

WHAT IF I SEE WARNING SIGNS?

There are steps you can take in a relationship to try to prevent abusive behavior later. If you took our **Healthy Relationship Quiz** and see warning signs now, it is likely that they will get worse. Here are some tips on how to keep your relationship on the right track. You should also consider ending the relationship in order to stay safe.

What Do I Need to Know?

Abusive relationships are based on the power and control the abuser has over the victim. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, the abuse may not yet be seriously violent. Instead, the abusive partner may exercise power and control through other types of abuse such as possessive behavior, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, and low-level violence like pushing or pulling hair. Remember that all abuse is a choice. There is no excuse for violence or abuse of any kind.

What Can I Do?

If you think your relationship has low levels of abuse or might become abusive, keep your safety in mind. Take these steps now because it is likely that abuse will get worse, especially if nothing is done now to stop it.

- Set limits and consequences for your partner's abusive actions. Tell your partner you will leave the relationship if he/she does not change the behaviors you believe are unhealthy or unsafe.
- Focus on your own needs. Be clear about exactly how you need your partner to change, which behaviors are acceptable and which ones are not. Don't accept excuses if your partner doesn't make these changes.
- Encourage your partner to get help. A domestic violence or counseling program can teach your partner to have a violence-free relationship.
- Your partner should have a positive attitude towards treatment and change. If your partner admits that any abuse is wrong, it is more likely the abuse will end.

Remember that even though you cannot change your partner, you can make changes in your own life to stay safe. Consider leaving your partner before the abuse gets worse. Whether you decide to leave or stay, make sure to use our **Safety Planning** handouts to stay safe. Whatever you choose, look for the support of family and friends so that you are not alone in this difficult time.

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship..
free from violence and free from fear.