

## Chapter 4: Family and Social Health

Healthful and Responsible Relationships



### 4.1 Healthful and Responsible Relationships

The relations you have greatly influence your health status. When you have positive, healthful, satisfying relationships, your life is more meaningful.

Relationship with Family



#### 4.1.1 Relationships with Family

Three factors that may affect your health status and quality of your family relations are family communication, family memories, and family values.

Communication

**Communication** is the verbal and nonverbal sharing of ideas, information, and feelings. Families that communicate well with each other tend to **build strong family relationships**.

Memories

Your family is the source of many of your **memories**. Some memories **share feelings of joy or sadness**. Every day you build up memories. You can focus on building positive family memories.

Values

Your philosophy of life is an overall attitude about life and the purpose of life. Your philosophy helps determine your **values**. Your parents' philosophy and values especially influence you. Your parents teach you values to assist you in responsible decision making. When you have positive self-esteem and healthful family relationships, you are more likely to have positive relationship with your peers. You have the foundation for satisfying relationships.

Family relationships **may change** when there is **separation, or divorce**. Family members usually **need support** and time to adjust after the change.

Relationship with Friends



#### 4.1.2 Relationships with Friends

The quality of your relationship is more important than the quantity. Skills to be good friend include:

- **Listening carefully** and keeping confidences.
- **Offering suggestions** on how to reach goals.
- **Offering expressions** of affection.
- **Sharing new activities** and new friends.
- **Providing** good companionship.
- **Sharing** joys and sorrows.

Relationship at  
Work and in  
Your  
Community

### 4.1.3 Relationships at Work and in Your Community

These relationships can be healthful when you take time to understand your responsibilities in each of them.

- **Find out** what is expected of you.
- **Follow** through with your obligations.
- **Be cooperative.**
- **Do your best.**

Communication  
in  
Relationships

## 4.2 Communication in Relationships

Communication is important in all kinds of relationships. Different relationships require different levels of communication.

Levels of  
Communication

### 4.2.1 Levels of Communication

The amount of self disclosure that is healthful depends on the depth of the relationship.

**Self-disclosure** is the act of making yourself known to others. There are four different levels of self-disclosure used in conversations.

- **Cliché:** Cliché is the use of small talk that is sometimes used to avoid silence. Examples: How are you? Great weather!
- **Reporting Facts** When you report facts or gossip, you talk about what someone else has said or done.
- **Sharing Ideas** you begin to disclose or share some of your ideas, judgments, and decisions.
- **Expressing Feelings** when you are comfortable in a relationship, you may express the feeling behind your ideas, judgment, and decisions. The highest level of communication involves the mutual sharing of feelings.

Communication at the highest level involves some risk. Some of your ideas and decisions may be rejected. However, the benefits are more rewarding than the risks. Communicating at this level promotes optimum health in several ways. One of these has to do with the possible prevention of psychosomatic diseases and disorders. When you keep feeling bottled up inside you, you can develop such problems as headaches, ulcers, or stomachaches. When you are able to express feeling in your relationships, you are healthier and your relationships are healthier.

I Messages  
and Active  
Listening

### 4.2.2 I Messages and Active Listening

Communicating feeling can be established by using I messages. I messages are statements that tell about you, your feeling, and your needs. To have the greatest impact messages must have three parts: a specific behavior, an effect of that behavior, and a feeling. Here is an example of I message:

When I studied two extra hours for the test (behavior), I received an A (effect), and I felt proud (feeling). When you use I messages, you are trying to communicate more clearly with others. I messages are also called responsibility messages. Active listening helps you clarify what someone has said to you.

Non-verbal  
Communication

### 4.2.3 Non-verbal Communication

It is the use of behavior rather than words to show feelings. **Some nonverbal communication expresses a negative response.** *Pressing your lips tightly together and shaking your head in disapproval are all behaviors that indicate a negative response. Tapping your foot may indicate a lack of patience.* Other behaviors indicate a positive response. Maintaining eye contact tells someone you are listening. A beaming smile expresses joy, acceptance, or excitement. When you combine verbal and nonverbal communication, they should match; give the same message.

Aggressive,  
Passive, and  
Assertive  
Behaviors

### 4.2.4 Aggressive, Passive, and Assertive Behaviors

You respond to situations with either aggressive, passive, or assertive behavior.

Aggressive  
behavior

**Aggressive behavior** is the use of words and /or actions that communicate disrespect toward others. It includes name calling, loud and sarcastic remarks, and statement of blame. Glaring at someone, using threatening hand gestures, and / or a stiff or rigid posture.

Passive  
behavior

**Passive behavior** is the holding back of ideas, opinions, and feelings. It includes self-criticism, unnecessary apologies, and making excuses. Also looking away or laughing when discussing or expressing serious feelings.

Assertive  
behavior

**Assertive behavior** is the honest expression of thoughts and feelings without experiencing anxiety or threatening others. Assertive behavior is the healthiest behavior. It promotes high quality relationships. It includes I messages and active listening. Also confident body posture, hand gestures and comfortable eye contact.