

Social Wellness

Topics in this Program:

- Your Relationship with Yourself
- Relationships with Family
- Relationships with Significant Others
- Relationships with Friends
- Other Relationships
- Your Relationship Strengths
- Healthy Communication
- Conflict Resolution



Your Relationship with Yourself

What does a healthy relationship with yourself look like?

Having a healthy relationship with yourself means that you understand and respect your own strengths, weaknesses, limits, and boundaries, just like you would in any other healthy relationship. Having a healthy relationship with yourself involves self-love. Self-love has been defined as "a state of appreciation for oneself". Self-love increases when you take the time to care for yourself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Self-love means making your own happiness and well-being a priority, not settling for less than you deserve, and not sacrificing your own well-being to take care of others.

What are the benefits of having a healthy relationship with yourself?

When you have a healthy relationship with yourself, you understand yourself better, you are happier, you have a greater ability to feel peace, and you have more to give to your relationships with other people. Loving and appreciating yourself will motivate you to make healthier lifestyle choices, such as exercising, eating well, getting enough sleep, and having healthy relationships with others.



How can you develop a healthy relationship with yourself?

Building a healthy relationship with yourself will look different for everyone because each individual's needs, wants, values, and interests vary. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Do something that makes you happy or brings you comfort every day.** You deserve it!
- **Start a new hobby or develop a new skill.** Learning a new skill brings self-fulfillment.
- **Say something positive to yourself in the mirror each morning.** Never underestimate the power of positive thinking.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Focusing on the good in life also helps you focus on the good in yourself.
- **Make a gratitude list.** Recognizing what you have helps you be happier with your life and yourself.
- **Spend time with people who are likeminded.** While you do grow and learn a lot from having relationships with people who are different from you, spending time with people similar to you helps you recognize your strengths and appreciate your uniqueness.



What will you do to develop a stronger relationship with yourself? _____

Relationships with Family

What does a healthy relationship with your family look like?

Every family looks different, but most healthy families share some common characteristics. In a healthy familial relationship, individuals can trust and rely on each other for love, support, affection, acceptance, and respect. Conflict, which is inevitable in all relationships, is dealt with in a productive, safe way. Healthy families are good at communicating openly and honestly and listening to one another. Healthy families often bond through shared values, beliefs, and activities. They are resilient and put family well-being as their top priority.

What are the benefits of having a healthy relationship with your family?

Children who have social, emotional, and physical support in their family relationships will have better health as an adult. Positive family relationships help individuals build confidence, trust, resilience, and independence. Healthy family relationships can help mitigate the effects of stress on individuals. Individuals are also likely to experience better mental health if they have positive family relationships. People with healthy family relationships are also more likely to engage in healthy behaviors, such as exercising, eating nutritious foods, and getting enough sleep. It is safe to say that positive family relationships contribute to overall improved well-being.



How can you develop a healthy relationship with your family?

Keep in mind that because every family looks different and has different dynamics, what works for one family may not work for another. Here are some ideas to get you started:



- **Spend quality time as a family.** It doesn't have to be a big or expensive vacation. Start with activities that your family enjoys, even if that's just watching a movie together at home. Always remember to be present when you are with your loved ones.
- **Make one-on-one time a priority.** Finding 10 or 15 minutes to check in individually with each family member is an important part of strengthening family bonds.
- **Be interested and involved.** Take an interest in the things that are important to your family members. Showing up to support them at concerts, sporting events, or other events they are participating in can mean a lot.
- **Express your love and support.** Give a hug or other greeting on your way in or out of the door. Take the time to call family members who live far away. Never underestimate the importance of verbally expressing your love.

What will you do to develop stronger relationships with your family members? _____

Relationships with Significant Others

What does a healthy relationship with a significant other look like?

A healthy relationship with a significant other includes honesty, trust, respect, and open communication. Each partner respects the other's independence, and both partners share decisions but can also make their own decisions without fear of retaliation from the other partner. There is also a respect for the other partner's privacy and space. In a healthy relationship, you feel that you can be completely yourself and express your opinions. Both partners always feel physically and emotionally safe. Consent is always given before engaging in any type of sexual activity. When there are disagreements, they can be resolved with compromise and negotiation.



What are the benefits of having a healthy relationship with your significant other?

Having a healthy relationship with your significant other has been linked to lowered anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, and greater empathy. They may also strengthen your immune system, help your body recover and heal from injury and disease, and lengthen your life. You may also experience a greater sense of purpose. As with healthy family relationships, individuals who have a good relationship with their significant other are also more likely to engage in healthy behaviors.



How can you develop a healthy relationship with your significant other?

As with any other type of relationship, different things will work for different people. Remember to be open with your partner about what each of you wants and needs in the relationship. Here are a few helpful tips:

- **Set boundaries.** Find ways to meet each other's needs that both of you are comfortable with. When your partner communicates their boundaries to you, make sure you respect them. Boundaries can be physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, digital, or even material.
- **Communicate openly and often.** The best relationships are built on good and frequent communication. Take the time to genuinely listen and respond to your partner in a way that makes them feel safe, heard, understood, supported, and not judged.
- **Build trust.** Be reliable. Do what you say you will do. Respect your partner's boundaries. Always be honest. Don't talk about your partner behind their back.
- **Be positive and affirming.** John Gottman, a relationship researcher, has found that happy couples have a ratio of five positive interactions or feelings to every one negative interaction or feeling.
- **Take care of yourself.** You will be a better partner when your needs are met and you make time for outside activities. Keep your life balanced.
- **Keep your expectations realistic.** Nobody is perfect. Love and respect your partner for who they are.

What will you do to develop a stronger relationship with your significant other? _____

Relationships with Friends

What does a healthy relationship with a friend look like?

Healthy friendships happen when both individuals feel good about themselves when they are with each other. There is an equal amount of "give and take" from both sides. Both individuals feel safe when they are together and enjoy spending time with each other. There is trust and respect between them, and both feel that they can be themselves around the other.



What are the benefits of having a healthy relationship with friends?

Many of the benefits of having healthy friendships overlap with the benefits that come from other types of relationships. Friendship increases your sense of belonging and purpose, improves your self-worth and confidence, helps you cope with stress and difficult events in your life, helps you accomplish your goals, and makes you happier. A study published in The American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine found that friendship helps people maintain healthy blood sugar levels, improves their heart health and mental health, and can even make it more likely that individuals will survive cancer.

How can you develop a healthy relationship with a friend?

Here are a few ways you can strengthen your friendships (or make new ones):

- **Choose your friends wisely.** It is okay to not be best friends with everyone you meet. Choose to surround yourself with people who build you up, who welcome you, who are positive, and who inspire you to be a better person. Work to be that kind of friend for them.
- **Make yourself available.** It takes time to develop, build, and maintain friendships. Make time for your friends and the people who are important to you. Of course it is okay to say no when you are feeling overstretched or overwhelmed, but recognize that friendship takes work. Extending invitations can go a long way.
- **Show genuine interest in them.** Take the time to learn how they think and feel, know what is going on in their life, listen to what they have to say, and take an interest in their interests.
- **Understand and support their goals and decisions.** Encourage them to have big hopes, dreams, and goals, and do what you can to help them achieve them. During childhood, it's easy to think that everyone is headed in the same direction, but as we get older, our life courses change. Good friends support each other even when they choose different life paths and respect each other's decisions even when they may not agree with them.
- **Keep your promises.** Do what you say you will do. If a friend shares private information with you, keep it confidential.
- **Celebrate what you have in common.** Most friendships begin because you have something in common. This can be an important part of your friendship. But don't be afraid to try new things together, too. These can also provide important bonding opportunities.



What will you do to develop stronger friendships? _____

Other Relationships

There are too many other types of relationships to be able to cover all of them, but here are a few ways you can improve your relationships with your coworkers, professors, and classmates. Just remember that all the principles we talk about today can apply to almost any relationship in some way.

Coworkers

- **Follow through on your commitments.** Good workplace relationships are built on trust. When you are given assignments, be sure to complete them to the best of your ability and in a timely manner.
- **Avoid gossip.** It can be easy to become frustrated with your coworkers,



especially in stressful situations or when working with tight deadlines, but talking behind their backs won't get the work done more efficiently or build their trust.

- **Know when to ask for help.** Understand your own strengths and weaknesses. Recognize that asking for help shows your willingness to learn and do good work. Be sure to offer assistance to your coworkers when they need it as well.

Professors

- **Visit your professors during their office hours.** Although emailing can be helpful for some things, it can't replace face-to-face interaction. Many questions or topics can be better addressed in person than through email. Don't be shy! You will stand out when you make the effort to introduce yourself and ask for their help.
- **Express gratitude to your professors.** Whether it's at the end of a lecture or the end of a conversation, express your gratitude to them for their assistance. This will help to leave a good impression.
- **Ask your professors about their fields of interest.** Most professors are excited to talk about the things they are researching or teaching about, especially with students who are genuinely curious.



Classmates

- **Introduce yourself to classmates you do not know.** You never know if they might become your new best friend!
- **Do your part when you have assignments in a group - and do it well.** It can be easy to justify doing little or low-quality work when in a group setting, but doing your part to the best of your ability will help minimize conflict, build trust, and help your group be successful.
- **When you need to provide criticism, do so constructively.** It is okay to express your opinions and sometimes even your frustrations, but do so in a polite manner. Take the time to listen to your classmates' perspectives and focus on the issue at hand, not the personalities of your classmates. There is something that can be learned from everyone.

Your Relationship Strengths



As we have talked about each of these relationships and how you can improve them, you have probably thought of many things you struggle with in relationships. While it is important to recognize the areas you can improve in, it is just as important to recognize the strengths you have and the positive things you can offer to each of your relationships. Think about your strengths and mark any that you feel apply to you below:

- Good communicator
- Good listener
- Empathetic
- Honest
- Loyal
- Compassionate

- Committed
- Kind
- Affectionate
- Supportive
- Devoted
- Moral

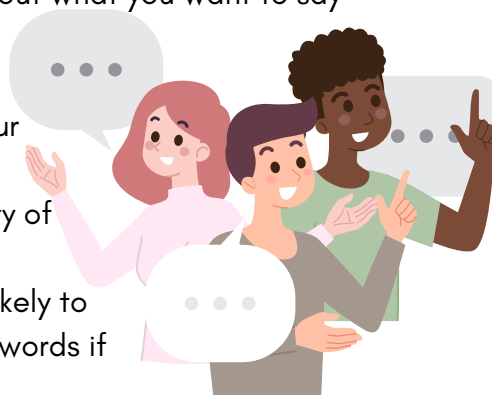
● Others:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Communication

As you have probably noticed, good communication is key to any type of relationship. Here are a few things to be aware of when working to improve your communication skills:

- **Prepare ahead of time when possible.** If there is an issue you need to discuss with an individual, it can be helpful to take the time to think about what you want to say beforehand. Of course you cannot prepare for most conversations you will have, but thinking through the ones you can will help you learn to stay in control of your emotions.
- **Be mindful of nonverbal communication.** The majority of communication is nonverbal and can often be more impactful than the words you speak. People are more likely to believe body language or other nonverbal signals than words if the two do not match.
- **Pay attention to your tone of voice.** How you say something is just as important as what you say. Make sure you are sending the message you want to be sending. Remember to stay in control of your emotions or take time to collect them before responding when needed.
- **Practice active listening.** When someone is speaking to you, make sure you hear the entire message, not just the words they speak. Give them your full, undivided attention. Try not to judge them or come up with counter-arguments as you listen. Avoid interrupting people when they are speaking. Use open, positive body language. Rephrase what you heard them say before responding. Ask open-ended, respectful questions when you need more clarification.
- **Build your emotional intelligence.** It is difficult to communicate with others when you do not clearly understand your own feelings and how they affect your thoughts, words, and behaviors. In addition to knowing yourself, you must also develop empathy for others. Empathy makes difficult conversations easier to have.



What will you do to develop better communication skills? _____

Conflict Resolution

All types of relationships involve disagreements. Even the very best relationships will have some conflict, but if handled correctly, they can serve to strengthen, not weaken, the relationship.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when faced with conflict:

- **Do not react with your first instincts.** Generally, our first reaction to conflict is defensiveness. Instead, be careful and calm, take a deep breath, and get in control of your emotions before responding. Control your temper throughout the entire conversation.
- **Listen first.** Give the other person a chance to talk and explain their perspective without interrupting, resisting, defending, or debating. Try to see things from their point of view.
- **Look for areas of agreement.** Once you understand where the other person is coming from, focus on the points you both agree on.
- **Be honest.** Be honest with yourself and others. Honesty will help reduce defensiveness.
- **Promise to think over the other person's ideas.** View the issue from every perspective. The other person may be right. Be willing to compromise to find the solution that is best for everyone involved.
- **Avoid making hasty decisions.** Give everyone involved time to think through the issue. Leaving the argument and coming back to it later will give everyone time to cool off, think clearly, and come up with realistic solutions.
- **Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements.** "I feel upset because..." sounds and feels a lot different than "you are wrong because...". Use neutral language.
- **Separate the person from the problem.** View the problem as a specific behavior or set of circumstances rather than attributing your negative feelings to the person.



Goals:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Resources:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • lifehack.org | • ny.gov | • sunshineclinic.org |
| • mindyourbody.ca | • National Institutes of Health | • beyou.edu.au |
| • gahope.org | • bbrfoundation.org | • betterhealth.vic.gov.au |
| • amherst.edu | • portal.ct.gov | • Utah State University |
| • livewellutah.org | • youthfirstinc.org | • lifeoptimizer.org |
| • indeed.com | • towson.edu | • open.lib.umn.edu |
| • harvard.edu | • clarke.edu | |