

PHC

Work Relationships & Good Mental Health



Relationships are one of the most important aspects of our lives. People who are more socially connected to family, friends, or their community are happier, physically healthier and live longer, with fewer mental health problems than people who are less well connected.

The journal *Personality and Social Psychology Review* reports that people who feel more camaraderie with their work colleagues, and more connection to the company itself, have better health and happiness and are less likely to burn out. Since we spend a good chunk of our lives at work, or thinking about work, it's not surprising that our relationships there would be strongly linked to our health.

While much of our working environment is determined by others, individually we can take steps that will help to protect and enhance our mental health and wellbeing.



Five Steps to Building Good Relationships at Work:

- Trust - If you trust the people you work with, you can be open and honest in your thoughts and actions, and you don't have to waste time and energy "watching your back."
- Mutual Respect - When you respect the people who you work with, you value their input and ideas, and they value yours. Working together, you can develop solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity.
- Mindfulness – This means taking responsibility for your words and actions. Those who are mindful are careful and attend to what they say, and they don't let their own negative emotions impact the people around them.
- Welcoming Diversity – People with good relationships not only accept diverse people and opinions, but they welcome them. For instance, when your friends and colleagues offer different opinions from yours, you take the time to consider what they have to say, and factor their insights into your decision-making.
- Open Communication – We communicate all day, whether we're sending emails and IMs, or meeting face to face. The better and more effectively you communicate with those around you, the richer your relationships will be. All good relationships depend on open, honest communication. For example; consider your choice of words carefully when crafting your email messages. Avoid writing impulse emails in the heat of the moment if you're unhappy or angry. Pause a moment, cool down and review what you have written so it sounds more objective.



We should try to build and maintain good working relationships with everyone, there are certain relationships that deserve extra attention.

- Clients and customers are a group who deserve extra attention. Think of the last time you had to deal with an unhappy customer; it was probably challenging and draining. Although you may not be able to keep everyone happy 100 percent of the time, maintaining honest, trusting relationships with your customers can help you to ensure that if things do go wrong, damage is kept to a minimum.



Go the Extra Mile

In a workplace environment, doing something special for your colleagues or peers may not require a lot of effort. It could be something small like running an errand, answering the phone or even pulling out a file from the library for your colleague. Simple actions will help your colleagues see you positively and appreciate who you are.

Say thank you: Find ways to demonstrate your appreciation and gratitude to your colleagues. Simply saying, “Thank you!” can go a long way to building positive relationships.

For more information about [Work Relationships and Good Mental Health](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing), please visit:
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