

Relationship Development

Session #4 within "Self-in-Context" Unit



VETERANS



ONWARD

Training Materials:

- Whiteboard and pens or flipchart and pens.
- Paper and pen for all participants.
- Print outs or links emailed to Assessment Tool resources for further study as desired:
<https://www.midss.org/content/brief-family-distress-scale>
<https://www.midss.org/relationship-assessment-scale-ras>

Learning Objectives:

1. Define “relationships” and explain why relationships are important to humans.
2. Name and describe 2 different relationship development theories and apply these to gain a better understanding of your current experience of a relationship.
3. Identify several relationship challenges.
4. Identify and apply several strategies for responding to relationship challenges.
5. Consider your own strengths and development points to help enhance your relationships.

Training Script:

Hello everyone, how are you today? My name is _____. I am going to be your tutor today for this training module on Relationship Development. It is the fourth session within the unit called “Self-in-Context”.

This module will take between 90 and 120 minutes to complete.

You will need a pen and paper to jot down your own ideas and thoughts in response to some of the tasks.

Before we even look at the learning objectives for today, I want us to begin with a safety warning. The topic of relationships can be difficult to think about or talk about. Relationships involve us connecting with another person and opening up and becoming vulnerable. When relationships are not satisfying, when there is conflict and disagreement within a relationship, if we are hurt or manipulated in a relationship, or when a relationship ends, we can feel a range of emotions that can be difficult to manage. Today, when we think about and discuss relationships, you may find some of the content challenging. It can be helpful to consider ways we can look after our own wellbeing as we study this module, so that we have a strategy to hand if we feel uncomfortable about the learning content.

In a moment, I will share with you three strategies that could be useful to you to help you to look after your own wellbeing as we study this module. Before that, I'd like you to think for yourself of a strategy that you know works for you.

Consider and complete this statement (writing it on your notepaper):

When I feel overwhelmed by feelings that are difficult to manage, it helps me to _____.

[Allow 2-3 minutes for completion].

Now we will have a chance to talk through some strategies. I'm going to invite you to tell the rest of the group about your own strategy. It is an invitation, so you have a choice as to whether you wish to accept that invitation or not. That can be an important strategy for taking care of ourselves when we feel uncomfortable or apprehensive: to recognise what choices we do have available to us. So – you have a choice about whether you would like to share your response with the group. I'm going to give us between 3 – 5 minutes in which we have the invitation to share your response.

The question I posed to you was to complete the statement: When I feel overwhelmed by feelings that are difficult to manage, it helps me to _____.

Is there anyone who would like to accept the invitation to share with us their response?

[Allow time for participants to share]

[Thank any participant who shares their response]

[Record any responses shared on the whiteboard/ flipchart]

After 3-5 minutes:

Thank you to everyone for your thought and your focus on that task. So, we've all had some time to reflect and think about ways to manage feelings that are difficult to manage that might come up during our training today. I said I would also share with you three strategies.

My three strategies fall into the heading of strategies that support our wellbeing in the long-term as well as the short term. So, I am not going to include strategies that can help you to deal with overwhelming emotion in the short term, but long term are not helpful. Therefore, I am not going to suggest you use alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs to cope. These can be helpful to manage emotion in the short term, but long term don't actually help us to manage overwhelm or difficulty.

So – my three strategies are:

When I feel overwhelmed by feelings that are difficult to manage, it helps me to:

- Step outside for 2 minutes, to take a breath and concentrate on my breathing.
- Remind myself that feelings come and go, and feelings move on. Remind myself I am not my feelings. I can imagine that my feelings are on a conveyor belt, slowly passing along before me. I can then feel a greater sense that I am not my feelings, I am me, and my feelings will pass.
- Name my feeling – I simply say to myself, or even write down, “right now, I feel _____”.

If you want to use any of these strategies today, please do. If you are going to step outside for a couple of minutes, just let me know you as you go.

So – in a moment, we will look at the learning objectives for today's module. Before we do that, it is important to recognise what we have covered so far:

- We've acknowledged that relationships can provoke a range of emotions that may be difficult to manage.

- We have had time to reflect upon our own strategies for managing when we experience feelings that are difficult to manage.
- We've recognised the difference between short-term and long-term strategies.
- We've heard 3 strategies that can be useful to support our own wellbeing in the long term when we experience feelings that are difficult to manage.

So, today's learning objectives. By the end of this module, my aim is that you will be able to:

6. Define "relationships" and explain why relationships are important to humans.
7. Name and describe 2 different relationship development theories and apply these to gain a better understanding of your current experience of a relationship.
8. Identify several relationship challenges.
9. Identify and apply several strategies for responding to relationship challenges.
10. Consider your own strengths and development points to help enhance your relationships.

Let's make a start on learning objective **1: to define "relationships" and explain why relationships are important to humans.**

The dictionary tells us that the word *relationship* means:

The way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected.

Another definition of *relationship* is:

The way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave towards each other.

So, we have relationships throughout our lives. We are born into a relationship: we need a parent or caregiver to feed, clothe and keep us safe. We may have siblings. As we grow and begin school, we have relationships with friends, we have relationships with different teachers. As we grow and develop further, we often develop romantic and sexual relationships. We may have our own children, in which case, we have a relationship with our kids. And then there are business relationships too: we often have a relationship with an employer, a bank, a car dealership etc., etc.

All of these are relationships in that there is some connection between us and them. Another way to put it, there is a connection between “Me and You”. This may be a weak or a distant connection, or it may be a strong and important connection. A relationship is where two or more people are connected in some way.

That second dictionary definition also tells us something important about relationships:

The way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave towards each other.

This definition tells us that different relationships have different expectations around how we behave within that relationship. For example, we are unlikely to behave the same way with our bank manager as with our romantic partner. We are unlikely to treat our Mother-in-Law the same way as we treat our friends. How we behave in a relationship is an important way of marking out or defining that relationship.

So – now we have a clear idea of what a relationship is, let’s consider why relationships are important to humans.

Relationships are essential to humans surviving. A newborn baby will soon die if he or she has no relationships. To begin with a baby and young child relies on relationships to meet all their needs: the basic survival needs for food, shelter, water etc. But also, the baby has human needs for love, affection and belonging. As we develop into adults, all humans still have needs for love, connection and belonging.

This idea can be illustrated using a diagram known as “Maslow’s hierarchy”. The psychologist, Abraham Maslow, wrote about the different human needs all humans have in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation"¹. He argued that humans are motivated to meet basic physical needs first before then seeking to meet their psychological needs. What is important for us to notice is that it is much, much easier to meet many of these needs when we have or are part of healthy relationships with others.

¹ Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.



So – healthy, satisfying relationships are very important to humans. Without them, we experience loneliness. When we feel alone, isolated or misunderstood by people around us, we can feel lonely. It is very possible to be lonely in a crowd. This is because loneliness is about the quality rather than the quantity of relationships that we have, so a person may have a lot of friends but still find that their need for quality connection with other people is not met. They may feel that they are not really understood, or known at a deep level by another human.

A survey by the Mental Health Foundation found that in the UK one in ten people feel lonely often and 48 per cent of people think we are getting lonelier in general. Loneliness does not just affect our mental health: it has been shown that loneliness increases mortality risk by 26%.

To help us record our learning in relation to this objective (1: to define “relationships” and explain why relationships are important to humans), we will take 10 minutes to complete a task. Using *figure 1*, fill in the names of people in your life with who you have a relationship with. Think about which layer or circle of the diagram you want to place their name.

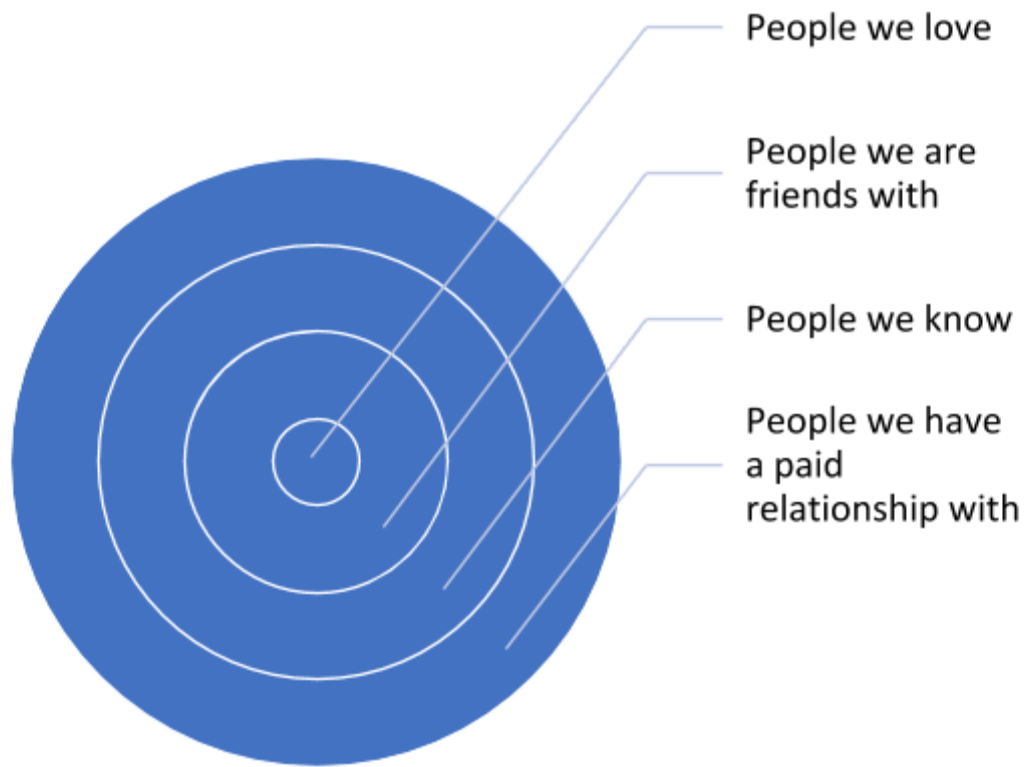


Figure 1

If you could only select 3 -or 4 people on this diagram to maintain a relationship with, who would you choose and why?

Which of your needs do these relationships help to fulfil?

[In a classroom-based setting, offer 5 mins discussion time if anyone wants a chance to feedback or comment upon this task].

We are now going to move onto learning that covers objective 2:

2. Name and describe 2 different relationship theories and apply these to gain a better understanding of your current experience of a relationship.

Think about some of your past and present relationships.

Sometimes people notice that they seem to follow or fall into a pattern in their relationships with other people.

Can you identify any patterns in your relationships with others?

[In a classroom-based setting, offer 5 mins discussion time if anyone wants a chance to feedback or comment upon this question].

For example, some of the patterns of relating and relationships that people have identified include:

- Avoiding forming relationships with people in authority and power.
- Seeking to end a relationship when things move to become more emotionally intimate or when there is talk about feelings.
- Being drawn towards relationships where you can take care or look after someone is difficult.

Because there can be common themes and patterns in people's relationships styles, there are several frameworks that have been developed by psychologists to help describe relationship patterns. Today, we will explore two of these. We will only be taking a brief look at these theories to learn the basics. As we do, you can consider if any of the ideas remind you of any of your own relationships with other people: either past relationships and / or present relationships?

The first framework is called **Bartholomew's two-dimensional model of attachment**. It was created in 1990 by psychologist Kim Bartholomew in 1990². It helps us to understand that our relationships with

² Bartholomew, K. (1990) 'Avoidance of Intimacy: An Attachment Perspective', Journal of Social and Personal Relationships 7: 147-178.

others often fall at some point on a continuum line between the two options of “positive model of self” (where we feel positive, or “ok”, about our self) and “negative model of self” (where we feel negative, or “not ok” about our self). [See figure 2]. Where we place ourselves on this line can impact the relationship we have with others. Where we place ourselves on this line may vary between different relationships. However, there may be a tendency to often place yourself at a certain point on the line. Consider one relationship in your life and consider where you would place yourself on this line when you are with the person you thought of.



Figure 2

Bartholomew’s two-dimensional model also asks us to consider where we would place ourselves on a second line which relates to how we view other people. Do we hold a positive or a negative view of other people? To what extent do we think of others as “ok” or “not okay”?

Repeat the exercise before by considering where you would place yourself on the line shown in figure 3 when you think of the relationship you previously considered:



Figure 3

Again, where we place ourselves on this line will vary from relationship to relationship and from situation to situation. However, you may notice a general tendency to place yourself at a certain point on the line.

The full version of Bartholomew’s two-dimensional model places these two lines together. Figure 4 shows this.

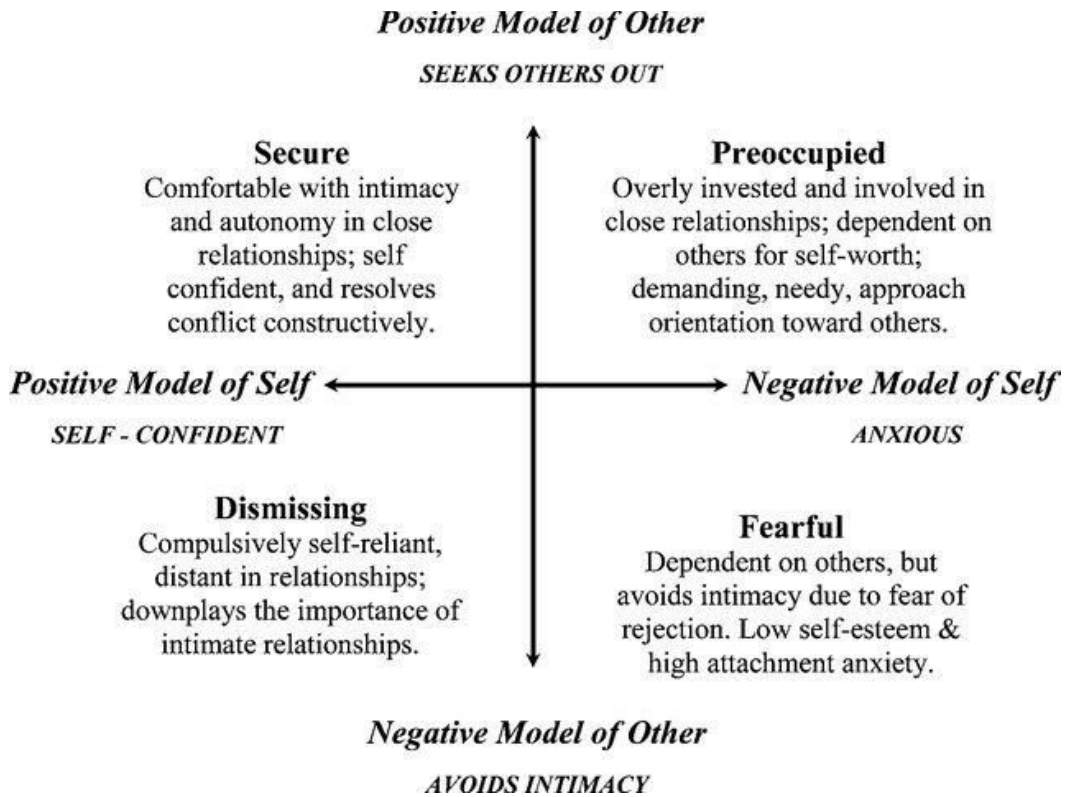


Figure 4

This model helps us to see that relationships feel most satisfying when we can hold a positive model of ourselves as well as a positive model of the other person. Bartholomew’s two-dimensional model calls this position “secure”.

It can be very hard to feel this “security” in relationships if we have had a lot of difficulty with past relationships, especially as a child. If other people did not show us what holding a positive model of self is like, we are less likely to hold that view about ourselves. If others did not show us what holding a positive model of others looked like, we are less likely to hold that view about others. However, we do know that our brains are flexible and adaptable and can change. We can learn to change the way we think about ourselves and about others. We can learn to feel more “ok” about ourselves and more “ok” about other people. This can help us to have greater satisfaction in our relationships with others.

Take a few minutes to have another look at figure 4. Spend 5 – 10 minutes considering the following questions:

1. What questions do you have?
2. What changes would you like to make, if any, about your view of others and / or yourself?
3. Who or what can help you with these changes: identify 3 people or resources that could be helpful?

[In a classroom-based setting, offer 5 mins discussion time if anyone wants a chance to feedback or comment upon this task].

We are also going to look at a second framework that has been developed by psychologists to help describe relationship patterns. This second model is known as the **Knapp Relational Developmental Model**. It was created by Mark Knapp, an expert in communication styles, in 1978³. Knapp’s model has 10 phases in total. 5 phases focus around forming relationships. The other 5 focus on relationships coming apart or dissolving. Not all relationships follow this pattern, of course, and there may be stages that are omitted. Relationships may move between the stages in different orders and at

³ Knapp, M. L. (1978). *Social intercourse: From greeting to goodbye*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

different speeds. However, it can be a useful model for helping us to chart how a relationship is progressing or developing.

Let's look at figure 5 which shows this model:

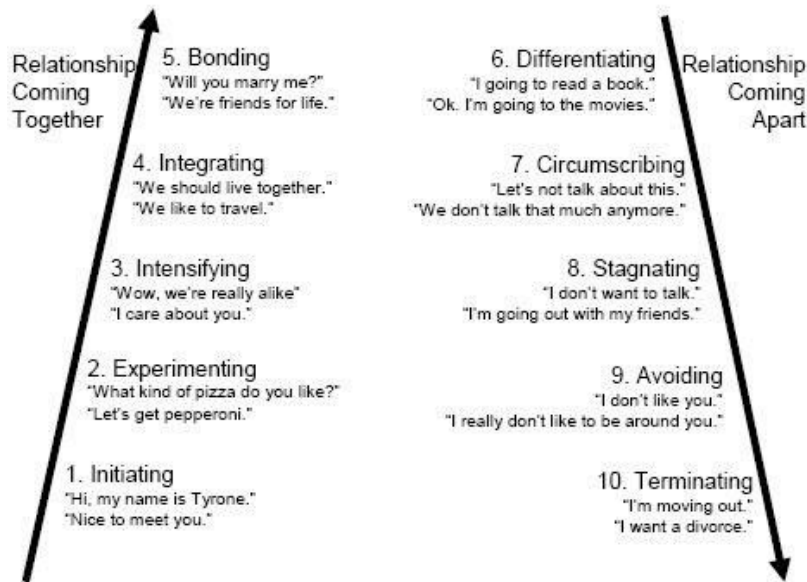


Figure 5

Let's look at each of the stages in turn:

1. Initiation

This stage is very short, sometimes as short as 10-15 seconds. In this stage, interactants are concerned with making favourable impressions on each other. They may use standard greetings or observe each other's appearance or mannerisms.

2. Experimenting

In the next stage, individuals ask questions of each other in order to gain information and decide if they wish to continue the relationship. "Many relationships progress no further than this point"

3. Intensifying

Self-disclosure becomes more common in the intensifying stage. The relationship becomes less formal, the interactants begin to see each other as individuals, and statements are made about the level of commitment each has to the relationship.

4. Integrating

The individuals become a pair in the integrating stage. They begin to do things together and, importantly, others come to see them as a pair. A shared relational identity starts to form in this stage.

5. Bonding

During the bonding stage, a formal, sometimes legal, announcement of the relationship is made. Examples include a marriage, "best friend" ritual, or business partnership agreement. Few relationships reach this level.

6. Differentiating

In this stage, partners begin to stress the "me" instead of the "we." In other words, the individuals begin to assert their independence. They may develop different hobbies or activities. The relationship may continue to dissolve, or this stage may be a warning sign that the couple needs to address their relationship status.

7. Circumscribing

Communication between the couple diminishes during this stage. They tend to avoid certain topics of discussion. Outwardly, the couple appears normal. At this stage, attempts can be made to discuss the relationship and return it to a positive state.

8. Stagnating

During the stagnating stage, the individuals avoid discussing the relationship because they think they know what the other will say. Others begin to take notice that something is wrong.

9. Avoiding

The pair begins to physically separate themselves during the avoiding stage. The two individuals try to reduce the opportunities for discussion.

10. Terminating

This is the final stage of the relationship. Termination may come naturally, such as at the end of the semester when roommates move out, or arbitrarily, through divorce. Termination of the relationship can occur positively or negatively.

This model can be very helpful in that it sees both the coming together and coming apart stages as involved in relationships. Facing difficulty, challenge and distance is therefore understood in this model to be part of a relationship. This model can help us to feel less self-critical when we face challenges or difficulty in our relationships.

Take a few minutes to have another look at figure 5. Spend 5 minutes considering the following questions:

1. What questions do you have?

2. Choose an important relationship in your life: at which stage on Knapp's model do you feel your relationship is at?

3. Do you want to do anything as a result of this learning?

[In a classroom-based setting, offer 5 mins discussion time if anyone wants a chance to feedback or comment upon this task].

So – let's take a moment to review our learning. We have

1. Defined what we mean by "relationships" and explored why relationships are important to humans.
2. We have also named and described 2 different relationship theories and considered how these apply to us and our own relationships.

As we move onto learning objective 3, I want to remind us of the strategies we began our session with today to help us manage difficult feelings that might come up during our training today. How are you doing today? Take a moment to check in with yourself, to ask yourself how you are doing? Recall your own strategies and the strategies others have shared.

Are we ready to move on?

Learning objective 3 is relatively straightforward. If you recall, it is to:

3. Identify several relationship challenges.

I believe we are already going to be experts at this objective – we all have plenty of experience of relationships to draw on: relationships with parents, friends, siblings, partners, children, work colleagues, business partners etc.

By relationship challenges, we mean things that cause difficulty or conflict in a relationship. Take a look at figure 6 and see if you can complete the diagram with other suggestions of things that can challenge a relationship.

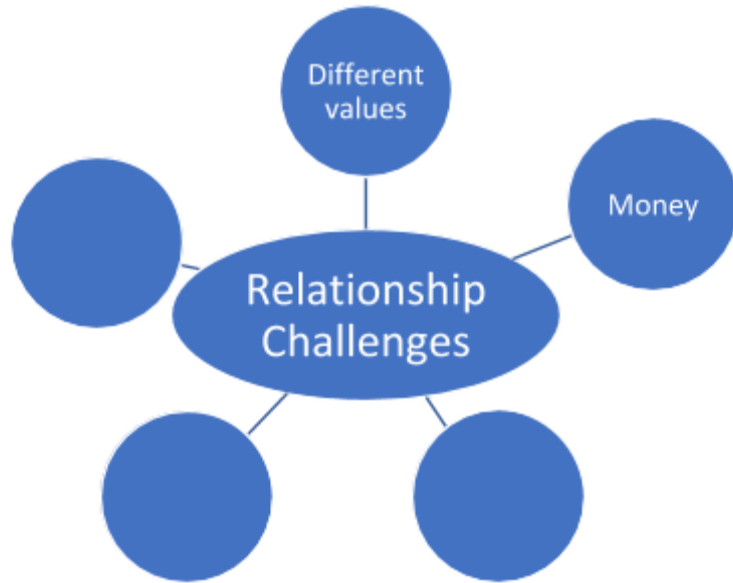


Figure 6

[If in a classroom setting, consider allowing time for participants to do this individually, or whether you'd prefer to invite the group to contribute suggestions which can be written on the whiteboard or flip chart].

Thank you. So, having identified there are plenty of things we can term “relationship challenges”, figure 7 seems appropriate:



Figure 7

The phrase “the straw that broke the camel’s back” reminds us that sometimes seemingly small things can provoke a big reaction. People around us who haven’t seen all the previous many, many small “straws”, may not understand why this challenge has suddenly overwhelmed us and may accuse us of overreacting. However, the many, many previous challenges have left us with reduced capacity to manage new challenges. By themselves, one or two challenges may “pinch” a little but feel manageable. When we face repeated challenges, we may reach “crunch point”. To avoid this, we need to recognise the “pinches” when they happen and take action BEFORE we get to crunch point.

The phrase “pinch, pinch, pinch, crunch” can help here.

Responding to the first couple of pinches by taking some helpful action can avoid the “crunch” reaction.

So – that leads us to learning objectives 4 and 5:

- 4. Identify and apply several strategies for responding to relationship challenges.**
- 5. Consider your own strengths and development points to help enhance your relationships.**

If we are going to reduce the “pinch, pinch, pinch, crunch” in our relationships we need to have strategies to hand that help us to respond when we begin to feel the “pinch, pinch” of relationship challenges. That’s not easy as it requires that we firstly develop awareness of our feelings and responses and that we secondly formulate an appropriate response. Like any skill, both of these require practice if we are to develop the skills required. We are going to look at 4 strategies that draw on psychology and scientific understanding of how our brains and bodies function when we are facing interpersonal difficulty (difficulty between ourselves and another person / people). It is possible to combine more than one strategy at a time.

As we go through each strategy, I will be asking you to consider and write down:

1. What you like about this approach:
2. What you dislike about this approach:
3. Can you identify a relationship you could try this strategy out with:

Strategy 1: Communicate.

When people experience relationship challenges, they may find they withdraw and avoid talking directly about the problem. Alternatively, they may get angry and shout or seek to argue their point with the person they feel challenged by.

Neither of these approaches helps us to communicate well.

Effective communication and decision making relies on us using the frontal cortex part of our brain which sits behind our forehead. This works best when we are calm and regulated. This works best when we are socially engaged and connected with others. Therefore, finding ways to stay calm and

communicate about the relationship challenge that supports us in allowing our frontal cortex to think about and identify helpful responses to the challenge.

Some tips that can help us to communicate calmly rather than avoiding or angrily reacting include:

- Take some deep breaths before you speak.
- Schedule a time and place to talk through the challenge with the person you want to talk to.
- If you suspect you might get angry and begin shouting, consider meeting in a park, café or other public area where you are less likely to shout.
- Try writing down bullet points about what you wish to say to the person to help you plan the essential things you wish to say.
- Consider using “I” statements – this helps to make what you want to say less intimidating: instead of “you always put the kids before me”, saying “I’d like you to spend time with me alone, as I feel left out when you only spend time with the kids” can sound less accusatory yet allows you to state how you feel about the challenge.
- Remember communication is a two-way thing: listen as well as speak. Show you are listening.

So – take 5 minutes to reflect upon this strategy of COMMUNICATE. Answer the following questions to help you structure your thinking:

1. What you like about this approach:
2. What you dislike about this approach:
3. Can you identify a relationship you could try this strategy out with?

Strategy 2: Focus on what you CAN influence.

When we feel the “crunch” of the “pinch, pinch, pinch, crunch” then we often feel out of control and overwhelmed by things. To avoid getting to the crunch, it can be helpful to take stock of the pinches and to ask ourselves what is in our power to change and influence, and what actually lies outside of our

control? Awareness of the differences here can then help us to just focus on what we can influence and can help us to take the next step to responding to the “pinch”. This can help us gain perspective on a situation that has been causing us to feel stressed or anxious. This concept of influence was expressed by Stephen Covey in his book, “7 Habits of Highly Effective People”⁴.

Covey explains that it’s helpful to think of two circles: a circle of influence or control, which is surrounded by a wider circle: a circle of concern (figure 8). We

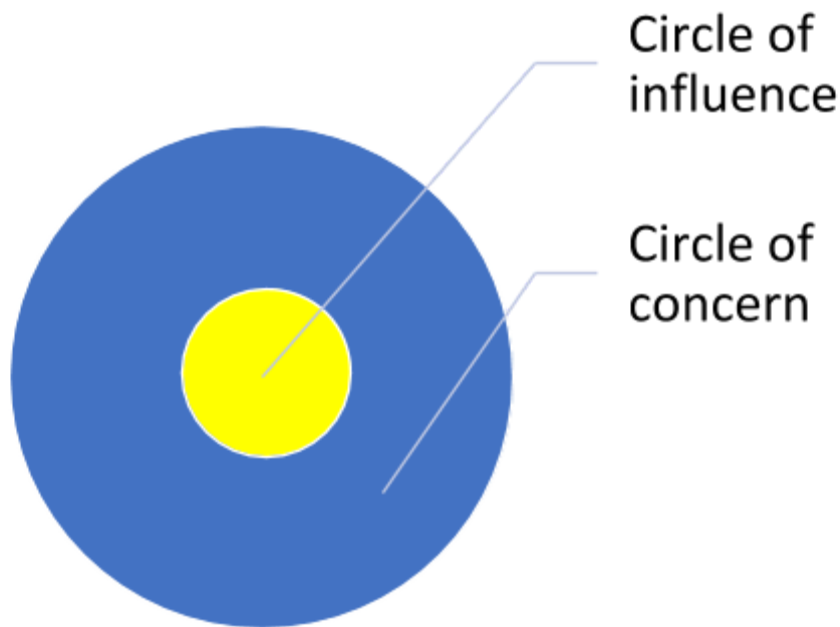


Figure 8.

Things in our circle of influence will vary depending on our job, family responsibilities etc. However, they are likely to include what we say, how we behave and what we think. The circle of concern includes things we may wish we could change and perhaps feel concerned about but cannot alter. They include the weather, natural disasters and economic downturns, what other people think of us and what other people say and do.

⁴ Covey, Stephen R. The **7 Habits** Of Highly Effective People: Restoring The Character Ethic. New York : Free Press, 2004. Print.

Accepting the things we cannot change is a powerful way to restore our energy and focus towards the things we can influence and control. This frees us from worry about things we have no control and influence over. This model can help us to adopt a mindset that allows us to be less bothered and stressed by the things we cannot influence or control. Drawing out the circles and filling them in could be something we do with another person: someone we are in a relationship with, so we can better communicate our thoughts with them and better understand their thoughts too.

So – take 5 minutes to reflect upon this strategy of **Focus on what you CAN influence**. Answer the following questions to help you structure your thinking:

1. What you like about this approach:
2. What you dislike about this approach:
3. Can you identify a relationship you could try this strategy out with?

Strategy 3: Managing Criticism:

Being criticised, or feeling like we are being judged, is a common challenge within relationships. When someone offers us criticism or feedback, or even if we just sense they may be thinking this about us, we may feel anxious and afraid, as if we are facing an attack. That can prompt us to either become defensive and attacking in our behaviour and speech (the “fight” response) or seek to avoid the person, feeling like we want to curl up and hide (the “flight” response).

One way of responding to the anxiety that can result from perceived or actual criticism is to be clear in your own mind that you are “ok”. Do you remember Bartholomew’s two-dimensional model? That included the possibility that we have a positive model of ourselves: to see ourselves as “ok”, rather than “not ok”. If we believe we are “ok”, then our work or actions in a given moment does not define us. Someone saying (or even thinking) that my work is not good enough does not equal “I am not good enough”. Working to cultivate a sense that “I am ok” can be a very helpful strategy for managing criticism.

Another tip for managing criticism to reframe your response so you approach criticism with curiosity? Is there anything valuable or helpful to you in what they say? If so, stand tall as you commit to taking that help on board. If not, stand tall as you remember that your worth is not defined by other people's judgement. It is your own judgement of you that is important to you.

So – take 5 minutes to reflect upon this strategy of **Managing Criticism**. Answer the following questions to help you structure your thinking:

1. What you like about this approach:
2. What you dislike about this approach:
3. Can you identify a relationship you could try this strategy out with?

Strategy 4: Breathe through Challenge:

Breathing is our basic support system. In times of challenges and difficulty, simply focusing on breathing can restore a sense of inner capability and calm. This can help our frontal cortex to continue to work effectively and staying calm can also help us to communicate and stay connected. It can help us to better focus on what is happening in this relationship, right now, rather than allow past memories or hurt and anger from previous relationships to contaminate this one.

When we experience challenge, our autonomic nervous system prepares the body for fight or flight in response to the fear or threat we face. Our heart rate increases, muscles tense and our digestion slows. Most aspects of our nervous system cannot be consciously controlled. Breathing is unique in that, through conscious breathing, you can regulate your nervous system.

There are many different breathing exercises you can practice. Here are two possible options which may support you when you face a relationship challenge:

Slow down: when we are relaxed, our breathing slows down. By slowing down your breathing, you can affect other bodily systems so that heart rate decreases.

- Find a comfortable sitting position, and place your feet flat on the ground.
- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.

- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5. You may not be able to reach 5 at first.
- Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from 1 to 5 again, if you find this helpful.
- Keep doing this for 3 to 5 minutes.

Square Breathing: This technique requires us to concentrate on our breathing and can bring a greater sense of balance and harmony.

- Begin by slowly exhaling all of your air out.
- Then, gently inhale through your nose to a slow count of 4.
- Hold at the top of the breath for a count of 4.
- Then gently exhale through your mouth for a count of 4.
- At the bottom of the breath, pause and hold for the count of 4.

So – take 5 minutes to reflect upon this strategy of **Breathe through Challenge**. Answer the following questions to help you structure your thinking:

1. What you like about this approach:
2. What you dislike about this approach:
3. Can you identify a relationship you could try this strategy out with?

So, that brings us towards the end of the learning for this module. We have covered a lot of ground. We have two tasks to consolidate what we have learnt today, and I have some resources to share with you that can help you take some further steps in learning about Relationship Development. Let's just remind ourselves of the learning outcomes we have covered:

We said that by the end of the session, you should be able to:

1. Define “relationships” and explain why relationships are important to humans.

2. Name and describe 2 different relationship development theories and apply these to gain a better understanding of your current experience of a relationship.
3. Identify several relationship challenges.
4. Identify and apply several strategies for responding to relationship challenges.
5. Consider your own strengths and development points to help enhance your relationships.

So, here is the first of the two final tasks for today. I will give us 10 minutes to work on this. I am going to share with you a letter written by “Tony”, describing some relationship challenges they face. I want you to imagine you are friends with Tony and jot a response down that you’d like to give Tony. Your reply should make use of some of the learning and ideas you’ve gained from today’s session.

Hi,

I wanted your advice or wisdom. My colleague at work is driving me nuts at the moment. No matter what I do, it's never good enough and they keep on making sly comments criticising me, then laugh, as if it's just a joke. I work really hard and I get angry with these comments. I’ve kept ignoring it up till now, and I try to keep my distance, but I am getting more and more wound up. I feel bad enough about myself without these sorts of things being said. I’m worried I’m going to lose my cool one day. I think that if I just try to laugh it off, they might just come to see me as ok and change how they feel about me. Have you got any advice or wisdom you can share with me that might help me out?

Thanks

Tony.

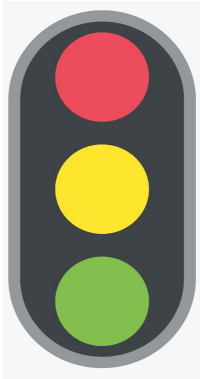
[Allow participants 10 mins to complete their response. Option to share their response with the group, time allowing].

I mentioned I am going to share some resources with you, that some of you may be interested in following up on. We looked at two frameworks developed by Bartholomew and also Knapp to help describe relationship patterns. There are a number of assessment tools that psychologists have developed to help us gain a better picture about the challenges and responses we tend to take within relationships.

One of these is a very simple measure that asks you to identify just 1 response from a list of 10 options. This helps to identify to what extent a family feels in crisis. This can be helpful in identifying when a family feels at a “crunch” point and may help people to be confident about seeking support. We call that measure the Brief Family Distress Scale. I have copies of that here if you’d like one (can be accessed at <https://www.midss.org/content/brief-family-distress-scale>)

And another resource I have for you is the Relationship Assessment Scale. This is a 7-item questionnaire designed to measure an individual's satisfaction with their romantic or intimate relationship. The higher the score, the more satisfied a person feels about their relationship. I have copies of that here if you’d like one (can be accessed at <https://www.midss.org/relationship-assessment-scale-ras>)

So, finally, using a simple traffic light system, I'd like you to evaluate your own learning today. For each objective, you are going to decide whether you feel you are:



RED / STOP	You have made no progress in learning this and are still at a "standstill."
AMBER	You have some understanding but aren't quite ready to apply it yet.
GREEN / GO	You have a good grasp of this objective and are ready to go and apply this learning in the real world.

1. Define "relationships" and explain why relationships are important to humans.

RED **AMBER** **GREEN**

2. Name and describe 2 different relationship development theories and apply these to gain a better understanding of your current experience of a relationship.

RED **AMBER** **GREEN**

3. Identify several relationship challenges.

RED **AMBER** **GREEN**

4. Identify and apply several strategies for responding to relationship challenges.

RED AMBER GREEN

5. Consider your own strengths and development points to help enhance your relationships

RED AMBER GREEN

What do you want to do as a result of your learning today?

Thank you to everyone for your engagement and participation in the session. I hope you have learnt some useful ideas that can be applied in your daily life.