

## Healthy Relationships and the Internet

Healthy relationships are very important and add to the richness of our lives. Having healthy relationships with family, friends and dating partners takes time, energy, and caring. The relationships that adolescents develop become a special part of their lives and will teach them some extremely important lessons about who they are. It is important to talk with adolescents about the aspects of developing and identifying healthy relationships.

### What do relationships have to do with Internet safety?

In an effort to reduce the risk of adolescents being sexually exploited online, they need to learn the difference between healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships. It is suggested that in order to teach adolescents about healthy relationships and to empower them to avoid exploitive relationships, they need to understand the difference between love and control.

### Teach your adolescent that healthy relationships are about:

- **Respect** — In a healthy relationship, partners value and cherish each other's friendship and consider each other's feelings.
- **Dignity** — In a healthy relationship, partners only ask each other to do things that they believe in and feel comfortable doing. They accept when their partner chooses not to do something they want.
- **Honesty** — In a healthy relationship, partners are sincere and mean what they say to each other.
- **Trust** — In a healthy relationship, partners can rely on each other and know they will not share each other's private information or say anything that would embarrass each other.
- **Kindness** — In a healthy relationship, partners are generous, and care about how each other feels.
- **Caring** — In a healthy relationship, partners are concerned about each other.
- **Listening** — In a healthy relationship, partners actively listen to each other without judgment.
- **Acceptance** — In a healthy relationship, partners like each other for who they are.



## Healthy Relationships and the Internet (cont'd)

- **Tolerance** — In a healthy relationship, partners have patience with each other and understand that nobody is perfect and everybody makes mistakes.
- **Helping** — In a healthy relationship, partners help and support one another during hard times.
- **Loyalty** — In a healthy relationship, partners stick up for each other and do not talk behind each other's back.
- **Being dependable** — In a healthy relationship, partners are there for each other when they say they will be, and keep plans with each other.
- **Enjoyment** — In a healthy relationship, partners enjoy spending time together.
- **Empathy** — In a healthy relationship, partners try to understand the way each other feels and are thoughtful not to hurt each other's feelings.
- **Intimacy** — In a healthy relationship, partners share their experiences, feelings and thoughts with each other.

