

# An Autistic Guide to Healthy Relationships



**A guide to what healthy relationships look like and how to spot the signs of abuse.**

# WHAT IS ABUSE?



A lot of autistic people have been hurt in their relationships with romantic partners and friends.

This is called **interpersonal abuse**.



Many autistic people have said they want to know what the signs of abuse are.



They also want to know the signs of good and healthy relationships.

# GOOD AND BAD RELATIONSHIPS



Relationships are all different. What one person likes might not be what another person likes.



Some people think **light teasing** or **banter** is fun. Others do not like it.



It is important to know what makes you feel good.

Then you can find people that help make you feel good.

# THIS GUIDE WILL TELL YOU ABOUT



## Red flags

Relationships that are harmful and abusive.



## Orange flags

Relationships that make us feel bad.



## Green flags

Relationships that are happy and safe.





# RED FLAGS

## BAD RELATIONSHIPS



### Violent

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Kicking

Hurting your body in any way.



### Threatening

Telling you they will hurt you if you do not do what they want.



### Bullying

Saying nasty things to you like calling you names.

Saying nasty things about you to other people.



## Lying

Lying and not telling the truth.



## Making fun of you

Making fun of your autism and stimming.



## Telling you what to do:

- What to wear
- Who to talk to
- What to post online
- How much money you can spend
- Not letting you do your favourite things



If you feel scared when you see the other person, that is a bad sign.



# RED FLAGS

## EARLY IN A RELATIONSHIP



### Forcing you

Making you do things like kiss, hold hands or have sex before you are ready.



### Love bombing

Giving you lots of gifts and saying nice things to force you to do what they ask.



### Pressuring you

Telling you to spend all of your time with them and wanting to know where you are at all times.



## Checking your phone

Wanting to look at your phone to see who you are talking to.



## Forcing you to make big decisions

Asking you to make big decisions like moving in together quickly.



Some autistic people may be very focused on their new friend or partner.

This is not usually a **red flag**.



**But** if you think things are happening too fast the person should respect this and slow down.



# ORANGE FLAGS

## RELATIONSHIPS THAT DO NOT FEEL GOOD



If a relationship does not feel good you may be able to talk about it and fix it.

If you can not fix it you might not want to stay in the relationship.



Not all bad relationships are abusive. Sometimes we want different things or have different interests.



A lot of relationships end because people are unhappy. That does not mean the people are bad.



# WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF A RELATIONSHIP IS NOT WORKING



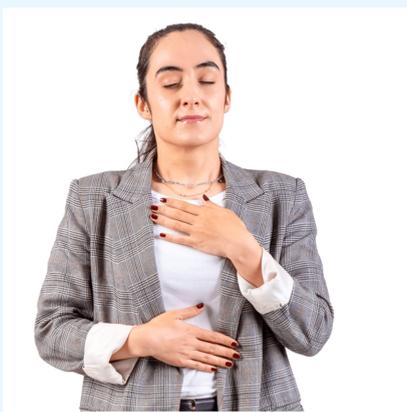
## Not talking about problems

It is important to feel listened to and listen to others in your relationships.



## Mental health difficulties

This can make it difficult to fix problems in a relationship. It is not your job to fix others.



Struggling with your mental health does not make you a bad person but you can only look after your own mental health not someone else's.



# GREEN FLAGS

## HAPPY AND SAFE RELATIONSHIPS



### Feeling safe

It is normal to argue in a relationship.

You should feel safe to tell someone you disagree.



### Have fun

You can laugh and joke with each other.



### Accept you for who you are

You can be yourself and **unmask** around them.



## **Not telling you what to do**

You can do what you want.



## **Talk about feelings**

You can both share how you feel.



## **Care for you**

They are caring and understanding and they support you.

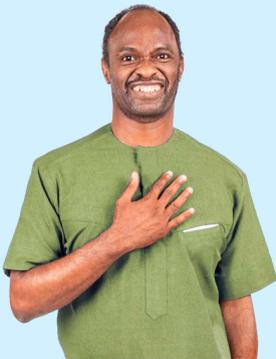




# GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



Do I feel safe?



Do I feel like I am treated well?



**You need to work at healthy relationships!**

Talk regularly about what you and the other person need because what you need can change.



## MORE INFORMATION



**For people who have been affected by relationship abuse:**

<https://ndconnection.co.uk/resources/p/summit-support-organisations>



**Information on violence, abuse and mental health organisations**  
<https://www.vamhn.co.uk/useful-links-and-resources.html>

# Thank you for reading!



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The red, orange and green flags used are based on this research.



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