

With technology becoming more significant, it is difficult not to obsessively check social media and various contact platforms you have with your partner. It is easy to misinterpret pictures or messages online and many people jump to absurd conclusions. One of the best ways of overcoming jealousy is to remove yourself from the online world as much as possible.

These are some of our tips to help with overcoming jealousy but ultimately it comes down to trust. The feeling of uncertainty is natural, but it is all about how you deal with it. As Robert L. Leahy Ph.D. suggests on Psychology Today, 'But uncertainty is part of life and we have to learn how to accept it. Uncertainty is one of those limitations that we cannot really do anything about. You can never know for sure that your partner will not reject you. But if you accuse, demand, and punish, you might create a self-fulfilling prophecy.'

It is also important that jealousy is a feeling. Feelings are messages of what is going on in our lives. Normal jealousy also happens in relationships. This is when you need to talk to your partner about what you are feeling. This is a way to build communication in a relationship, share what each other needs and wants, learn about how to treat each other in ways that say they are important, and honor and respect the needs of your partner.

Please remember, jealousy is not all negative. Feelings of jealousy may also be telling you that your partner is not being honest with you, that something is not quite right in the relationship. These feelings are useful in learning to know and

understand what is happening in your relationship. You may discover how healthy your relationship is or is not. If your partner is deliberately attempting to create jealousy, you need to explore that and decide if the relationship is healthy/unhealthy.

Wrap up of this section. What did you learn about yourself in this session and what does that mean to you?

## **THRIVE Sessions 20-22 SELF-ESTEEM**

### **SELF ESTEEM DYNAMICS**

Self-esteem is the value we choose to place on ourselves. It is how we view ourselves, not how others view or value us. We tend to perceive, judge, and act in ways consistent with our self-esteem.

Self-Esteem is one of the strongest factors in having/not having a healthy relationship. When you have positive self-esteem, you take good care of yourself and if you take good care of yourself, you will be able to take good care of others. With strong self-esteem, you will not allow yourself to be abused, used, manipulated and you will not do that to others.

#### **Types of self-- esteem**

1. **Positive self-esteem:** this viewing yourself as worthwhile.
2. **Negative self-esteem:** this is viewing yourself as worthless or only worthwhile if you accomplish what you think you should. Sometimes people with negative or low self-esteem have an inferiority complex. They may have strong and persistent doubts or worthless, in comparison to others.

#### **Symptoms of an inferiority complex**

- \* sensitivity to criticism.
- \* inappropriate response to flattery.
- \* tendency towards blaming.

- \* hypercritical attitude.
- \* feeling of persecution.
- \* negative feelings about competition.
- \* tendency toward exclusiveness, shyness, and timidity.

### **Different areas of self-concept**

1. **Identity:** a person's identity involves having direction for their life. It involves answering such questions as "Who am I?" and, "What's my purpose in life?".
2. **Self-acceptance:** self-acceptance involves knowing and accepting the strengths and weaknesses you have. Feeling that you are o.k.
3. **Self-satisfaction:** self-satisfaction involves being satisfied with who you are and where you are on the road of life. Some dissatisfaction is healthy because it motivates people to strengthen their weakness or change their situations.
4. **Behavior:** behavior involves feeling okay about yourself in relation to how you act or behave. This could involve how you behave toward your children, spouse, or other members of your family.
5. **Moral, ethical self:** moral, ethical self, relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to being ethical in dealing with others and in doing what you feel is right or wrong. It could relate to how you feel about your relationship to a superior being such as god.
6. **Physical self:** physical self involves how you feel about your physical appearance, your body, and about your health.
7. **Personal self:** personal self relates to how you feel you present yourself to others. It could involve use of gestures, facial expressions, and nonverbal expression.

8. **Family self:** family self relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to your family, husband, wife, children, or parents. It could involve whether there are problems in the relationship, or whether you feel the "family" likes you or thinks you are okay.

9. **Peer self:** peer self relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to those outside your family. This means friends, teachers, employers, etc...

### **WHY IS SELF-ESTEEM SO IMPORTANT?**

1. It determines how we let others treat us
2. It affects the decisions and choices we make, such as the spouse we choose, friends we choose, employment etc...
3. It affects academic and career achievement.
4. It affects how motivated we are or how hard we try.

### **WHICH SIGNIFICANT FACTORS INFLUENCE OUR SELF ESTEEM?**

1. Parents, family
2. Social class, family
3. Intellectual ability
4. Physical appearance, facial, body build
5. Job, role
6. Education
7. Physical strength, stamina
8. Sexual prowess

#### **What causes low self-esteem?**

Low self-esteem often begins in childhood. Our teachers, friends, siblings, parents, and even the media send us positive and negative messages about ourselves.

For some reason, the message that you are not good enough is the one that stays with you.

Perhaps you found it difficult to live up to other people's expectations of you, or to your own expectations.

Stress and difficult life events, such as serious illness or a bereavement, can have a negative effect on self-esteem.

Personality can also play a part. Some people are just more prone to negative thinking, while others set impossibly high standards for themselves.

**How does low self-esteem affect us?**

If you have low self-esteem or confidence, you may hide yourself away from social situations, stop trying new things, and avoid things you find challenging.

In the short term, avoiding challenging and difficult situations might make you feel safe.

In the longer term, this can backfire because it reinforces your underlying doubts and fears. It teaches you the unhelpful rule that the only way to cope is by avoiding things.

Living with low self-esteem can harm your mental health and lead to problems such as depression and anxiety.

You may also develop unhelpful habits, such as smoking and drinking too much, as a way of coping.

**What is your self-esteem like?**

List 5 things you like about yourself

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List 5 things you are proud of in your life

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List 5 things you do well

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How can we improve our self-esteem?

### **How to have healthy self-esteem**

To boost your self-esteem, you need to identify the negative beliefs you have about yourself, then challenge them.

You may tell yourself you're "too stupid" to apply for a new job, for example, or that "nobody cares" about you.

Start to note these negative thoughts and write them on a piece of paper or in a diary. Ask yourself when you first started to think these thoughts.

Next, start to write some evidence that challenges these negative beliefs, such as, "I'm really good at cryptic crosswords" or "My sister calls for a chat every week".

Write down other positive things about yourself, such as "I'm thoughtful" or "I'm a great cook" or "I'm someone that others trust".

Also write some good things that other people say about you.

Aim to have at least 5 positive things on your list and add to it regularly. Then put your list somewhere you can see it. That way, you can keep reminding yourself that you're OK.

You might have low confidence now because of what happened when you were growing up, but we can grow and develop new ways of seeing ourselves at any age.

### **Other ways to improve low self-esteem**

Here are some other simple techniques that may help you feel better about yourself.

### **Recognize what you're good at**

We're all good at something, whether it's cooking, singing, doing puzzles or being a friend. We also tend to enjoy doing the things we're good at, which can help boost your mood.

### **Build positive relationships**

If you find certain people tend to bring you down, try to spend less time with them, or tell them how you feel about their words or actions.

Try to build relationships with people who are positive and who appreciate you.

### **Be kind to yourself**

Being kind to yourself means being gentle to yourself at times when you feel like being self-critical.

Think what you'd say to a friend in a similar situation. We often give far better advice to others than we do to ourselves.

### **Learn to be assertive**

Being assertive is about respecting other people's opinions and needs and expecting the same from them.

One trick is to look at other people who act assertively and copy what they do.

It's not about pretending you're someone you're not. It's picking up hints and tips from people you admire and letting the real you come out.

### **Start saying "no"**

People with low self-esteem often feel they have to say yes to other people, even when they do not really want to.

The risk is that you become overburdened, resentful, angry, and depressed.

For the most part, saying no does not upset relationships. It can be helpful to keep saying no, but in different ways, until they get the message.

### **Give yourself a challenge**

We all feel nervous or afraid to do things at times. But people with healthy self-esteem do not let these feelings stop them trying new things or taking on challenges.

Set yourself a goal, such as joining an exercise class or going to a social occasion. Achieving your goals will help to increase your self-esteem.

Please watch this video: <https://bit.ly/3jK03yf>

It is important to realize that self-esteem is important for all participants in a relationship. When choosing a partner, spend some time assessing their level of self-esteem. Work at choosing those who have strong self-esteem-this will make the relationship more successful.

Wrap up of this session: What did you learn about your self-esteem? About your partner's self-esteem? What are you going to do to maintain and improve your self-esteem?

### **THRIVE Session 23-Substance Abuse and Teen Relationships**

The teenage years are filled with emotion, hormones, and growth. Many begin romantic relationships for the first time. Teenage relationships are tough. Things become even more challenging when alcohol and drugs are involved. Studies show that there is a link between drug and alcohol abuse and teen dating violence.

#### **Drugs, Alcohol Lower Inhibitions**

A lot of teenager's experiment with drugs and alcohol. Sometimes it's because they feel pressure since other kids are doing it. Other times it's a learned behavior at home. Some teens turn to drugs and alcohol as a way to escape or relax.

Whatever the reason, drugs and alcohol alter the way our minds and bodies work. Drugs and alcohol lower inhibitions and increase the risk of engaging in unhealthy

behaviors. Teens have a lower tolerance for drugs and alcohol, so the effects are much more dramatic.

Unhealthy behaviors can be incredibly dangerous in a teenage relationship. Teens under the influence of drugs or alcohol are more likely to become:

- Jealous
- Controlling
- Physically abusive
- Emotionally abusive, and
- Sexually abusive.

Alcohol-charged outbursts also tend to be more violent and damaging.

### Dating Violence and Parents' Substance Abuse

Drugs and alcohol can adversely impact teen dating relationships, even if the teens involved are not drinking. At least **one study** has found that a parent's drug or alcohol use can affect their child's relationships in the future.

According to researchers at the University of Buffalo research institute on addictions, teen dating Violence **isn't just a teenage problem**. Rather, "the risk for aggressive behavior and involvement in dating Violence are related to stressors experienced much earlier in life."

If, between preschool and middle school, a child has an alcoholic or drug addicted parent, they are much more likely to be abusive to partners in future relationships.

Why? There could be several reasons to explain the relationship between a parent's addictions and a teen's behavior.

- Parents struggling with addiction are more likely to be depressed and/or withdrawn from their children.

- Children are only exposed to behaviors fueled by drugs and alcohol and accept them as the norm.
- Deprived of attention, children are more prone to act out.
- Children witness or are victims of abuse at home.

Researchers believe that a parent's addictions change the family dynamic and cause children to become more aggressive. These aggressive tendencies prevent those children from developing positive, healthy relationships.

### Substance Abuse and Victims of Dating Violence

Drug and alcohol abuse contribute to dating violence. It is also a consequence of it. Victims of teen dating violence are much more likely to turn to drugs or alcohol to cope with the abuse.

Girls are more likely to turn to alcohol, while boys are more likely to abuse marijuana. All teens who are involved in abusive relationships are more likely to abuse prescription opioid medications.

Abusing drugs and alcohol will not just affect a teenager's relationships. It can also impact other aspects of their lives. Teens may begin to choose drugs and alcohol over school, friends, sports, and family. Substance abuse in teens is linked with poor decisions, including drunk driving.

**Jim Yeargan**, a former prosecutor and Atlanta-based DUI lawyer, says teens are much more likely than adults to get into an accident while driving under the influence. At the very least, the decision to drive drunk can result in an arrest for DUI. At the very worst, a drunk driving accident can be fatal and warrant much more serious charges. Not only will the teen have face criminal charges, but also live with the knowledge and memory of such a tragic event.

Drugs and alcohol are deeply intertwined with teen dating violence. Substance abuse is both a cause and effect. It can be a vicious cycle. Parent drinks. Child inclined to be violent in future relationships. Teen abuses partner. Teen and victim both turn to drugs and alcohol to cope. They will grow up and, if they do not get

help and leave their habits behind, their own children may be destined to live the same life.

Without intervention, this cycle is doomed to repeat itself. It needs to be broken. Do not just speak with your kids about dating violence. Talk to them about drugs and alcohol, as well.

Wrap up of Session 22:

What did you learn from this section?

How can this information help you improve this and future relationships?

### **THRIVE Session 24-25 Looking at my relationship**

All relationships have expectations and "rules". These can also be known as expectations. Very often each member of the relationship has different rules/expectations from the other person. "Relationship rules" are not usually discussed, however they are there. When they are broken, there are problems and often abuse. It is important to look at the rules of your relationship, to see if your rules/expectations match those of your partner.

#### **PARTNERSHIP, RULES AND ROLES**

1. In the relationship you are in now or, in a relationship you have been in, what do you think your partner expects/expected from you?

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2. What happens if you don't meet those expectations?

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How do you know when you have broken the rules/expectations?

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3. What expectations do you have of your partner?

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4. What happens if your partner does not meet those expectations?

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How does your partner learn that s/he has not met the expectations/broken the rules?

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5. Where did you learn or develop those expectations? Family, culture, experience

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6. Are any of your expectations unfair or unreasonable?

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7. How do the expectations (rules) your partner has restrict you? What do you do if you can't follow those rules? (lie, get defensive, blame someone else, work harder, etc)

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8 If you or your partner "steps" out of the expected role, what happens? From you, from your partner, from others?

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8. What do you or have you given up from being in this relationship?

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9. One of the times that bothered me most in my relationship was:

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10. If I wanted to make my partner laugh, I would...

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11. If I wanted to make my partner angry, I would...

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12. If I wanted to make my partner cry, I would...



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13. I wish I were more...

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14. I wish I were less...

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15. I would like to say...to my partner.

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16. I would like my partner to say...to me.

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17. I am happiest with my partner when...

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18. What I like best about my relationship is

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19. What I like least about my relationship is

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20. I feel jealous when

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21. I am afraid when

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22. To keep from getting hurt by my partner, I

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23. When I hurt my partner, I

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23. My partner is unfair when

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24. I get defensive when my partner

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25. I have a hard time telling my partner

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Wrap up of sessions 23-25:

What did you learn from this session? What rules/expectations do you need to let go of? What changes do you need to make in order to make your relationships stronger, more resilient, and healthier?

## **THRIVE Session 26-27: The Concept of Self-Responsibility**

**Responsible behavior** is made up of **five** essential elements—honesty, compassion/respect, fairness, accountability, and courage. Let us look at each one. **Honesty** The old saying is true—honesty really is the best policy.

We often hear to take 100% responsibility for our life. What is the big deal about it? The big deal is that it moves you from victim to victor of your life.

It puts you at cause and not at effect, meaning that you accept that you create your life and not just reacting to it. You appreciate that things happen *for* you and not *to* you.

Taking responsibility puts you at choice and that allows you to choose how to respond to life's challenges. You move into the driver seat of your life's journey.

Most of all, taking 100% responsibility changes your energy and the practices described here put you in higher vibrating mind-body states.

As you know, we are energy, our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions are energy and the law of attraction brings us more of what we think and feel. It merely matches the energy of your thoughts and feelings with experiences that will give you the same energy.

Now, when you broadcast thoughts that result in you feeling good, the law of attraction responds by bringing you the experiences that will confirm you feeling good.

So, it pays to take responsibility of your life. Do you agree?

Let's explore 9 ways how this looks in everyday life including your business.

**1. Take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.**

To take responsibility for your life, is to take responsibility for your powers of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting, because this is the structure of all human experience. You create your life with your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.

You take responsibility when you accept that the thoughts you have, are *your* thoughts coming from *your* mind. How you feel happens in *your* body and is a result of *your* thoughts. The words you speak come from *your* mouth and voice. The actions you take, are taken by *you*.

What this means is that nobody can make you think, feel, say, or do anything. Nobody can push your buttons because you are the button maker! In the same way you don't have control over how other people respond as they respond from their mindset.

## **2. Stop blaming**

Stop blaming your partner, parents, economy, your upbringing, or the dog for your misfortune. Blaming keeps you in victim mode and robs you of changing your situation.

When you stop blaming and accept responsibility, you shift from victim to victor. Now you can look at the situation and decide what to do about it.

Ask yourself, "What is my role in this?"

## **3. Stop complaining**

Complaining is another form of blaming and playing victim as if you have no choice. It also shows that you focus on lack, things going wrong, things happening to you. In everything not going according to plan, there is a gift, there is a bigger picture.

Ask yourself, "What is the gift here? What can I learn from this?"

## **4. Refuse to take anything personal**

This is a biggie. Assuming that everything is about you. Taking any form of disagreement as a personal attack. Remember, you don't have control over how other people respond, you only have control over how you respond.

Refuse to take anything personal. It is most probably not about you, but about the issue at hand. Instead of making assumptions, rather ask questions. This is a powerful and liberating practice, with never ending surprises.

Ask yourself, "Is this about me, or the issue at hand?"

## **5. Make yourself happy**

Taking responsibility for your happiness is liberating. Firstly, to realize that happiness does not come from outside of you. It is not the job of your partner, parent, friend, child, to make you happy.

To be happy is a decision and the gateway to happiness is gratitude. Keep a gratitude journal and you will find lots to be happy about.

Also, do things that make you feel happy. Listen to your favorite music, surround yourself with beauty, express your creativity, do acts of kindness, etc.

Ask yourself, "What about this could make me happy?"

## **6. Live in the present moment**

Life is now. There is only one moment, now. The past is history, the future is a mystery, so there is only now, this moment. Take responsibility for this moment and make the best of it to redeem the past and create the future you want. Paulo Coelho wrote something to this effect in his biography.

Be the gatekeeper of your thoughts and refuse to have a rerun of the same 60000 thoughts of yesterday if they do not get you what you want in life.

Choose your thoughts carefully in every moment and when you become present you have the awareness of what you are thinking and feeling. This then allows you to interrupt thoughts that do not serve you. Deliberately change them in the moment to what you want to create in that moment to shape your future.

Ask yourself, "Am I in the present moment and what do I want?"

## **7. Use the power of intention**

You have the power to choose. In fact, you are making choices all the time. Tea or coffee, red dress or black dress, hair up or down, yoga or go for a run. Even by not making a choice, you are making a choice.

Become intentional in making choices by having a vision in mind. A vision for your life, your business, your relationship, your health, wealth, etc.

Living intentionally by deliberately making choices to move you forward toward manifesting your vision or outcomes, is consciously taking responsibility for your life.

Ask, "Is saying yes to this moving me towards my goal?"

## **8. Feel calm and confident**

When you take responsibility for your life and experience, you step into a place of calm confidence. You feel calm because you know that you are consciously in charge of yourself and that you can choose how you respond.

You feel confident that you will not fall into victim-mode by sucking up other people's verbal vomit. They can keep those gifts.

Ask yourself, "What do I choose to accept from this conversation and how do I choose to respond?"

## **9. Look for the good in people**

There is a saying that we judge ourselves by our intentions and we judge others by their behavior.

Make it your new habit to look for the intentions behind people's behavior. So often when we understand where someone comes from, we let go of judgement.

One excellent practice is to remove the labels we hang onto people like bibs around their necks and that somehow gives us permission to treat them in the worst possible way. Often this applies to the people closest to us.

Ask yourself, "If I just see him/her as a human being, how will I respond differently?"

Another effective practice is listening to understand instead of listening to respond. This means to practice asking questions to really understand what the other person means, instead of waiting for a chance to interrupt and voice your important opinion.

This allows you to take responsibility to intentionally have illuminating conversations and fulfilling relationships, because the person that you are talking to will appreciate your attention, like and trust you and support you in return

By

- Dina Marais, Business & Life Reinvention Coach

## **CHOICES AND DECISION MAKING (Ways of being Self-Responsible)**

Decisions are the actions that decide how we conduct our lives. We are all making decisions all the time. Sometimes we will say to ourselves, "I'm not going to make a decision about \_\_\_\_\_." We fool ourselves that we have not made a decision and we don't have to deal with any of the repercussions such as someone being mad at us, someone feeling that we have chosen other than them, or someone's feelings being hurt. Unfortunately, this is not true. When we don't make a decision, we make a decision to not make a decision. This is a decision and it has consequences.

**Remember.** You don't get what you want when you don't make the decisions and don't take the actions yourself. Letting others decide for you means that you may not get what you want, and you may end up doing something you don't want to do or be something you don't want to be.

So, what's the answer? Making decisions, making decisions, making decisions. The more decisions you make, the more comfortable you are in making decisions and in living with them. There are some things that will help you make better decisions. They are:

**1. What is the real problem that needs a decision?** Too often, we cover things up and don't look at the real problem. Understanding the real issue helps make a good decision. Can you think of a time when you didn't look at the real problem and instead blamed the problem on something else? Something that happens a lot in relationships is when a partner cheats. Somehow the other partner finds out and then puts all of the blame on the person that their partner cheated with. This may keep the relationship from breaking up, but it doesn't deal

with the real problem. The real problem is why their partner allowed themselves to cheat, why they broke the commitment they had in the relationship. Until that is dealt with, the problem may keep happening over and over.

**2. What are all of the possible options for the decision?** List the positive and the negatives for each of the options. (Remember, all options have both negative and positive elements) Making a list of positives and negatives often makes the decision much easier. In looking at the options, don't forget to look at short time gains and losses and long time gains and losses. For example, drinking may have a short time gain in that it tastes good, you feel good and relaxed for awhile, and it fits in with others. On the other hand, the long term effects may not be so good in that you may do something stupid or dangerous and suffer consequences for this, there may be some uncomfortable physical effects (hangovers, etc.), and you might get into trouble.

**3. Get all of the available information you can in order to make the best decision possible.** Ask others, get information wherever you can, and use this information to make the most informed decision possible. The more information you have the better decision you are going to make-both for now and for later.

**4. Ask and use information from those you trust to help you make your decision.** You may have people in you life who have gone through similar situations. Asking them about the decisions they made and how those decisions may help you. You may not ultimately make the same decision, but their experience may help.

**5. Take your time.** Don't let others or yourself pressure you to make a decision until you are ready. Making decisions in haste often leads to making a wrong decision and may be costly.

**6. Allow yourself to make a mistake if the decision you make turns out to be not so great, use what happened to make a new and better decision.** Don't let mistakes shut you down and keep you from making any more decisions. Mistakes are simply ways of getting you more information that you need to make the best decision possible.

**7. Be prepared for the responses of others, both positive and negative.** There will always be those who will work to tear your decisions apart and to prove that they will never work. And there will be those that feel since you made a good



decision, you will always make good and great decisions. There is danger on both sides. Every decision stands on its own. The benefit of making decisions is that you learn to make decisions, and you become comfortable making decisions; And the more you practice making decisions, the better you will become at making decisions. Making a good decision does not mean that you will always make good decisions, nor does making a bad decision mean that you will always make bad decisions.

### **100% SELF-RESPONSIBILITY RULE**

What does being 100% self-responsible mean to you?

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What is difficult about being 100% self-responsible?

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What are the benefits of being 100% self-responsible?

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How is a relationship better if both members are 100% self-responsible?

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In what ways is your partner 100% self-responsible? In what ways is he/she not?

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What steps can you take to become more self-responsible? What stops you from taking them?

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Wrap up of this section:

What did you learn about yourself in this section?

How can being Self-Responsible change your life?

## **THRIVE-session 28 Relapse Prevention Plan**

What is a relapse prevention plan? Why do you need one?

### **What Is a Relapse Prevention Plan?**

A relapse prevention plan is a written plan that helps you recognize the signs of relapse, avoid triggers, and prevent a return to abusive/violence free behavior.

It will likely include a detailed plan of action to help you initiate a personal self-care plan, identify techniques you will use to deal with urges, and create a list of people you will reach out to if you feel the urge to be abusive.

### **Why Do I Need a Relapse Prevention Plan?**

Relapse is very common-First of all, it is important to remember that you are dealing with a habit-the tendency to revert to habit behaviors is high when we are stressed. Relapse can be caused by several different factors, such as:

- Stress Worries, money, grades, etc.
- Relationship issues Certain sights and smells

If a relapse happens, it is not the end of your recovery journey. Additionally, just because you have a relapse prevention plan, does not mean you will relapse. It just helps minimize the damage and quickly get you back on track if you do.

**Relapse is a process; it is not an event.** To understand relapse prevention, you must understand the stages of relapse. Relapse starts weeks or even months before the event of physical relapse. In this page you will learn the early warning signs of relapse and specific relapse prevention techniques for each stage of relapse. There are three stages of relapse. (1)

- Emotional relapse
- Mental relapse
- Physical relapse

### **Emotional Relapse**

**In emotional relapse, you are not thinking about being abusive.** But your emotions and behaviors are setting you up for a possible relapse in the future.

The signs of emotional relapse are:

- Anxiety
- Intolerance
- Anger
- Defensiveness
- Mood swings
- Isolation
- Not asking for help
- Not going to meetings
- Poor eating habits
- Poor sleep habits

### **Early Relapse Prevention**

Relapse prevention at this stage means recognizing that you are in emotional relapse and changing your behavior. Recognize that you are isolating and remind yourself to ask for help. Recognize that you are anxious and practice relaxation techniques. Recognize that your sleep and eating habits are slipping and practice self-care.

If you don't change your behavior at this stage and you live too long in the stage of emotional relapse you'll become exhausted, and when you're exhausted you will want to escape, which will move you into mental relapse.

**Practice self-care.** The most important thing you can do to prevent relapse at this stage is take better care of yourself.

For example, if you do not take care of yourself and eat poorly or have poor sleep habits, you'll feel exhausted and want to escape. If you do not let go of your resentments and fears through some form of relaxation, they will build to the point where you'll feel uncomfortable in your own skin. If you do not ask for help, you'll feel isolated. If any of those situations continues for too long, you will begin to think about using behaviors that you have used in the past. But if you practice self-care, you can avoid those feelings from growing and avoid relapse.

## **Mental Relapse**

**In mental relapse there is a war going on in your mind.** Part of you wants to go to old behaviors, but part of you does not. In the early phase of mental relapse, you are just idly thinking. But in the later phase you are definitely *thinking* about those old behaviors.

The signs of mental relapse are:

- Thinking about "how good" things used to be
- Justifying old behaviors
- Lying
- Hanging out with friends who support abusive behavior
- Fantasizing
- Thinking about old behaviors
- Planning your relapse

It gets harder to make the right choices the longer this goes on.

## **Techniques for Dealing with Mental Urges**

**Play the tape through.** Think about what will happen and what the consequences will be if you go back to the old behaviors. Remember how the cycle starts and does not stop. Think about the harm you will do to those you care about. When you play that tape through to its logical conclusion, abusiveness does not seem so appealing.

**Tell someone about what you are feeling.** Call a friend, a support. Share with them what you are going through. The magic of sharing is that the minute you start to talk about what you are thinking and feeling, your urges begin to disappear. They do not seem quite as big and you don't feel as alone.

**Distract yourself.** When you think about being abusive, do something to occupy yourself. Call a friend. Get up and go for a walk. If you just sit there with your urge and do not do anything, you're giving your mental relapse room to grow.

**Wait for 30 minutes.** Most urges usually last for less than 15 to 30 minutes. When you are in an urge, it feels like an eternity. But if you can keep yourself busy and do the things you are supposed to do, it will quickly be gone.

**Do your recovery one day at a time.** Do not think about whether you can stay abuse/violent free forever. That is a paralyzing thought. It is overwhelming. Let the new behaviors become the new habits. And CELEBRATE not relapsing!!

**Make relaxation part of your recovery.** Relaxation is an important part of relapse prevention, because when you are tense you tend to do what is familiar and wrong, instead of what is new and right. When you are tense you tend to repeat the same mistakes, you made before. When you are relaxed you are more open to change.

### Physical Relapse

Once you start thinking about relapse, if you do not use some of the techniques mentioned above, it does not take long to go from there to physical relapse.

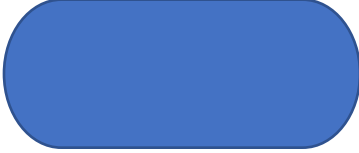
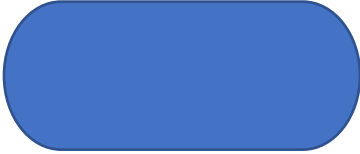
#### References

1) The stages of relapse were first described by Terence Gorski. Gorski, T., & Miller, M., *Staying Sober: A Guide for Relapse Prevention*: Independence Press, 1986.

What are your relapse warning signs and what are the coping mechanisms you will use when you recognize the warning signs:

Relapse Warning Signs	My coping mechanism for handling


What are my relapse triggers?





Trigger	My strategy for dealing with it

Who and what is my support system-choose people you can connect with quickly. It is important to understand that you may need different people for different needs. Having several people on your list ensures that you can get help when you want/need it.

Who/contact info	What they help with	When will contact them

What is my personal plan for taking care of myself? Exercise, lifestyle changes, friends to keep/friends to let go of, sleep, nutrition, etc.

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