

# ABC's of a Healthy Relationship

- **A** is for Awareness
- **B** is for Balance
- **C** is for Conscious Choices

## **A is for Awareness**

Using what you know to respect others and demanding respect in return. Knowledge of the consequences of unhealthy relationships, recognizing danger signs, and knowing your boundaries. Preventing violence by recognizing a lack of power and respect. Applying the knowledge you have in order to change unhealthy relationships into healthy ones. Basically, awareness means knowledge of all aspects of a relationship. This knowledge can be gained through talking with trusted teachers, counselors, family, and older friends. The Internet and books can also help you find the information you need.

## **B is for Balance**

Balance means being in sync with your partner and having a relationship that is not one-sided – meaning that one person has more control or power than the other. Communication is the key to staying in balance. Both you and your partner have to talk about what the other person wants, and listen to what the other person has to say. You need to realize that your partner will have his or her own valuable opinions, and that you have to work together to balance their desires (and vice versa).

You and your friends probably have similar interests, but you are not completely the same. Likewise, you may have common interests with family or your boyfriend/girlfriend, but that doesn't make you the same person. You can certainly do things together, but remember that you can have different interests, too.

Make sure you and your partner have time to pursue your own interests as well. If you change in a relationship and adopt all of the other person's favorite things, hobbies, and lifestyles, the relationship becomes unbalanced, which is a very bad sign.

## **C is for Conscious Choices**

Conscious choices include being able to decide what the next step in the relationship is – don't allow things to "just happen." Allowing things to escalate on their own is a common excuse that teens use to explain getting into emotional or sexual situations that they don't always know how to handle. Choices mean being able to take control.

In order to be aware, balanced, and make healthy choices, you need the building blocks of the ABCs: communication, trust, and respect. They are the keys to a healthy relationship.