

# PRIME TIMER

## FOCUS

Centre for Independent Living

November 2005

Volume 1, Issue 4

## Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Article for Residence Times – October 2004

**T**hroughout our lives, we are involved with many different kinds of relationships. We have friendships, romances, work and school-related connections, familial ties, and, quite often, relations that defy categorization. Each of these situations has the potential to enrich us, adding to our feelings of self-worth, enjoyment, and growth. On the other hand, in other situations, we may find ourselves feeling uncomfortable. It can be difficult to come to the realization that a lover, friend, colleague, or family member is not treating us with the respect we deserve. Keep in mind that in all kinds of kinships, there is likely to be some disagreement, need for compromise, and times of frustration. These alone do not necessarily indicate that a relationship is unhealthy. Here are some things to think about when considering whether a particular bond is a healthy one or not:

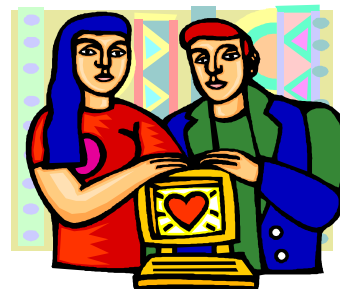
### In a healthy relationship, you:

- ⇒ Treat each other with respect.
- ⇒ Feel secure and comfortable.
- ⇒ Are not violent with each other.
- ⇒ Can resolve conflicts satisfactorily.
- ⇒ Enjoy the time you spend together.
- ⇒ Support one another.
- ⇒ Take interest in one another's lives: health, family, work, etc.
- ⇒ Have privacy in the relationship.
- ⇒ Have more good times in the relationship than bad.

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- ⇒ Can trust each other.
- ⇒ Are each sexual by choice.
- ⇒ Communicate clearly and openly.
- ⇒ Make healthy decisions about alcohol or other drugs.
- ⇒ Encourage other friendships.
- ⇒ Have more good times in the relationship than bad.



**In an unhealthy relationship, one or both of you:**

- ⇒ Try to control or manipulate the other.
- ⇒ Make the other feel bad about her/himself.
- ⇒ Ridicule or call each other names.
- ⇒ Dictate how the other dresses.
- ⇒ Do not make time for each other.
- ⇒ Criticize the other's friends.
- ⇒ Are afraid of the other's temper.
- ⇒ Discourage the other from being close with anyone else.
- ⇒ Ignore each other when one is speaking.
- ⇒ Are overly possessive or get jealous about ordinary behavior.
- ⇒ Criticize or support others in criticizing people with your gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other personal attribute.
- ⇒ Control the other's money or other resources (e.g., car).
- ⇒ Harm or threaten to harm children, family, pets, or objects of personal value. Push, grab, hit, punch, or throw objects.
- ⇒ Use physical force or threats to prevent the other from leaving.

Sometimes it's not so easy to decide if a troublesome tie should be maintained the way it is, worked on, or ended before it goes any further. One thing to consider is if the relationship was ever different than it is now. Is there something stressful happening that could be impacting the way you interact? Maybe money is tight, you've moved, are looking for work, are dealing with a difficult family circumstance, or are going through some other kind of transition. Or maybe there are problems from a while back that were never resolved, and are now resurfacing. What in particular is bothering you, and what would you like to see change? Talk over these questions with each other, or with someone you trust, like a friend, teacher, or counselor. Think about what, if anything, you can each do to make the other feel more comfortable in the relationship.

If a partner, friend, or colleague is harming you or your loved ones physically, emotionally, or sexually, it's time to seek help. If s/he is encouraging other harmful behaviors, like abuse of alcohol or other drugs, unsafe sexual activity, or other activities that make you feel uncomfortable, you have a right to leave. There are a lot of resources available to help you. Perhaps the most important thing to do is to trust your instincts and the people close to you whose opinions you trust and value. Each and every one of us deserves to feel safe, valued, and cared for. Keep in mind that one of the strongest signs of a healthy relationship is that both people involved feel good about themselves. Also, by treating yourself with self-respect and believing in your right to be treated well, you are taking important steps towards developing equitable, mutually fulfilling ties in the future.

### **Boundaries and Healthy Relationships**

*“Boundaries are imaginary dividing lines that we establish between ourselves and others to protect our hearts, souls and minds from the unhealthy or damaging behaviour of others.”* (“Out of the Box Coaching”, Mary R. Bast, Ph.D.)

A **boundary** is a dividing line between you and anyone else, even a loved one. It represents both physical and emotional limits others may not violate. When a boundary has been crossed by others, that person might experience intense feelings of anger, hurt, outrage, etc. Setting your boundaries is meant to stop anyone, even your most loved one, from crossing the line with you. Each person has their own ‘internal indicator’ of when the line has been crossed.

#### **Why do people set boundaries?**

- ⇒ To help them feel safer.
- ⇒ To reduce the possibility of getting hurt by others.
- ⇒ To increase our ability to trust others.
- ⇒ To increase our sense of self worth and self esteem because we are sending ourselves the message that we are worth caring about.
- ⇒ To let others know what is okay and what isn't okay in terms of acceptable behaviour around you.
- ⇒ Boundaries let others know what your limits are. This gives loved ones the security of knowing your relationship guidelines, eliminating their fears about how they should or shouldn't behave around you.

## **Why do people cross our boundaries?**

- ⇒ To gain power and control.
- ⇒ To take the power away from us, making us feel less empowered or 'helpless'.
- ⇒ To intimidate us.

## **Why do we allow our boundaries to be violated?**

In a word, FEAR...

- ⇒ FEAR someone will not like us.
- ⇒ FEAR we will be punished in some way.
- ⇒ FEAR we are doing something that we don't have the right to do.
- ⇒ FEAR we will be judged as selfish or mean.
- ⇒ FEAR we will feel guilty.
- ⇒ FEAR that if we don't do as another wants, the relationship is at risk.

People with good boundaries in relationships:

- ⇒ Feel secure, grounded, better able to cope.
- ⇒ Are able to set limits and say "no".
- ⇒ Remain true to their self and try to compromise so that both they and their partner feel satisfied.
- ⇒ Are flexible and accountable.
- ⇒ Feel clear and decisive and act to get what they want and need out of the relationship.
- ⇒ Take responsibility for their own feelings and actions.
- ⇒ Speak with "I" messages and attempt to hear their own needs and emotions.
- ⇒ Can express healthy anger and refuse to be victimized.
- ⇒ Can stay engaged and yet feel separate.
- ⇒ Listen to their intuition.
- ⇒ Are direct about getting their needs met and don't try to manipulate others.

People without good boundaries in relationships:

- ⇒ Feel afraid and always expect the worst to happen.
- ⇒ Have difficulty saying "no".
- ⇒ Make expectations and excuses for their partner's behavior.

- ⇒ Are unclear about their choices, often wondering if their right.
- ⇒ Make others responsible for their good and bad feelings about themselves.
- ⇒ Use guilt, fear and shame in attempting to change their partner.
- ⇒ Are more focused on their partner's needs than on their own.
- ⇒ Avoid knowing the truth in order to avoid pain.

## **Cholesterol—Healthy Eating Tips**

*Better Health Channel: Victoria, Australia, November 2005.*

**C**holesterol is a type of fat that is needed for many bodily functions, such as the production of hormones. It is also an essential component of cell membranes. It has many good uses, but is a problem when there is too much of it in the blood. Eating healthy foods, choosing polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils and reducing saturated fats in your diet will help reduce cholesterol levels

Cholesterol is made in the body by the liver. Some cholesterol also comes into the body through foods - this is called 'dietary' cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol is found only in animal products (such as offal, fatty meats, full fat dairy products and egg yolks). Plant foods - such as avocados, nuts, grains, fruit and vegetables - don't have any dietary cholesterol.

### **Cholesterol explained**

There are two forms of blood cholesterol. Low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is known as the 'bad' cholesterol because it contributes to heart disease by sticking to and narrowing blood vessels. High density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is known as the 'good' cholesterol because it keeps LDL levels in check and helps protect against heart disease.

### **Causes of high blood cholesterol**

Eating too much saturated fat and trans fats is the main cause of high blood cholesterol. Saturated fat is found mainly in full fat dairy products, especially milk and cheese, fatty meats, butter, and two vegetable oils - coconut and palm oil. Most deep fried takeaway food and commercially baked products such as biscuits and pastries also contain saturated fats.

Cholesterol in food can also raise blood cholesterol, particularly in people who have a high risk of developing heart disease. Cholesterol in food does not raise cholesterol in cholesterol in the blood to the same extent as saturated and trans fats.

See your doctor or dietitian for further information and advice. Researchers now believe that limiting the intake of saturated fats is more useful than limiting cholesterol-rich foods when trying to lower blood cholesterol levels.

Replacing foods that contain saturated fats, with foods that contain polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, will help lower blood cholesterol levels. Foods high in polyunsaturated fats include margarine spreads and oils such as sunflower, soybean and safflower, fish, some nuts and seeds. Foods high in monounsaturated fats include margarine spreads and oils such as olive, canola and peanut, avocados and some nuts.

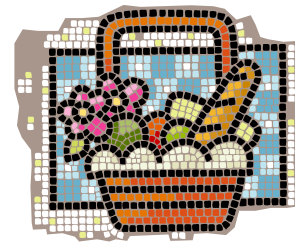
### **Healthy eating suggestions**

Below are some healthy eating suggestions to help keep your blood cholesterol in check.

#### **Eat fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains and beans**

Suggestions include:

- ⇒ Snack on plain, unsalted nuts and fresh fruit.
- ⇒ Incorporate dried peas (for example split peas), dried beans (haricot beans, kidney beans), canned beans (baked beans, three bean mix) or lentils into two meals a week.
- ⇒ Make vegetables, and grain based foods (such as breakfast cereals, bread, pasta, noodles and rice) the major part of each meal.



#### **Eat fish and lean meat**

Suggestions include:

- ⇒ Eat fish (any type of fresh or canned) at least twice a week.
- ⇒ Select lean meat (meat trimmed of fat and chicken without skin).
- ⇒ Try to limit fatty meats, including sausages and delicatessen meats such as salami.

#### **Use vegetable oils and choose reduced fat dairy products**

Suggestions include:

- ⇒ Use margarine spreads instead of butter or dairy blends.
- ⇒ Use a variety of oils for cooking - some suitable choices include canola, sunflower, soybean, olive and peanut oils.

- ⇒ Use salad dressings and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oils.
- ⇒ Choose low or reduced fat milk and yogurt or 'added calcium' soy beverages.
- ⇒ Try to limit cheese and ice-cream to twice a week.

### **Try to limit takeaway and snack food**

Suggestions include:

- ⇒ Try to limit takeaway foods to once a week. Takeaway foods include pastries, pies, pizza, hamburgers and creamy pasta dishes.
- ⇒ Try to limit snack foods such as potato crisps and corn crisps to once a week.
- ⇒ Try to limit cakes, pastries and biscuits (chocolate or creamy) to once a week.
- ⇒ Try to limit cholesterol-rich foods, such as egg yolks and offal (for example liver, kidney and brains)

### **Where to get help**

- ⇒ Your doctor.
- ⇒ An Accredited Practicing Dietitian.
- ⇒ Check the yellow pages/

### **Things to remember**

- ⇒ Limit your intake of saturated and trans fats and cholesterol-rich foods.
- ⇒ Replace saturated fats with polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats.
- ⇒ Enjoy a variety of foods such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, fruit, vegetables, legumes, lean meats, poultry, nuts, fish and reduced fat dairy products.



FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
OF TORONTO

For People. For Change.

**T**he Seniors and Caregivers Support Services Unit is proud to announce that our team has expanded its service capacity. We are now able to provide counselling supports to seniors and those who care about and/or for them in Mandarin, Spanish and English. Other languages are also available at various times according to student and volunteer support.

They welcome referrals to work with people whose major areas of concern including Abuse; Depression; Isolation; Dealing with chronic illness; Family dynamics; Caregiver stress; Communication and Bereavement.

Their offices are located in downtown Toronto and the south-east part of Scarborough. They are also able to provide services in home or in the community in which a client lives. All services are free of charge and are provided to persons who live and/or work in Toronto. The waiting list is limited at this time.

To make a referral please contact our Service Access Unit at 416-595-9618. For further information, please contact Lisa Manuel, Manager, at 416-755-5565 ext. 422 or [lisama@fsatoronto.com](mailto:lisama@fsatoronto.com).

## POACH [Parents Of Adolescents Changing Habits]

**A** group for *Parents of Adolescents* who meet on **Wednesday evenings 6:30 to 8:15 p.m.** The group runs for six Wednesday evenings: **November 23, 2005; November 30, 2005; December 7, 2005; January 4, 2006; January 11, 2006 and January 18, 2006.**

While attending this group, you will learn how to “grow up” your parenting skills as your child gets older; communicate better with your adolescent; not take conflict “personally”; keep your “cool” when things get hot; see your teen’s need for independence in a new way; and know what to do when your teen is in “real” trouble.

For more information, call (416) 622-8833 and ask to speak to Anne Secord-Houston at extension 163 or Jess Poland at extension 238. To register please call Rae Augusto at (416) 622-8833, extension 252. There is no fee to attend. The sessions will be located at 600 The East Mall, 3rd Floor. Unfortunately, no childcare will be available.



## **Protecting Your Personal Rights—A Workshop for Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women**

**E**ducation Wife Assault presents the final session of their four part workshop series for women with disabilities and Deaf women, facilitated by women with disabilities and Deaf women:

### **“From Stress to Strength” Learning to find the Sources of Stress in your Life With Greater Awareness and Practical Tools**

The workshop will take place on **Saturday November 26th, 2005 from 1pm to 4pm** at the Anne Johnston Health Station (2398 Yonge Street at Montgomery).

Register early as space is limited. To register or for more information, contact Fran Odette at (416) 968-3422, extension 30, by TTY at (416) 968-7335 or by email at [fodette@womanabuseprevention.com](mailto:fodette@womanabuseprevention.com) by November 18, 2005.

\$5.00 or pay what you can. Please bring exact change if possible. ASL interpreters, computer note-taking, attendant care and child care services will be provided upon request.

Education Wife Assault is a United Way member agency.



**Centre for Independent Living**

Prime Timer Focus is a quarterly publication.

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www.cilt.ca ]**

Articles on products, agencies or services are for information only and are not meant as endorsements.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and may not reflect the views of CILT.

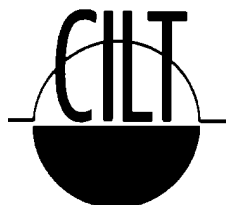
*CILT is a non-profit resource organization, consumer-controlled and community based. CILT is funded through the United Way, City of Toronto grants, Federal and Provincial government grants, donations, earned income and membership support.*

*CILT is a consumer-controlled, community-based resource organization. We help people with disabilities to learn Independent Living skills and integrate into the community. (Please note: CILT is a resource agency and does not do any political, systemic or group advocacy!)*

*CILT operates on the philosophy of the Independent Living movement which was developed in response to traditional rehabilitation services models. CILT's aim is to develop and implement dignified social services that empower individuals rather than create dependencies. We encourage people with disabilities to take control of their own lives by exercising their right to examine options, make choices, take risks and even make mistakes.*

*CILT is one of 25 members of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) and one of 10 members of the Ontario Network of Independent Living Centres (ONILC).*

*CILT is also unique in that a majority of Board and staff positions must be held by persons with a disability, thus ensuring that the service is directed and controlled by the consumer.*



*For persons with a disability...by persons with a disability.*