

Nurturing Relationships

Healthy Relationships are an important part of our lives, part of having a healthy relationship is having boundaries in place, such as;

Physical Boundaries: Your body and space, you have the right to autonomy over your body and personal space. No one has the right to touch you or invade your personal space without your express permission.

Emotional/Intellectual Boundaries: Emotional boundaries are about refusing to discuss topics you find inappropriate, or letting people emotionally dump on you or let other dismiss your emotions. Intellectual boundaries are not talking to people who belittle you and also means respecting others - even if we don't agree with their opinions. This is about feeling safe to express our own opinions, so long as they do not infringe on the literal safety of others. It means having an awareness of what an appropriate discussion is in the setting we are in.

Spiritual & Religious Boundaries: Your beliefs. Being able to have your own view and opinion on beliefs/morals while also respecting that other's opinions may be different.

Sexual Boundaries: Your limitations with sexual acts/behaviours. In an intimate sexual relationship it is good practice to learn each other's preferences and needs/wants. Remember consent and the ability to stop at any time is important to sexual boundaries.

Material Boundaries: Possessions/Money. Some may find it uncomfortable discussing topics like money, earnings and expenditure, if this is the case, relay this to your partner. Again, it is important to express your thoughts on these topics to ensure you are comfortable. When it comes to possessions, this boundary depends on your individual relationships. For example, you might let your parent borrow your caravan for the weekend, but not a friend who you rarely see.

Activity 1: Take A Few Minutes To Consider the following;

1. A boundary you have in place now
2. A boundary you would like to implement
3. Is this realistic?

4. What are the barriers to implementing this?
5. How would you do this?
6. How would you manage this?



Attachment

Attachment theory explains how innately we desire an emotional bond with a parent/caregiver. Depending on the nature of this bond i.e., caring, abusive or negligent, etc, this can impact our relationships and ability to bond with others in our later years.

Attachment theory explains how our emotional bond with our parents/caregivers impacts and affect our relationships in later life. There are 4 types of attachment styles;

Secure: (In younger years) - needs wholly satisfied, feeling loved, cared for, and mostly happy.

Those with a secure attachment style find it easy to make friendships and are more secure in themselves finding it easy to trust others and form romantic relationships.

Dismissive/Avoidant: (In younger years) - come from a neglectful home, feeling they can only trust themselves.

People with a dismissive/avoidant attachment style are hesitant to get close to people, keeping people distant and fearing intimacy.

Anxious/Preoccupied: (In younger years) - needs not always valued, doubting self and self-worth.

People with an Anxious/Preoccupied attachment style may have a fear of abandonment, and that their partner will leave them. Often they will require reassurance from relationships regularly.

Disorganised: (In younger years) - Coming from an abusive home, and being emotionally numb.

These people have a hard time forming meaningful relationships as they both feel a need to be loved and are wary of developing a romantic relationship.

Activity 2: Take A Few Minutes To Consider the following;

1. What attachment style do you think you have? Do you relate to it?
2. Do you feel like you want to discuss this with someone to understand it better?

What now...?

If you would like to talk to someone about what you are experiencing, would like to give counselling a try, OR are unsure about counselling but feel you need something...we have an option for you.

One At A Time Therapy

Not sure counselling is for you? One At A Time Therapy is a one-off session with a counsellor which can help you in the here and now, with whatever the biggest issue is you are facing in your relationships or mental health.

Relationship MOT

This service is a light touch activity for you and your partner, a 'check-up' for your relationship which can help you to remember what you love about them and remind them of it, while finding out ways to help you move forward in the areas that you might not be on the same page about.

Counselling services

Relationship Counselling may be an effective intervention to support your relationships and mental well-being. We offer a range of counselling services including for Individuals, Couples, Families, Children & Young People.

If you would like to learn more about these or any of our other services, visit relateni.org/services/ or call 02890 323454 between 9am and 9pm.

Our website also has a range of [helpful tips, tools and resources](#) to help you support your relationships and mental fitness.

If you are in need of immediate support, you may find helplinesni.com/ useful.

**we
can
Relate**