



Peer Education Project

HEALTHY

RELATIONSHIPS

Parent and caregiver
guide: Healthy
relationships with
ourselves and our peers



Mental Health
Foundation



In a survey shared with our [OPEN network](#), we asked a sample of parents/caregivers, what does a healthy relationship mean to you?

"A relationship you feel safe to be yourself in, that is mutually supportive and you can trust the other person."



"We don't take each other for granted and understand each other's problems and are there to listen, help and support each other."

"Everyone is respectful of each other and are able to communicate their feelings without fear, judgement or prejudice.....and to enjoy each other's company and have a laugh!!"

"A mixture of support and space - good reciprocal communication. Understanding that you will have different opinions about some things and that is ok."

"A healthy relationship should be reciprocal and equal. It's important in a relationship to feel loved, supported and included. There should be healthy boundaries and you should feel safe."



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We would love to hear about how you use this resource and your feedback. Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to complete a 2-minute form. If you would like any further information about these resources, please contact the PEP team at schools@mentalhealth.org.uk

This resource is part of a campaign focused on healthy relationships with ourselves and others. The campaign has been supported by Fastn, an organisation that championed the development of relationship skills in childhood that sustain positive relationships for life. Fastn's relationships education work has now become part of charity, Family Links The Centre for Emotional Health. To find out more and get in touch please visit the website www.familylinks.org.uk

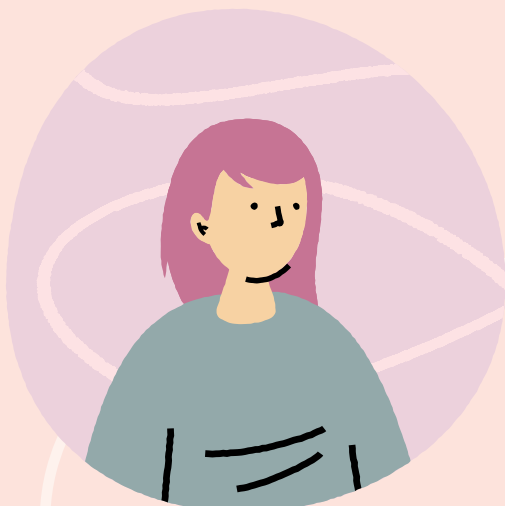


Tips for supporting your child/young person, and yourself, with developing healthy relationships

This guide has been developed using key themes from the top tips for healthy relationships with ourselves and our peers, that the [Mental Health Foundation's Young Leaders](#) created.

Sometimes, it can feel difficult to know where to start or when a 'good time' to talk to your child or young person about certain topics is. Here are a few resources to support with this:

- [How to talk to your child about mental health, a guide by Young Minds](#)
- [Talking to your child about difficult topics, a guide by NSPCC](#)
- [How to talk to your 'tweens' and teens about body image, a guide by the Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [Activities to get you and your children talking about their feelings, a guide by the Mental Health Foundation](#)



If you are in need of support and/or advice, here are few places you could reach out to:

- [Parent Talk, from Action for Children:](#)
a dedicated section on their website to provide support to parents, from articles, videos and their free, confidential live chat with a parenting coach.
- [Parent helpline, from Young Minds:](#)
a helpline service to support parents and carers who are concerned about their child's mental health, up to the age of 25. The helpline services runs as a telephone service, a webchat and an email service.





Tip: Talking kindly to yourself

Supporting your children and young people

Sometimes, we can be unkind to ourselves through our thoughts and actions. For children and young people, unkind self-talk – talking to yourself in a negative way – is likely as they face pressures, such as achieving good grades, peer relationships, puberty, social media, exploring their identity and many other factors.

Regular unkind self-talk and actions can affect our self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. It is important to support children and young people to recognise how they treat themselves and how they can put things in place to be kind to themselves.



Understanding their inner critic and inner coach:

Explore [video 6](#) with your child/young person to think of helpful ways to 'turn down' their inner critic and 'turn up' their inner coach.



Raising self-esteem:

There are many pressures and obstacles that can affect your child's or young person's self-esteem. Read this [guide](#) for information and advice on how you can provide support.



Kindness matters:

Read this [guide](#) on how to support children and young people to show kindness to themselves and others.



Tip: Talking kindly to yourself

Support for parents and caregivers

Sometimes our self-esteem can be knocked and we can find it difficult to feel accepted and comfortable with who we are. Over time, this kind of uncertainty can start to affect our mental health, and make it difficult to recognise our self-worth.



Looking after your self-esteem:

Read this [information page](#) on what self-esteem is and ways to improve it.



Practicing kind self-talk:

Read this [article](#) on how to challenge negative self-talk and speak more kindly to yourself.



Tip: Practicing self-care

Supporting your children and young people

Taking the time to do the things you enjoy and that bring you comfort, can help you build a healthy relationship with yourself, and also support your mental health and wellbeing.

Putting in time to speak to your children and young people about the value of self-care and practicing self-care activities together, can help them find their own ways of connecting with themselves.



What is self-care?: Share this [guide](#) with your child/young person about self-care, including tips from other young people.



Self-care activities: Explore this [self-care activity page](#) with your child/young person, finding out what activities they enjoy or would like to try. This activities listed were suggested by young people aged 11-25.



Tip: Practicing self-care

Support for parents and caregivers

It can sometimes be difficult to put time aside for self-care. Taking time for yourself can sometimes lead to feelings of guilt and shame. Yet putting yourself first by practicing self-care is an important part of looking after your mental health and wellbeing.



Understanding what is self-care:

Listen to this [short video](#) explaining what self-care is and why it is important.



Putting time aside for self-care:

Read this [information page](#) on self-care, including advice on how to protect time for it.



Practicing self-care:

Read these [top tips on self-care](#). Everyone's approach to self-care will look different, so it is important to find what works best for you.



Tip: Talking about peer relationships

Supporting your children and young people

By supporting children and young people to reflect on how different relationships are making them feel, we can help them to recognise when a relationship is not making them feel good. This will help them to think about what they can do and what they need from their peers to feel comfortable and supported.

Showing interest in your children and young people's peer relationships, and holding space for them to share any worries they may have with you, will help them to feel supported.



Supporting children/young people with friendships:

Read this [guide](#) on how to support your child/young person with their friendships.



Dealing with conflict in relationships:

Explore [video 8](#) with your child/young person to think of ways they can look after themselves when they are finding things difficult in their relationships.



Tips and advice on friendships:

Share this [guide](#) on friendships with your child/young person.



Tip: Talking about peer relationships

Support for parents and caregivers

As a parent/caregiver, it can sometimes feel difficult to find the space and time to put yourself first and connect with others. However, it is important to protect time for you to connect with your peers and build healthy relationships with them. Having a network around you can help you feel supported and can prevent difficult feelings such as loneliness.



Investing in relationships:

Good relationships protect our mental health and wellbeing at any stage of life. Read this [guide](#) on tips to build healthy relationships with yourself, with the people you are close to and with those around you.



Looking after yourself when feeling lonely:

Sometimes, even when we are with others, we can feel lonely. Read this [guide](#) on things you may find useful if feeling lonely.



Tip: Respecting others

Supporting your children and young people

Sometimes words can be said when they shouldn't be or when they are not fully understood. Words can also be used to cause harm. It is important for children and young people to understand the impact their words can have on others, and feel confident to reach out for support if harmful words are being used towards them or others.

Holding spaces for you to have an open conversation with your children and young people about different experiences. You could do this when harmful words are used in programmes and music, or highlighted in the news.



Talking to children/young people about racism:

Read this [advice](#) on how to talk to your child/young person about race and racism, and what you can do to support them if they are experiencing racial bullying.



Understanding bullying and its different forms:

Explore this [section](#) on bullying and what actions you can take if your child/young person is being bullied.



Talking about gender equality:

Read this [information page](#) on gender equality and how you can support your child/young person understanding of it.



Tip: Respecting others

Support for parents and caregivers

We may experience disrespectful language and situations at any point in our lives. It is important to recognise when language and/or situations are not ok, and feel confident in reaching out for support.



Know your rights:

Read this [information page](#) on discrimination, protected characteristics and what you can do if you feel you are being unfairly treated.



Reaching out for support:

If you, or someone you know, have been affected by crime and traumatic events, including fraud, domestic abuse or a hate crime, reach out to [Victim Support](#) for advice and support. Victim Support provide free and confidential support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year for anyone who has been affected by crime and traumatic events.



Tip: Putting in boundaries

Supporting your children and young people

Children and young people may find it difficult to set personal boundaries with their peers, especially if they feel pressured to be accepted. They may worry about FOMO – fear of missing out – or how they will be viewed by their peers if they do not take part in certain activities.

By holding space for your children and young people to share with you the pressures they are facing, and how they feel about it, you can support them to understand what boundaries they may need to put in place. Exploring with them different ways to let their peers know what their boundaries are, may help them to feel reassured and more confident in their peer relationships.



Understanding peer pressure:

Read this [short article](#) on peer pressure and how to support your child/young person.



Using social media:

Read these [tips](#) for talking to young people about their use of social media.

Support for parents and caregivers

Sometimes, as parents and caregivers, you can also feel a sense of peer pressure, which can lead to thoughts of self-doubt or comparison – am I doing a good job? It is important to recognise how you can build in your own boundaries with those around you.



Dealing with parenting pressure:

Read this [article](#) on ways to manage pressure from other parents or advice on being a 'good parent/caregiver'.



Putting in boundaries:

Read these [top tips](#) on how to put in healthy boundaries.



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