

TOPIC 8

Healthy and respectful relationships

8.1 Overview

Key knowledge

- Key characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships and the impact on health and wellbeing, and development

Key skill

- Analyse the role of healthy and respectful relationships in the achievement of optimal health and wellbeing
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FIGURE 8.1 Teamwork and decision making are important aspects of healthy and respectful relationships.



KEY TERMS

Abuse physical, psychological or sexual ill treatment of a person

Authoritarian parenting a style of parenting that employs strict rules, and punishment if rules are broken

Authoritative parenting a style of parenting that uses positive reinforcement of good behaviours and flexibility in interpretation of rules

Belonging the feeling whereby a person feels they have a place and a role in society

Communication the passing or sharing of information between people

Connectedness relates to the quality, number and frequency of interactions with others in a social setting

Emotional abuse the use of verbal abuse, threats, rejection, put downs and other behaviour in order to have control over another person

Empathy the ability to understand and share the feelings of another

Equality the state of being equal, whereby all people involved in a relationship are valued and able to contribute to and take from the relationship. They have the same expectations of the relationship.

Honesty the quality of being honest — choosing not to lie, deceive or cheat

Intimate relationship an interpersonal relationship that involves physical and/or emotional closeness

Loyalty the quality of being faithful to others. It also means that people stick by each other and provide support and consistency even through challenging times.

Non-verbal communication the use of gestures, body language, mannerisms and facial expressions to express yourself

Permissive parenting a style of parenting that is low in discipline and whereby parents see themselves more as friends than parents

Physical abuse any physical act that hurts or scares an individual

Relationship a connection between two or more people or groups of people

Respect the consideration of others' feelings, opinions, rights and needs

Safety the state of being free from danger, either physically or emotionally

Social networking the use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interests

Trust the feeling of having confidence in another person and feeling emotionally and physically safe around them

Uninvolved a parenting style whereby parents show little interest in their children's lives

Verbal communication the use of sounds and words to express yourself

8.2 Healthy and respectful relationships

KEY CONCEPT Understanding what makes a healthy and respectful relationship

Humans have evolved to be social beings, and feeling of a sense of **belonging** and **connectedness** are essential to our health and wellbeing. A **relationship** is the connection between two or more people, or groups of people, and their involvement with one another over a period of time. We have relationships with all sorts of people. Relationships are complex and dynamic; they can be developed and maintained in a range of ways. Relationships can be healthy or unhealthy, and both have an impact on the dimensions of health and wellbeing and the areas of development.

8.2.1 Types of relationship

There are many types of relationship: some can be quite simple while others are more complex. For example, we may have simple relationships with many people based on shared interests or lifespan stage. Other relationships, such as with an intimate partner, can be more complex where the needs of both people need to be met. This can be difficult sometimes; for example, if one person in the relationship gets a job in another city, the other partner might need to compromise on their career, friendships or interests.

FIGURE 8.2 There are many different types of relationship.

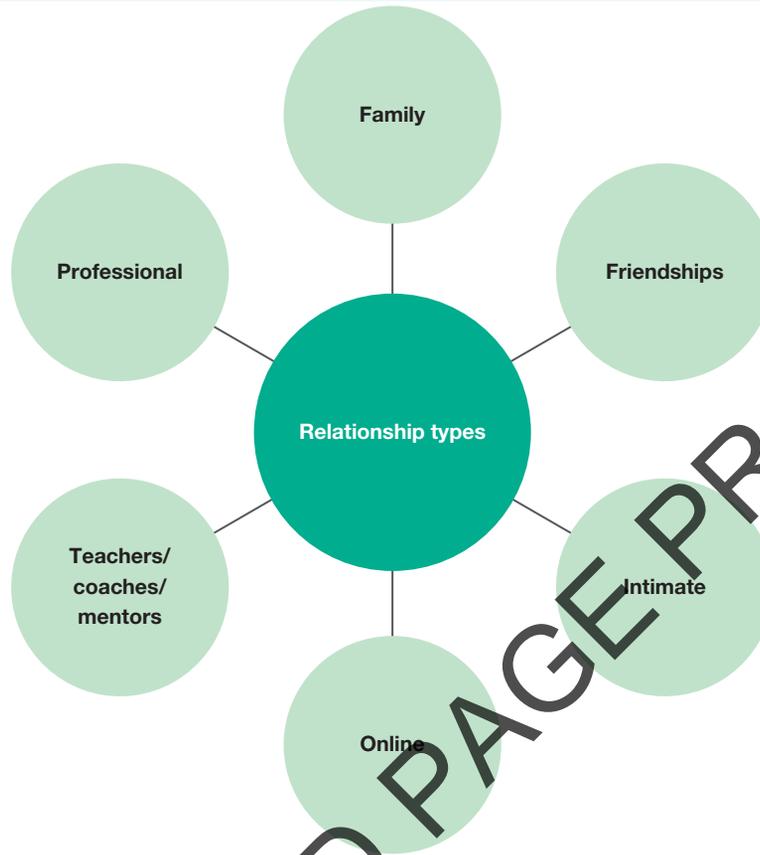


FIGURE 8.3 Relationships are formed with a wide range of people throughout the lifespan.



Many relationships will change over time depending on people's life experiences, interests and needs. The relationships that we experience throughout our lifespan shape our beliefs, sense of self-worth, and give a sense of belonging and connection.

Family relationships

Families are diverse and unique. Regardless of their makeup, families usually provide love, security, care and support for their members. Family members are generally dependable and trustworthy, and support and guide us through milestones in life. Such times might include starting school, choosing which university to attend, moving out of home, and getting married or having children. In the past, typical families comprised parents and children. However, today there are a wide variety of different family structures. What is classified as their family is different for each individual depending on their circumstances. Families are better defined by what they do and the qualities they offer their members rather than how they are composed. Regardless of their makeup, all families should provide a supportive, caring and loving environment for their members.

FIGURE 8.4 Families come in many different forms.



In many family scenarios, the relationship between parents and children is a key factor in how well the family functions. There are four main recognised parenting styles, each of which has the potential to impact on health and wellbeing of parents and, especially, children. These parenting styles and their commonly accepted impacts on health and wellbeing of the children are discussed below.

Authoritarian parents establish a set of rules and expect their children to follow them without question. This type of parenting relies on punishment, does not allow negotiation and the children gain minimal skills in problem solving. Children from these types of families often have lower levels of emotional and mental health and wellbeing, as they often direct anger at their parents for the punishments they inflict and also tend to have poor self-esteem.

Authoritative parents also have rules; however, they allow some exceptions based on their children's feelings and also explain the reasons for their rules or limits. These parents tend to use consequences rather than punishments, and often implement positive consequences or rewards to reinforce positive behaviours. Children with these types of parents usually develop good decision making skills and become responsible adults with good mental health and wellbeing.

Permissive parents don't really offer any discipline and may take on the role of friend more than parent. As such, although they may encourage their children to talk to them about their problems, they rarely discourage bad behaviour. Children in these relationships often have issues with authority and rules, causing them difficulties at school and later in life. These children often report low self-esteem and sadness, which causes poor mental health and wellbeing.

Uninvolved parents show little interest in their children's lives, often do not meet their basic needs and offer little attention. These parents are often affected by mental health issues or substance abuse problems. Children in these families tend to feel rejected and consequently have low levels of happiness and poor self-esteem.

Friendships

The friendships we establish are often based on common interests, such as sports and hobbies, or on life experiences. Like all relationships, friendships can change significantly. They can be close and intense or more relaxed and carefree. Friendships can be long lasting or short, but all can be meaningful and important to our health and wellbeing and development. Friends may drift apart for periods or forever. This may not necessarily be negative; it's just that their common interests may have changed.

Friends usually share good times and bad, and offer support in those times that are more difficult. Friends offer opportunities for understanding the world outside of the influence of our immediate family. Friends are critical during certain life stages, such as youth, when many young people strive to become independent from their families. Youth rely on their friends to help with decisions about dating, consuming alcohol and drugs, sports, and school priorities. Friends can either be a good or bad influence, and their input in such decisions should be carefully evaluated.

FIGURE 8.5 Friends offer care and support and are important to health and wellbeing at all stages of the lifespan.



Online relationships

Since the development of **social networking** sites, many people of all ages have been able to develop and maintain relationships through online **communication**. There can be negative outcomes associated with online relationships; however, healthy and respectful relationships can also be developed through online forums and networking sites for people with shared interests. Large numbers of people use social networking sites such as Facebook to maintain contact with people they already know offline. Chatting and interacting online can be an effective way to stay in touch and keep up to date with friends easily and instantaneously.

Intimate relationships

Intimate relationships usually involve strong emotions. Love and infatuation are romantic feelings that are common

FIGURE 8.6 Social networking sites such as Facebook help to develop and maintain relationships, especially over long distances.



in such relationships. Intimate relationships involve a desire to spend large amounts of time with, and a physical attraction to, another person; but they may not always be sexual in nature. Many intimate relationships do become sexual after a period of time. The characteristics of intimate relationships differ for everyone and depend on values, beliefs and expectations. For some people, intimacy is centred on physical closeness; for others it is more about a spiritual or emotional connection.

Relationships with teachers, coaches or other mentors

Healthy and respectful relationships can be formed with any people who play a significant role in our lives. Particularly for young people, teachers at school or sports coaches are important people in a young person's support network. Mentors of any type provide positive role models for people of all ages and can be very influential in the lives of youth.

FIGURE 8.7 Intimate relationships involve a close connection with another person.



FIGURE 8.8 Teachers and coaches are a major source of support and guidance for young people.



Professional relationships

Most adults spend large amounts of their day in some form of work environment. Their relationships with co-workers and managers can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. In the workplace, relationships need to be open and supportive and are usually based on shared values and goals. Workplace relationships require good communication, trust and respect. Healthy and respectful workplace relationships generally allow workers to be more productive and result in better outcomes for everyone for the workplace.

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Relationships Summary screens and practice questions

8.2.2 Characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships

Healthy and respectful relationships have positive impacts on all aspects of health and wellbeing and development for people across the lifespan. Healthy and respectful relationships are important — they contribute to personal growth and self-confidence, promote self-expression and an awareness of others. They enable

people to feel accepted, and give an important sense of belonging and connectedness. The key characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships are respect, trust, honesty, loyalty, empathy, safety and equality.

Respect is a pattern of behaviour that is found in healthy and respectful relationships whereby people have consideration for others' feelings, needs, thoughts and rights. Respect means that people in the relationship value each other's opinion and treat each other in a thoughtful way.

Trust in others means that you think they are reliable and dependable, you have confidence in them, and feel safe with them emotionally and physically. Trust is a key characteristic of healthy and respectful relationships.

Honesty in healthy and respectful relationships involves telling the truth and not keeping secrets. Being honest means choosing not to lie, cheat, steal or deceive in any way. Honesty and trust are characteristics that are closely linked, as being honest helps to build trust in any type of relationship.

Loyalty is a characteristic of healthy and respectful relationships whereby people stick by each other and provide support and consistency even through challenging times. Being loyal doesn't mean that the people involved in the relationship always agree and share exactly the same opinions, but they will always be there for each other and work to resolve their differences.

Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing by placing yourself in their position. Empathy helps to contribute to healthy and respectful relationships because it allows people to sense and understand other people's emotions and offer support when needed.

Safety is an essential characteristic of any healthy and respectful relationship. A relationship can't be considered healthy and respectful if the people involved do not feel physically and emotionally safe. Like honesty, safety and trust are intrinsically linked. Emotional safety means trusting other people with your feelings and knowing that they have your best interests in mind. Only healthy and respectful relationships are those free from any sort of physical harm or abuse.

Equality means that the people involved in the relationship are valued and able to give and take from the relationship. They have the same expectations of the relationship. Relationships all involve different numbers of people — from intimate relationships of two people to larger family or friendship groups. Regardless of the number of people involved, each person needs to contribute to a healthy and respectful relationship. When a relationship is unequal, one person may try to hold power over the other.

Healthy and respectful relationships may involve disagreements or differences of opinion. In healthy and respectful relationships, when differences occur they are managed in ways that lead to understanding and resolution without damage to the relationship. Conflict within relationships can be uncomfortable; however, conflict that stems from a difference of opinion or ideas does not necessarily lead to an unhealthy relationship. It is normal for groups of people to hold different points of view. In a healthy and respectful relationship conflict is resolved, often by simply agreeing to disagree.

FIGURE 8.9 The key characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships



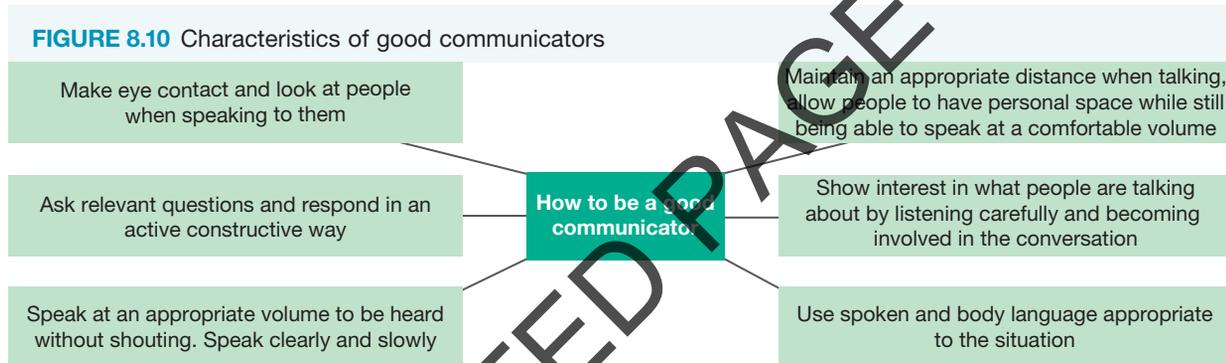
The importance of communication

For healthy and respectful relationships to be developed and maintained good communication is an essential characteristic. Clear communication in any relationship allows people to share their interests, aspirations, and concerns or worries. It helps them to discuss their expectations of the relationship and to support each other. Clear and supportive communication in healthy and respectful relationships can help people to make difficult decisions.

Communication involves verbal and non-verbal skills. **Verbal communication** is clearly conveying a message through talking and careful listening, while **non-verbal communication** is the use of body language, facial expressions and tone of voice. Good communication is an important feature of healthy relationships because it shows the people involved have respect for each other. Verbal communication allows facts, thoughts, feelings and opinions to be conveyed directly. Clear verbal communication is essential to building healthy and respectful relationships in order to avoid misunderstandings, hurt, anger or confusion. Non-verbal aspects of communication are easily lost when electronic communication is used. Facial expressions, body posture and tone of voice are not available as cues to understand the true context of a message. Misunderstandings and hurt feelings are common consequences of this type of communication and do not foster healthy and respectful relationships.

Developing good communication skills is a process that continues throughout a person's lifespan. Some characteristics of good communicators are outlined in figure 8.10.

FIGURE 8.10 Characteristics of good communicators



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Healthy and respectful relationships Summary screens and practice questions

8.2.3 Unhealthy relationships

To determine how healthy and respectful a relationship is, you must first be able to recognise the signs of an unhealthy or negative relationship. Most people encounter unhealthy relationships at various times in their lives. These relationships are not always abusive in nature; however, they are unsatisfying to one or more of the people involved. An unhealthy relationship is usually one in which a person is prevented from challenging themselves, and is unable to be their best self. Other characteristics might include:

- feeling uncomfortable around a person or group of people
- being put down by others
- not feeling appreciated, valued or cared for
- feeling that the relationship is unequal and one person is putting in greater effort than others to maintain the relationship

FIGURE 8.11 Shouting, anger and fear are common in unhealthy relationships.



- low self-esteem and a lack of confidence around others
- being embarrassed, bullied or harassed
- feeling scared, vulnerable, constantly disappointed or angry.

Abuse in relationships

An extremely unhealthy relationship may become an abusive relationship. **Abuse** can be physical, emotional or sexual and endangers the person being abused.

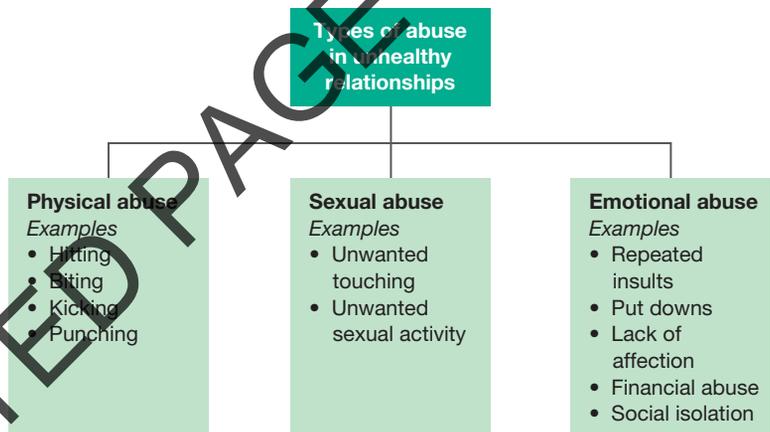
Examples of each type of abuse are outlined in figure 8.13.

Unhealthy and abusive relationships can have extremely detrimental consequences for health and wellbeing and development in all lifespan stages. Being physically abused causes injuries and sometimes death; while sexual and emotional abuse can lead to poor self-esteem, depression, anxiety, withdrawal from social interactions and self-harm. All dimensions of health and wellbeing are negatively affected by any form of abuse in a relationship. Abusive relationships within families are known as family or domestic violence, and includes not only behaviour resulting in physical injury, but also direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, financial control, damage to property, social isolation and any behaviour that leads another family member to live in fear.

FIGURE 8.12 Physical violence and fear are common features of abusive relationships.



FIGURE 8.13 Types of abuse in unhealthy relationships



8.2 Activities

Test your knowledge

1. Identify the six different types of relationship.
2. (a) Name the four parenting styles discussed.
(b) Briefly outline the characteristics of each parenting style.
3. Create a table or concept map identifying the characteristics of a healthy and respectful relationship with a description of each characteristic and a picture that illustrates that characteristic.
4. What is meant by
(a) verbal communication?
(b) non-verbal communication?
5. Provide an example where a misunderstanding in a relationship has occurred as a result of poor verbal and non-verbal communication.
6. Explain why communication is so important in healthy and respectful relationships.

Apply your knowledge

7. (a) In the tables provided, identify the three most important characteristics of relationships with parents, friends, teacher or coach.
(b) Justify why you consider these characteristics the most important in each of the relationships.

Parent(s)	
Characteristic	Justification

Friend

Characteristic	Justification

Teacher or coach

Characteristic	Justification

8. Imagine that you and three others have been stranded on a desert island.
 - (a) Identify and describe three ways the relationship between all four people might be tested.
 - (b) Suggest a list of rules to maintain respectful relationships on the island.
 - (c) Which characteristics of a healthy and respectful relationship do you think would be most needed in this scenario? Why?
9.
 - (a) Identify the characteristics of an unhealthy relationship.
 - (b) Discuss reasons why a person may stay in an unhealthy relationship.
 - (c) Predict the impact of an unhealthy relationship on the health and wellbeing of an adolescent who has just begun dating.
10. Often messages communicated electronically are misinterpreted. Suggest reasons why misunderstandings often happen with this type of communication.

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Unhealthy relationships Summary screens and practice questions

8.3 Healthy and respectful relationships and health and wellbeing

KEY CONCEPT Understanding the impact of healthy and respectful relationships on health and wellbeing

Healthy and respectful relationships in which there is good communication and all people feel supported, connected and cared for have a positive impact on all dimensions of health and wellbeing.

Physical health and wellbeing is enhanced as people in healthy and respectful relationships do not suffer physical injuries from abuse or violence. Healthy and respectful relationships also promote physical health and wellbeing in other ways. For example, people may play sport as part of a team or be encouraged to do physical activity with friends and family members, which improves cardiovascular health, helps to maintain a healthy body weight and enhances the functioning of the immune system.

Healthy and respectful relationships are at the core of good social health and wellbeing. Having healthy and respectful relationships contributes to the achievement of optimal social health and wellbeing, as people interact with others in a positive way and offer support to each other.

Emotional health and wellbeing is also closely associated with healthy and respectful relationships. When people are in positive, caring relationships they are easily able to recognise and manage their emotions.

As discussed earlier, healthy and respectful relationships do sometimes involve conflict, which can lead to emotions such as sadness, disappointment, frustration and anger. However, in healthy and respectful relationships a positive outcome can be achieved with good communication. Through good communication within a caring and supportive relationship optimal emotional health and wellbeing can be promoted.

Stress, anxiety and low self-esteem are characteristics of people involved in unhealthy, negative relationships in which mental health and wellbeing can be severely compromised. Healthy and respectful relationships can improve and promote optimal mental health and wellbeing because stress levels remain low. When anxiety is present it can be reduced by sharing thoughts and being cared for by others. Being supported to achieve goals and accept challenges builds good self-esteem and self-confidence. In healthy and respectful relationships, even when people fail to fully achieve their goals, having love and support from others means they can try again and resilience is built along the way.

Being part of a healthy and respectful relationship means that big life decisions can be made together, which means the anxiety that usually accompanies them can be reduced. For example, a couple might be deciding when to start a family. In a healthy and respectful relationship with good communication, both parties will offer their thoughts and feelings to make the decision together. In an unhealthy relationship, both partners might feel anxious and stressed about the decision and withdraw from each other.

A sense of belonging is at the centre of good spiritual health and wellbeing. A strong feeling of connectedness is fostered through healthy and respectful relationships. People feel connected to each other through shared interests, values, beliefs and opinions, which are the foundations of positive relationships. Healthy and respectful relationships are inclusive of others and make people feel comfortable, promoting optimal spiritual health and wellbeing. Meaning and purpose in life are essential aspects of spiritual health and wellbeing, which can be achieved through having many different relationships. For example, a football coach can satisfy his or her spiritual needs by building a strong relationship with a team of young sports players. Helping young people to develop their skills and watching them grow as players can be very fulfilling for a coach. People who become involved in volunteering can achieve spiritual health and wellbeing through the relationships they make through giving their time and effort.

FIGURE 8.14 Friends running together encourage each other to achieve optimal physical health and wellbeing.



FIGURE 8.15 Achieving goals and self-confidence are features of mental health and wellbeing that are promoted through healthy relationships.

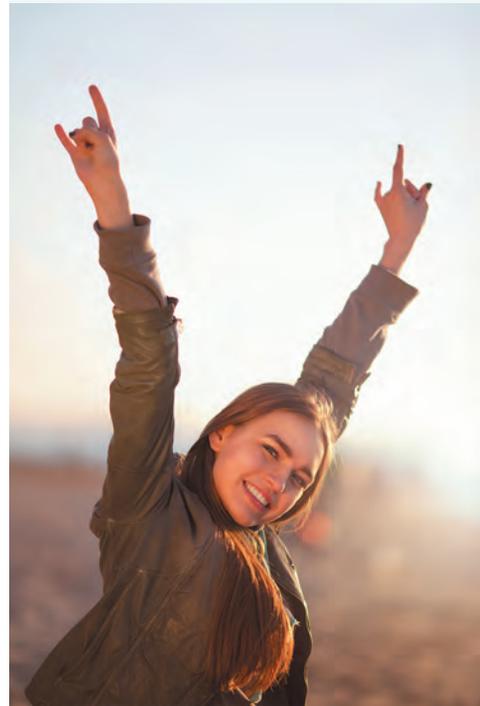


FIGURE 8.16 Volunteers at shelters for homeless people satisfy their spiritual health and wellbeing needs through helping others.



CASE STUDY

Good relationships keep you healthier for longer

Arguments with the people we are close to can have a serious impact on our health and mortality rate, a new study has confirmed. The link between having supportive friends and family and serious health outcomes has long been recognised, but this research, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Public Health*, takes our knowledge of the impact of relationships on health one step further by showing how stress can even impact on our lifespan.

Stressful social relations with partners, children, other family members, friends and neighbours, were examined using questions about everyday life. Questions addressed the degree to which people felt their relationships demanded too much of them, worried them or involved conflict. These questions were scored from always through to seldom, with people reporting frequent stressful social relations being deemed as at high risk.

Social relations were also measured with a more standard psychological questionnaire, the Copenhagen Social Relations Questionnaire. This study found that frequent worries, demands or conflicts were related to an increased risk of death through any cause.

Individuals who experienced frequent conflicts in their social relationships were, alarmingly, at two to three times the risk of mortality compared to individuals who rarely experienced such conflict. Conflicts, worries and demands from your partner seemed to be particularly important and had a stronger effect on men's mortality than women's, suggesting that men are more vulnerable to the negative impact of social relationships.

Be sociable

These results shouldn't surprise us. It has already been established that large social networks and high quality social support can boost your lifespan; we would expect that negative social relationships might be linked to an increased risk of mortality.

FIGURE 8.17 Conflict in our close relationships can affect our health and wellbeing.



The link between being socially isolated or having poor quality social relationships and earlier mortality is well established. And having a small social network appears to be particularly detrimental to men when the link between social support and mortality takes into account other risks such as smoking and high blood pressure.

But less is known about the other side of the coin in terms of whether or not our social relations can actually harm our health. There is certainly some evidence to suggest this is the case. In my own laboratory we have shown that individuals with poor quality marriages have a reduced antibody response to medical vaccinations in comparison to happily married individuals.

During a stressful marital conflict, laboratory studies have shown that physical wounds heal slower in couples who consistently demonstrated high levels of hostile behaviour toward each other, and higher levels of inflammation the day after a hostile marital social interaction. Inflammation is a major contributor to many age-related diseases.

There are many candidates for causing this. In particular, higher levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, can adversely affect many parts of the body including the immune system, cardiovascular function, and even muscle and bone strength.

It is possible that men's increased vulnerability to the impact of stress on their bodies is due to these same biological pathways, as men have been shown to have higher stress hormone and blood pressure responses than women. In turn, high stress reactivity is associated with a range of serious diseases including developing cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular disease mortality.

Healthy relations, healthy life

So the key question is, what can we do to reduce our risk of falling foul of the negative effect of stress in our relationships? A glib answer would be, do not form close relationships with individuals with whom one does not get on well. But relationships often deceptively start well and only show the cracks and difficulties later down the line.

A more pragmatic answer would be to work hard at our relationships, to maintain their quality, by making both parties in the relationship feel valued and appreciated. Through this, conflicts, demands and worries should become less frequent.

Another potential solution might be to learn to self-regulate our responses to conflict when it arises. Rather than escalate the situation by responding negatively to a negative encounter in order to further our own point of view, we might consider reacting calmly.

Scientifically, the biological impact of stress on people who don't tend to respond angrily in stressful situations is smaller than those who are frequently angry and hostile, and make large displays of showing it. Sometimes there is no escaping stress in our relationships with others — especially those we're closest to. But with increasing evidence that stress has a serious impact on our health and lifespan, we'll do better to work hard at investing in our relationships.

Source: Phillips A 2014 'Good relationships keep you healthier for longer', *The Conversation*, 12 May <http://theconversation.com/good-relationships-keep-you-healthier-for-longer-26549>.

Case study review

1. According to the article, individuals who experienced frequent conflict in their social relationships were how many times more at risk of mortality than those who rarely experienced such conflict?
2. Is the mortality of men or women more affected by the impacts of negative social relationships?
3. What evidence is there to suggest that social relationships can actually be harmful to our health and wellbeing?
4. How can we reduce the risk of the harmful effects stress in our relationships? Identify and describe three different suggestions outlined in the article.

8.3 Activities

Test your knowledge

1. Explain the ways in which relationships can be:
 - (a) good for health and wellbeing
 - (b) bad for health and wellbeing.
2. Complete a concept map with an example of how healthy and respectful relationships can have a positive impact on each of the dimensions of health and wellbeing.
3.
 - (a) Why are relationships with frequent conflict damaging to health and wellbeing?
 - (b) Conflict can be a part of a healthy and respectful relationship. Discuss the impact of conflict on the health and wellbeing of people in a healthy and respectful relationship.
4. A sense of belonging is a key feature of several dimensions of health and wellbeing. Explain how this is promoted through healthy and respectful relationships.

5. (a) How do you know if a relationship is unhealthy or abusive?
(b) List the three types of abuse in relationships with two examples for each one.

Apply your knowledge

6. Access the **For the Birds** weblink and worksheet in the Resources tab in your eBookplus then complete the worksheet.
7. Access the **Family violence** weblink and worksheet in the in Resources tab in your eBookPlus, then complete the worksheet on the Victorian Government's new ten-year plan on family violence.

eBookplus RESOURCES

-  **Explore more with this weblink:** For the Birds
-  **Complete this digital doc:** For the birds worksheet
Searchlight ID: doc-22637
-  **Explore more with this weblink:** Family violence
-  **Complete this digital doc:** Family violence worksheet
Searchlight ID: doc-22638

8.4 Healthy and respectful relationships and development

KEY CONCEPT Understanding the impact of healthy and respectful relationships on development

8.4.1 Physical development and healthy and respectful relationships

Development of gross and fine motor skills are the areas of physical development that will benefit most from healthy and respectful relationships. Positive relationships with friends and sports coaches who encourage participation in recreational activities promote physical development. For example, a team of netballers who have a friendly relationship with their teammates and their coach will be motivated to attend training and weekly games, which improves aspects of physical development such as hand-eye coordination, running, jumping, throwing and catching. If the relationship with the coach is unhealthy because the coach has unrealistic expectations, or shouts or uses put-downs at training, players won't want to go to training and their motor skills will not continue to develop.

8.4.2 Social development and healthy and respectful relationships

Social development is fostered by healthy and respectful relationships and, like social health and wellbeing, social

FIGURE 8.18 Motor skills such as throwing and catching are enhanced by positive relationships with coaches and teammates.



development is intrinsically linked with healthy and respectful relationships. Developing communication skills, conflict resolution skills and an understanding of values and beliefs are aspects of social development that are enhanced through healthy and respectful relationships. In relationships where there is respect, honesty and loyalty, people can practise these skills without fear of being embarrassed or put down by others. Being yourself and feeling comfortable with who you are is key to the development of self-identity, and it is only possible when the people around you support and do not judge you. This only occurs in healthy and respectful relationships, not in relationships that are unhealthy.

8.4.3 Emotional development and healthy and respectful relationships

Healthy and respectful relationships allow for and promote the emotional development of people of all ages. When relationships are supportive and people can be honest with each other, emotions can be expressed without fear of rejection or ridicule. People who are in relationships where there are low levels of stress and little conflict are able to express their emotions and are able to recognise and support others' emotions. In an unhealthy relationship, an emotion such as jealousy, for example, might be expressed as anger or frustration. In a healthy and respectful relationship, a jealous person would be more able to talk about their jealousy with their friend or partner, and come to a satisfactory resolution. Healthy and respectful family relationships foster emotional development. For example, if a young child is supported to understand why they are frustrated and throwing a tantrum, rather than simply told not to do it or ignored, they are better able to learn about their emotions and find ways to express them more effectively as they grow older.

8.4.4 Intellectual development and healthy and respectful relationships

Intellectual development involves mental processes such as building knowledge and problem-solving abilities, imaginative skills and language skills. All of these characteristics are enhanced through healthy and respectful relationships with supportive family and friends, and particularly with teachers in a formal school setting. For example, if a child is part of a friendship group that supports learning and intellectual development, the child will not hold back at school for fear of embarrassment or bullying by other students. This friendship group might work together and encourage each other with their homework, increasing their problem-solving skills and learning. Similarly, a teacher who develops good relationships with students through a safe, caring learning environment will encourage students to take risks with their learning to advance their creativity and problem-solving skills. In a classroom where the teacher shouts and embarrasses students, or where students put each other down or are bullied, intellectual development will not proceed as students become bored and lose interest and motivation, or they are scared to offer their thoughts in case they are wrong.

FIGURE 8.19 Students in a supportive learning environment will offer their thoughts without feeling embarrassed or worried that they might be incorrect.



8.4 Activities

Test your knowledge

1. Explain why relationships can have a positive and negative impact on the development of an individual.
2. Explain, using an example for each, how healthy and respectful relationships promote physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. (You could use a table for this question.)
3. Youth is a time of increased conflict between children and parents. Explain how in a healthy and respectful parent–child relationship, this conflict helps to promote:
 - (a) social development
 - (b) intellectual development.
4. Explain using examples how healthy and respectful relationships promote the interrelationship of health and wellbeing and development.

Apply your knowledge

5.
 - (a) Find the lyrics to a song that focuses on relationships.
 - (b) Print out the lyrics. Is the relationship healthy and respectful or unhealthy?
 - (c) In small groups, discuss what the song is saying about relationships and evaluate the possible impacts of the relationship on each of the areas of development.
6. Read the following case study then answer the following questions.

Susan and her boyfriend Tom have been dating for a month. Susan decided she wanted to have sex with him and told him two nights ago. Yesterday Susan's parents went away for the weekend and she asked Tom to stay over. Susan started to feel really uncomfortable when they started kissing. She felt sort of sick and nervous. Susan thought that Tom noticed that she didn't feel good. He asked her if there was anything wrong. It was kind of hard for Susan to explain, so she didn't say anything for a few seconds, then she just said she didn't feel well. Tom seemed a little annoyed, but he said that that was cool, and got her a glass of water. Susan eventually told Tom that she didn't feel good because she wasn't ready to go that far yet. Tom listened and together they decided that they would wait until they both felt comfortable. Then Susan and Tom watched a movie and went to sleep.

- (a) Do you think this is a healthy and respectful relationship? Justify your answer.
- (b) Using examples from the case study, suggest ways that this relationship might promote Susan and Tom's emotional development.
- (c) Using examples from the case study, suggest ways that this relationship might promote Tom's social development.
- (d) Using examples from the case study, suggest ways that this relationship might promote Susan's intellectual development.

8.5 Topic 8 review

8.5.1 Key skills

KEY CONCEPT Analyse the role of healthy and respectful relationships in the achievement of optimal health and wellbeing

An understanding of what makes a healthy and respectful relationship and what is not healthy and respectful is the starting point for this key skill. It is necessary to be familiar with the characteristics of a healthy and respectful relationship before being able to analyse the impact these type of relationships may have on a person's ability to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. The main characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships are trust, honesty, respect, safety, empathy and loyalty.

To analyse means to examine something methodically and in detail. In this key skill, it is necessary to take the details of each healthy and respectful relationship characteristic and determine how it affects each dimension of health and wellbeing (physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual). Because this key skill is about the achievement of optimal health and wellbeing, discussions should focus on the positive impact on health and wellbeing and what happens in healthy and respectful relationships. Answers should not discuss the impact of unhealthy or abusive relationships and their negative outcomes.

For example, a question may ask for a discussion of a particular parenting style and the impact of this relationship on achieving optimal health and wellbeing.

The authoritative parenting style is characterised by the key features of a healthy and respectful relationship as it displays empathy, trust, respect, safety and honesty when placing limits on behaviours. Although the parents set limits and boundaries, they respect the feelings and opinions of the children and explain to them the reasons behind their decisions. This type of relationship helps build an environment where optimal health and wellbeing is promoted. Physical health and wellbeing is achieved as parents make decisions that keep their children safe from physical harm, such as injuries.² Emotional health and wellbeing is fostered in this type of relationship because there is good communication and, although there are boundaries and limits which may cause frustration or disappointment in the children, they are free to express their feelings, and the parents manage these feelings by explaining why those limits are in place.³ Mental health and wellbeing is promoted in this type of caring relationship as children's stress and anxiety levels are kept low through good communication and resolution of conflicts. Opinions are listened to and decisions are explained so that there is mutual understanding and children are able to be supported while they learn resilience skills.⁴

It is not necessary to cover every dimension of health and wellbeing in this type of discussion.

Practise the key skill

1. List the characteristics of a healthy and respectful relationship.
2. Explain what is meant by each of the following terms in relation to healthy and respectful relationships:
 - (a) empathy
 - (b) respect
 - (c) equality.
3. (a) What are the characteristics of good communication?
(b) Explain why it is important to have good communication for healthy and respectful relationships.
4. Explain how healthy and respectful relationships promote optimal health and wellbeing.
5. Explain how healthy and respectful relationships promote an individual's development at any age of the lifespan.
6. Give examples of each of the types of abuse commonly seen in unhealthy relationships.

- 1 Characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships are listed.
- 2 The impact of the relationship on an aspect of physical health and wellbeing is explained.
- 3 The ability to achieve good emotional health and wellbeing is explained.
- 4 The impact of the relationship on mental health and wellbeing is discussed.

7. Predict the possible impacts of each of the four parenting styles on the dimensions of health and wellbeing and areas of development. A table such as the one below could be used here. (Discuss as many of the dimensions of health and wellbeing and areas of development as possible.)

Parenting style	Impact on health and wellbeing	Impact on development

UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS

8.5.2 Topic summary

- Healthy and respectful relationships are essential to achieving optimal health and wellbeing.
- A relationship is a connection between two or more people.
- Types of relationship include family, friendships, intimate relationships, online relationships, relationships with teachers/coaches or others in mentoring roles, and professional relationships in workplaces; there may be many other examples of relationships.
- Some relationships are complex; others are simple and relatively straightforward.
- Meaningful relationships can be short or long lasting but both involve a connection.
- Families generally offer support and care in a loving environment, regardless of the makeup of the family.
- Friends offer opportunities and understanding outside the family context.
- Friendships are usually based on shared interests or experiences.
- Friends usually share good times and challenging times.
- Friendships can be critical to decision making, especially during youth.
- Online relationships offer ways to develop and maintain positive relationships, especially over long distances.
- Intimate relationships involve strong emotions and physical closeness with another person, but they are not always sexual relationships.
- Expectations of intimate relationships are different for each person.
- Relationships with teachers, coaches or other mentors can be very important, particularly for young people.
- Healthy and respectful relationships are characterised by respect, loyalty, empathy, equality, safety, trust and honesty.
- Good communication is the key to healthy and respectful relationships.
- Communication can be verbal or non-verbal.
- Unhealthy relationships prevent the achievement of optimal health and wellbeing.
- Unhealthy relationships are characterised by poor communication, being embarrassed, bullied, put down or harassed by others, and unequal power or control between people.
- Unhealthy relationships can cause fear, disappointment and sadness and result in low self-esteem.
- Abusive relationships can include physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and can cause injuries through violence as well as poor mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
- Healthy and respectful relationships promote all dimensions of health and wellbeing.
- Physical health and wellbeing is promoted through a sporting team or by exercising with friends and family.
- Mental health and wellbeing is promoted as healthy and respectful relationships reduce levels of stress and anxiety.
- Emotional health and wellbeing is promoted as people are easily able to recognise, understand and manage emotions when they are cared for and supported.
- Healthy and respectful relationships are central to good social health and wellbeing.
- Spiritual health and wellbeing needs are satisfied through relationships with others as they give meaning and purpose to people's lives.
- Healthy and respectful relationships have a positive impact on all areas of development.
- Physical development is promoted through the motivation to develop motor skills with a team or relationship with the coach.
- Social development is promoted through positive interactions with people in many different types of relationship.
- Emotional development is promoted through being able to express and manage emotions appropriately in relationships with others.
- Intellectual development is promoted through positive interactions with teachers and supportive friends who value learning,

8.5.3 Exam preparation

Question 1

- (a) Identify two characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships. **(2 marks)**
- (b) Outline how each of the characteristics chosen in question 1a promote health and wellbeing. **(4 marks)**

Question 2

Identify one type of relationship and discuss how it could contribute to a person achieving optimal health and wellbeing. **(2 marks)**

Question 3

Read the following case study then answer the questions.

Grace and Matilda are in year 2 at school. They have been friends since they started together in prep and like many of the same things. At school, their favourite class is Art. Recently, Grace has started playing more with Ruby at lunchtime and excluding Matilda completely. Matilda felt sad at being left out, but some other girls have welcomed her into their group at lunchtime. Grace has now become jealous that Matilda has new friends and she tells Matilda that she won't be friends with her anymore if she doesn't stop playing with the other girls. Grace won't let Matilda borrow her pencils and she takes all of Matilda's favourite paint colours and won't share them with her. While Matilda continues to play with her new friends, Grace and Ruby spread mean stories about her so that no one else will want to play with her.

- (a) Is the relationship between Matilda and Grace healthy and respectful? Justify your answer using examples from the case study. **(2 marks)**
- (b) How could this relationship have an impact on Matilda's health and wellbeing? **(2 marks)**
- (c) How could the relationship with the new group of friends or a supportive and caring teacher promote Matilda's optimal health and wellbeing? **(2 marks)**
- (d) Analyse the impact of the relationship between Grace and Matilda on Matilda's intellectual development. **(1 mark)**
- (e) Analyse the impact of the relationship with the new group of friends on Matilda's emotional development. **(1 mark)**

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