Friend or Foe: How our relationships influence our mental health

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1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

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What qualifies as a friendship?

- Definitions
- Traits
- Beliefs
- Examples
A good friend…

- Treats you with respect
- Is reliable, even in bad times
- Doesn’t judge or criticize
- Is consistent
- Can be trusted
- Is eager to help
- Makes time for you
- Is supportive
- Listens with care
- Is honest
- Enjoys your company
- Makes you feel comfortable
- Loves you
- Is like sunshine
- Is willing to share their pizza

If you had a friend with these traits, do you think your friendship would affect your mental wellness?
What qualifies a friendship?

• Definitions

A relationship between two individuals who are caring and supportive to one another.

• Traits

May vary per person/context

• Beliefs

• Examples
A good friend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treats you with respect</th>
<th>Is reliable sometimes</th>
<th>Doesn’t judge or criticize</th>
<th>Is consistent</th>
<th>Can be trusted</th>
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<td>Is eager to help</td>
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<td>For some things</td>
<td>Makes you feel comfortable</td>
<td>Loves you</td>
<td>Is like sunshine</td>
<td>Is honest</td>
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<td>Enjoys your company</td>
<td>When no one else is around</td>
<td>On some days</td>
<td>Is willing to share their pizza</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
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*If you had a friend with these traits, do you think your relationship would affect your mental wellness?*
Sometimes friendships are a bit complicated…

…and may affect our mental wellness
Our Movement. Our Moment.

#NAMICON19

Mental Wellness

Relationships

• Parents
• Siblings
• Partners
As any other relationship, friendships may...

...have peaks and valleys
...be complicated
...range from healthy to unhealthy
...affect our mental wellness
The Loneliness Epidemic

In the last 50 years, rates of loneliness have doubled in the USA.

Feeling Lonely

- 54% Never/Rarely Feel Alone
- 46% Sometimes/Always Feel Alone
What role do friendships play?

- I have someone close to confide in
- I do not have someone close to confide in
Let’s recap...

- Friendships may affect mental wellness
- We don’t learn enough about friendships
- We are facing a loneliness epidemic
- We need to learn more about healthy friendships
So let’s learn about healthy friendships!
What qualifies as a healthy friendship?

Communication & Kindness

(The lack of) Toxicity & Abuse

Enjoyment & Connection

Care & Support
Communication & Kindness

- I have good conversations with my friend.
- When I need to share, my friend genuinely listens.
- When I need to confide in someone, I can trust my friend.
- My friend is open and honest with me.
- My friend does not judge or criticize me for sharing.
Communication & Kindness

- I feel comfortable sharing with my friend.
- My friend does not snap at me.
- If I get into a disagreement with my friend, we can talk through it.
- When I need to talk, my friend isn’t distracted (e.g., phone).
- My friend is not aggressive towards me.
Toxicity & Abuse

- I feel safe around my friend.
- My friend is not mean to me.
- My friend doesn’t blame me and is able to take accountability.
- My friend does not lie to or about me.
- My friend does not gossip about me.
Toxicity & Abuse

- My friend does not insult or humiliate me.
- My friend does not exclude me.
- My friend does not pressure or manipulate me.
- My friend does not threaten or coerce me.
- My friend has not harmed me.
Enjoyment & Connection

- Even the mere thought of my friend makes me feel good.
- My friend understands me.
- I feel attuned to my friend.
- My friend and I have similar interests.
- I can be myself around my friend.
Enjoyment & Connection

- I enjoy my time with my friend.
- My friend and I have good memories together.
- I look forward to seeing my friend.
- When we are together, it is mostly (if not always) positive.
- I am satisfied with the amount of connection we have.
Care & Support

- My friend cares for me.
- We both share equally.
- We accept our differences.
- We have mutual respect
- We both invest in our bond.
Care & Support

- I can count on my friend when I need help.
- I am happy to help my friend when in need.
- I am glad to set time aside for our friendship.
- My friend is considerate of my needs.
- My friend does not take me for granted.
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<th>Communication &amp; Kindness</th>
<th>Toxicity &amp; Abuse</th>
<th>Enjoyment &amp; Connection</th>
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6/19/2019
Fostering Healthy Friendships

Healthy friendship assessment → Reflection → Room for growth → Mutual Support
Common Challenges

- Expectations
- Social Media
- Personal Growth
- Breakups
Diagnoses & Friendships

When you have a mental illness, you may think that your friendships are bound to be more complicated. You may even deem healthy relationships impossible. This is **NOT** true. It’s very important to dispel the internalized stereotype that your relationships will suffer because of your mental diagnosis.
Discussing Mental Health in Friendships

- Sharing about your mental health
- When a friend shares about mental health
- When you think a friend needs help
Sharing about your mental health

Healthy friendship assessment → Reflect → Room for growth → Mutual Support
When a friend discloses a diagnosis

1. Listen
2. Be compassionate
3. Be Provide Support
4. Educate Yourself
5. Establish Boundaries
When you think your friend might need help

Reflect
Educate Yourself
Listen
Provide Support
Establish Boundaries
The power to create a healthy friendship lies within your hands.

Today you learned:

• How friendships may impact mental wellness.
• How to tell the difference between a healthy and unhealthy bond.
• How to talk to your friend about mental health.
Friend or Foe:
How our relationships influence our mental health

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