

# What is Peer Violence?

## Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviours Between Young People

Peer violence is a rising public health issue that can affect the mental and physical health of youth and teens, and their ability to develop positive connections. It is any act or pattern of controlling behaviour from one peer to another. Youth who are subject to peer violence have a greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) as adults.

**Parents and caregivers can help by talking to youth about the warning signs of peer violence, and how to build healthy peer connections.**

## Types of Violence and Abuse

### Cyber-Violence

When technology is used to cause fear, harm, or embarrassment. This includes spying on someone online or tracking their location without them knowing.

### Criminal Harassment or Stalking

Repeated communication or contact that reduces a person's sense of safety. Examples: non-stop phone calls, texts or emails, or secretly tracking someone's location.

### Financial Abuse

Behaviour that is used to gain power and control over a person's money.

### Coercive Control

Controlling a person using fear and threats to make them act a certain way.

### Emotional Abuse

Any act that harms the mental or emotional health of a person. Examples: manipulation, threats, or behaviour that aims to degrade, humiliate, or control a person's emotions.

### Intimate Violence

Any form of unwanted sexual activity, behaviour, or threatening actions done to a person without consent.

### Physical Violence

Any act of force or harm that causes pain or makes someone afraid.

45% of teens aged 15 to 17 have experienced peer violence.



Peer violence in Canada is rising. After a period of decline, teen peer violence has gone up by 33% since 2015.



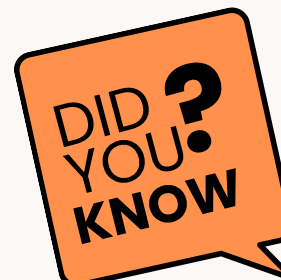
## Warning Signs and Risks of Peer Violence

- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide)
- Low self-esteem
- Substance misuse
- Poor school performance
- Increase social withdrawal or isolation
- Development of unusual, inappropriate, or uncharacteristic behaviours
- Physical injuries
- Transmitted Diseases
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Future risk of being a victim or perpetrator of dating violence
- Unexplained or significant change in weight (gain or loss)
- Noticeable shift/decline in interests and activities
- Changes in personal boundaries or boundary-setting behaviour



# Understanding Power and Control

The **Power and Control Wheel** shows the effects of abusive peer connections and how violence happens.



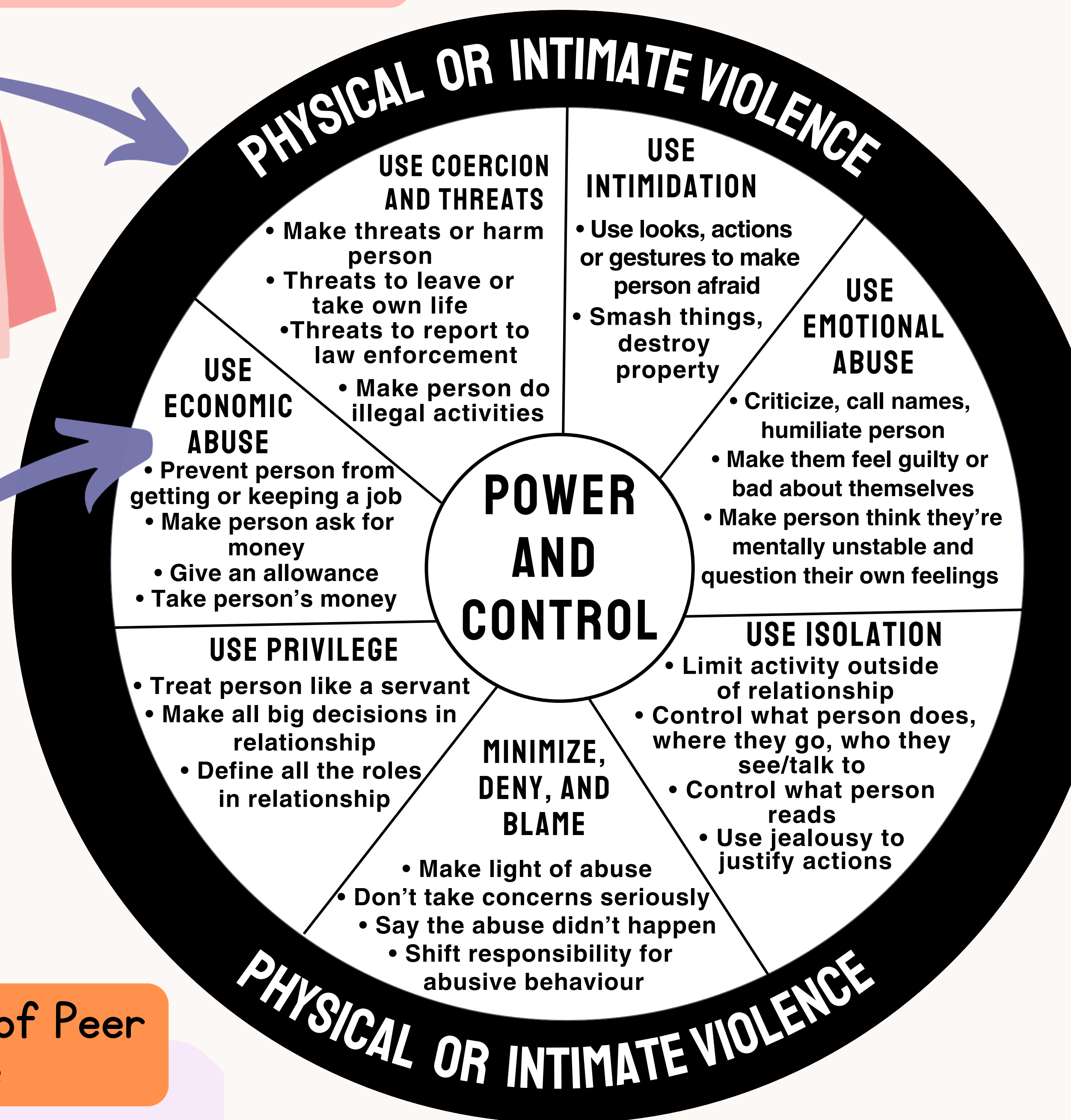
It only takes one unhealthy behaviour for a peer connection to be considered abusive.

## OUTER RING

The thick black line shows **PHYSICAL or INTIMATE VIOLENCE** which reinforces unhealthy behaviours, creating a cycle of control.

## INNER RING

Ongoing and sometimes subtle **UNHEALTHY BEHAVIOURS** used throughout a peer connection.



## Warning Signs of Peer Violence

Pressuring into unwanted physical contact of any kind.

Isolating peer from friends and family.

Threatening or causing physical harm including scratches or bruises.

Controlling how peer spends their time, what they can and can't do.

Showing extreme jealousy, insecurity or controlling behaviour.

Controlling peer's behaviour or how they dress.

Showing explosive or unusual mood swings.

Constantly monitoring peer's social media or tracking their location.

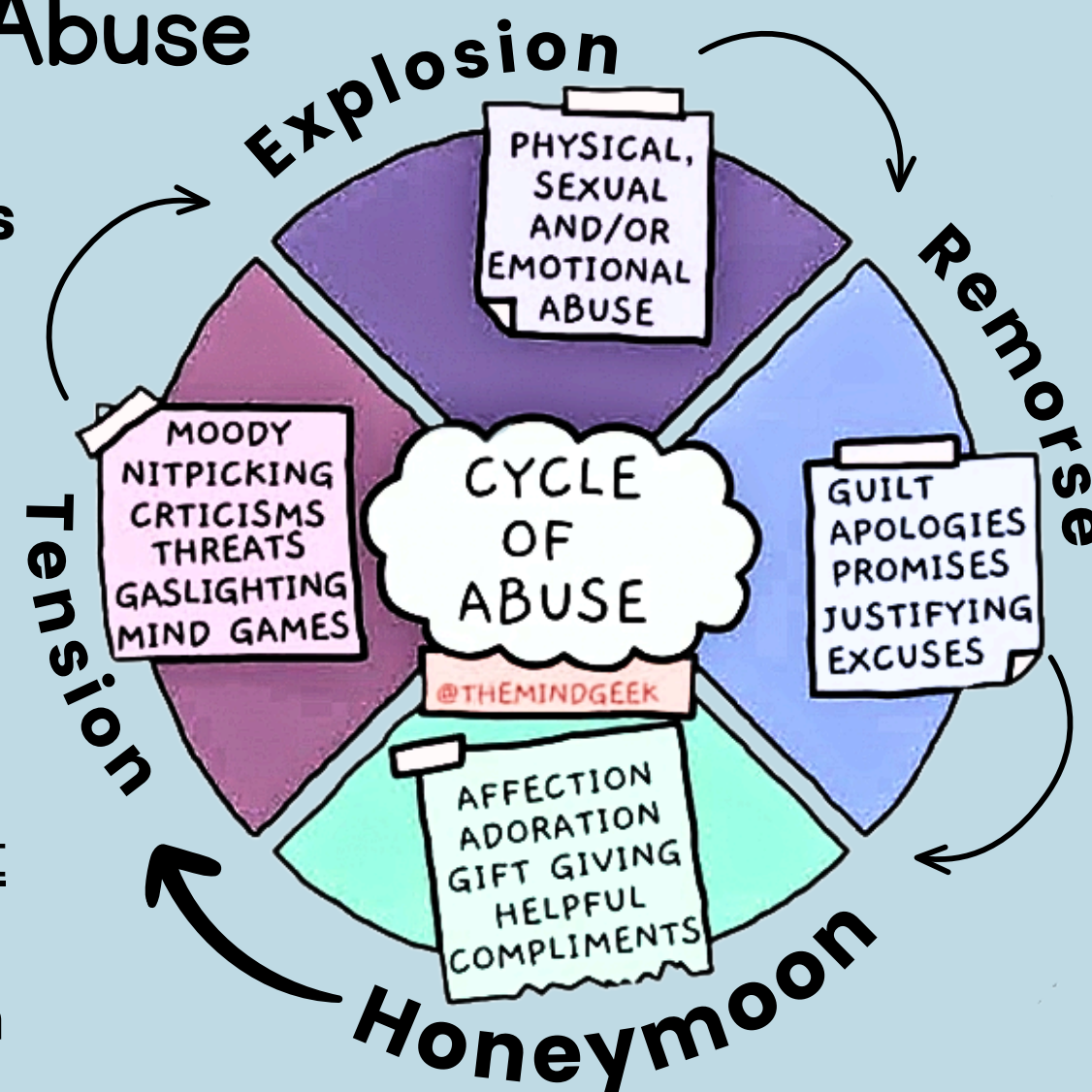
Insulting, humiliating or threatening peer in any way.

Invading privacy and personal boundaries, such as showing up without notice.

## The Cycle of Abuse

**The common pattern of abusive behaviours between peers.**

Starting with the Honeymoon stage, this cycle makes it hard for someone to leave a bad peer relationship. It can take up to eight times for a survivor to permanently leave an abusive peer.







## What is a Healthy Connection?

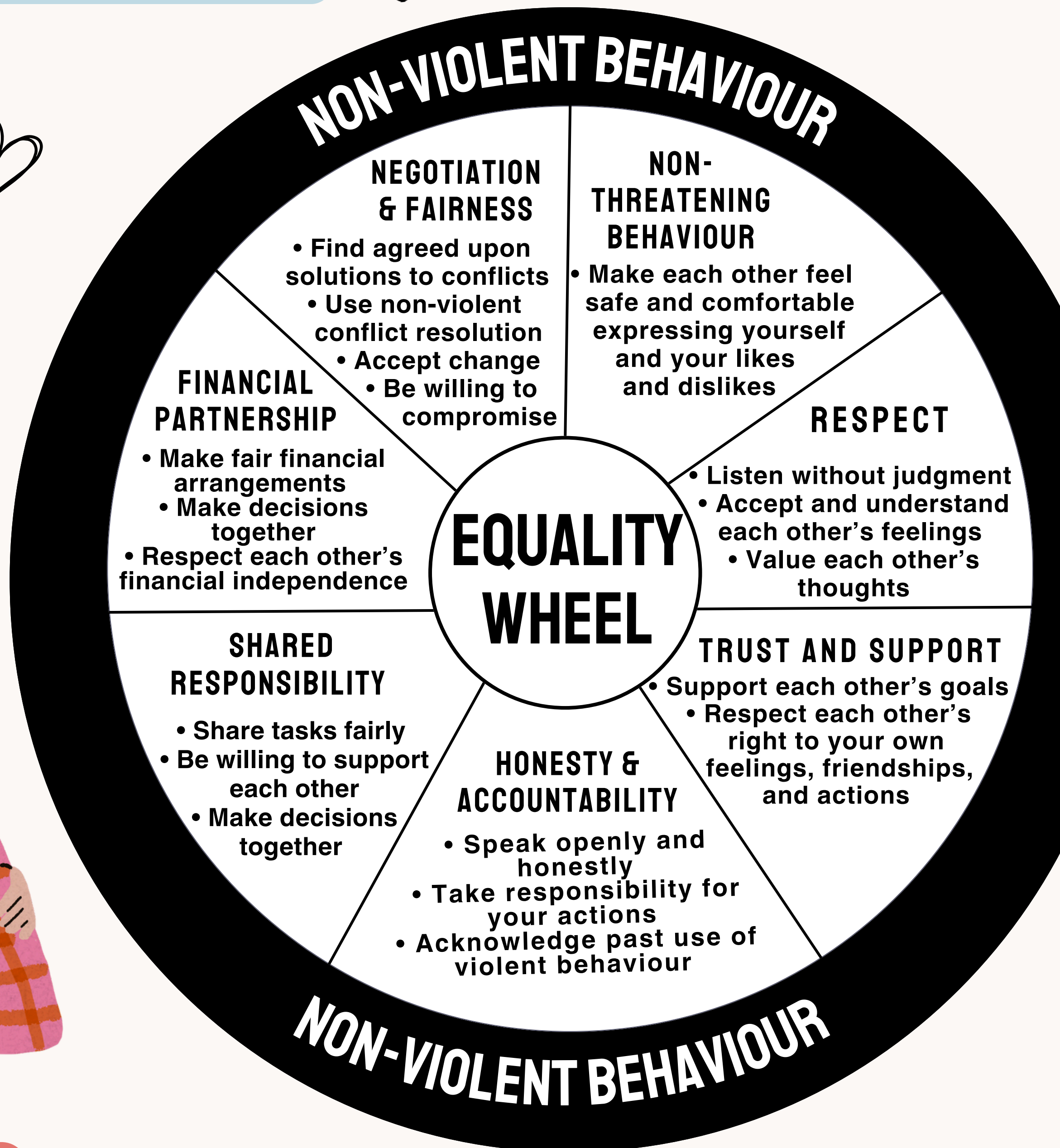
**Healthy connections** are defined by a sense of respect, trust, honesty, and open communication with peers, family members, partners, and caregivers. In healthy connections, people feel safe and supported.

## How to Build Healthy Connections

**The Equality Wheel** shows positive acts that people can do to build an equal, healthy connection that is free of abuse or violence.

**Peer violence and abuse can be prevented through better communication and equality in connections.**

Studies also show that when peers communicate openly and respectfully, connections are more likely to thrive!



## 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Facts & Supports





## How to Support Victims/Survivors of Peer Violence

- Be supportive and listen without judgment.
- Make a safety plan for what to do after an incident.
- Accept what a youth is telling you about their peers.
- Educate yourself on peer violence and the warning signs of unhealthy connections.



Female identifying teens aged 15 to 17 are **nine times** more likely to experience violence with peers than boys of the same age.



### LOCAL 24HR CRISIS LINES:

**Sexual Assault Crisis Line : 519-253-9667**

**Hiatus House: 519-252-7781**

### IF YOU ARE IN DANGER:

**Call 911 or go to your closest hospital emergency department**

## Need Help OR a Referral?

Connect with a  
**HWoW Gender-Based Violence Support Worker:**

### **Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County**

519-255-1127 EXT. 179

[www.themcc.com](http://www.themcc.com)

#### **WEST**

(519) 256-6621

[www.westofwindsor.com](http://www.westofwindsor.com)

### **South Asian Centre of Windsor**

519-252-7447

[www.themcc.com](http://www.themcc.com)

### **Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women (W5)**

519-973-5588

[www.wwwwiw.org](http://www.wwwwiw.org)

### **YMCA: Newcomer and Community Services Windsor**

519-258-9622

[www.ymcaswo.ca](http://www.ymcaswo.ca)

## Other Supports in the Community

### **Victim Services of Windsor**

#### **Hiatus House**

519-252-7781

[www.hiatushouse.com](http://www.hiatushouse.com)

#### **& Essex County**

519-723-2711

[www.vswec.ca](http://www.vswec.ca)

#### **Nisa Homes**

1-888-315-6472

[www.nisafoundation.ca](http://www.nisafoundation.ca)

#### **Sexual Assault Crisis Centre**

519-253-3100

[www.saccwindsor.net](http://www.saccwindsor.net)

#### **Windsor Essex Community Health Centre – Teen Health**

519-253-8481

[wechc.org/location/teen-health](http://wechc.org/location/teen-health)

#### **New Beginnings Essex County**

519-971-0973

[www.newbeginningswindsor.com](http://www.newbeginningswindsor.com)

#### **Sexual Assault \ Domestic Violence Treatment Centre**

519-253-2234

[www.wrh.on.ca/SADVTC](http://www.wrh.on.ca/SADVTC)

#### **Family Services Windsor-Essex**

519-966-5010

[www.fswe.ca](http://www.fswe.ca)

#### **Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society**

519-252-1171

[www.wecas.on.ca](http://www.wecas.on.ca)

#### **Windsor Essex Child and Youth Advocacy Centre**

519-995-3974

[www.wecyac.ca](http://www.wecyac.ca)

#### **Amy Lo Faso, Principal of Safe Schools – WECDsb**

519-253-2481 EXT. 1117

[amy\\_lofaso@wecdsb.on.ca](mailto:amy_lofaso@wecdsb.on.ca)

#### **Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre**

519-253-3243

[www.caifc.ca](http://www.caifc.ca)

#### **Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre**

519-916-1755

[www.soahac.on.ca](http://www.soahac.on.ca)

#### **Reseau-Femme Du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario**

1-888-946-3029

[www.rfsoo.ca](http://www.rfsoo.ca)

#### **Le Centre Communautaire francophone de Windsor-Essex-Kent**

519-948-5545

[Info@ccfwek.org](mailto:Info@ccfwek.org)

#### **Legal Assistance of Windsor Supporting Survivors of Gender Based and Sexual Violence Program**

519-256-7831

[www.legalassistanceofwindsor.com/gbvsa](http://www.legalassistanceofwindsor.com/gbvsa)



Scan for  
Youth-Specific  
Supports and  
a Digital Version  
of this Resource

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

## **Sexual Assault Crisis Centre**

519-253-3100

[www.saccwindsor.net](http://www.saccwindsor.net)

## **Youth Wellness Hub**

519-800-8640

[www.youthhubyqg.com](http://www.youthhubyqg.com)

## **Trans Wellness Ontario**

226-674-4745

[www.transwellness.ca](http://www.transwellness.ca)

## **The House Youth Centre**

519-736-6811

[www.thehouseyouthcentre.com](http://www.thehouseyouthcentre.com)

## **The Bridge Youth Resource Centre**

226-773-3454

[www.thebridgeyouth.ca](http://www.thebridgeyouth.ca)

## **Windsor Essex Community Health Centre – Teen Health**

519-253-8481

[wechc.org/location/teen-health](http://wechc.org/location/teen-health)

## **Amani – Mental Health Support for Black Youth**

519-253-8481

[www.amaniservices.ca](http://www.amaniservices.ca)

## **Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre**

519-253-3243

[www.caifc.ca](http://www.caifc.ca)

## **Amy Lo Faso, Principal of Safe Schools – WECDSB**

519-253-2481 ext. 1117

[amy\\_lofaso@wecdsb.on.ca](mailto:amy_lofaso@wecdsb.on.ca)

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## **Family Services Windsor-Essex**

519-966-5010

[www.fswe.ca](http://www.fswe.ca)

## **New Beginnings Essex County**

519-971-0973

[www.newbeginningswindsor.com](http://www.newbeginningswindsor.com)

## **Youth Diversion Essex County**

519-253-3340

[www.ecyouthdiversion.ca](http://www.ecyouthdiversion.ca)

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519-256-7831

[www.legalassistanceofwindsor.com/gbvsa](http://www.legalassistanceofwindsor.com/gbvsa)



For more  
information  
and support,  
visit  
[wechu.org/YRV](http://wechu.org/YRV)

