



## PERSONAL BILL OF RIGHTS:

### You have the right to:

1. Receive emotional support.
2. Live free from criticism and judgment.
3. Live free from emotional and physical threat.
4. Be heard and responded to with courtesy.
5. Put yourself first.
6. Earn and control your own money.
7. Have your privacy respected.
8. Have your feelings and experiences acknowledged as real and valid.
9. Have the right to grow and change as an individual.
10. Have the right to love and be loved.

**A healthy relationship doesn't discriminate between gender identity and sexual orientation. Healthy relationships include the following:**

- Partners who respects eachother's gender identity
- Partners who don't discredit lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans-gender identities because you don't have sex the way they want you to.

## RESOURCES:

### Fenway Health Violence Recovery Program

Clinical support for victims of domestic violence, hate crimes, police brutality, and sexual assault. For assistance or more information, call 617.927.6250.

### The Network La Red

Survivor-led organization, working to end partner abuse. For 24-hour assistance call 617.742.4911

### Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project

Provides assistance and support to GLBTQ victims and survivors of domestic violence. For 24-hour assistance, call 1.800.832.1901.

# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Tips from the *Take Charge of Your Health!* series



**ANSIN BUILDING** 1340 Boylston Street Boston MA 02215  
**TEL** 617.267.0900 **WEB** fenwayhealth.org

**SOUTH END** 142 Berkeley Street Boston MA 02116  
**TEL** 617.247.7555

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## A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

**Respect.** Each partner respects the other's voice, emotions, and boundaries.

**Boundaries.** Each partner is an individual and has the right to personal space.

**Support.** Partners offer encouragement, validation, and reassurance.

**Compromise.** Individuals may hold opposing opinions, but it is important to respect one another's view.

Communication can make or break a relationship—whether it's with your partner, family member, or coworker. Keep in mind that body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions can have as much of an impact as the words you use.

## TIPS FOR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

### Body language

- Sit or stand in a relaxed manner
- Face your partner with your whole body
- Keep your arms relaxed and uncrossed

### Tone of voice

- Speak calmly and clearly
- If you find yourself getting upset, try lowering your voice instead of raising it
- Use the same tone of voice you would use when giving a stranger directions

### Facial expression

- Make sure your facial expression matches your emotions
- Make eye contact



Be mindful of non-verbal communication, like crossed arms or raised voices, which can send the wrong message to a partner.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

- **Give the speaker your full attention.**
- **Avoid interrupting and/or redirecting the conversation.**
- **Show your interest.** Use both verbal and non-verbal cues to let the speaker know you're focused on them. Nod or shake your head, mimic their facial expressions, and ask follow-up questions.
- **Address stress.** When you start to feel stressed in a conversation, take a moment to do the following:
  - Take three calm, deep breaths
  - Tense and release your muscles—especially your hands
  - Close your eyes and engage your senses. What do you smell? What can you hear?

## STEPS TO EFFECTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

- **Set aside time.** A conversation about a fight should not be held while one partner is distracted. Both partners should find time and a comfortable, neutral space to talk.
- **Talk face to face.** Sometimes texts and emails can be taken the wrong way, and it's easy to be distracted while talking on the phone. Make one-on-one time to talk without interruptions.
- **Employ the 48-hour rule.** After a disagreement, give yourself time to calm down and process your emotions. If after 48 hours, you're still upset, have a discussion with your partner about why you're feeling what you're feeling

**Quick Tip:** One of the best practices to adopt is using "I" statements. Keep YOUR responses limited to YOUR feelings and try not to accuse or speak for your partner. For example:

*Instead of:* You didn't call me!

✓ **Try:** I feel frustrated when we make plans and they fall through.

*Instead of:* You never make time for me!

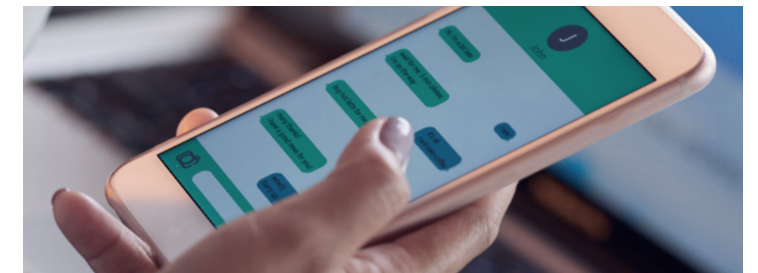
✓ **Try:** I feel we don't have time to see each other and it makes me feel that our relationship isn't important to you.

*Instead of:* You're crazy!

✓ **Try:** I understand this is something that concerns you. Tell me what you're feeling.

*Instead of:* You just don't get it!

✓ **Try:** I don't feel as though I'm making my feelings clear.



Talk face-to-face to avoid distractions and miscommunications.