What Unhealthy Relationships Can Look Like Through an LGBTQ+ Lens

While this list focuses on the ways unhealthy behaviors can manifest in LGBTQ+ relationships, this does not mean that all LGBTQ+ relationships will exhibit these signs! These examples are to be used to show the unique ways that One Love’s 10 Unhealthy Signs might appear in LGBTQ+ relationships, including romantic relationships, friendships and family relationships. Remember unhealthy behaviors can be exhibited by anyone, whether they identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community or not.

### Unhealthy Sign

**Manipulation**
When someone tries to control your decisions, actions or emotions.

**Intensity**
When someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behavior that feels overwhelming.

**Isolation**
When someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people.

**Sabotage**
When someone purposely ruins your reputation, achievements, or success.

### LGBTQ+ Example

- Playing into someone’s internalized homophobia or discomfort around their sexuality to influence their behaviors
- Trying to convince someone to stay in the closet or to come out before they are ready
- Pressuring someone to transition (i.e. gender expression, medical interventions, etc.), or to not transition

- Making someone feel obligated to date, spend more time with, or get more serious with a partner because of a lack LGBTQ+ community

- Using a lack of LGBTQ+ community or lack of LGBTQ+ acceptance to keep someone from spending time with friends or family
- Example: “Your family would never accept our relationship – it would be better if you stopped talking to them.”
- Using the fact that someone is not out to everyone to further isolate them. Someone who is not able to be out is already isolated – they may be unable to talk about their relationship at all, let alone the fact that it’s unhealthy
- Preventing a person from interacting with other LGBTQ+ people, or with non-LGBTQ+ people

- Outing someone to get them fired, kicked off a team, or kicked out of their home
- Taking away or blocking someone’s access to hormones, binders, or other gender-affirming resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhealthy Sign</th>
<th>LGBTQ+ Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deflecting Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>• Blaming problems on someone’s LGBTQ+ identity or using a partner’s identity or one's own identity as an excuse for behaving in unhealthy ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior.</td>
<td>• Example: “Of course I have to keep you at home, you’re pansexual – if you go out, I know you’ll cheat on me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Our family is falling apart because you’ve decided to be gay.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiltling</strong></td>
<td>• Making someone feel bad about their identity, their unsureness around their identity, their dating history (ex: biphobia), or how out they are to friends/family/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it’s your job to keep them happy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possessiveness</strong></td>
<td>• Using stereotypes or past partners to say who someone can or cannot hang out with or where they can or cannot spend time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone is jealous to a point where they try to control who you spend time with and what you do.</td>
<td>• Example: “I don’t want you spending time with her because you’re into girls – you’re probably into her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Example: “You can only hang out with straight people”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vollatility</strong></td>
<td>• Justifying erratic behavior around the lack of acceptance of LGBTQ+ identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone has a really strong, unpredictable reaction that makes you feel scared, confused or intimidated.</td>
<td>• Example: “I can’t help yelling and throwing things sometimes – my life as a lesbian has been really hard.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belittling</strong></td>
<td>• Using stereotypes or transphobic comments toward someone to make them feel small or worthless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself.</td>
<td>• Making someone feel lesser because they identify outside of hetero-normative or cis-normative standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Body-shaming someone, especially surrounding their gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Betrayal</strong></td>
<td>• Outing someone without their consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone is disloyal or acts in an intentionally dishonest way.</td>
<td>• Intentionally using incorrect pronouns and/or a person’s deadname* in private or public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Deadnaming is (intentionally or unintentionally) calling a trans or non-binary person by former name or birth name that they no longer use.

Learn more about healthy and unhealthy relationships at joinonelove.org.
What Healthy Relationships Can Look Like Through an LGBTQ+ Lens

These examples are to be used to show the unique ways that One Love’s 10 Healthy Signs might appear in LGBTQ+ relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Sign</th>
<th>LGBTQ+ Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Comfortable Pace | - Asking for consent as a couple discovers their physical relationship  
- NOTE: Gender queer/fluid people may have different levels of comfortability with different aspects of their physical relationship depending on how they feel on a particular day  
- Feeling that one’s partner is taking it slow and checking in often to make sure they’re comfortable, especially when it is one partner’s first LGBTQ+ relationship  
- Respecting a person’s timeline in their coming out process  
- Feeling comfortable sharing one’s private thoughts, feelings, etc. and not worrying that they are not going to be exposed |
| Trust | - Using correct gender pronouns and name  
- Respecting a partner’s wish to remain sober by not peer pressuring them (NOTE: Alcohol and substance abuse are higher in LGBTQ+ communities²)  
- Avoiding fetishization and stereotypes of queer people of color (often abbreviated to QPOC) |
| Respect | - Working together to find safe and brave places where you and your partner can enjoy each other’s company without fear of judgement  
- Getting involved in LGBTQ+ communities together |
| Fun | - You enjoy spending time together and bring out the best in each other. |
Healthy Conflict
Openly and respectfully discussing issues and confronting disagreements non-judgmentally.

Honesty
You can be truthful and candid without fearing how the other person will respond.

Independence
You have space to be yourself outside of the relationship.

Equality
The relationship feels balanced and everyone puts the same effort into the success of the relationship.

Taking Responsibility
Owning your own actions and words.

Kindness
You are caring and empathetic to one another, and provide comfort and support.

Learn more about healthy and unhealthy relationships at joinonelove.org.