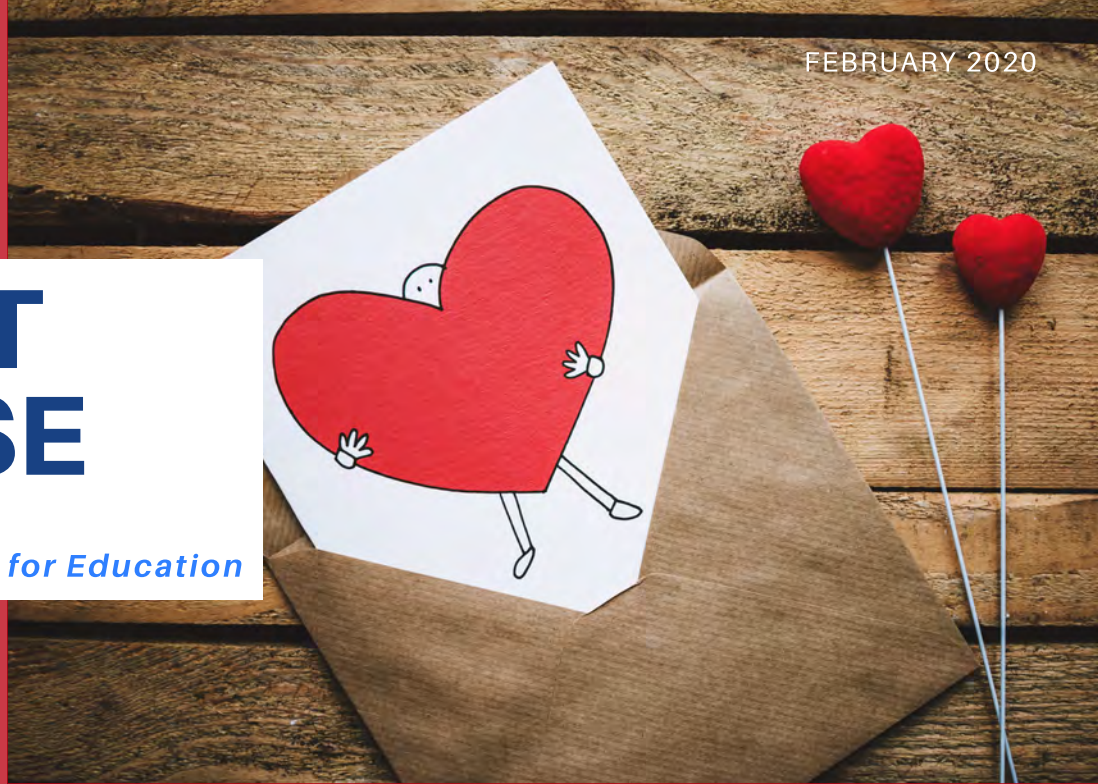




CONNECT WITH EASE



Employee Assistance Service for Education

Overview

Monthly Article:
Establishing Happy and
Healthy Relationships



FEBRUARY IS RELATIONSHIP WELLNESS MONTH

The month of February is mainly recognized as the month of love as it hosts one very popular holiday - Valentine's Day. Often times when we think of Valentine's Day we may immediately think of our significant others or those who we are in romantic relationships with. However, when it comes to relationships in our lives, we have more than just one. Our relationships may vary between those with our friends, family, neighbors, coworkers and even our pets. Often neglected, is the relationship we have to our own self! These relationships may also look different and feel different in terms of support, vulnerability, and the strength of bond, but these relationships all share one thing in common, a connection.

As evidenced in research, strong relationships are a significant source of meaning in people's lives. When individuals are asked what factors contribute to their happiness, they point to their relationships with others. Studies suggests that having strong connections to others is healthy, reduces stress, and contributes to our overall happiness.

This month reflect on the relationships in your lives and take the opportunity to strengthen, deepen, and renew those bonds as well as expanding your circle and your support network. Practice being present, in the moment, to enrich your connections with others. In the same way that we take the time to practice gratitude on Thanksgiving or to develop healthy habits for New Year's, use this month to reflect on and improve the quality of your relationships, including the relationship with yourself!

EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

Free confidential professional help for district employees and family members:

Family troubles. Emotional distress.
Job stress.

Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use. Grief. Loss.
Life transition issues.

Professional counselors are available.
Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7 assistance.

ESTABLISHING HAPPY AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

BY: EASE STAFF

Humans have an innate desire to connect, build relationships, and be close to other people. As we form these relationships, it's crucial to understand each other's needs and expectations as it's fundamental to healthy relationships. Relationships can be defined in different ways (e.g., romantic, work, familial, friendships) but in order for relationships to be healthy, they should embody open, honest and safe communication.

COMMUNICATION

One of the most important ingredients for a healthy relationship is open and honest communication. It's not possible for someone to read your mind, so don't try to read theirs. Instead ask honest questions and provide honest answers. Create an environment where you feel safe and comfortable in expressing your thoughts and feelings.

- **Speak up.** If something is bothering you, it is best to talk about it instead of holding it in.
- **Respect each other.** Demonstrate to your significant other that you are keeping their thoughts and feelings in mind. Maintain mutual respect as it is an essential component of healthy relationships.
- **Compromise.** If you've come to a disagreement find a way to compromise. Try to solve conflicts in a fair and rational way.
- **Be supportive.** Offer reassurance and encouragement to each other. If you need support, communicate that! Healthy relationships are about lifting each other up and not putting each other down.
- **Respect privacy.** Healthy relationships require space. You don't have to share everything or be together all the time. Have healthy boundaries and give each other space.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are essential to any relationship. By setting boundaries, you can have a deeper understanding about your relationships and a stronger sense of self. They allow us to separate who we are, and what we think and feel, from the thoughts and feelings of others. Signs of healthy boundaries include:

- Taking care of yourself without feeling guilty
- Not feeling responsible for someone else's happiness
- Asking for what you want or need
- Feeling safe to express difficult emotions or disagree
- Taking responsibility for your own happiness
- Knowing who you are, what you believe, what you like

BOOST YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Celebrate love this month within all your relationships. Your relationships can always use a boost. Engage in healthy behaviors that are fun and enjoyable. Reflect on great times in your relationships (e.g., parents, siblings, friends, family members, children). Go out and enjoy quality time with those you love and care about most. Connect with others and connect with yourself!

- Use "please" and "thank you" to show appreciation for the little things. Remind your loved ones that you value them.
- Emphasize positive traits about one another and improvements that can be made.
- Model unconditional love and positive regard for those around you.

Healthy Relationships	Unhealthy Relationships
Equality You make decisions together.	Control One of you makes all the decisions and is demanding.
Honesty You can share your feelings and thoughts with each other.	Dishonesty One of you lies or hides things from the other.
Physical Safety You feel safe with each other. You're not scared of getting hurt.	Physical Abuse One of you hits, slaps, grabs, or shoves the other person.
Respect You listen and accept each other's opinions, friends, and interests.	Disrespect One of you makes fun of each other's feelings, thoughts, and opinions.
Comfort You feel great being yourself and you are comfortable saying "sorry."	Discomfort One of you might make threats like, "I'll break up with you if..."
Sexual Respectfulness You never force each other to do things you aren't comfortable with.	Sexual Abuse One of you pressures or forces sexual activities the other does not want to do.
Independence You have friends and hobbies outside of your relationship.	Dependence One of you makes threats to do something drastic if relationship ends.
Humor You have fun in the relationship.	Hostility One of you is mean to the other.

<https://blog.adventisthealthcare.com/2013/02/12/the-health-benefits-of-healthy-relationships/>
https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/counseling/self_care/healthy_relationships/10_tips_for_health_realtionships
<https://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/>

TALK

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.
(800) 882 1341