

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

The following questions are directed primarily at evaluating the potential for abuse in an intimate relationship. They can, however, help you to identify abusive behavior in other relationships (i.e., with friends, employers, parents, children, professional helpers). We use “s/he” as we wanted these questions to be relevant to examine any type of relationship.

ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP

1. Can you describe particular characteristics that you love?
2. Can you give examples of these?
3. How many qualities of being a “good friend” does this person possess?
4. What are his/her interests besides being with you?
5. Does s/he have any of the qualities that previous people who have been with you have had?
6. Can you discuss concerns/problems about the relationship with the person?
7. How do you feel about your “self” when or after you have been with him/her?

ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL

1. Does he/she accept your right to decide about birth control? Is s/he willing to wear a condom or discuss issues related to sexually transmitted disease.
2. Is s/he willing to have you spend time alone, even if s/he’d like to be with you?
3. Is s/he pleased with your accomplishments and ambitions?
4. Does s/he believe that only they should make the important decisions?
5. Does s/he think you have enough education even though you want to go to school?
6. Does s/he take over when you’re doing something whether you want them to or not?
7. Does s/he sometimes put you on a pedestal, saying that they don’t deserve you?
8. Are there some qualities you especially like about yourself that s/he disapproves of or ridicules?
9. When you have acted on your own, does s/he sometimes call you a “dyke”, “ball buster”, “whore”, etc.?
10. Has your partner spent time in jail or been arrested for acts of violence?

ABOUT FRIENDS AND FAMILY

1. Is s/he glad that you have your own friends?
2. Does s/he have good friends? What are your feelings about them?
3. Is s/he sometime jealous of your friendships or family?
4. Does s/he talk negatively about your family when you’re alone, but impress them when in their company?
5. Does s/he put your friends down as either “too good” for you or “not good enough”?

ABOUT TRUST

1. Does s/he keep asking you about the other relationships in your life?
2. Do you feel interrogated when you return after having been out?
3. Are you accused of “cheating” on him/her if you dance with an old friend or talk to others when in public?
4. Does s/he seem to sulk or be irritable when you are having a good time, but playful and happy when you are bored or lonely?
5. Do you feel that it is safe/okay to share your thoughts/feelings?

ABOUT GENDER AND SEX ROLES

1. Does s/he think women can and should be as wise, worldly, confident, strong, decisive and independent as men?
2. Does s/he think it is a wife's/woman's right to decide whether to work out of the home or not?
3. Are there special traits about women that s/he admires? What are they?
4. What was his/her relationship like with his/her mother, sister, other women?
5. Does s/he think that under any or some circumstances it is okay to hit a woman?
6. What was his/her relationship like with his/her father? What traits does he/she admire in significant male role models or heroes?
7. Does s/he believe that men should earn more than women? Does s/he express wanting baby boys more than baby girls?
8. How does s/he see masculinity or a "real man"?
9. Does s/he put down or ridicule characteristics associated with women or femininity? Does s/he use slang or profanity that reflects words about women?
10. Does s/he always decide when and how you have sex? If you say "no", does s/he stop?
11. Has s/he been in fist fights or physical altercations with others?
12. Has s/he been in other abusive relationships? If so, has s/he taken responsibility and dealt with it in ways that make you feel safe?

ABOUT COMMUNICATION AND FEELINGS

1. Does s/he ask and show interest in hearing your opinion?
2. Does s/he both talk and listen?
3. Does s/he tell you when his/her feelings are hurt? Does s/he punish you by withdrawing?
4. Is s/he able to show they're "weak" or vulnerable and to cry? Does s/he only show this type of emotion after abusing you?
5. Is s/he affectionate aside from after abusing you or wanting sex?
6. How does s/he express anger? Does s/he break or throw things?
7. Does s/he have a temper? How does s/he control it?
8. Does s/he get abusive when you don't have dinner ready on time or some other task that you are responsible for?
9. Can s/he talk openly and honestly about his/her feelings, problems, worries, insecurities, etc.?
10. Can s/he talk openly and honestly about sex?
11. When hurt, does s/he act angry instead?
12. Does s/he have a drug or alcohol problem? Can s/he admit it? Is s/he actively seeking help or in recovery?
13. Can s/he admit when s/he is wrong?