****

**Relationship Trauma - Signs of Unhealthy Love**

Trauma is frequently found within relationships. It is important to understand what kind of love is healthy, and what is hurtful. Many of us are not taught from a young age how to love, which makes this particular area very easy to feel stuck in. This applies to romantic relationships, and also with friends, family, and others. Understanding is the first step to preventing trauma. The following are markers for signs of unhealthy love within relationships:

* Things progress too quickly to the point of feeling smothering. At first this may feel good, but then starts to feel like you have to always be with them. If you don’t respond to a text, they show up randomly at different places, and emotions are high if you’re not together.
* You can’t ask for your own needs. You may try to express yourself, but nothing is heard or it may be dismissed.
* You are being isolated from others around you, which means you start to lose relationships with those you have been close to.
* Extreme jealousy. This brings up frequent mistrust and possessiveness. Sometimes it can also include a push pull dynamic in the relationship. He/she lashes out at you irrationally, then expects you to prove your love to them by coming back.
* You feel belittled and criticized. This causes you to doubt more about yourself and be more dependent on him/her for approval.
* Conversations are manipulated to make you feel like everything is always your fault. It feels like you are the bad guy and they are always the victim.
* Interactions become easily volatile followed up by apologies of it never happening again. This pattern repeats with the same arguments over and over.
* Interactions escalate to the point of threats. These threats can be physical, sexual, or emotional.