

# ACS Family Advocacy Program

## Unhealthy Relationships

Relationships that are not healthy are based on power and control, not equality and respect. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, you may not think the unhealthy behaviors are a big deal. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative, abusive behaviors, are — at their root — exertions of power and control. Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

If you think your relationship is unhealthy, it's important to think about your safety now. Consider these points as you move forward:

- Understand that a person can only change if they want to. You can't force your partner to alter their behavior if they don't believe they're wrong.
- Focus on your own needs. Are you taking care of yourself? Your wellness is always important. Watch your stress levels, take time to be with friends, get enough sleep. If you find that your relationship is draining you, consider ending it.
- Connect with your support systems. Often, abusers try to isolate their partners. Talk to your friends, family members, teachers and professional support systems like behavioral health or victim advocacy, to make sure you're getting the emotional support you need. Remember, our advocates are always ready to talk if you need a listening ear.
- Think about ending the relationship. Remember that you deserve to feel safe and accepted in your relationship. Seek support services and research the best way to leave safely.

Even though you cannot change your partner, you can make changes in your own life to stay safe. Consider leaving your partner before the abuse gets worse. Whether you decide to leave or stay, make sure to use safety planning resources to stay safe, as leaving can often be the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Family Advocacy Program at on our Belgium hotline at +32 (0)472 90 1068 or at our Netherlands hotline at +31 (0)613 21 6737. You may also visit our website page <https://home.army.mil/benelux>.

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