Assessing Relationships*

**What to observe**

- How do you feel about yourself when you are with your parents / boyfriend / spouse / friend?
- What do you like best about spending time with your parents / boyfriend / spouse / friend? Could you do better?
- Does your opinion matter to your parents / boyfriend / spouse / friend? Does their opinion matter to you?
- Do you ever fight with your parents / boyfriend / spouse / friend?
- If you fight, what does a fight look like? Does anyone get physically violent? Do people hurt each other with words? Do you punish each other by not talking or by withholding attention from each other?
- If you fight, does someone “win” the argument or do you compromise?
- Do your parents/ boyfriend / spouse / friend encourage you or put you down? Do they think your hobbies/career/activities are important?

**What to ask**

- Does the mom allow physical proximity or lean away from the person speaking?
- Does the mom pay attention when others talk to her? Do others pay attention to her?
- Does the mom mention relationships she has with others?
- Does the mom describe relationships that imply equal power or does she describe relationships in which she is subordinate to someone else’s wishes or needs?
- Does the mother appear to be afraid of the father?
- Are there signs of physical abuse in the home?
- Does the mother or father act jealous of the attention you pay to the children or another member of the house?
- How does the couple talk about each other, in positive or negative terms? How do they talk about their children?
- Is the mother responsive to her children when they cry or demand attention?
- Does the mother trust others or does she seem wary?

**What to listen for**

- Comments related to a caregiver’s childhood relationship.
- Opinions or attitudes about the relationships that the caregivers see others having.
- Positive or negative descriptions of others or how the caregivers relate to others.
- Comments about being angry or fearful of another person.
- Hints of jealousy.
- Descriptions of extreme isolation or total dependence on another for financial support.
- A lack of relationships. Few experiences interacting with others.
- A caregiver ignoring others involved in the conversation or being ignored. Talking over each other.

* For more information, refer back to the job aids from the Domestic Violence module.
# Job Aid 2: Relationship Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Unhealthy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priority:</strong> The relationship is important to both people.</td>
<td><strong>Isolation:</strong> One person in the relationship demands exclusivity and tries to cut the other person off from friends and family, which makes the person feel alone or shut out emotionally.</td>
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<td><strong>Clarity:</strong> Boundaries are in place to protect all involved.</td>
<td><strong>Dependence:</strong> One member of the relationship has to completely rely on the other for financial and emotional well-being.</td>
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<td><strong>Honesty:</strong> Communication is open and truthful.</td>
<td><strong>Distrust:</strong> Neither person trusts the other one enough to share feelings or thoughts honestly.</td>
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<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong> Each person is committed to the well-being of the other person.</td>
<td><strong>Jealousy:</strong> One person is overly possessive of the other. The other is fearful because of the possessive or suspicious behavior.</td>
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<td><strong>Respect:</strong> The each person’s opinions are treated as valid.</td>
<td><strong>Violence:</strong> Fights are physically or emotionally violent. One person considers yelling and hitting acceptable ways of solving an argument.</td>
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<td><strong>Equality:</strong> Both members of a relationship are considerate of the other. One is not better than another.</td>
<td><strong>Inequality:</strong> One partner cannot possibly meet the other’s expectations. Treatment just isn’t fair.</td>
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