**Lesson: Building Healthy Relationships**

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**The Importance of Relationships**

Your relationships with others can affect physical, mental/emotional, and social health. Having mutual values, interests, and respect are the basis of a healthy relationship. **Friendships** are based on caring, respect, trust, and consideration. **Family relationships** are the strongest bonds with others, and they last a lifetime. **Citizenship** is the way you conduct yourself as a member of the community.

**Character** is the way you think, feel, and act, which has the greatest influence on your relationships with others. The most important traits of good character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

The three basic skills of healthy relationships are the **three** C's:

* + Communication
	+ Cooperation
	+ Compromise

Good relationships have characteristics such as mutual respect and consideration, honesty, dependability, and commitment. Fortunately, you have the ability to make your relationships develop into a positive aspect of your life.

**Different Types of Relationships**

There are **four** basic types of relationships:

* 1. **Friendship**– A friendship is a significant relationship between two people based on caring, trust, and respect.
	2. **Family relationships**– Family relationships include parents, guardians, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandmas, and grandpas.
	+ **Casual relationships**– Casual relationships are formed with people you encounter every day at school and in the community. Also, casual relationships include anyone who is not a friend, romantic relationship, or family member.

**Romantic relationships**– A romantic or intimate relationship is one in which you can truly be yourself with someone and have mutual respect for one another. It is an emotional connection that can also be physical. It does **not** have to be in the context of a sexual relationship.

**Positive and Negative Effects of Relationships**

All relationships can have either a **positive** or **negative** effect on your physical, mental/emotional, and social health. You know you are in a healthy relationship when you have shared values, respect, and shared interests.

A relationship consists of not only two people but also the many ways in which they relate. For a relationship to succeed, certain traits must be present.

**Traits of a Healthy Relationship**

The following is a list of traits found in a healthy relationship:

* 1. Cooperation
	2. Compromise
	3. Respect
	4. Acceptance
	5. Honesty
	6. Trustworthiness
	7. Dependability
	8. Loyalty

Empathy

**Communication**

**Communication** is how you send and receive messages and can be done through gestures, facial expressions, and behavior. We communicate to let others know how we feel, what we think, and what we expect. It also allows you to discover feelings and the needs of others.

**The Three C's of Communication**

The **three** basic skills of healthy relationships are "The Three C's": communication, cooperation, and compromise. Good relationships also have characteristics such as mutual respect and consideration, honesty, dependability, and commitment.

**Communication** – The way you send and receive messages.

**Cooperation** – A method that involves working together for the good of all.

**Compromise** – Problem-solving method that involves each participant giving up something to reach a solution that satisfies everyone.

**Contributing to a Healthy Relationship**

If you are practicing the three C's, you make positive contributions to healthy relationships. In addition, there are other characteristics that are very important to remember, including the following:

**Mutual Respect and Consideration** –In healthy relationships, people show mutual respect even when they disagree.

**Honesty** –Because of mutual respect and consideration, people will have the confidence to be open and honest about their actions, thoughts, and feelings. Dishonesty will seriously weaken or destroy a relationship.

**Dependability** –Participants in a healthy relationship are dependable. They are trustworthy and reliable. Each is there for each other's needs.

**Commitment**– Healthy relationships require commitment. Those in the relationship are loyal to each other and committed to strengthening the relationship.

There are **three** basic skills associated with effective communication:

* 1. Speaking
	2. Listening

Body Language

**The Three Types of Communication**

Having good communication skills requires a high level of self-awareness. Understanding your personal style of communicating will go a long way toward helping you create positive and lasting impressions on others. You can make another person more comfortable with you by selecting and emphasizing certain behaviors that fit within your personality. Learning to be assertive in your communication will help you have success in many aspects of your life. The different types of communication are listed below.

**Assertive**–Communication involves expressing thoughts and feelings clearly and directly without hurting others.

**Passive**–Communication involves the inability or unwillingness to express thoughts and feelings. Passive communicators do not stand up for themselves.

**Aggressive** –Communication involves trying to get their own way through bullying and intimidation. They do not consider the rights of others.

**Assertive Communication**

When using **assertive communication**, you communicate thoughts and feelings clearly and directly without hurting others' feelings. Assertive communicators attack the problem, not the person.

You can be more assertive by doing the following:

* 1. Using “I” messages to explain your feelings
	2. Actively listening to the person.
	3. Trying to understand the other person’s feelings
	4. Expressing appreciation and being respectful
	5. Seeking a compromise that does not go against either of your values

Speaking clearly and confidently, making eye contact, and appearing interested

**Passive Communication**

When someone uses **passive communication**, they are unwilling or incapable of expressing thoughts and feelings.

Characteristics of passive communication include the following:

* 1. Hoping the other person will guess what you are feeling
	2. Always listening and rarely talking
	3. Denying your own feelings and making excuses
	4. Criticizing yourself and always apologizing.
	5. Always giving in to the other person
	6. Mumbling, looking away, or fidgeting nervously

**Aggressive Communication**

**Aggressive communication** uses bullying and intimidation. An aggressive communicator attacks the other person, not the problem.

Characteristics of aggressive communication include the following:

* 1. Using “you” messages to blame the other person
	2. Interrupting or being sarcastic
	3. Making fun of the other person’s feelings and using name-calling
	4. Criticizing the other person and never giving a compliment
	5. Yelling or refusing to talk, pointing your finger, glaring, using physical force

**Good Speaking Skills**

Having good speaking skills means you don’t expect others to read your mind to know your expectations and feelings.

Good speaking skills include the following:

* 1. Speaking clearly
	2. Changing pitch and loudness in the tone of voice
	3. Using “I” messages when message has strong emotional content
	4. Avoiding name calling or antagonizing

**Listening Skills**

When you listen to others, you show how much you care. Being a good listener is important in having healthy relationships. Making eye contact, expressing positive body language, using signals such as nodding, not interrupting, and putting away prejudices or assumptions will make you a better listener.

Active listeners use the following techniques:

**Reflective listening**– Rephrasing or summarizing

**Clarifying**– Asking how they feel

**Encouraging**– Giving signals that you understand

**Empathizing**– Actually feeling what the other person is feeling

**Nonverbal Communication**

**Nonverbal communication** is subtle communication and one can be unaware it is taking place. Sending a message to someone through body language can be very powerful.

* 1. **Body Language**– Nonverbal communication through gestures, facial expressions, and behaviors.

**Nonverbal Communication**– Subtle and often takes place subconsciously. Being aware of body language helps you send the right message.

**Conflict Resolution**

When it comes to interpersonal conflicts, learning healthy strategies for problem solving with respect to others will help you in developing healthy and happy relationships throughout life.

**Common Causes of Conflict**

The following are common causes of conflict in relationships:

* 1. Power Struggles
	2. Loyalty
	3. Jealousy/Envy
	4. Property Disputes

 Territory and Space

**Steps for Resolving Conflict**

The following are some negotiation steps in resolving conflict within a healthy relationship:

* 1. Select a time and place to work out the problem.
	2. Work together on the solution.
	3. Have an open mind.
	4. Be flexible.
	5. Take responsibility for your part in the conflict.

Give the other person an “out."