

Continue

































[illegible]



Suppressing emotions doesn't make them disappear—in fact, they're likely to leak out through your body language, tone, and more. Here's how to spot "emotional leakage." Find a Relationship Issues Therapist Get the help you need from a therapist near you—a FREE service from Psychology Today. Atlanta, GA Austin, TX Baltimore, MD Brooklyn, NY Charlotte, NC Chicago, IL Columbus, OH Dallas, TX Denver, CO Detroit, MI Houston, TX Indianapolis, IN Jacksonville, FL Las Vegas, NV Los Angeles, CA Louisville, KY Memphis, TN Miami, FL Milwaukee, WI Minneapolis, MN Nashville, TN New York, NY Oakland, CA Omaha, NE Philadelphia, PA Phoenix, AZ Pittsburgh, PA Portland, OR Raleigh, NC Sacramento, CA Saint Louis, MO San Antonio, TX San Diego, CA San Francisco, CA San Jose, CA Seattle, WA Tucson, AZ Washington, DC You'll have many different types of relationships throughout your life. Most tend to be categorized as acquaintances, friends, family, romantic partners, sexual partners, work colleagues, or situational relationships. Each type comes with different expectations, benefits, and challenges. Interpersonal relationships are a vital part of life. They can range from close and intimate to distant and challenging. No matter the nature of the relationship, different types of relationships help form the social support network that is pivotal for physical and mental well-being. We make all kinds of connections with other people over the course of our lives. Some of these are positive relationships that help us feel a sense of belonging. Others can be less helpful, or may even have negative effects on our mental health and well-being. To better understand and discuss these relationships accurately, it can be helpful to learn more about the different types of relationships a person can have. A relationship is any connection between two people, which can be either positive or negative. You can have a relationship with a wide range of people, including family and friends. The phrase "being in a relationship," while often linked with romantic relationships, can refer to various associations one person has with another. To "be in a relationship" doesn't always mean there is physical intimacy, emotional attachment, and/or commitment involved. People engage in many different types of relationships that have unique characteristics. Relationships typically fall into one of several different categories (although these can sometimes overlap): Family relationships Friends Acquaintances Romantic relationships Sexual relationships Work relationships Situational relationships (sometimes called "situationships") These different forms of relationships can vary greatly in terms of closeness, and there are also different subtypes of relationships within each of these basic types. Some of the different kinds of relationships that you might experience at some point in your life include the following. While there are many different types of relationships, the four main types are typically identified as family relationships, romantic relationships, friendships, and acquaintanceships. A platonic relationship is a type of friendship that involves a close, intimate bond without sex or romance. These relationships tend to be characterized by: ClosenessFondnessUnderstandingRespectCareSupportHonesty Acceptance Platonic relationships can occur in a wide range of settings and can involve same-sex or opposite-sex friendships. You might form a platonic relationship with a classmate or co-worker, or you might make a connection with a person in another setting such as a club, athletic activity, or volunteer organization you are involved in. This type of relationship can play an essential role in providing social support, which is essential for your health and well-being. Research suggests that platonic friendships can help reduce your risk for disease, lower your risk for depression or anxiety, and boost your immunity. Platonic relationships involve closeness and friendship without sex. Sometimes, platonic relationships can change over time and shift into romantic or sexual relationships. Examples might include a friends-with-benefits or a friends-to-lovers situation. Romantic relationships are those characterized by feelings of love and attraction for another person. While romantic love can vary, it often involves feelings of infatuation, intimacy, and commitment. Experts have come up with a variety of different ways to describe how people experience and express love. For example, psychologist Robert Sternberg suggests three main components of love: passion, intimacy, and decision/commitment. Romantic love, he explains, is a combination of passion and intimacy. Romantic relationships tend to change over time. At the start of a relationship when people are first falling in love, people typically experience stronger feelings of passion. During this initial infatuation period, the brain releases specific neurotransmitters (dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin) that cause people to feel euphoric and "in love." Over time, these feelings start to lessen in their intensity. People develop deeper levels of emotional intimacy and understanding as the relationship matures. Romantic relationships often burn hot at the beginning. That's why we often feel like we can't stop thinking about the object of our affection and want to be near them all the time. While the initial feelings of passion usually lessen in strength over time, feelings of trust, emotional intimacy, and commitment grow stronger. A codependent relationship is an imbalanced, dysfunctional type of relationship in which a partner has an emotional, physical, or mental reliance on the other person. It is also common for both partners to be mutually co-dependent on each other. Both may take turns enacting the caretaker role, alternating between the caretaker and the receiver of care. Characteristics of a codependent relationship include: Acting as a giver while the other person acts as a takerGoing to great lengths to avoid conflict with the other personFeeling like you have to ask permission to do thingsHaving to save or rescue the other person from their own actionsDoing things to make someone happy, even if they make you uncomfortableFeeling like you don't know who you are in the relationshipElevating the other person even if they've done nothing to earn your goodwill and admiration Not all codependent relationships are the same, however. They can vary in terms of severity. Codependency can impact all different types of relationships including relationships between romantic partners, parents and children, friendship, other family members, and even coworkers. Codependent relationships are co-constructed. While one partner might seem more "needy," the other partner might feel more comfortable being needed. Someone who feels more comfortable being needed, for instance, may avoid focusing on their own needs by choosing a partner who constantly needs them. Casual relationships often involve dating relationships that may include sex without expectations of monogamy or commitment. However, experts suggest that the term is vague and can mean different things to different people. According to the authors of one study published in the Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, casual relationships can encompass situations such as: One-night stands Booty calls "Sex" buddies Friends with benefits Such relationships often exist on a continuum that varies in the levels of frequency of contact, type of contact, amount of personal disclosure, discussion of the relationship, and degree of friendship. The study found that people with more sexual experience were better able to identify the definitions of these labels compared to people with less sexual experience. Casual relationships are often common among younger adults. As long as casual relationships are marked by communication and consent, they can have several sex-positive benefits. They can satisfy the need for sex, intimacy, connection, and companionship without the emotional demands and energy commitment of a more serious relationship. Casual relationships tend to be more common among younger adults, but people of any age can engage in this type of relationship. Consent and communication are key. An open relationship is a type of consensually non-monogamous relationship in which one or more partners have sex or relationships with other people. Both people agree to have sex with other people in an open relationship but may have certain conditions or limitations. Open relationships can take place in any type of romantic relationship, whether casual, dating, or married. There tends to be a stigma surrounding non-monogamous relationships. Still, research suggests that around 21% to 22% of adults will be involved in some type of open relationship at some point in their life. The likelihood of engaging in an open relationship also depends on gender and sexual orientation. Men reported having higher numbers of open relationships compared to women; people who identify as gay, lesbian, and bisexual were more likely to report previous engagement in open relationships compared to those who identify as heterosexual. Such relationships can have benefits, including increased sexual freedom, and pitfalls, such as jealousy and emotional pain. Open relationships are more successful when couples establish personal, emotional, and sexual boundaries and clearly communicate their feelings and needs. Open relationships are a form of consensual non-monogamy. While there is a primary emotional and often physical connection between the two people in the relationship, they mutually agree to intimacy with other people outside of the relationship. A toxic relationship is any type of interpersonal relationship where your emotional, physical, or psychological well-being is undermined or threatened in some way. Such relationships often leave you feeling ashamed, humiliated, misunderstood, or unsupported. Any type of relationship can be toxic, including friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, or workplace relationships. Sometimes all people in a relationship play a role in creating this toxicity. For example, you may be contributing to toxicity if you are all consistently unkind, critical, insecure, and negative. In other cases, one person in a relationship may behave in ways that create toxic feelings. This may be intentional, but in other cases, people may not fully understand how they are affecting other people. Because of their past experiences with relationships, often in their home growing up, they may not know any other way of acting and communicating. This doesn't just create discontentment—toxic relationships can take a serious toll on your health. For example, according to one study, stress caused by negative relationships has a direct impact on cardiovascular health. Feeling isolated and misunderstood in a relationship can also lead to loneliness, which has been shown to have detrimental effects on both physical and mental health. Toxic relationships can be stressful, harmful, and even abusive. If you are in a toxic relationship with someone in your life, work on creating strong boundaries to protect yourself. Talk to a mental health professional or consider terminating the relationship if it is causing you harm. How you define your relationship depends on various factors, including what matters to you and how the other person feels. To define your relationship, it can be helpful to ask a few questions: Do you have romantic feelings for one another?What does each person hope to get out of the relationship?How much time do you want to spend together?Where do you see the relationship going?Are you currently involved with or want to be involved with other people? Figuring out what matters to you and your partner is an important step in defining the type of relationships you are interested in having. You might find that you are both on the same page or discover that you want different things out of your relationship. Defining your relationship doesn't have to mean committing for the long term. Instead, it can be a way to help you both better understand the boundaries and expectations of your relationship. Regardless of how you define your relationship, there are important steps you can take to ensure that your connection is healthy. Strategies that can help include: Communication is often the single most important thing in a relationship. Good relationships are also marked by honesty, trust, and reciprocity. This doesn't mean that the relationship is purely transactional; it indicates that you naturally engage in a give-and-take that provides mutually beneficial support. No matter what type of relationship you have with another person(s), it is important for it to be a healthy one. Healthy relationships are characterized by trust, mutual respect, openness, honesty, and affection. Good communication is also a key factor. You can take steps to improve your relationships with other people. Two helpful strategies are to let others know you care and show your appreciation. But if a relationship is causing stress or shows signs of being toxic, look for ways to establish clear boundaries, talk to a therapist, or even consider ending the relationship if it is taking too much of a toll on your well-being. Social relationships are important, and they come in all different types. Having a variety of relationships with different people can ensure that you have the support and connections you need, minimize your risk of loneliness and social isolation, and improve your emotional health and well-being. SignsRed flagsQuizTipsTakeawayOpen communication, curiosity, individual interests, and teamwork are just a few ways to develop a healthy relationship. It also depends on your needs and those of your partner. Healthy relationships don't look the same for everyone. We all have different needs. Your specific needs around important aspects of a relationship may change throughout life. What makes a relationship thrive depends on the needs of the people in it and the space allowed for a person to grow.Relationships that don't align with more traditional relationships can still be healthy. For example, people who practice polyamory or ethical non-monogamy might define a healthy relationship somewhat differently than people who practice monogamy. "One thing healthy relationships largely share is adaptability," Lindsey Antin, a therapist in Berkeley, California, told Healthline. "They adapt to circumstances and the fact we're always changing and going through different phases in life."Here's a look at some other hallmarks of healthy relationships.Partners in healthy relationships are often comfortable facing difficult conversations as well as easy-to-have conversations. Even if your partner has a different opinion, they listen without judgment and then share their perspective. Communication goes both ways. It's important you also feel that they'll voice their own concerns or thoughts as they come up. People in non-monogamous relationships may place even more value on emotional check-ins and frequent communication about what's happening with other partners. Trust involves honesty and integrity. You don't keep secrets from each other. When you're apart, you don't worry about them pursuing other people.But trust goes beyond believing they won't cheat or lie to you.It also means you feel safe and comfortable with them and know they won't hurt you physically or emotionally. You know they have your best interests in mind but also respect you enough to encourage you to make your own choices. Healthy relationships are best described as interdependent. Interdependence means you rely on each other for mutual support but still maintain your identity as a unique individual.In other words, your relationship is balanced. You know you have their approval and love, but your self-esteem doesn't depend on them. Although you're there for each other, you don't depend on each other to get all of your needs met. You still have friends and connections outside the relationship and spend time pursuing your own interests and hobbies. Keeping curiosity in your relationship means you're interested in their thoughts, goals, and daily life.You want to watch them grow into their best self. You're not fixated on who they used to be or who you think they should be. Curiosity also means you're willing to consider or talk about changes to your relationship structure if aspects of your existing relationship become less fulfilling. Recognizing the need for personal space and time to separate from your partner is essential in a healthy relationship. This time may be spent relaxing solo, pursuing a hobby, or spending time with friends and family.Although spending time together is important, setting aside time to be without your partner may also be just as advantageous.When the mood is right, it's important to make time for fun and spontaneity. If you can joke and laugh together, that's a good sign.Sometimes, life challenges or distress might affect one or both of you. This can temporarily change the tone of your relationship and make it hard to relate to each other in your usual ways. But being able to share lighter moments that help relieve tension, even briefly, strengthens your relationship even in tough times.Intimacy often refers to sex, but not always. As long as you're both on the same page about getting your needs met, your relationship can still be healthy without it.Physical intimacy might involve kissing, hugging, cuddling, and sleeping together. Whatever type of intimacy you share, physically connecting and bonding is important. Your physical relationship is most likely healthy when you:feel comfortable initiating and talking about sexcan positively handle rejectioncan discuss desiresfeel safe expressing your interest in more or less sexHealthy intimacy also involves respecting sexual boundaries. This includes:not pressuring partners about sex or specific sex acts when they say nosharing information about other partnersdiscussing sexual risk factorsA strong relationship can be considered a team. You work together and support each other, even when you don't agree on something or have goals that aren't exactly the same. Even in a healthy relationship, you'll have occasional disagreements and feel frustrated or angry with each other from time to time. However, partners who address conflict without judgment or contempt can often find a compromise or solution. If you can talk about your differences politely, honestly, and with respect, you're on the right track. Your relationship should contribute to a sense of fulfillment, happiness, and connection. If you tend to feel more anxious, distressed, or unhappy around your partner, your relationship may be struggling. Signs of unhealthy relationships can vary widely. Below are a few signs to consider."We are never in control of changing another person," Antin said. If you're concerned about a specific behavior, you should feel comfortable enough to bring it up. It's OK to express your feelings and ask them to consider making changes. But it's not OK to tell them what to do or attempt to control their behavior.If they do something that really bothers you and you can't accept it, the relationship may not have long-term potential. Boundaries can come into play across your relationship, from respectful communication to privacy needs.Maybe you've said, "I need personal space when I get home from work. I'm happy to see you, but I need to de-stress before any physical affection." But they continue to come up to you right when you get home, trying to kiss you and pull you into the bedroom. When you say no, they apologize and say, "I just can't help myself."If you set a boundary and they push against it or pressure you to change it, that can be a serious red flag. Your relationship might be struggling if you consistently see less of each other without a clear reason, such as family difficulties or more responsibilities at work. Other warning signs include feeling distant from each other or relieved when you're not together. You might even try to find excuses to avoid spending time together. Healthy relationships tend to be fairly well balanced. Beyond financial responsibilities, relationship equality can also relate to intangible things, such as affection, communication, and relationship expectations. Periods of inequality can happen from time to time. One of you might temporarily lose your income, have difficulty helping with chores because of illness, or feel less affectionate due to stress or other emotional turmoil. But if your relationship regularly feels unbalanced and your partner doesn't try to improve, this may become problematic. It's not healthy to constantly criticize each other or say intentionally hurtful things, especially about personal choices, such as food, clothing, or favorite TV shows. Criticism that makes you feel ashamed or bad about yourself is generally unproductive.Also, note how they talk about others. Your relationship with each other could seem perfectly healthy. But if they use hate speech, slurs, or make discriminatory remarks about others, consider what this behavior says about them as a person. Maybe you don't feel heard because they seem disinterested when you bring up a problem or share something that's been on your mind. Or you might have a hard time sharing your opinion or talking about serious issues because you worry they'll just brush you off. Miscommunications can happen, of course. But if you do talk through an issue and they seem receptive but don't make any changes or seem to have completely forgotten what you talked about by the next day, that's also a warning sign. If your partner responds to your different viewpoint with dismissal, contempt, or other rudeness, this often suggests they don't respect you or your ideas. If you feel that you need to censor what you say or feel unsafe because you worry about your partner's reaction, consider leaving the relationship. You may also consider seeking professional help or speaking with a trusted loved one for support.You can reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit TheHotline.org for support and resources.It's difficult to apply the same standards to every relationship. However, if you're looking for guidance on whether yours is healthy, there are a few things you can ask yourself as a self-test.If some of the relationship red flags struck home, couples counseling might be a good step. "Couples therapy is about two people arriving to work on themselves," Antin said. Getting help doesn't mean you've failed. It means you want to work at improving, for yourselves and for each other. But even the healthiest of relationships can sometimes use a little extra work. Here are some tips to make sure things stay on the right track:embrace each other's differenceswork to solve problems as a teamtry new hobbies or activities togetherdiscuss personal goals and aspirationsstay curious about the way they do and see thingsThe definition of a healthy relationship can differ from person to person. But common signs of a healthy relationship may include:having open communicationcreating a safe space for each person to feel heardapproaching disagreements without judgmentsetting and maintaining healthy boundariesIf you're worried about your relationship or believe it's not as strong as it used to be, consider seeking professional support. A therapist can help offer guidance on when more effort might help and when it's time to move on. Read this article in Spanish.