



# RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy | Unhealthy | When There is Danger



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## Introduction

This brochure is offered to Native youth and young adults to give some direction and information about healthy relationships. It is also about recognizing and dealing with abusive and violent behaviors that too often happen in dating and intimate partner relationships. Relationships can be difficult no matter what your age. No brochure can answer all your questions or give you everything you need. But we hope you can find something in here that provides light, encouragement and support as you try to figure out one of the most important things in life – relationships.

Relationships are about connection. Relationships are something sacred - the core of life. Traditionally L/D/Nakota peoples end prayers with the words “Mitakuye Oyasin.” It’s said to be the biggest and smallest prayer. One way of translating it is “We are all related.” This is an understanding Indigenous people have throughout the world. “We are all related” sounds simple. But it takes a lifetime to understand because it’s about the inter-relationship, interdependence, harmony and balance of all things Creator made. It makes each one of us sacred, because if you are not in your place in the circle of life, everything is harmed.

That’s why violence of any sort harms all. It pushes people out of their place. Taking care of ourselves, mind, heart, body and spirit, balancing the relationship or connections of those parts is the beginning of strengthening the circle of life. It cannot be done alone. So, we encourage you to find your way, and seek out and make relationships with people who can help make your fire grow! Remember, because we are all related, we are never truly alone. If you are struggling or are unsafe, please reach out. You have a right to and deserve safety and support. This brochure also provides resources to connect with people who can help you.

Take care. Blessings!



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GOOD LAKOTA? (A Good Relative)

In today’s world, you hear a lot of don’ts, but you don’t hear much about the do’s. Do you ever wonder why this is? Someone may say to you, “Be a good Lakota” [a good relative] and you feel like saying, “What is that?” when all you see around you is drinking and people being mean to each other? Or you see guys acting tough and abusive; thinking this is being a Lakota warrior. Being a good Lakota can take on an unpleasant overcast after a while.

I asked many Lakota speakers, most of them being elders, what it meant to be Lakota hca; to be a true Lakota. There were all kinds of answers, but there was much common ground. Waunsila, to have compassion was at the top of the list. Wahwayela opiic’iye was another frequent response and is the complete opposite of the tough warrior image. It means to conduct oneself gently and peacefully.

Another question I posed to the Lakota speakers was, “What cultural quality do you feel would help young people today?” First of all, they said that it’s something that you can’t just box up and give to them. Just by knowing the word, they won’t learn the quality of a cultural feature like “igluonihan”. Young people must see this behavior modeled consistently, not just be told to behave this way in words. Igluonihan means to conduct one’s self honorably and to be a good influence on your human environment. To igluonihan doesn’t mean dressing up or bragging.

It is really easy to do the hurtful things, but our ancestors were wise and from one generation to the next, they tried to improve the condition of the whole group of people. Even though it was harder, they knew they had to discipline themselves; to be wacintanka, to be peaceful. Generation after generation, they nurtured the quality of the people.

They knew that the behavior of one person can enhance or degrade the community and so it was important that the instructions were clear. Those instructions are still in Lakota language.

We live in a society of individualism. People look out for themselves and don’t pay attention to the quality of relationships; of wotakuye; being related. The challenge for young people is to understand that we are a small, but distinct culture, only thousands of people among millions. It is a greater challenge to hold on to those cultural behaviors that are of a higher order of morality than the society that surrounds us. It may seem like an impossible task, but the instructions are fairly simple: be a good relative, conduct yourself in peace, with discipline, honor and compassion. That is being a good Lakota. Try it.

Be well, my relatives.  
Rosalie Little  
Thunder,  
Caught In  
Crossfire  
Woman,  
Sicangu Lakota





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“Humankind has not woven the web of life.  
We are but one thread within it.  
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.  
All things are bound together.  
All things connect.”

—Chief Seattle 1854,  
Ancestral Leader of the Suquamish Tribe

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## What is a Healthy Relationship?

### What Is a Healthy Relationship?

Seems like there are tons of lists, lectures, books, publications about violent and unhealthy relationships. But after you memorize the “bad” lists, then what? Not a whole lot of discussion about what a good relationship is about. This is a start on figuring that out.

In healthy relationships, each partner is equal. They respect and like the things about the other that are different. The Equality Wheel (page 14) shows the special things in a relationship that are non-violent and healthy. Notice the Circle is held together by traditional values. If your behaviors are based upon these values, you can never go wrong. Show these values to yourself and your partner!

In healthy relationships, people make decisions thoughtfully, together, and communicate with each other without fear. When they disagree, they talk about differences. They listen to the other’s viewpoints and feelings. When they have a conflict, they find a way to compromise, so they both get what they need.

When one of them gets angry or loses their temper, they take a time out. They wait until they are both ready to talk calmly.

If one feels hurt by the other, they can talk about it. They can apologize without feeling humiliated, put-down or afraid. If one feels like having time alone, or wants to do things separately, their partner accepts and encourages it.

If either one approaches the other to have sex and one doesn’t want to, they stop. They both understand that “no” or silence means “no” and respect it. Or they may talk about it and change what they are do-

ing so that both of them are comfortable.

There is no room for fear in a non-violent relationship. Each person trusts the other. They can enjoy each other’s successes at school, sports and other activities. They are happy when the other has lots of friends, interests and dreams for the future. They know caring about someone doesn’t mean they can be and do everything for the other. They both need friends.

They know jealousy is not a sign of love, but that jealousy is about control and a result of seeing a person as property. Their partner gives support but is not responsible for making the other feel better about who they are. Each person knows they are responsible for their own health and happiness.

*Spark Magazine; SDCEDSV*

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**Native Love is understanding your role, respecting your partner—being there for one another.**

—Sam Alexander, Gwich ‘In

”





# Healthy Relationships Quiz

From StrongHearts Native Helpline  
[www.strongheartshelpline.org](http://www.strongheartshelpline.org)



- ☐ My partner gets extremely jealous or possessive.
- ☐ My partner accuses me of flirting or cheating.
- ☐ My partner constantly checks up on me by texting or calling all the time.
- ☐ My partner tries to keep me from seeing or talking to my relatives or friends.
- ☐ My partner encourages me to quit school or work or asks me to stop participating in activities and hobbies.
- ☐ My partner makes fun of my culture or spirituality and hurts my feelings.
- ☐ My partner says or implies that I'm not Native enough or that I'm too Native.
- ☐ My partner doesn't let me participate in my culture.
- ☐ My partner manages all of our finances and controls how we spend money.
- ☐ My partner has big mood swings. They can get angry and yell at me one minute, but then sweet and apologetic the next.
- ☐ My partner yells, screams or humiliates me in front of others.
- ☐ My partner makes me feel like I can't do anything right, or they blame me for problems.
- ☐ My partner breaks things or throws things to scare me.
- ☐ My partner makes me feel nervous or like I'm "walking on eggshells."
- ☐ My partner pressures or forces me to have sex or go further than I want.
- ☐ My partner pressures me to take nude or sexually explicit photos.
- ☐ My partner makes me feel bad for how I look and what I wear.
- ☐ My partner grabs, pinches, pushes, shoves, chokes, punches, slaps, holds me down, throws things or hurts me in some way.
- ☐ My partner threatens to hurt me, my relatives or children.
- ☐ My partner says that they didn't mean to hurt me. It was an accident.
- ☐ My partner threatens to harm themselves and blames me.
- ☐ My partner acts like the abuse is no big deal, denies the abuse, or tells me "it's your own fault" or "you deserved it."

## Check your results!

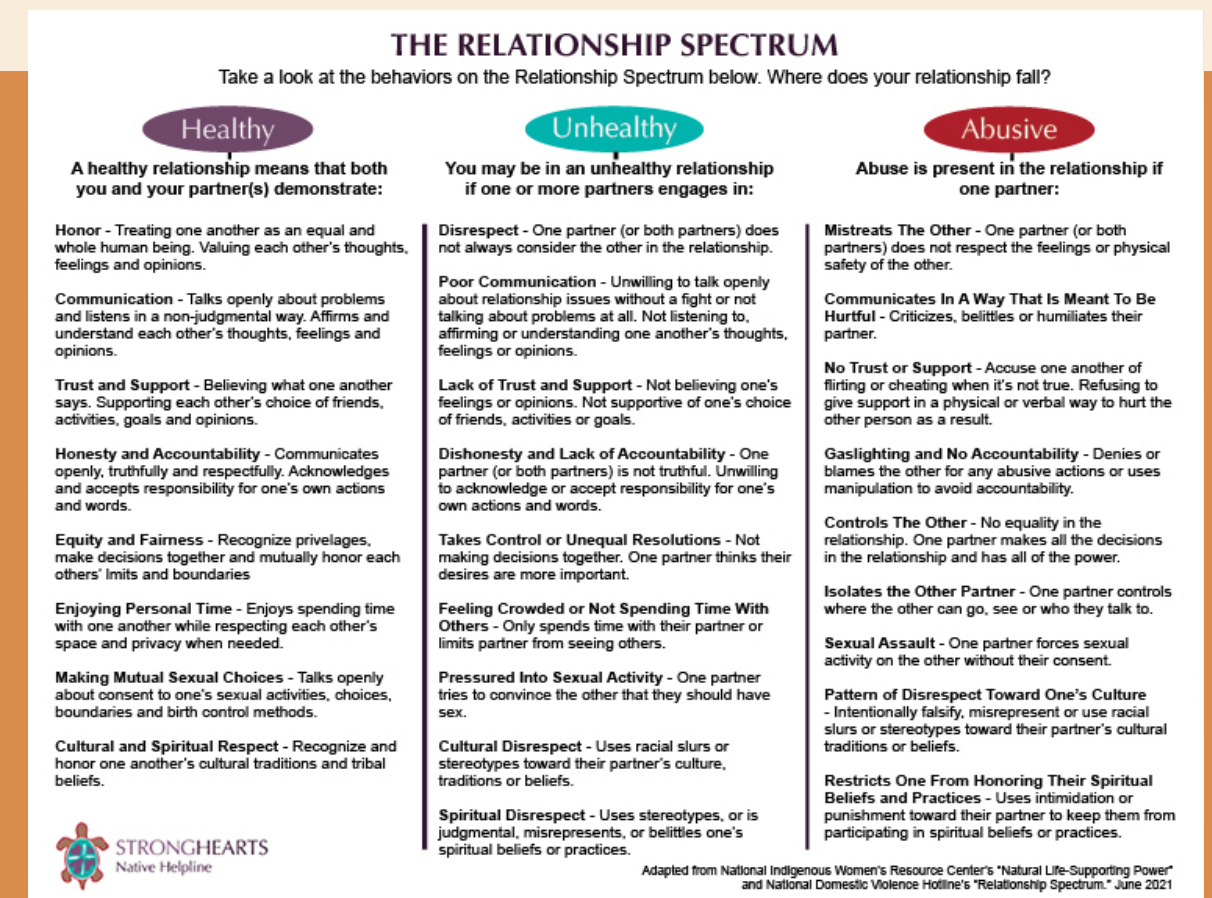
**If you checked 0 boxes**, it seems like you have a healthy relationship. Your relationship behaviors honor your relatives. Your ancestors would be proud.

**If you checked 1-2 boxes**, there might be some things in your relationship that are unhealthy or that make you uncomfortable. That doesn't necessarily mean these are warning signs of abuse. Keep an eye on these things and talk with your partner to make sure they don't become a pattern. Your concerns are valid. Open and honest communication is an important gift to each other, and we can honor our ancestors by practicing it.

**If you checked 3-4 boxes**, you are likely experiencing some red flags of an abusive relationship. This can be difficult, but do not ignore these signs. All relationships take work, but healthy relationships don't include abuse. You are sacred and you have the right to a healthy relationship.

**If you checked 5+ boxes**, you may be in an **abusive relationship**. No one deserves to be abused and abuse rarely stops. The most important thing is your safety, consider making a **safety plan**. We are here to listen. 1-844-762-8384 or strongheartshelpline.org (chat)

Quiz adapted from **Love is Respect**





# R<sub>x</sub> For a Healthy Relationship



## START OUT AS FRIENDS.

Get to know someone before you start dating. Find out if you have similar interests, tastes and values. You don't have to give up your interests for someone else. Differences can teach you new things.

## HANG OUT IN GROUPS.

Avoid the pressures of a one-on-one date by getting together with another couple or a bunch of friends.

## MAKE YOUR LIMITS CLEAR AND STICK TO THEM.

Tell someone up front if you've decided to only date in public places or refuse to ride with someone who's been drinking. The same goes for sex. Be clear about what you are and aren't willing to do. Talking about your boundaries early on, it may be awkward, but it can help you avoid misunderstandings – and getting hurt. If your partner can't respect that, you've got plenty of other dating options.

## DON'T RUSH THINGS.

It takes time to trust, and if you two are right for each other, you'll have plenty of time to be together. Some signs things are moving too fast:

- They call, text, or email you non-stop
- They always want to be with you and don't want you to be with anyone else

- They pressure you to commit or get physical too fast
- The attention is flattering, but that kind of intensity may be a sign of someone who could become abusive.

## GIVE EACH OTHER SPACE.

Love isn't about jealousy or obsession. You need time to hang with your own crowd, and so does your BF/GF. Anyone who wants to spend every minute with you or keeps you from seeing other friends or family is way too controlling.

## COMMUNICATE WITH RESPECT.

- Speak for yourself. Don't blame other people for your feelings or reactions.
- Listen without getting defensive or planning what you'll say next.
- Stick to the subject – don't bring up past arguments or mistakes.
- Don't use threats, call names, or make them feel guilty.

This information is courtesy of Teen ESTEEM magazine, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

Editor's note: The symbol Rx stands for "prescription. The Egyptians considered it a symbol of good and restored health. Source: <https://n8ve.net/Q8Rxk>

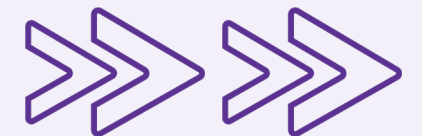
If you are a victim of domestic violence or intimate partner violence, know it is NOT your fault. Violence is the actions and responsibility of the abuser—not you.

You are not in control of other's behavior.

Younger women, ages 16-24 are most likely to be victimized. In over 85% of intimate partner violence, the victims are women, and the abusers are men and boys.<sup>1</sup> However, it can and does happen to men and boys and between same sex and Two-spirited couples. Relationships should be about respect; not power and control masked as love. **You deserve healthy and respectful love.**

1 Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 187635 (Oct. 2001).

## Respect yourself for being non-violent, but what if...



### Your Friend is Violent or Abusive?

- **Tell them that their abusive behavior is wrong and should stop.**
- Support and encourage your friend to use their strength and courage to change their behavior.
- Tell them about the people and places they can go to get help to change.
- Help them realize the abuse is their responsibility, not their partner's fault.
- Tell them you are afraid for their partner.
- Tell them partners are meant to be equals. Women are sacred.
- Let your friend know that they have a right and responsibility to power and control only over their own actions.
- Give support to your friend's partner.
- Tell an adult you respect.

### Your Friend is Being Abused?

- Tell them it's not their fault.
- Tell them you are afraid for them.
- Listen to them and accept what they say in a non-

judgmental way.

- Support and encourage your friend's strength and courage; they deserve to be treated the way they treat others.
- Learn more about abuse and share it with your friend when they want.
- Find out where domestic violence shelters and support groups are. Get advice & support from these programs for yourself. It's hard to see a friend in danger and hurting.

### You Are Being Abused?

- Tell your friends, parents or another adult you can trust. If they can't or won't help, find a domestic violence shelter. They'll talk to you, give you information and whatever else you may need.
- Call the police or other authorities. Being made to fear for your safety is a crime. Violence is a crime.
- Leave the relationship if you want/can. It is scary and dangerous to leave. Get help from a shelter or other adults you trust.

**Remember you are not responsible for his violence.  
Only he can control his behavior; the violence is not your fault.**



# How Do I Know This is Love?

We love chocolate. We love our favorite football team. We love our car. We love our new shoes. We love our friends. We love our boyfriend/girlfriend/partner. No wonder we're confused about love!

Our feelings about all these different things have a lot in common. They make us feel good and happy. We're glad they are in our lives. They can bring a smile to our face, laughter. Sometimes they can bring sadness and hurt, too. But if there's love involved, there is no fear for safety or violence.

There are important differences between loving things like fries, that cool shirt and favorite football team, and people. Fries, chocolate, shoes and shirts don't have spirits. People have spirits. In fact, we are spirits on a physical journey in this life. Each of us has a unique spirit and journey or path in life. We're here to learn and enjoy this life. Creator made each of us special and different, but equally important. Acceptance and respecting another person's path when it moves away from ours, is a sign of love. Even though it may be painful, it's a person's right to end a relationship. It's not a failing; it's just how it is meant to be. It should never involve abuse or violence.

Cars, shoes, and fries are things. They are objects we can own, change or trash. They are our property. People are not property. We cannot own people, make them change and should never trash them. If we try to, we are messing with a gift from Creator and the consequences can hurt everybody. (Note: Hickeys are a way of marking property – not love.)

Creator says, "Be good to one another; love one another." Creator never said just certain ones, or certain relationships over others. Relationships can be special, and we act differently depending upon the type of relationship. All of our relationships enrich our lives. In other words, demanding someone give up other relationships, or to expect one relationship to make you "happy," (really, it's about control...) stops a person's spiritual path. Not natural. Not love.



When it comes to intimate relationships, we often hear things like "she's my other half," or songs that say something like "I'm nothing without you," or "I can't live without you." They make it sound romantic to be just the two of you, totally alone. There's a reason traditionally young men and women were taught to be self-sufficient, healthy whole individuals before it was considered okay for them to get married. Healthy relationships are made with two healthy, happy people. They are together not because they feel they "need" each other, but because they "want" to be together. If you're not okay alone, no relationship can make you "okay."

Saying you can't live without someone is like saying you can't live without a drug. If you can't live without a

drug, then you need treatment. You are out of balance spiritually, mentally, emotionally and need to heal. Same with a relationship. It's true when they say you have to love yourself in order to love someone else. And you cannot love someone into loving themselves.

So, what is love? It is respect, compassion, trust, kindness, generosity, understanding, laughter and sharing. It is belief in and support for the other's path in life no matter where it goes. It is commitment to support the best in each other. Love is never abusive, jealous or violent. In Lakota when a couple is "in love," it is called tekicihilapi. It means "they cherish each other."

Spark Magazine, Vol 1, Issue 1;B.Hill, SDCEDSV

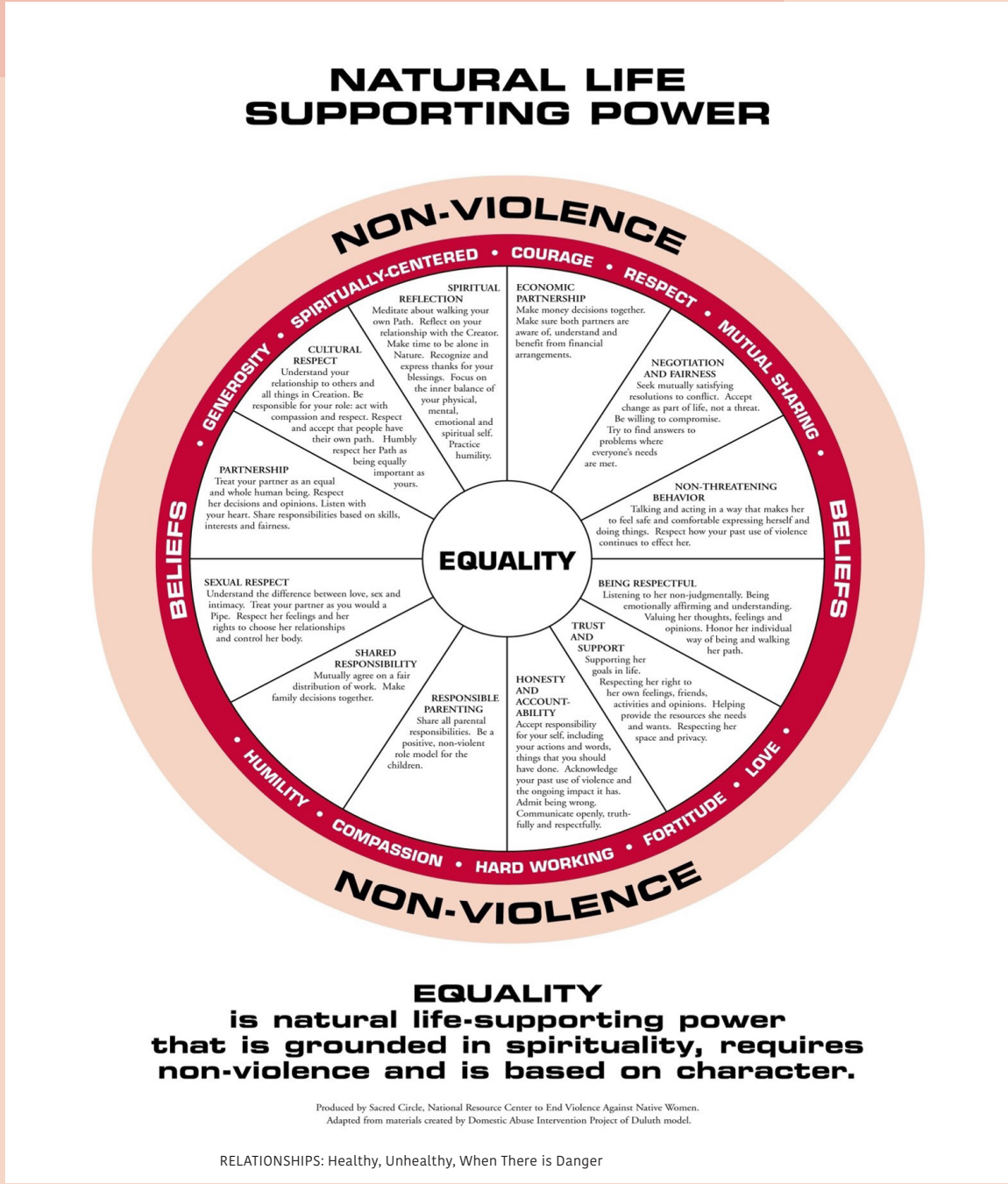


**“ Native Love is showing compassion to one another. Violence is never a part of Native society. –Raelyn Rodriguez, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians ”**



Equality Wheel - Our work to end violence against Native women and recreate peaceful, harmonious relationships and communities is based on reclaiming our traditional values, belief systems, and life ways. The natural, traditional life way rests upon values which are reflected in our behaviors and relationships with all things.

The key values of this life way are compassion, respect, generosity, mutual sharing, humility, contributing/industriousness, courage, love, and being spiritually centered.



# Talking about Consent in a Relationship



- Consent is...**
- Consent is mandatory before any sexual activity.
  - Consent is mandatory every time. Consent for one thing does not mean consent for everything.
  - Consent is permission and agreement between all partners involved.
  - Consent is communicating your boundaries verbally.
  - Consent is voluntary.

- Consent is not...**
- Consent is not silence.
  - Consent is not forced or coerced.
  - Consent is not permanent. You can withdraw consent at any time.

**Consent lets our partners know we honor and respect them!**



**What does consent mean?**

Consent is a HUGE concept to keep in mind when thinking of how we are in relation those around us. It is important to remember that consent is needed in ALL relationships, including personal, professional, environmental, and sexual.

Many believe that consent is limited to only physical and sexual relationships, however in our everyday life, consent is something that we should practice in each and every aspect of our lives with the people and non-human relatives around us. It is important that everyone feels comfortable and agrees on the activity that they would like to participate in, especially for our Native youth. This includes allowing ALL of our relatives the ability to choose whether or not they would like to engage in any type of touching, hugging, holding hands, sexual activity, and conversation.

To practice being good relatives to one another, we need to understand that everyone has the ability to choose who they would like to interact with. Everyone deserves to feel safe and to set their boundaries that make them feel comfortable.

We recognize that CONSENT must also be at the center of every conversation, action, and interaction.

- Consent happens when everyone involved agrees and gives permission to do something
- The best way to give and receive consent is verbally with a YES or NO
- Consent for one thing does not mean consent for everything!
- Consent needs to happen for each behavior and every interaction
- It's okay to say NO!
- Consent can be taken back at any time
- Consent is given freely, not through pressure, threat or intimidation

**How is consent applied?**

As Native peoples, we have been practicing consent since time immemorial. Such examples include the following:

- Offering prayers from our holy beings for our lands, farming practices, hunts, healing, and needs
- Offering medicines or items for a ceremony to be performed, or to ask for knowledge from another relative
- Giving gifts or offerings to pass through another Tribal community/nation other than our own
- Giving land acknowledgements when we are on another Tribal Nation's homeland other than our own

In contrast to our current reality, it is also important to understand that this still applies to how we practice consent TODAY especially because of the ongoing effects of colonialism, land violence, and gender violence against our Indigenous women, men, and LGBTQ2S+ relatives. Through a Native lens, it is our responsibility to care for our land and traditions because they are our non-human relatives as well. This is also known as Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and is an important principle that Indigenous peoples can use to protect our right to participate in conversations with both the US and Canada to speak up for our land.

If you are interested in learning more about Consent over Land and Body, check out the below resources from our friends at the Native Youth Sexual Health Network: "Toolkit – Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies: Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence"

**Take Action: Creating Safe Space**

Many communities don't have much for young people. No or few youth programs. No safe space just for youth. Don't wait for the adults – you can organize!

It just takes two people to start a whole movement. Native people have always supported each other with very little. Look around your community. Where is there safe space? Somebody's home? School after hours? Who do you trust and respect? Ask for their help in learning how to organize. If there's a women's program or shelter, ask if they can help.

You are sacred! Believe in your power to make change. Pray and move to create a safe space in your community for yourself, your friends and your relatives.

**To learn more about Consent please visit:**

- Project Consent: <https://n8ve.net/ZxIPW>
- We R Native: <https://n8ve.net/5OEMF>
- Cultural Survival: <https://n8ve.net/Ogaul>
- NYSHN: <https://n8ve.net/jLiBT>



# Healthy Relationship Bill of Rights

Adapted from StrongHearts Native Helpline

You have rights in your relationship. Everyone does, and those rights can help you set boundaries that should be respected by all partners in a healthy relationship.

## You Have the Right To:

- Live without fear.
- Privacy, both online and off.
- Feel safe and respected.
- Participate in your culture and practice your spirituality.
- Say no at any time (to sex, drugs/alcohol), even if you've said yes before.
- Hang out with your relatives and friends and do things you enjoy.
- End a relationship that isn't right or healthy for you.
- Be free from violence and abuse.
- Express your own feelings and opinions.
- Be listened to and taken seriously.
- Set your own priorities.
- Say "no" without feeling guilty.
- Ask for what you want without apologies or fear.
- Ask for information from others.
- Make mistakes like everyone else.
- Have your needs met.
- Not be perfect.
- Be angry, sad, confused or whatever else you're feeling.

If you feel that your rights have been violated and want to talk,  
StrongHearts Native Helpline is here to help.  
1-844-762-8483. [www.strongheartshelpline.org](http://www.strongheartshelpline.org)

## Jealousy Isn't a Sign of Love

If someone tells you they wouldn't be jealous if they didn't love you, they are lying or manipulating. They might not even know they are lying, but they are. Jealousy is envy, suspicion, distrust, resentment. Insecure or controlling people get jealous. If someone loves you, they trust you and want you to have and do whatever you want. They are glad for you and support you in what you want (as long as it's not self-destructive).

When a person we are in a relationship with says they are jealous, often they are really saying they want us to stop doing something – usually being with other people. They want total attention from us, to be the center of their lives all the time. It's a way of controlling and isolating us from family, friends and support. Checking texts, questioning where you've been, who you talked to, following you – that's stalking. It's illegal. Those are tactics of battering. Love is freeing and secure.

"I wouldn't be jealous if I didn't love you" comes just before "I wouldn't hit you if I didn't love you." Hitting is violence, not love. Jealousy is an emotional hit. We can't make others feel secure about themselves or our relationships. That's their responsibility, their lesson. Don't accept the guilt trip.

Spark Magazine, Vol 1, Issue 1; B. Hill, SDCEDSV

“

Have love for everything. Have respect for everything. Have honor for everything. That's love.

—Sarah James, Gwich 'In

”



# What is Dating Violence?

Dating violence is when two people are going out with each other or dating, and one person is abusive, threatening or uses power and control over the other person. This includes physical and sexual violence, economic abuse, threats, intimidation, denying, blaming and emotional abuse. Stalking and using social media to intimidate are also common control tactics. Dating violence can turn into battering. Battering, or intimate partner violence, is a constant pattern of purposeful abusive, violent behaviors that controls and instills fear in the other person.

These behaviors are not part of a caring relationship. This kind of violence is not natural and not part of Indigenous lifeways. It's a

result of what society teaches us as a result of colonization. Men are not born violent. Women are not born to be victims. A healthy relationship is based on respect and compassion. Dating violence happens to one out of every three girls/ women. Sometimes it happens to boys/ men by women, and also in Two Spirit LGBTQ relationships. However, most of the time the victim is female, and the abuser is male.

- Some harmful and abusive behaviors look like:
- partner acts like they “own” you
  - they decide who you can talk to
  - partner tells where you can go
  - tells you what to wear or how to dress
  - they get angry, jealous and physically abusive.

# What Does Digital Abuse Look Like?

In a healthy relationship, all communication is respectful whether in person, online or by phone. It is never okay for someone to do or say anything that makes you feel bad, lowers your self-esteem or manipulates you. Digital dating abuse is the use of technologies such as texting, social media or direct messages to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behavior is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.

- You may be experiencing digital abuse if your partner:
- Tells you who you can or can't be friends with on social media.
  - Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, DMs or other messages online.

- Uses social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc. to keep constant tabs on you.
- Puts you down in their posts.
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and demands you send some in return.
- Pressures you to send explicit videos.
- Steals or insists to be given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through your phone frequently, checks up on your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.

Adapted from Love is Respect - What is Digital Abuse? [https://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/What\\_Is\\_Digital\\_Abuse.pdf](https://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/What_Is_Digital_Abuse.pdf)

# Dating Violence is a Form of Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV)/battering includes many tactics that are used to maintain power and control without the exertion that physical and sexual violence require. This can happen when people are “dating” or going out with each other. It may be called “Dating Violence” and can be just as painful and dangerous as intimate partner violence.

NOTE: IPV/battering is different from “dysfunctional” or “unhealthy relationships.” Unlike IPV/battering, in dysfunctional or unhealthy relationships there is equal power and control, both can act on their decisions, and though hurtful things are said and done, neither person is in fear for their life. Couples counseling and other similar mental health interventions may be helpful and appropriate. A key distinction is that in IPV/battering at some point, one person – the victim –is in constant fear for their life from their partner.

Physical and sexual violence are the “enforcers” of IPV/battering. Physical and sexual violence only has to happen once to understand that a certain look or gesture means: “I beat you and/or raped you once. I will do it again.” Individually, batterers may use tactics differently. Often many tactics are being used all at once. Please remember to be very careful if you are leaving. Do not warn the abuser you are leaving because they often increase their violence to maintain control. Get help from a domestic violence program, law enforcement and/or trusted family and friends to stay safe and get the support you deserve.

NOTE: IPV/battering is more than a mental health issue. Though battering of males by females happens, IPV is primarily gender based. In approximately 95% of IPV/battering, the victims are female, the offenders/abusers are male (U.S. Dept. of Justice, BJS, National Crime Victimization Survey). IPV/battering also happens within Two Spirit/LGBTQ relationships. It is serial, violent crime. Violence against women and domestic violence is rooted in mainstream culture. It is not natural. Before

colonization, violence against women and domestic violence were extremely rare within Indigenous cultures.

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# Warning Signs of Dating Violence

People often wonder if there are signs that might warn about possible violence in a relationship. A lot of times there are warning signs, but sometimes there aren't any. The following is adapted from the National Technical Assistance Center on Family Violence.

1. Did your partner grow up in a family where there was violence? Some people who grew up in families with violence may use violence when faced with problems.
2. Does your partner tend to use force or violence to "solve" problems? Have a quick temper? Does your partner punch walls or things when upset? Cruelty to animals is a common behavior of people who are cruel to others.
3. Does your partner have a poor self-image that they try to cover up by being tough?
4. Does your partner have old-fashioned ideas about the role of men and women? ("real men" and "good women") Does your partner act as though women are not important or like they are property?
5. Is your partner jealous of you, your friends and family? Does your partner keep tabs on you? Does they want you to always go with them, even if you don't want to go?
6. Does your partner play with guns or other weapons? Do they talk about using them on people or to get "even"?
7. Does your partner experience extreme highs and lows? Is your partner really kind at one time and really cruel at others?
8. When your partner is angry, do you feel afraid of them? Do you find not making them angry is a major part of your life?
9. Does your partner treat you roughly or physically force you to do what you don't want to do?
10. Does your partner constantly watch or follow you? Or constantly text and/or call you? This is stalking and it's a crime.

ABUSE DURING DATING IS A GUARANTEE OF ABUSE LATER.

DO NOT THINK THAT YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR PARTNER.

Living together or getting married or having a baby will NOT stop abuse.

IF YOUR PARTNER DOES ABUSE YOU,  
SEEK HELP!



**IPV/Battering:** the purposeful use of a system of multiple, continuous tactics to maintain power and control over another. This intentional violence results from and is supported by unnatural, misogynistic, sexist societal and cultural belief systems. IPV/Battering is a crime against individuals, families and communities.

Originally produced by Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women

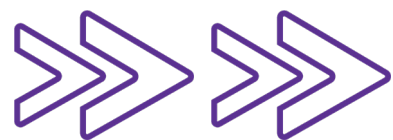


# How Do I Know If I’m in a Relationship with an Abuser?

In an unhealthy or relationship with an abuser, you might find yourself feeling depressed, anxious and fearful. Dating violence can be confusing, because we know our partner can be kind, nice and fun. Caring and love should make you feel good about who you are right now without changing.

Dating violence causes pain and fear. Love does not. Love cannot stop dating violence. If it happens when you are dating, it will get worse if you live with, have children with, or marry the person who is abusive towards you. Sometimes people change, but words and promises aren’t change. Change starts with owning your own behavior and doing what is necessary to change thinking and behaviors. It takes time, commitment and working with other people who understand and will support but also hold the abusive person accountable for their bad behavior.

If this is happening to you, know it’s not your fault. You deserve help and support. No one deserves to be abused.



## What to do if you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship:

- Immediately go to a safe place and tell someone you trust.
- Call or text StrongHearts Native Helpline (1-844-762-8483, or chat online at [strongheartshelpline.org](http://strongheartshelpline.org)) to talk with an advocate confidentially, or have a friend call for you.
- Love is Respect: info, chats and more for young people. Visit [Loveisrespect.org](http://Loveisrespect.org)
- National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org); call 1-866-331-9474 or 1-866- 331-8453 TTY.
- Native Youth Crisis Hotline: Check [turtleisland.org](http://turtleisland.org) or call 1-877-209-1266
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- The Trevor Project: Gay Teen Suicide Hotline: 1-800- 850-8078
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network: See [www.rain.org](http://www.rain.org) or call 1-800-656-HOPE
- [STDResource.com](http://STDResource.com) answers questions about sexually transmitted diseases and getting help
- Gay & Lesbian National Hotline: 1-888-843-4564; [www.glnh.org](http://www.glnh.org); Youth Talkline: 1-800-246-PRIDE

## What Is Sexual Violence?

Rape, incest, sexual harassment, molestation, prostitution, sex trafficking are all types of sexual violence. So are many forms of bullying, butt slapping, bra snapping, sexual name-calling, pressuring into sex, and “training.” Sexual violence can happen without any physical contact. Staring at sexual parts of your body and unwanted sexual comments and gestures, phone calls, texting, cyber-stalking and e-mail have become common methods of sexual violence. Lack of physical contact does not necessarily mean less trauma.

It’s a long list. All sexual violence is some type of rape - violent acts where sex is the weapon. Using sex as a weapon is very effective and violent because sexual acts impact us spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. These acts are always about taking power and control away. It is not caused by low-cut shirts, tight clothes or being drunk. Nobody “asks for it.” It is never the victim’s fault.

Rape happens to boys/men and in the Two Spirit -LGBTQ communities. But, most victims of sexual violence are women, and most offenders/rapists are male. It is not natural. Today, at least 1 in 3 Native women will be raped. Living with fear of being raped is really a crime, too. Girls and women change their behaviors and create life ways in order to prevent rape from happening to them. Going out and even to the bathroom in groups, not going out alone, especially at night, parking in well-lit places, listening for footsteps, checking the back seat of the car before you get in.... It doesn’t stop sexual violence.

Most rapes are done by someone the person knows. Teachers, relatives, clergy, school friends, therapists and even so-called traditional spiritual leaders have sexually violated women and both male and female children. They use their relationship of trust as part of their trap in order to rape. This creates a sense of betrayal that is extremely painful. If one of those people rapes you, who do you trust to tell? Who do you ever trust again?

The trauma sexual violence inflicts can last a lifetime if the person is not believed, and safety, support and resources for healing aren’t provided. We often do not tell or seek help because they feel shame and responsibility for what happened to them. This thinking is a result of beliefs and attitudes about sexual violence taught by society. Victim-blaming is a type of rape because it strips you, the survivor, of your rights and lets the rapist off the hook.

Sometimes we don’t blame ourselves, but won’t tell, because going through the criminal justice system makes us vulnerable again. We may re-live the rape every time we have to repeat our story. Too often there are no consequences for the rapist. If we tell, we may be shunned or re-assaulted. Some of us know all this and still testify as our way of reclaiming our power and control over our lives. We know even if there is no conviction, we have “outed” a rapist. We have protected others from the rapist.

Telling is our, the survivor’s, choice. Many of us (and childhood victims of all genders) do not tell for weeks, months or many years - even decades. It can take that long to get strong enough and find enough safety and support to talk about the rape. It’s important to talk about rape openly as a violent crime, state repeatedly and loudly that rape is never the victim’s fault, accept no excuses for it, provide support for those who have been raped and hold the offender accountable with severe consequences. Rape can be stopped.

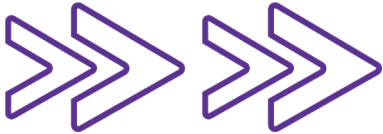
All sexual violence against women begins with the thought that women are basically spiritless sex objects that are inferior to men. This same kind of thinking to true about children as well. It’s used to justify the violence. Without that thought, there is no violence against women or children. We know this because in traditional Native culture, women and children are known to be sacred and possess powerful spirits. Women have the ability to give and nurture



life. To harm a woman or child is to harm yourself and everyone else.

Traditionally, Native women are treated with respect by Native men. Men are protectors. Traditionally, Native women and children were safe from the violence experienced today. Colonization brought an unnatural, violent belief system that was forced upon our people. But we cannot blame non-Natives any longer. We are doing this to each other, too. We have the ways to stop it. We have our own natural, respectful, non-violent belief system. We can reclaim our Indigenous values and lifeways, so everyone is safe.

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#DearNativeYouth We often hear that trauma is woven into our DNA. Don't forget that resiliency and strength are too.

# Lies and Truths About Sexual Violence

**Truth:** Sexual violence rarely happened in Native communities before colonization. White Buffalo Calf Woman said, “Even in thought, women are to be respected.”

**Lie:** Women often provoke sexual assault by how they act or dress; they ask for it.

**Truth:** This is a poor excuse and a lie. Rape is not a crime of passion or “lust.” It is about misogyny (women-hating) and power and control.

**Lie:** Rape is not a big deal; it is only sex.

**Truth:** Rape is a life-changing, violent crime. It is a crime using sex as the weapon. Rape violates, humiliates and strips control. Forcing someone to engage in sex against their will is an act of violence and aggression. Fear of dying is a common response to being raped.

**Lie:** When a woman says “no” she really means “yes.”

**Truth:** If a woman says no, it is the responsibility of the man to accept and respect her “no.” There are many ways of saying “no”: “I have to go”/ “I’m going to be late”; “My friend is waiting”; “I’m not into this”; silence; crying; body language (squirming, stiffness etc.) and not saying “yes.” Many rapists will not quit until they get what they want. Women may eventually submit because they are afraid of more physical violence if they refuse. It is still rape.

**Lie:** It’s only rape if she fights back and has physical injury.

**Truth:** Many women are too afraid to struggle. They may freeze in terror or realize that fighting back will get them hurt much worse or killed. 85% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the woman knows and trusts. That betrayal and disbelief are weapons of rape. Assaults may also be drug assisted. The goal is to do whatever it takes to survive.

**Lie:** If it really happened, victims would be able to tell what happened in a complete and logical way.

**Truth:** Trauma impairs memory temporarily, and sometimes permanently. Rape is a near-death experience. It can take weeks, years or decades to accept, much less talk about. Many women know if they tell, they may not be believed, may be in more danger, that reporting to law enforcement may complicate their lives for a long-time and/or rarely result in a conviction.

**Lie:** A woman who has had sex before with the offender cannot be raped.

**Truth:** It is a women’s right to say “NO” at any time - regardless of an existing relationship, marriage, and/or she previously had sex with that person.

**Lie:** Rape only happens to women, not men; they can fight back.

**Truth:** Men are raped usually by other men who physically, and/or psychologically over-power them. Individual rapists may target a certain type of person, but infants, elderly, boys and girls, women and men are raped. The vast majority of rapes are committed by men over women 16 - 25 years old, and to children, both boys and girls.

**Lie:** Men who rape have been sexually abused as children.

**Truth:** Many male rapists claim to have been sexually abused as children, though studies show many lie about this to excuse their behavior. If childhood sex abuse caused the victim to grow up into a rapist, then most rapists would be women.

**Lie:** Men who rape other men are gay.

**Truth:** Rape is not about sexuality and does not relate to sexual orientation or identity. It’s about humiliation and submission by violent acts to prove power and control. Most men who rape men and children are straight/cisgendered. Rape happens in the LGBTQ communities. Rapists who are straight/cisgendered men are known to target lesbians and gays – these are hate crimes, too.

**Lie:** Most rapes only happen in the street late at night outside the home.

**Truth:** Rapes occurs at all times of the day, often in the morning. 6 out of 10 rape/sexual assaults occur in the home or the house of a friend, relative or neighbor. Marital rape is part of battering.

**Lie:** People should be discouraged from talking or thinking about the rape. They should forget it and go on.

**Truth:** Rape transforms a person. Forgetting is not possible. For those who tell and are not believed or are silenced, the life-threatening trauma is multiplied many times over. They may never speak of it again or at least not for a very long time. Healing may not happen. Healing happens over time, in the individual’s own ways, if they have informed, compassionate, non-judgmental support and safety.

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# Our Rights and Responsibilities

## For Girls and Women



1. You are not responsible for anyone’s behavior, but your own.
2. No one has the right to hit you no matter what you do. They can walk away, talk it out, see a counselor, pray or play ... NOT HIT!
3. If you are abused or raped, it is never your fault. If we’re drunk, crabby or anything else, it does not give anyone permission to hurt us. Nobody has to like us or our behavior, they can choose not to be around us.
4. Trust your gut level feelings, they are usually right. Gut feelings may be your spirit talking! Listen and believe yourself.
5. Nothing justifies your partner’s bad behavior. Respect him/her and yourself by letting him/her take responsibility for their behavior.
6. Date rape happens a lot. Remember if you’re alone with a date, you may not be safe, even in your home.
7. Relationships should be based on trust and respect, not fear and guilt. You have the right to leave a relationship just because you want to. You don’t need to explain.
8. The only approval you need is your own. Undo the brainwashing that says “good women” are submissive, weak. Traditionally, women are powerful and sacred.
9. People in relationship are meant to be partners, supportive and respectful of each other’s ways. Not one “better” than the other.
10. Know that violence is not born into people. It is learned and can be unlearned.
11. No one owns another human being. People are not property you fight over.
12. Women/girls are sisters. We don’t need to compete against each other, name-call or fight.
13. Using power and control tactics are violence, not love.
14. Be gentle with yourself. Expect to be treated like you do your best friend.

## For Boys and Men



1. If you are a non-violent boy/man, be proud of it. Much in American society pushes boys/men to be violent and disrespectful of girls/women. Traditionally, it is the opposite: respect is a key value.
2. Using power and control tactics are violence, not love.
3. Hickeys and name tattoos are signs of “ownership,” not caring and respect.
4. Men don’t scare people they care about.
5. You are responsible for your behavior; no one can force you to be violent.
6. It’s better to walk away than be violent. Undo the brainwashing that says “real men” are violent. Traditionally, native men are strong and respectful.
7. Know that sex without a clear “yes” is rape.
8. Non-violent boys/men can be role models for other boys/ men. When violent friends talk about “tuning up” their partner or “training,” men tell them it’s wrong.
9. Men don’t laugh at jokes that put women down.
10. If there was violence in your childhood (or as an adult), you can still choose to be non-violent. You have a right to help and healing.
11. People in relationships are meant to be partners, supportive and respectful of each other’s ways. Not one “better” than the other.
12. Know that violence is not born into people. It’s learned and can be unlearned.
13. Abuse is not a way to resolve conflict or earn love and respect.
14. If you believe something in your past is causing you to be violent, then you are responsible for seeking help to change. Blaming is a cop-out. Healing is your right, but you have to choose it.
15. No one owns another human being. People are not property to fight over.
16. Be gentle with yourself. Expect to be treated like you do your best friend.

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# Drugs and Partying

“**Date Rape Drugs**” are tools used by rapists to make it easier for them to rape. And to get away with it. These drugs are put into a person’s drink or food without their knowledge. All of these drugs harm your ability to understand and react to what is happening to you. Many impair memory, so later you may feel “something happened,” but you cannot remember what. The rapist counts on these effects to be able to rape and get away with it.

Rape does happen to boys and men, too. It happens within Two Spirit LGBTQ communities, also. Anyone who is raped deserves the same support, kindness and protection. However, most victims of rape are female, so the word “woman” is used when talking about this crime.

The harsh reality is that the “rapist” most often is someone you know, and you thought was a friend or someone you could trust. If you don’t accept this reality, then you may be too trusting or take risks at parties or other places that put you in danger. Rape is never the victim’s responsibility, no matter what, but being aware and taking precautions, may help protect you from this horrible crime.

### Common Date Rape Drugs:

- Alcohol
- GHB (Liquid ecstasy, scoop, easy lay)
- Ketamine (special K, ‘K’, Vitamin K)
- MDMA (Ecstasy, E, X, roil)
- Rohypno (roofies, rope, LaRoach)

## Be careful with yourself. Drinking or using drugs makes it more difficult to keep yourself safe.

### If you use:

- Remember drug-assisted rapes are often done by people you know and think of as friends.
- Go out with friends you trust and plan to check on each other and leave together.
- Don’t leave a drink (or food), including soda or water unattended.
- Open your own cans or bottles.
- Let people know where you are going, how you’re getting there and back, when and who you’re with.
- Do not drink anything that looks, smells or tastes suspicious.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Trust your instincts. If you get an uneasy feeling, believe it! Leave with a friend.
- If your friend has been drugged or is drunk, get to a safe place. If she won’t go, stay with her.

### What you can do....

- Accept that “no” means “no.” If she doesn’t freely say “Yes,” it means “No.”
- Realize that forcing a woman to have sex against her will is rape. This includes trying to talk her into it and being intimidating or threatening in anyway.
- Have respect for women and self-respect. Sex is not a sport or game. It is part of a caring, loving relationship between informed, consenting adults.
- Understand, she never gives up her right to say “no” and/or change her mind.
- Understand that a woman’s silence is not consent. She may feel afraid without you realizing it.
- Refuse to be drawn into a gang rape.
- If you know a rape is planned or happening, get the woman to safety, call police, get help.
- Let other men know jokes about rape are not acceptable. Real men don’t rape.
- Traditionally, women are respected and treated as sacred. Women who are drugged or high are not to be thought of as “rapeable.” If you notice a female friend who is drunk or under the influence, they are vulnerable and need help to get safe.
- Know that men are not born to be violent against women (or each other!). If you are a non-violent man, or if you are confused by all the mixed messages about how to treat women, get support

- from other respectful, non-violent men.
- Educate yourself about these issues. There are men against violence organizations. Start a new one!

### What to do if you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted:

- Immediately go to a safe place and tell someone you trust.
- Call or text StrongHearts Native Helpline (1-844-762-8483, or chat online at [strongheartshelpline.org](http://strongheartshelpline.org)) to talk with an advocate confidentially, or have a friend call for you.
- Seek medical attention and an exam before you bathe, shower or change your clothes.
- Medical attention is extremely important. Call 911, a doctor, your local emergency number or your local women’s shelter for assistance. You will be treated for external/internal injuries, tested for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and receive support services.
- Decide if you want to report the rape. It’s your choice. Reporting is difficult but can help regain power and control over your body and life. Go with someone you trust.
- Rape hurts physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Get help. You won’t forget, but you can heal.

### REMEMBER...

Even if you have been drinking, it is not your fault! Survival is the most important thing. Trying to forget it never works. It’s not your shame. Get help. It’s your right to heal. Getting someone drunk or high to have sex is RAPE. Pressuring or coercing someone into sex is rape. Rape is never the victim’s fault; it’s violent crime.

- Approximately one of every four women will be raped in their lifetime in the United States.
- One of every two Native women will be raped (70% of the time by non-Natives).
- Alcohol or other drugs will be used in at least 43% of rapes.
- Over half of rapists are known to the woman.
- Statistics (DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006 National Crime Survey)

Partying & Rape brochure; South Dakota Coalition Ending Domestic and Sexual Violence



# Youth Resources

Services for youth are different in every community. Check with your local shelter, I.H.S., YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, social services and schools for what's available in your community. These are more sources of information and support on-line and/or by phone:

- Call or text StrongHearts Native Helpline (1-844-762-8483, or chat online at [strongheartshelpline.org](http://strongheartshelpline.org)) to talk with an advocate confidentially, or have a friend call for you.
- Break the Cycle is about empowering youth to end domestic violence. On Facebook, too. Visit [breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org).
- Love is Respect: info, chats and more for young people. Visit [Loveisrespect.org](http://Loveisrespect.org)
- The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: Visit [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) or call 1-866-331-9474 or 1-866- 331-8453 TTY.
- Native Youth Crisis Hotline: Check [turtleisland.org](http://turtleisland.org) or call 1-877-209-1266
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- The Trevor Project: Gay Teen Suicide Hotline: 1-800-850-8078
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network: See [rain.org](http://rain.org) or call 1-800-656-HOPE
- STDResource.com answers questions about sexually transmitted diseases and getting help
- Gay & Lesbian National Hotline: 1-888-843-4564 or [www.glnh.org](http://www.glnh.org) or Youth Talkline: 1-800-246-PRIDE
- Planned Parenthood gives info about birth control, HIV, STD's, women's & men's health. See [ppmsd.org](http://ppmsd.org)
- We R Native - <https://n8ve.net/harnd>

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“Both the elder men and women advised continual prayer. They adamantly believe that the solution to the problem of violence against women will be found in regaining spiritual balance and remembering culture and traditional values. Men need to understand the sacredness and power of women and their responsibilities in caring for her and the children. These elders felt that women have forgotten their sacredness and need to re-examine their responsibilities and refocus on their rights.”

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—Raising Public Awareness on Domestic Violence in Indian Country; Cangleska, Inc., and South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Published by National Resource Center on Domestic Violence











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