

again, but if the situation doesn't change, you have to face the fact that your relationship is not functioning, and that you on your own can't do anything to change it. Keep it in mind: the efforts made by only one of the partners won't be enough to get the relationship to work.

IMPORTANT! If you experience physical or sexual violence in the relationship, or even the possibility is present, ask for help!

HARM OR ABUSE?

Sometimes it happens, even in a healthy relationship, that we hurt our partner. Sometimes we say or do something which can hurt the other because we are tired and/or frustrated; or it could be the result of bad patterns carried from childhood. In a healthy relationship these sorts of harms are relatively rare and can be discussed honestly. We talk about abuse if harm continues or increases, is one-directional, becoming frequent and severe; and that the one who suffers from it has less and less influence, and is increasingly powerless in preventing them.

The signs are:

- **One-way:** it is always the same person who hurts the other, and the other person is sad and threatened and will eventually forgive or at least will try to move on.
- **Cyclic:** Offenses and beatings are followed by requests for apologies, love confessions or promises. For a while, everything seems to be fine, but the violent person in the relationship will get more and more nervous and frustrated, and sooner or later the storm breaks out in the form of additional offenses, slaps and humiliation.
- **Escalation:** the violent partner first only causes harm to the other through words, then applies stricter control over the other, isolates them, and creates an unequal and dependent relationship. After gaining psychological power over the other, the first "hustle slap" will happen and that will be followed by the second. The slaps will slowly develop into frequent beatings and sexual abuse which can even evolve into murder. Due to the one-way, escalating and cyclic violence, the victim suffers from the following: isolation, solitude, confusion, powerlessness, self-blame, humiliation, and fear of the next violent outburst.

If you suspect you know someone who lives in an abusive relationship, call our helpline for support.

HOTLINE
FOR ABUSED
WOMEN AND CHILDREN
06 80 505 101
MON, TUE, THU, FRI 18.00-22.00
www.nane.hu • www.nokjoga.hu

Helpline for abused women and children +36 80 505 101
(Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 6pm -10 pm)
General emergency number: 112
Police: 107

Please support the work of the NANE Women's Rights Association!
Tax Identification Number: 1806033-1-42
Bank account number: 16200010-10045143 (MagNet Bank)
IBAN: HU88162000101004514300000000
SWIFT: HBWEHUHB

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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

LOVE IS NOT JUST FEELINGS OF PASSION
AND ROMANCE. IT IS BEHAVIOUR.

(SUSAN FORWARD)

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NANE
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

There is no secret recipe for a healthy relationship, as each person and every relationship is different. But it is possible to see if the relationship is based on equality, without the presence of violence. If a relationship - either professional, familial or romantic - is based on equality, free from violence, it should provide security, and inner conflicts will be effectively resolved.

Every relationship can be placed on a virtual scale which goes from the ideal, non-violent partnership to the extreme of domestic violence that may end in murder. (Murder is more frequent in a relationship than one would think. In Hungary alone, at least one woman is killed every week by her present or previous husband or partner).

In an ideal relationship, partners work to resolve potential tensions and prevent arguments while spending time together or during sex; and daily tasks bring joy and fulfilment to both parties. At the other end of the scale, there is domestic violence where one of the partners systematically destroys the other's self-confidence, does not leave space for improvement, and regularly exposes the other to physical, psychological, sexual or social-economical violence.

These two endpoints define the difference between well and badly functioning relationships.



The below lists might help you decide where your relationship stands on the above scale: ideal, healthy, unhealthy or abusive.

My relationship is most likely healthy, if:

- The problems can be discussed, and the discussions will result in change.
- The use of non-violent communication has positive results in the relationship.
- Both partners invest the same amount of energy to solve common problems.
- I can freely express my feelings.
- My partner reacts to my successes happily and supportively.
- Both of us have the possibility to change and improve.
- My partner encourages me to improve and I feel that my life is more complete.
- I feel stronger.
- My partner would let me go if I wanted to break up.

My relationship is unhealthy if:

- We can't discuss our problems.
- We talk about the problems but nothing changes.
- The use of non-violent communication in the relationship has no results.

My relationship is abusive if, on top of the above-listed items, any one of the below is true as well:

- My partner responds to my successes with blame, understatement or anger.
- My partner's behaviour is rude or harsh towards me if we are alone or in public.
- My partner treats me as if I am invisible, doesn't say a word to me, doesn't reply if I ask.
- Only my partner can change, develop and improve, I can never do that.
- My world gets smaller and smaller (my friends and relatives, my old hobbies, goals and desires are disappearing).
- I feel more and more weak and powerless.
- My partner would not let me go if I wanted to break up: blackmails me with his/her feelings, illness, children, etc. or threatens me with murder or suicide in case I leave.
- My partner threatens me with physical violence.
- My partner sometimes hits me or forces me to participate in sexual activities which I do not like nor want.

VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT (ASSERTIVE) COMMUNICATION

We call any form of communication non-violent where we express ourselves and our needs in a way where we don't blame others for our emotions and we communicate via simple statements. Such statements describe what certain events mean to us or indicate how we would react to them. In a healthy relationship this type of communication is received openly.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE THAT YOUR PARTNER QUESTIONS THE FACTS AS WELL AS YOUR FEELINGS, AND MOCKS OR IGNORES YOUR REQUESTS AND NEEDS, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULDN'T BE MAINTAINED.

Features of violent communication:

- Comparison and blame;
- Generalisation;
- Moral judgement (good/bad, normal/sick, right/wrong);
- Offensive and rude;
- Reassigning the responsibilities for our feelings;
- Threats and punishments.

Example: "I left you there yesterday without a word (punishment) because you are a jerk (judgement). You never speak to me (generalisation) and you always piss me off (reassigning the responsibilities for one's feelings). However you would chat with others (blame). You are disgusting (hurt)!"

There are very few people who would respond with patience and empathy to such offenses. The expected answers more likely will be arguments, offence, counter-offence and shock. This type of communication closes down the conversation.

Model of non-violent communication:

- Fact;
- Emotion;
- Thought (opinion);
- Need;
- Request.

Example: "When you didn't speak to me yesterday on the tram (fact), I felt very lonely (feeling). I thought that you had a problem with me, and were therefore punishing me (opinion). When I'm with you I would like you to notice me (need). I'd like it if next time you would not travel silently next to me, and if you have any problems, you would tell me (request)."

In these statements (with the exception of the third sentence, which is an opinion) there is nothing that could give reason for a debate. In a functioning relationship, this type of communication will result in the partner turning toward the other and getting involved. The conversation opens up.

If your relationship is functional, then non-violent communication sooner or later will result in answers which accept your perspective ("I did not want to hurt you. I'm sorry." "I understand. You can't stand if I don't talk to you when we are travelling together."); or show your partner's perspective to you ("I felt lonely too, and was waiting for you to say something.")

If, however, your relationship is unhealthy or abusive, your partner will reply with violent communication. "It wasn't like that. You didn't speak to me" (argumenting the facts) "This is nuts!" "You are too sensitive" (questioning or degrading your emotions) "You are out of your mind." "Don't you have bigger problems?" (humiliation and understatement) "You are always whining about something." "Women and their sensitive souls!" (cynism). "You are insane!" (vituperation) "I'm not listening to this anymore." (stubborn seclusion from any further dialogue). If you get answers similar to these, you should try once or twice