

## BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

### *a guide for young adults*

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As young adults navigate life transitions like leaving home, starting college, or entering the workforce, building healthy relationships is essential. Romantic, platonic, or familial, these bonds support emotional well-being and personal growth. Here are some tips for fostering strong, healthy connections.

#### 1. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Open and honest communication is the cornerstone of any healthy relationship. This means expressing your feelings, needs, and boundaries clearly while also being willing to listen without judgment. Young adults often struggle with conflict resolution, but disagreements don't have to lead to breakdowns. When both parties feel safe to express themselves and work toward solutions, relationships grow stronger.

#### 2. MUTUAL RESPECT

Respect involves recognizing each other's individuality and autonomy. In a healthy relationship, partners or friends value each other's opinions, support one another's goals, and never attempt to control or belittle the other. Respect also means acknowledging and honoring each person's boundaries, whether emotional, physical, or digital.

#### 3. TRUST AND HONESTY

Trust doesn't develop overnight. It is built through consistent behavior and reliability. Being honest, keeping promises, and showing integrity help establish a secure foundation. In romantic relationships especially, jealousy or secrecy can erode trust. Young adults should strive to build connections where honesty is encouraged, and past mistakes are used as learning opportunities, not weapons.

#### 4. EQUALITY AND SUPPORT

Healthy relationships involve give and take. One person should not consistently do all the emotional or physical labor. In friendships and romantic partnerships, both individuals should feel supported and valued. If one person's needs or desires constantly overshadow the other's, it may signal an imbalance that needs to be addressed.

#### 5. INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

Being close to someone doesn't mean losing your identity. Healthy relationships allow space for individual growth, hobbies, friendships, and goals. Young adults often feel pressured to "merge lives" quickly, especially in romantic settings. However, maintaining independence strengthens the relationship and fosters long-term compatibility.

#### 6. RECOGNIZING UNHEALTHY PATTERNS

It's important to identify red flags early. Constant criticism, manipulation, lack of boundaries, or controlling behavior can signal an unhealthy dynamic. If a relationship consistently leaves you feeling anxious, drained, or unworthy, it may be time to take a step back and re-evaluate the relationship. Seeking help from a counselor, trusted adult, or support group can provide clarity and tools for making safe choices.



Healthy relationships are built on communication, respect, trust, equality, and personal growth. As young adults learn more about themselves and the world around them, forming positive connections becomes both a learning process and a foundation for future happiness. Prioritizing healthy relationship habits now sets the stage for lifelong well-being.