

Life Skills Development/Module Two/ Relationships

Unit 2: Human Relationships

Introduction

In this unit we shall deal with human relationships. Human relationships refers to how you feel and act towards others and they towards you. The interaction of one person with another, influences each other's behaviour. The quality of the interpersonal relationships is extremely important for the success, failure, happiness, unhappiness and the future life of a person. Good relationships are important wherever you are, whatever job you are doing and whatever people you meet or have to deal with. It is therefore important to look at interpersonal relationships between parents, children and other members of family, acquaintances, friends, opposite sex, teachers, children, members of religious-, cultural-, and other groups (Engelbrecht, et al, 1989).



Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, learners should be able to:

- Discuss the different types of relationships.
- Use skills and display values that improve relationships in family, groups, and community.
- Identify ways in dealing with peer group pressure.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the coping skills associated with the adult responsibilities of child bearing, child rearing and effective parenting practices.
- Demonstrate skills in building a relationship.
- Demonstrate responsibility in a relationship.
- Develop a healthy and balanced personality.



Definitions

- Responsibility: is being answerable/accountable to someone for something; it is a duty.
- Parens patriae: refers to the public policy power of the state to usurp the rights of the natural parent, legal guardian or informal caregiver, and to act as the parent of any child or individual who is in need of protection (i.e. if the child's caregiver is exceedingly violent or dangerous).

Types of Relationships

Family Relationships

Let's start with your relationship with your family. You need to have a healthy relationship with your family, your parents, your siblings and other members of the family. You accept them as they are and they accept you with your shortcomings (mistakes). Their relationship towards you should be sincere and genuine.

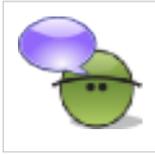
Your relationships with your family will lay a foundation for your relationships outside your family circle: at your school, at university, in your job and in your community.

If you respect members of your family, you are sure to be courteous to them and have good manners. You will take responsibility of certain tasks. You will cooperate with the rest of the family to make things easier for everybody. Perhaps you need to think about your relationships with your brothers and sisters.



Reflection

Why is it necessary to have a healthy relationship with your brothers and sisters? Give five reasons.



Feedback: After you have done your reflection, you might be interested to know what others could have listed. Your reasons may vary from others, because you know what is relevant to you. Click [HERE](#) to read what others may have listed.



Activity

Identify conflicts that arise in family relationships.



Feedback: The list of possible conflicts may not have been exhausted, however, all answers might be correct depending on your circumstances. Click [HERE](#) to find possible conflicts in other people's families.

Relationships with Acquaintances and Friends

Any discussion on human relationships will need to consider the different people or group of people that constitute this relationship. With the world becoming more and more complex, the web of relationships also becomes more complex.

Acquaintances are people we know or may not know by name, but we have spoken to and have seen on a regular basis. Friends are people we know and interact closely with; people we trust and feel for. We need to make a distinction with the term strangers who are people we do not know. However, our relationships with these different groups differs accordingly. For example, some relationships are voluntary i.e. we can choose them, like friends and acquaintances, but there are others like parents and children which cannot be decided by those concerned.

Our relationships with friends are by choice. We choose each other and the relationships is of equals. These relationships are based on mutual respect, possibly mutual interests, and mutual influence which can be either good or bad. It is therefore very important to choose the right friends, because you will be known by the friends you choose.

People that we do not know well or are strangers, we need to be careful with them. Take time to know them better before we commit ourselves to strange relationships. It is therefore advisable to date a person before you agree to have a sexual relationships or deciding on the life partner.



Reflection

- Reflect on the types of people you come across in our everyday life (at school, work place, public places like bus station, bank, social gatherings) and place them in the different groups and reflect on the kind of relationships you have with them.



Feedback: You must be in a position to differentiate the different relationships you have experienced.

Dealing with Peer Group Pressure

During adolescence and the youth period, relationships become very increasingly important. Young people who have developed healthy, meaningful and enduring relationships are less likely to bow to peer pressure or engage in problematic sexual behaviour. Relationships like friendship bring status, companionship, support, a sense of acceptance, belonging and identity and the opportunity of sharing among young people of the same age. When a young person does not have friends, s/he is especially vulnerable to risk-taking behaviour.

Learners should know that some relationships can be problematic and increase a likelihood of taking drugs, engaging in criminal behaviour and engaging in early sexual behaviour. Sometimes learners get into bad relationships if those group give them a sense of excitement, belonging and acceptance though that does not get them anywhere. These learners usually have low self-esteem and are unable to resist peer pressure.

If you think you need to make and keep positive relationships, you need to develop an understanding what your needs are, what your identity is, you need to feel good about yourself and have skills to communicate and express your feelings effectively.



Self Assessment

Do you think you have what it takes to resist peer pressure? List your good points that can maintain good relationships.



Feedback: To get more information on how to raise your self-esteem, and communicate effectively, read more on Relationships Skills.

Sexual Relationships and Marriage

In this section we are going to focus on the importance of sexual relationships and choosing a life partner for marriage. We all know that we need relationships. Everyone of us need a companion at some point in our lives.

With the onset of puberty and the normal physiological changes that takes place, it is very normal for adolescents to have strong feelings of sexual desires, get attracted to the opposite sex, and fall in love. They then need to be able to express their sexual feelings. It is therefore at adolescent phase that many young people will start dating and having romantic relationships. At this stage, emotions, feelings and sexual desires are very normal, however, adolescents often find it difficult to practise self-control. What is really important for us to understand at this point is how to handle those emotions, feelings and desires in a meaningful way.

The sexual relationships with males and females start with dating. Dating is one of the primitive relationship both girls/boys, men and women engage in. We therefore, need to discuss a little more about dating and choosing a life partner. This will help us in developing skills of how to engage in a healthy and a safe opposite sex relationship.

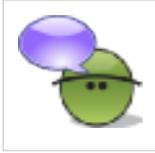
Dating

Dating is a very important step in building relationships. This phenomenon differs in different cultures and beliefs. Some people date by their choice and some get their dates arranged or forced. Also the different backgrounds makes people to think of dating in different ways. Commonly, dating is counted as a process to build a relationship. The people concerned have mutual rights to stop dating or continue as their feelings and circumstances dictates. The dangers lies in the fact of dating strangers. It is important to considers the choice of dating, in terms of time, readiness and safety. It is very important to consider the practical aspects of dating, the good and the bad things that may happen, how to stop the relationship (to break away) and the consequences of your choices. It is therefore important to have a mutual agreement on the kind of dating you both choose. To reflect more on mutual considerations, please do the next activity.



Reflection

Think and list things that need to be considered and mutually agreed on for a healthy relationship during a dating period.



Feedback: Things to be considered could include:

- mutual respect
- mutual loyalty
- mutual helpfulness
- mutual understanding
- mutual interests
- mutual unselfishness
- mutual appreciation of friendship
- mutual values

Choosing a Life Partner

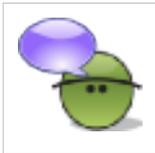
Choosing a life partner is even more of a very big decision in life. We have very important decisions to make every day of our lives. This process is very important in our lives. A wrong choice of a life partner can lead to a life long unhappiness. In order to make well thought-out decisions as well as informed decisions, we need to tap on our skills on decision making processes. There are good points to read on decision making skills. Click [HERE](#) to read those points.

After reading those points, you now realise how the decisions you make influence the rest of your life. You should carry the responsibility of your choice for a date or for a life partner and not blame others. To reflect more on choosing a date or a life partner, please do the next activity.



Activity

- List the essential qualities and values that you expect in a partner in order to build a good relationship.



Feedback: People may have different criteria to choose a date or a life partner for marriage. Click on the Criteria for Choosing a Life Partner. This list may not be comprehensive, but it may give you some hints.

Parenting



Parenthood

What is Parenting?

Parenting is the process of raising and educating a child from conception until adulthood. This is usually done in a child's family by the mother and father (i.e. the biological parents). Where parents are unable or unwilling to provide this care, it is usually taken on by close relatives (including older siblings) and grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents, godparents, or institutions (such as group homes or orphanages). *Parens patriae* refers to the public policy power of the state to usurp the rights of the natural parent, legal guardian or

informal caregiver, and to act as the parent of any child or individual who is in need of protection (i.e. if the child's caregiver is exceedingly violent or dangerous).

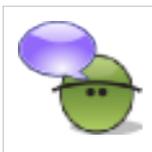
What makes a person a good parent?

Being a good parent means creating a loving, safe environment for your children as they grow from baby to toddler, right through to the teenage years. You'll need different skills for each stage, but at all times your child will depend on you. You'll become the expert on your child and on what they need to grow into happy, healthy adults. Loving your child, with no strings attached, is the most important thing you can do. But you'll also have to make a huge number of decisions about the best way to bring up your child. Of course this responsibility brings joy and excitement - but it can be overwhelming, frustrating or even boring at times. Most people manage these emotional and practical challenges with a mixture of love, help from relatives and friends, good advice, common sense, and luck.



Self Assessment

Question: Can poor parenting lead to psychiatric disorders in children?



Feedback: Answer: Yes, say investigators from Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. In an 18-year-long study of nearly 600 families, they found that kids who grew up with neglectful or abusive parents were significantly more likely to have mental problems later in life, regardless of whether there was a history of mental disease in their immediate family.

Researchers began the study in 1975 when they identified 593 families in two New York counties who were taking part in the Children in the Community Study. The average age of the children at the time was 6 years old. Maladaptive parental behaviour — defined by factors such as inconsistent enforcement of rules, loud arguments between parents, difficulty controlling anger at the child, low educational expectations, verbal abuse, etc. — was assessed via psychosocial and psychiatric interviews at the beginning of the study and then again in 1983, 1985-1986, and 1991-1993.

Results showed that most of the kids who experienced high levels of maladaptive parenting during childhood suffered from psychiatric disorders in adolescence or early adulthood. The researchers also found higher levels of maladaptive parenting among parents with psychiatric disorders. Children with parents who had psychiatric

disorders, but were still good parents fared no worse than those with parents who exhibited neither signs of mental illness nor poor parenting skills.

Relationships with Social Groups: Religion, Cultural, Political, etc.

Human relationships will also involve people from different religious, political and cultural backgrounds. Though the people have different affiliations, the degree of relationship varies. We need to accept the differences and respect people for what they are i.e. the faith they hold to, the political ideology they espouse, and the cultural values they uphold.

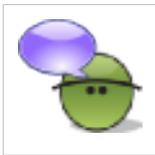
There are a number of advantages in a country which is multi-racial and where there is a good relationship between the different social groups. The interaction between the different groups will lead to an enrichment of the people on the social, political and cultural levels. The wealth of knowledge and expertise will make the society progress.

There may also be problems in a country where there are people of different backgrounds. As they do not know each other well, there may be misunderstandings leading to prejudice and even conflict at times. Very often prejudice against a group tints our view of each member of that group and human relationships suffers. Then the country's progress also suffers.



Reflection

- List the major religious groups in your country.
- List the major political groups and define their roles in your society.
- What would be the major differences between cultural and religious groups?
- How can relationships be improved between different social groups in a country?



Feedback: Depending on your country's multi-racial status, you may have realized that there is some advantages and disadvantages in different social groups. Your answer therefore would depend on your context.

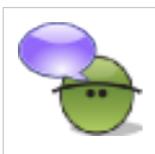
Building Relationships

Relationship building is considered a key youth development practice and critical for promoting young people's healthy development and learning. It involves the development of caring, supportive relationships between adults and young people, and among young people and their peers. Through experiencing different relationships, the young people build knowledge, gain emotional and practical support from adults and peers, and experience guidance from adults. Building relationship requires the building of trust, being non-judgemental, acceptance of self and others as they are. Good relationships are so important that two people will need to respect each other.



Reflection

Think of the different relationships you have. Are you having healthy relationships with your parents, siblings, other family members, friends, etc. List the things that you would do to make your relationships healthier.



Feedback: To get feedback on your reflection click on the following link [Characteristics that help make a relationship healthy and happy](#)

Responsibility in Relationships

In order to build a healthy relationship, one needs to feel responsible in a relationship. It is very important to take a look at what a healthy relationship require. A healthy relationship demand a responsible person with a healthy personality. *Personality* is the distinctive traits and characteristics that makes a person unique. Responsibility in a relationship is very important in everyday of our lives. Despite factors such as peers pressure, influence from magazines, movies, television, and books, we still remain with personal responsibility in a relationships. Though a healthy personality does not guarantee our success and hapiness, it enable us to cope with disappointment in our lives than a person with a sick personality.

In most instances, the healthier our personality is, the better our personal relationship will be with others. As individuals, we must learn to accept and respect ourself before we accept and respect others in our life. Certain qualities of an individual must be taken into consideration to discuss responsibility in a relationship. These includes sincerity, friendliness, self-discipline, and self confidence. You might be interested to develop a healthy personality. You therefore need to look at the following reflective activity and do a self-analysis.



Reflection

This is a Self Analysis Table on a Healthy Personality. Fill in the table below, and decide what you are going to do to develop one. Decide whether you are willing to do what it takes to acquire a healthy personality.

Characteristics	TRUE	FALSE
I am aware what a healthy personality is.		
I want a healthy personality.		
I am willing to develop a healthy personality.		
I will do whatever it takes to develop a healthy personality.		
It is important for me to have a healthy personality.		
My values plays an important role in improving my personality.		
My healthy personality will help me cope with life effectively.		



Feedback: After you have done your self analysis, the feedback here on Principles of Good Human Relationships may not give you any recipe of things you need to make your personality healthier, but rather the qualities that people with good relationships have.



Assignment

This assignment gives you an opportunity to explore your beliefs and practice on your skills that underpin healthy relationships. Make a chart with two blocks to list what is a healthy relationship and what is an unhealthy relationship.



Feedback: After you have done your assignment and may be you have consulted your friends on their beliefs and skills about healthy relationships, you can click on this table of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Aspects to compare with your answer.



Summary

In this unit you learned about:

- Different types of relationships
- Behaving appropriately with family, friends and peers
- Dealing with peer pressure
- Choosing a date and a life partner
- Parenting practices
- Building relationships in a responsible way
- Developing a healthy personality



Assessment

1. What skills do you think a person needs in order to be able to make and keep friends?
2. Think about your own relationships. What prevented you from making friends? What made it easy for you to make friends?
3. What are the most important things in a sexual relationship? List at least five points.

References

Skills Development/Module Two/Human Sexuality <http://www.wikieducator.org/images/c/ca/Previous.png> ^[1] |
Skills Development/Module Two/Gender and Sex Roles <http://www.wikieducator.org/images/c/c4/Next.png> ^[1]

References

[1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life>

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