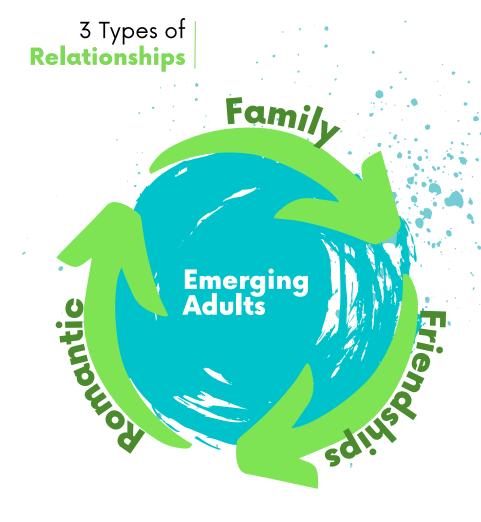
Healthy relationships in emerging adults are vital for positive development, including their mental health. Meaningful connections and healthy relationships can foster a sense of security and safety in the world and put young people in a better position to ask for help when necessary. As a professional, you have an important role in helping emerging adults examine if their relationships are healthy.

Relationships & Mental Health

Aim to help them build "stamina for difference," or engaging people different from themselves. This term replaces the typical use of "tolerance" (in word and mindset) with "stamina," putting the responsibility on each of us to move beyond simply tolerating others.

Positive Youth Development

- What do youth WANT their relationships to look like, not merely what to avoid.
- Resilience is built through stressful situations with the support of our communities, schools, families, and friends.
- Normalize the experience of difficult interpersonal situations.
- Focus on helping youth keep themselves safe in potentially dangerous situations.



The following pages provide examples of healthy relationships between emerging adults and their family, friends, and romantic partner(s). Look at these markers as fluid between each type of relationship - they can cross over. Help teach emerging adults to create a mental checklist to self-evaluate their relationships.

Family

Markers of healthy family relationships include:

Guidelines

- Keep in mind that the absence of conflict
 is not necessarily healthy good
 disagreements and tough conversations are
 the markers of families that welcome
 difference ("stamina for difference").
- Healthy conversations involve feeling safe
 to engage in open communication so that
 they are not afraid of getting into trouble
 for what they say.
- Have a safe haven and allow a space for the young person to "be a mess" and to "not be okay."
- It is vital to have clear rules and responsibilities for parents/caregivers and youth, and that boundaries are established and followed.
- A family's religion, ethnicity, race and culture likely shape family norms. For example, some cultures prioritize interdependence vs. independence, multigenerational homes, and elder respect.

Shared positive experiences

Differences welcomed

Interests supported

Independence encouraged

Open communication

Clear, age-appropriate expectations

Friendships

Markers of healthy friendships include:



Mutual Effort

Honest communication

Working through conflict

Support

Guidelines

- Intentional efforts to repair after hurt feelings and tough conversations
- Celebrate
 achievements and
 successes
- Support each other through hardships and struggles
- Prioritize spending time together, having fun, and nurturing the relationship
- Encourage good choices and point out when our actions may be bad for us

Romantic

Markers of healthy romantic relationships include:

Guidelines

- Spend **time** together.
- Share thoughts, feelings, and validate each other.
- Be supportive and caring:
 - "I'm here for you."
 - "You can be real with me."
- Share physical closeness and comfort.
- Sexual elements should be healthy, such as physical intimacy.
- Establish clear and respectful boundaries that allow everyone to feel safe, secure, and at ease, both mentally and physically.

