Healthy relationships can make good times sweeter and hard times easier. Look out for these components to find and foster fulfilling relationships:

1. Mutual Trust and Respect: feeling safe with each other, building each other up, & treating each other with worth
2. Autonomy: supporting one another’s other relationships, goals, & interests
3. Reciprocity: mutually contributing effort, support, & care
4. Communication: actively listening, being open and honest, & feeling heard

At the end of the day, make sure you’re doing what makes you feel good!

Reevaluate your relationship if you feel stressed, criticized, or pressured at any point.

Consent is an ongoing dialogue built on mutual trust, respect, and transparent verbal and nonverbal communications. What’s consent look like? Do a VIBES check!

- Voluntary – communicate without pressure, coercion, manipulation, or force
- Informed – communicate relevant sexual health information, boundaries, and desires
- Being of sound mind – everyone is able to clearly make, communicate, and understand decisions
- Enthusiastic and engaged – communicate actively and with interest so everyone is able to explore and experience pleasure
- Specific and continuous – an ongoing dialogue that involves paying attention to body language, active listening, and checking in with every change in activity

“What do you want to do right now?”
“I want to kiss you.”
“I want to kiss you.”
“I’d like that.”

Safer Sex

Most people with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) don’t have symptoms. You can do a standard STI screening at Student Health and Wellness for $40, which will be charged to your student account as an unspecified service.

Birth control reduces risk of unplanned pregnancy. Consult with a provider to choose the best option for you. Remember that purchasing emergency contraception at a pharmacy is available to you if needed.

Having sex isn’t the only way to be intimate in a romantic relationship. It’s your personal choice to decide whether, how, and when to express sexuality. If choosing to have sex, communicate consent and use safer strategies to prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

Resources

- Sexual Respect Team - Healthy relationships, collaborative consent, and sexual health workshops available: studenthealth.virginia.edu/sexual-respect
- Shelter for Help in Emergency (SHE) - Confidential, 24-hour hotline for empowering those impacted by relationship violence, plus other support services: (434) 293-8509
- Planned Parenthood - Sex education, birth control, and other reproductive health care: plannedparenthood.org
- CavCare - To access sexual harm prevention and response resources at UVA: https://cavcare.virginia.edu/
- Visit our website for more resources