

Online Communication: Texting and Sexting

What is too much texting?

- Texting can be a great way to keep in touch with your partner. If your partner texts too much, it's not only irritating, but it could be unhealthy.
- Constant contact may be a sign of controlling behavior.
- Consider talking to your partner about giving you a little bit of space.
- Remember, if they're using text messages to monitor who you're with or where you go, that is a warning sign of abuse.

Sexting

- It is 100% your choice if you want to engage in any kind of sexual activity, including sending nude or sexually explicit images of yourself.
- You deserve to feel safe and respected in your relationship at all times. If your partner is pressuring or forcing you to sext when you don't want to, or if you sexted privately with your partner and they are breaking your trust by threatening to share your photos or texts, these are abusive behaviors.
- Sexting can also have legal consequences. Any nude photos or videos of someone under the age of 18 could be considered child pornography, which is illegal to own or distribute. Make sure you know what you are doing before you send a sext.

Reading Someone Else's Texts

- Healthy relationships are built on trust, not jealousy. There is no justification for a partner to want to go through your text messages, or phone usage, if they trust you.
- If your partner is reading your text messages and monitoring your phone usage this is a warning sign of an unhealthy relationship. This is considered controlling behavior.
- Everyone has the right to privacy and to be free to choose to talk to whomever they like.

Threats over Text

- Threats over text should be taken seriously. Don't make excuses and discount them as nothing.
- Keep track of threatening texts and think about talking to someone you trust about what is happening. Being in a violent relationship is dangerous, and you don't have to go through it alone.

What Can I Do?

Whether you feel like your partner is already using their cell phone in an abusive way or you're trying to prevent it, here are tips to keep you safe and healthy:

- Remember, it's ok to turn off your phone. Just be sure your parent or guardian knows how to contact you in an emergency.
- Don't answer calls from unknown or blocked numbers. Your abuser can easily call you from another line if they suspect you are avoiding them.
- Try to avoid responding to hostile, harassing, abusive or inappropriate texts or messages.
- Save or document troublesome texts as you may need them later for evidence in case you file a criminal report or ask for a restraining order.
- Many phone companies can block up to ten numbers from texting or calling you. Contact your phone company or check their website to see if you can do this on your phone.
- If you are in or coming out of a dangerous relationship, avoid using any form of technology to contact your abuser. It can be dangerous and may be used against you in the future.
- It may seem extreme, but if the abuse and harassment don't stop, changing your phone number may be your best option.

If you are feeling threatened, overwhelmed, and suffocated by your partner's constant texts, or calls, you may be in an unhealthy relationship.

You have the right to be in a safe and healthy relationship free from all types of abuse

Adapted from www.loveisrespect.org



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