

Mental Wellbeing: Relationships

From the day we are born we start building relationships. We trust that as an infant we will be taken care of by our parents and/or caregivers. As we grow we continue to build relationships with others throughout our entire life time. Sometimes those relationships teach and grow us and other times they may hinder us.



TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS

- **Social group/friends-** Consists of two or more humans who interact with one another, share similar characteristics and collectively have a sense of unity.
- **Household/family-** One or more persons who share main residence, and share meals or living space. There may or may not be extended family and of close friends included in this group as well.
- **Peer group-** Is both a social group and a primary group of people who have similar interests age, background, or social status.
- **Organizational groups-** A social group which distributes tasks for a collective goal.
- **Community member-** A small or large social unit (a group of people) who have something in common, such as norms, religion, values, or identity.
- **Intimate relationships-** An interpersonal relationship that involves physical and/or emotional intimacy.

Wikipedia.org outlines each type of relationship and who falls under the definition of each. There are several different types of relationships and all

are equally important but need to be fostered differently. The 2 types people tend to struggle with the most are friends and intimate relationships.



HOW DO I KNOW MY RELATIONSHIPS ARE HEALTHY?

Everyone wants to believe that all their relationships are healthy but what are some signs that will tell me that they are? The Health Center at the University of Washington identifies several key characteristics to healthy relationships. Here are a few of them:

- Honesty
- Trust
- Support
- Mutual Respect
- Communication

Relationships should enrich your life. Healthy, positive relationships and friendships are built on respect, love and kindness. Knowing the signs of a healthy relationship can help you identify when your relationship might be unhealthy and how to turn it around. Here are some self-care tips

- **Set Your Own Boundaries.** You get to choose how much of your life to share with another person and shouldn't feel pressured to share more.
- **It's Okay To Say No.** If something makes you uncomfortable you can choose not to do it. In a healthy relationship your decisions are respected.
- **Know Your Own Worth.** You shouldn't be asked to change the unique person that you are in order to gain anyone's trust or respect.

- **Communication Is Key.** Healthy relationships rely on being able to express one's thoughts and feelings without being judged or ridiculed. You don't have to agree with someone in order to respect and support them.
- **Conflict Is Normal.** You can overcome conflicts by listening openly to understand various perspectives. Recognize that you don't always have to agree, although you should respect different opinions.
- **Know When To Apologize.** Everyone makes mistakes and a sincere apology is a brave and meaningful way of repairing relationships.
- **Personal Space Is Important.** People need their own time to enjoy hobbies, hang out with friends and family, or just be alone. No one else should control how you spend your personal time.
- **Honesty And Trust.** Trust is essential to any healthy relationship and being truthful is essential to building trust. This includes being factually truthful and honest about thoughts and feelings without being hurtful.
- **Privacy.** Emails, phone calls, and text messages sent to you were meant for you. You have a right to keep them private and you should expect others to keep your messages private as well.
- **Mutual Support.** In healthy relationships people support each other's hopes and dreams, help each other through difficult times, encourage each other, and are willing to compromise.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY/ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Sometimes those relationships that we depend on may not be the healthiest and actually hurt us. Here are some signs that may suggest you are in an unhealthy relationship.

- 1) Intimidates you with guns, knives or other weapons
- 2) Prevents you from making your own decisions
- 3) Tells you that you can't ever do anything right

- 4) Controls when you go places and where you go.
- 5) Pressures you into things.



If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship and don't know where to turn, there is help out there. These resources include:

- Central MN Sexual Assault Center: 15 Riverside Dr. NE, St. Cloud 56304, 320-251-4357 or 1-800-237-5090. Or online at: <https://cmsac.org/>
- Anna Marie's Alliance: P.O. Box 367, St. Cloud, MN 56302, 320-253-6900 or 1-800-950-2203. Or online at: <http://www.annamaries.org/>
- Aspire Curriculum: A free domestic violence education curriculum aiming to reduce the level of intimate relationship violence in the U.S., and instill the importance of bystander responsibility. Learn more about this curriculum and the new app for your phone here: <https://www.whengeorgiasmiled.org/aspire-curriculum/>

References:

<https://bornthisway.foundation/mental-wellness/self-care-tips/>

<http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/health-resource/healthy-vs-unhealthy-relationships>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_relationships

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelINOSHADING.pdf>

<http://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>

<https://www.whengeorgiasmiled.org/aspire-curriculum/>