

DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

ARE YOU WAVING A WHITE FLAG ON A RED FLAG RELATIONSHIP?

When we think about our overall health and wellness, it's easy to think that perhaps we need to consider our food choices, try to get enough sleep, and participate in more exercise. What often goes underrecognized as an influence in the state of our mental health, is our relationships.

Relationships can help or hurt, bring joy or sadness, support or minimize. All relationships go through challenges, but how do you know when it's time to disconnect from a partner, a friend, or a family member?

- **Is your time and energy being spent on trying to "fix" the relationship?**
- **Is the relationship one-sided?**
- **Are boundaries and the word "No" being respected?**
- **Do you compromise who you are to make the relationship work?**

Disconnecting from harmful relationships can help to enhance and protect your mental wellness.



Good boundaries make for good relationships.

A healthy relationship is one in which each person has a clear sense of individuality and can honestly and openly communicate their needs without any negative retribution such as blame and bullying. Boundaries are often needed for positive long-term relationships. These are limitations that we put on relationships as protection from being controlled, manipulated, and abused. Healthy boundaries create a good balance of taking care of yourself and being there for others.



Toxic relationships can be complicated.

DEALING WITH A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP

1) It is important to feel you can communicate your needs.

"What I need is _____."

"When you say _____, it makes me feel _____."

2) Remember to take care of yourself.

Practice self-care, have a support system, and know your emotions.

3) Don't wave the white flag and make excuses for poor behaviour.

Recognize the value of your needs and don't compromise your values. There is nothing wrong with taking a break.

4) It might be time to set and maintain boundaries.

Communicating and maintaining boundaries set clear limits of what is accepted in relationships. If boundaries are disrespected, it may be time to let go.

**Seek the advice of a professional who can help to identify a toxic relationship and guide your course of action appropriately.*

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How to Determine, Set and Maintain Boundaries in a Relationship

Identify What Your Boundaries Are. What can you tolerate in your relationship? What makes you feel uncomfortable or disrespected? You can't set boundaries if you haven't reflected on the attitudes and behaviours from which you wish to be protected.



Communicate Your Boundaries. You can't expect others to respect your boundaries if they don't know what they are. Be direct about your wants and needs and what you are willing to compromise on. Use "I" statements and be prepared that the person on the other end may not react well to the conversation at first. This may be a red flag, or boundaries may feel unfamiliar and require time for processing. Allow space for reflection and let them come to you.

Be Ready to Deal with a Boundary Violation. You may have to reaffirm your boundaries and be very specific about how they were violated. In a respectful way, speak up for yourself by letting the other person know how it made you feel. Suggest a way to work together to ensure it doesn't happen again and set a consequence in place if they don't comply.

Follow Up and Follow Through. Don't let a boundary violation slide. Follow through on the consequence and avoid being taken advantage of. You deserve to feel validated, supported and significant.

It's always ok to contact a professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker. A trained professional can help you to assess your relationships and your needs and direct you to the most effective course of action.

Sources: <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>
<https://psychcentral.com/blog/whats-a-toxic-person-how-do-you-deal-with-one/>
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