How to Help a Friend

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

What is a healthy relationship?
A healthy relationship occurs between people who communicate openly and honestly, feel respected, and support one another. Partners are aware of and respect boundaries, while also being available to talk. Healthy relationships can exist between friends, family, coworkers, and significant others.

What to look for:
Healthy relationships encompass the following characteristics:

• Strong communication: issues are dealt with as soon as both partners are ready, each tries to put themselves in the other's shoes, both practice active listening, and both are willing to compromise.
• Appropriate boundaries: each person can express what they are and are not comfortable with, especially when it comes to work, friends and family, sex, and personal space and time.
• Kindness, acceptance, compassion, and empathy: relationships can be messy, and since no one is perfect, each partner may do something that hurts the other from time to time. When this happens, both take the time to solve problems together and forgive.
• Fun: it's all about being happy! Partners should be able to connect, laugh, and be affectionate.

How to help a friend:
If you notice a friend struggling with an unhealthy relationship:

• Gently voice your concerns and listen to their point of view.
• Highlight the healthy relationship characteristics listed above, and take the time to help your friend identify ways to implement them in their life.

Additional resources:
If your friend needs additional support, connect them with Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS):

• CAPS at C4C: 303-492-6766
• CAPS at Wardenburg: 303-492-5654

For additional information, see www.colorado.edu/counseling