

Experiences from our past can also affect our health and well-being, such as:

- ✓ Emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect
- ✓ Racism and other forms of oppression.

Being hurt at any point in your life can affect your health and relationships as an adult but there are things that can support you being healthy.

Safe and Connected

Dealing with trauma and relationship abuse can feel isolating. Reaching out is the first step.

- ✓ Taking steps to be safe in an abusive relationship can be scary but is important for your well-being and the well-being of your family.
- ✓ If you decide to disclose your HIV status to a partner, consider doing it in the presence of a trusted friend who already knows your status, particularly if you're worried that your partner could react negatively.
- ✓ If you think things that happened in your past may be affecting your health, talk to a trusted health care provider or peer advocate.
- ✓ Work with someone you trust to develop a self-care plan to help you take your medications as prescribed, connect with others and get a good night's sleep.
- ✓ Share this card with your friends and others in your community who might need help.

To learn more about safety in abusive relationships, call the National DV Hotline number on the back of this card to speak anonymously with an advocate.

National hotlines can connect you to local resources and provide support 24/7 via phone or online chat:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
www.thehotline.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-4673 | www.rainn.org

SAMHSA National Helpline
for drug use and mental health
1-800-662-4357

The Body complete HIV resource
www.thebody.com

AIDS.org HIV/AIDS prevention, FAQs and news | www.aids.org

Positive Women's Network support and action network
www.pwnusa.wordpress.com



POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK
USA

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Positive Sex and Relationships: Taking control of your health

You Deserve Kindness

You may have gotten this card because you are HIV positive and your provider knows that supportive, caring relationships are good for your health. All of us deserve kind and respectful relationships. How is yours going?

Ask yourself: Do my partner(s) support me:

- ✓ by respecting my choices?
- ✓ in spending time with friends or family?
- ✓ in staying healthy?

Do I:

- ✓ Give my partner(s) the same respect and space?
- ✓ Feel safe talking about sex and protection with my partner(s)

If you answered YES to these questions, it is likely that your relationship(s) are healthy, which can contribute to good physical and mental health.

On Bad Days

For many, HIV is connected to unsafe relationships. For example, your partner(s) might react in a way that puts you at risk if you disclose your status.

Do your partner(s) ever:

- ✗ Threaten to disclose your private health information?
- ✗ Shame you about health issues you are dealing with or tell you no one else will want you because of them?
- ✗ Isolate you from friends or family?
- ✗ Tell you you are dirty or nasty?
- ✗ Keep you from taking medication or going to the doctor or support groups?
- ✗ Withhold money for things you need (e.g., food, medication, transportation)?
- ✗ Threaten you with loss of custody, housing, or employment?

If any of this is happening, it could be harder for you to stay healthy. Know that you are not alone and it is not okay. There is support available 24/7.

Drugs and Partners

Some folks use drugs and alcohol to cope. Ask yourself:

- ✗ Am I drinking or using drugs in order to cope with what is going on in my relationship(s) or because of my health?
- ✗ Has my partner(s) used my drug or alcohol dependency to control or manipulate me?
- ✗ Has my partner(s) ever pressured to share my works or use when I don't want to?

Many folks have struggled and survived by using but maybe it isn't working any more and you want to make a change. Talk to your provider or a trusted friend about what you have been experiencing.