

Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Our Vision

At PRIMEXL we aim to be the partner of choice in the creation of better organisations and better lives.

Our Values

We value:

- **Meaningful relationships**
- **Premium quality services**
- **Innovation** – we are always looking for ways to add more value to our clients
- **Accountability for our performance**

For more information about our suite of solutions, please contact:

PRIMEXL

461 Scarborough Beach Road
OSBORNE PARK WA 6017

PHONE +61 8 9492 8900

FAX +61 8 9446 8089

FREECALL 1800 674 188

EMAIL training@primexl.com.au

WEB www.primexl.com.au

Relationships are one of the single most important aspects to maintaining our health and wellbeing. Our immune system responds and mirrors the state of our close interpersonal relationships. If these relationships are unhealthy then our immune system can become compromised leaving us vulnerable to physical illness.

Healthy relationships which make us feel loved, supported, validated, accepted and which meet our needs are an important factor in promoting our health. A good relationship is one which changes over time, requires effort and often is sheer hard work. Daily life routines, pressures from work, family, friends, fatigue, isolation, time constraints, competing demands and boredom can all put strain on otherwise healthy relationships.

Many of us become complacent about the relationships we are in over time, giving energy and priority to other things and maintain the patterns we have settled into. Discussions and communication become a low priority or are left unclear leading to misunderstanding. As unresolved issues build, respect and empathy towards the other person can decrease. Frustration and anger can build, impacting negatively on our relationship and potentially our health. Several key strategies to enhance the well being of both our relationships and health include:

Create quality time together

Set time aside each week or at least each month to share time together without other distractions or pressures. Try a candle lit dinner at home or a restaurant, a picnic or drive, sitting on the beach or by a river etc. Talk about the positive aspects of your lives together during this time.

Discuss beliefs, values, and future goals

Some may be the same yet others may be different. This is fine and even healthy so long as most are similar. How do you know what you both believe in or if you are going in the same direction unless you 'check in with each other' and 'check it out' with your partner. Spend time exploring

rather than assuming that you know what the other believes.

Express and understand needs

Much of the time we may not tell our partner what we really want as we don't know how to express our feelings or wants without hurting the other or fear risking an argument. We may often find it easier to blame or bully the other person, hold back our feelings as we don't want to 'start something' or can't see the point of raising issues. The result is often what we seek to avoid – misunderstanding and hurt feelings. Set an hour aside each week to talk about your needs and feelings.

Balancing needs

Not only is understanding needs important but also maintaining a balance of whose needs are met. If only one persons' needs are given priority or value the majority of the time then this will lead to the other person feeling devalued and frustrated. Healthy relationships need both people to agree to co-operate and compromise to ensure that each persons needs are met at least fifty percent of the time.

Complete your communication in an open and honest way. Issues begin in relationships with misunderstandings and assumptions which lead to neither person having their needs met. Communication skills are critical to reducing the risk of this occurring.

Fighting Fair

You both win when you deal with issues and conflict in a constructive and fair way way. Remember you are friends and a team, rather than enemies. All relationships encounter struggle – join together as a team to address these challenges.

Resolve rather than recycle

Everyone in a relationship carries past baggage and issues which generate frustration and anger at some time. Acknowledge these feelings to issues and accept this is the way you feel. What is more important is the way you resolve the past or current issues. If you hold onto your anger, hurt or frustration, these emotions can grow and become destructive. At times when issues are raised words can easily be said which are not easily forgotten. Recall at this time that your relationship is not a battleground nor does it have a scorecard of wins. Resolve issues as they arise when smaller and more manageable rather than recycling them into a larger destructive entity.

Forgive and appreciate the positives

It is easy to be a critic, but sharp words only serve to build barriers. Choose understanding and forgiveness rather than blame and criticism. Make a decision not to demand revenge by remembering your own past mistakes and what it meant to be forgiven. Remove words such as 'and another thing', 'you always', 'you never', 'you did the same last time', and 'I've never forgotten how you' as they interfere with forgiveness and issue resolution. Express your appreciation and affection for one another at least three times a week. An outstanding characteristic of strong healthy partnerships is the ability to express positive regard for the other and shared experiences. Try 'have I ever told you how much I appreciate the way you ...' and 'I love it when you....'. Openly confirming your love and

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confidence in the other person can encourage them to try what they might otherwise be afraid to do.

Trust and acceptance of change

Trust is one of the single most important contributors to maintaining a healthy relationship. Who is it you turn to you when you needed help or advice? Value the trust and closeness that you feel with your partner, knowing that you can trust this person. Accept that we and our partnerships are all in a constant process of change. Ask yourselves if you are willing to change together and let the relationship grow rather than stagnate without change. Be willing to be flexible and adapt to the changes as a team or partnership.

To access PRIMEXL's EAP service simply contact us on (08) 9492 8900 or visit www.primexl.com.au