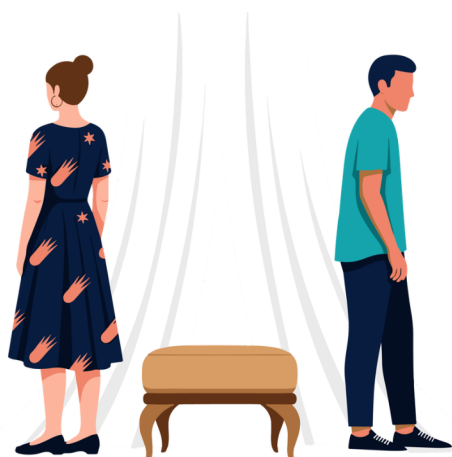


Cultural Myths Promoting Unhealthy Relationships

In South Asian cultures, certain myths and misconceptions can also promote unhealthy relationships.

- **Extreme Sacrifice** – In South Asian cultures, endurance of abuse is normalized, with individuals encouraged to suffer in silence to maintain harmony.
- **Honor** – Pressure to maintain family reputation causes people to keep abuse, mental health issues, and marital issues silent, otherwise, “What will people say?”
- **Emotional Neglect** – Feelings and emotions are dismissed as a sign of weakness. This can prevent the victim from speaking out.
- **Respect for Elders** – Unquestioning obedience towards elders can lead to difficulty with boundary setting. Saying no can be seen as disrespectful.
- **Gendered Roles and Patriarchy** – Women are expected to be submissive and prioritize family over their needs. Men are expected to be the primary authority. This leads to imbalances of power between men and women.
- **Gaslighting and Manipulation** – These can be used to maintain, for example, the mother-son bond or familial control. This can lead to insecurity and anxiety.
- **Stigma of Divorce** – Divorce is seen as a failure, pressuring the victim to stay in unhealthy or abusive relationships.
- **Focus on Collectivism** – Focus on the family over the individual, and making decisions based on the family can lead to a lack of personal space and codependency.



These harmful norms can lead to hiding abuse, feelings of guilt, pressure to conform, lack of boundaries, and emotional neglect. This can make it hard for victims to escape toxic situations.