



Enhancing personal and professional relationships

"We are hardwired to connect with others; it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it, there is suffering."

Brene Brown

Positive relationships both at home and in the workplace are key to not only career success, but our happiness and wellbeing. When building relationships, we feel more connected, satisfied, and productive. By understanding how we interact with others close to us, we can build and strengthen our relationships.

Strong workplace relationships

- Increase satisfaction with our careers
- Promote a sense of safety and belonging
- Provide us with support and assistance with difficult tasks
- Allow us to adapt and overcome volatile and uncertain environments

Strong personal relationships

- Better prepare us to cope with stressful events and conflict
- Increase our emotional resources and promote recovery
- Give us new perspectives
- Foster a sense of fulfillment and happiness

Our relationships can be huge sources of support, or they can be a source of stress and demand if not nurtured. Sometimes our relationships can even be both stressful yet positive at the same time, creating a 'good stress' (or 'eustress') which can give us meaning and a sense of shared accomplishment in overcoming challenges together.

"Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It's not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything."

Muhammad Ali

Positive, successful relationships with clear and open communication can protect us from the ups and downs of life, allow us to manage changes collaboratively, and act as a buffer for negative feelings by helping us cope. We can all take a number of actions to ensure we are setting up and maintaining our relationships well.



To support healthy relationships, both at home and at work, skill building is important. Good relationships don't just happen – you need to work at it.

You can top up your relationship skillset by:







- Better understanding yourself. Be honest about your own strengths and weaknesses. Emotional Intelligence and putting a focus on self-awareness and empathy is key to enhancing our relationships with those around us. By being in tune with ourselves and our emotions, we can better communicate and connect with others.
- Take time to think about the words you use. Using "I-statements" and focusing on the situation, rather than placing ownership or blame when things don't go well is essential to maintaining healthy relationships. Creating trust and a sense of emotional safety is crucial.
- Actively listening. Focus your attention and truly engage with the people around you, promoting a sense of togetherness and understanding.
- Recognise your own limits and boundaries, and don't be afraid to be vulnerable. Sometimes we just aren't at our best – exhaustion and stress gets to all of us. Recognise when you've given all you can and share this honestly with those you trust. This will give you support to recover, whilst also building stronger relationships.

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you; spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life."

Amy Poehler



Additional tips for healthy relationships:

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|  | Make time to develop relationships and interact with our colleagues, going beyond the conversations we have in the hallway or at the water cooler. |  | Share your appreciation of people, both with them, and with others. |
|  | Offer and ask for assistance. By sharing knowledge and providing or receiving help we are building trust and engaging in a supportive transaction. |  | Offer and accept chances for meaningful connection. Go beyond one-word answers and ask follow up questions to show you care. |
|  | Provide and seek feedback from one another can demonstrate how we value others insights. Use the 'Situation, Behaviour, Impact, Alternative' model to give real meaning ('I loved it in our meeting when you said X, it helped us make the right decision about Y. You really saved the day in there!') |  | Make a concerted effort to include fun in your relationships. Silly rituals, in-jokes and enjoyable outings create connection and joy. |