

Maintaining Positive Relationships

Welcome to maintaining positive relationships. My name is Nelly and I am one of your moderators today. Lacey Birch is our guest speaker. She started with Magellan in 2019 and is a senior EAP consultant for our drug-free workplace program. She is a licensed certified counselor and addiction specialist. She has taught psychology in Belleville, Illinois. She also provided patient care to people and is currently in private practice therapist specializing in the area of substance use cop mood and personality disorder. I want to turn it over to you Lacey.

Hello everyone. Thank you for the intro. Good afternoon and good morning. I hope everybody's having a good day midway through the week. That is positive. Today we are going to talk about maintaining positive relationships which I think right now is crucial. I'm sure a lot of everyone has seen a lot of activity in the world or there is some in your workplace coming from clients or customers or internally. Today were going to talk about how I can focus on the positive and get more out of those relationships. Our objectives today, talking what healthy relationships look like, the components of maintaining positive relationships and the importance of those relationships at work and steps to deal conflicts. Sometimes people think a good relationship or healthy relationship doesn't have conflict. That's not necessarily true, it's how you deal with the conflict to determine how healthy or positive the relationship really is. Starting with what a healthy relationship looks like. As a therapist and in private practice in working with personality disorders in particular I think I am often called on to look at and talk about what is a healthy relationship look like, am I in a healthy relationship, how to get a relationship back on track that has gotten off-track and I think as much as it's important to identify and determine if it's viable, I think it's just as important to learn when they relationship is going well pick some people grew up in conflict environments and are maybe acting out chronically toxic patterns really don't even realize when something is going well. So taking the time to point out that it doesn't have to be perfect to be positive or normal to get a good idea to get the baseline. With all of that in mind we will go to some different things that healthy relationships have in common. These things are characteristics of any type of relationship. Thinks it can be looked at in a positive or healthy relationship. The first thing is trust. Obviously I'm sure everyone has heard trust is arguably the most important relationship characteristic. Without trust you don't have a solid foundation to build on and you are constantly unsure if a person is going to come through for you or if there meaning what they are saying. A big part of being a person of your word and it can be difficult for some people. If you tell your kid were going to the zoo today then you need to go to the zoo. It works the semi with a negative situation. I told you if you didn't do this we are not going to do that pick you have to be a person of your word either way and that is how someone builds trust and they know you can be counted on to meet you or meet them where they are at. They are saying there is a lot of feedback. The next part of that is communication. Communicating honestly and respectfully especially about things that are difficult and I think you have to learn how to do that. Some people really don't have the skills. A lot of us have learned to keep things uncomfortable under the surface for the sake of everyone getting along. People pleasing, trying to make sure challenges don't escalate into a full out war so sometimes we don't bring anything up because of the fear of that can vacation going poorly. Working on speaking up we need to and we can cut building the tendencies to not lash out and to not keep things under the surface that need to be dealt with or addressed. Finding our voices and making sure we are bringing up subjects that need to be brought up. The next piece is patients. Known as perfectly patient all the time. Different factors can affect our level pick anybody who's a parent knows someday she feel like you are a great parent and you have gentle parenting down in the next day your sleep was rough stressed about work for you have some health problems going on in your much more easily agitated today. I think extending others a basic common denominator of

patience allows for peace, flexibility and supporting the other person. I try to remember that I don't know what kind of day that other person is having or what they have going on outside of this interaction pick reminding yourself sometimes that I would want to be shown the patience and grace when I'm having a tough day. Tried to keep that in mind to extend that to people around me. That can help us take a breath and they beat before we react. Empathy, I think people get confused about sympathy and empathy. Empathy is the ability to step into someone else's shoes and really try to understand the perspective. Whether this is an parenting or being a good neighbor or just merging on the highway. Think if you can truly put forth the effort to try to sound understand semis perspective especially if you disagree with it because you don't know, sometimes you don't know where they're coming from or what lens they are looking for and trying to have empathy and see it from their perspective can really help you dive in and build the foundation. Flexibility. Think flexibility is important also. Relationships get compromised, the key component, it's not always going to be 50-50 but making sure we are all doing our best to bed and not break and showing flexibility in decision-making and day-to-day life, it's not just one person pending all the time. That can get coccyx toxic overtime. You wanted to be as balanced as it can be everybody is giving and everybody is taking. I refer to that as the Rose and the Gardner. Nobody wants to be the gardener all the time and everybody deserves to be the Rose some of the time. We have to make sure we are being flexible and coming from a place of everybody wins. Appreciation is always a good one. Research shows the importance of gratitude within the relationship it makes you feel happy and more secure. The more refill the gratitude the more we feel appreciated for who we are in relationships and what we are bringing to the table. And also improves the overall well-being of the relationship. You have you, the other person and something in the middle to the relationship is its own organism, its own entity. The more you appreciate with the bringing to your life, the better that relationship is going to feel. Sometimes we think that person might not care if we mention it or not but that can go a long way in combating negative feelings that people might feel. Respect, and healthy relationships people value each other's time and opinions just like they value their own and protect each other's privacy and don't use each other as the butt of the joke all the time or like hired help. A lot of people might recognize if you felt with your partner that I'm just the hired help, I'm Rosie the robot and I don't feel like I'm being respected as an individual member of this relationship. When respect erodes its long and painstaking to build it back. A couples therapist who has put out a lot of books and done a lot of research, John, he says it's one of the four Horsemen when resentment starts to build and respect erodes it's very hard to come back from that. Once it feels disrespectful and resentful it's hard to repair that bridge. We've also got reciprocity. This I think is in any relationship. I think some know somebody who keeps score, -for-tat. I will slow down a little bit. I do speak quite fast. I am a fast talker. Not keeping tally, not doing -for-tat. You picked me up at the airport last week so you owe me a favor I bought lunch so now you owe me dinner, in a healthy relationship that will ebb and flow organically so making sure the respect feeling fades into the background and you get to the equilibrium. That doesn't mean it's always 50-50 but sometimes you're giving 80, sometimes you giving 20 and vice versa. Everybody kind of feels like they are on an equal playing field. Healthy conflict resolution. We'll talk about that more in depth if we get to the end. The way people argue or don't can predict a lot about your relationships success. People who hide that they are upset or don't bring things to the forefront or don't express their emotions and work to resolve them, sometimes that is worse than having that difficult conversation or a blowup fight. Being able to talk to things with respect and understanding goes a long way in terms of having a healthy positive relationship. Individuality and boundaries. If two people are exactly the same they probably don't have much to talk about. On the opposite end of the spectrum polar opposites maybe don't have enough in common so people don't feel like there is a reason to listen. Respecting each other as individuals, asking and trying to understand from each other's perspective and taking all of the antique and how. The other part of that is setting boundaries. That means I'm going to tell this person that they're going to do. Not necessarily pick that needs you will tell

them what you will or will not tolerate or what you will and will not do depending on what's going on. You can tell your partner to stop yelling at me. That may not happen. You cannot control them yelling but what you can say is if you continue to yell at me I'm going to leave for the afternoon and if that person wants to spend time with you than that shows them that they will not get to spend time with you if they yell. Sometimes it's setting the expectation that this is what I'm expecting in this situation and if we cannot get to that place I will no longer be in the situation. If you can't respect this and I cannot do that. Setting appropriate boundaries. Instead of saying I want you to stop yelling at me, you can say I'm not going to be able to continue this conversation if you cannot speak to me respectfully. To honor that boundary you walk away if the yelling continues.

I cannot control someone yelling at me but I can control how you interact with them.

One thing I wanted to ask, I like to get ideas from people Costa for not think about. What are some ways you show appreciation to the import people in your life? Maybe are unique or special to you? I always think it's interesting to see what different people come up with.

For those of you who've not used a poll question, type at the bottom where it says type your answer here and click that arrow to the right. That is what will broadcast the message. I will say we have a lot of responses coming in.

I saw someone post I call them and catch up with them. I think especially now people discount how important a 5 to 10 minute phone call with someone can actually be. It doesn't have to cost money or be a dramatic gift. Just a I was thinking about you. There is a great therapist named Esther, she has great videos about medication. She has a master class you can take. She has a great couple! Picky complains with your family depending on the ages of the people in your family, it would be good for fun for a holiday get-together I think. It's called where should we begin and you pull a card and tell a story. I was watching a video of her doing it with people on the street the other day and one card said who has been a big influence in your life that you've never told them in the sky said my grandpa and she said why have you never told him? I expected him to say he's no longer with us but he said I just haven't I will call them when I leave today because it's important for you to know. I'm sure that phone call made such a difference to his grandpa. I think it's a big discounted will that people don't give enough credit to.

There are quite of few people verbalizing it. I tell my wife I appreciate everything she does every day.

That's amazing but also being specific. We can here think you and I love you and it can turn into background noise so something like I really appreciate that you took the time to take the dog outside earlier. That really took something off my plate. Even something small like that. That have appreciation is huge. I send cards and it's like people have forgotten about that. That's a good one. I saw something else a second ago that was interesting. A lot of people are putting cooking for people were baking for them. That is what people don't give a lot of credit to. Making some of their favorite meal, that stuff. If anybody doesn't know what the love languages are, I suggest looking that it. You can take a quiz to find out weirs are. Sometimes we think we are committed getting communicating appreciation and we are in theirs but we aren't in hours. Sometimes were just not communicating anyway the person receives it. He has the five apology languages and one for teenagers. There is a lot for that option.

What are some ways you can maintain a healthy positive relationship. Keep expectations realistic. I think this is a good one. Nobody can be everything to everyone. We want to make sure we are keeping our expectations of other people in check and accepting them as they are and not trying to change them

spreading out where we get our needs and support. Talk with each other., And chat and even meeting in person and chatting. What does that mean, take the time, genuinely listen, ask questions, share information, don't be thinking about something else or looking at something else. Tune in and give that person your undivided attention. Be flexible. Again, we talked about flexibility early Earth. Healthy relationships allow people to change and grow and become different people. Take care of yourself also. You have to have room for both people's needs. If you're often caring for others and neglecting your own, this can be a problem for many reasons. Codependency taking over for a lot of people it's much easier to deal with other people's problems than deal with our own. Making sure we are taking care of ourselves and focused on her own life and doing what we need to do with it. Than being dependable if you make plans with someone, follow through, complete things we commit to. Be consistent with it. I think it's great to do something for somebody one time if the expectation is that you should do it all the time it absent flows and it can get frustrating for the other person if things are not consistent. I think that goes a long way with people following through. Be affirming. According to a relationship researcher, a couples therapist, I will put Mel on the spot. Have a positive interactions you think it takes to counteract one negative interaction?

I'm going to say five.

It is five. You are a good guesser or you read my notes.

I didn't. Have heard it before. I try to remember that one.

That's in an average, a coworker friendship relationship but in a couple, and that main partner relationship it can take up to 10. If you think about we had a negative interaction this morning, I blow up at breakfast, you're now in the red. To get back in the black it's going to take you 10 compliments cotton little things to get there. we want to make sure we are taking that into account. Where is our bank account balance right now with our interactions with this person. Has been more negative than positive lately? I would be more positive in back to it making it negative very quickly. Keeper life balance. People cannot meet every need. We need to find her own interests and become involved with other things but healthy relationships have room for people to have relationships outside of that relationship. Make sure we are spreading ourselves out and meeting our own needs and we are not expecting everyone else to meet those needs for us.

That is such a fun game. I think it's \$40. I think you can buy it on Amazon now. Used to only be on her website. Such a fun game. It's all different cards. Tell me a story about a time you felt brave. You learn a lot about people playing it. Stay connected, reach out to people and catch up. I think with Covid thanks became more clear that it took more effort than we had been putting in. Doing zoom and other ways to connect with people, we cannot be face-to-face. I went through a pregnancy during the pandemic and even face timing people to tell them I was pregnant, I wanted to make sure I was keeping those connections alive so do what you can to stay connected, however you make that happen.

Be yourself. It's much easier and more fun to be authentic and to pretend to be someone you are not. Healthy relationships are made of real people. We want to make sure we are bringing our real self to the table. Now we are going to talk a little bit about why healthy relationships and positive relationships are important at work. We are more likely to be happy according to a survey of people who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged in their job but it also doesn't have to be a best friend or relationship of that deepness, just people who have a good friend in the workplace are more likely to be happy. We are naturally social creatures, we spent a lot of our time at work. A third of our

life at work. Good relationships with colleagues makes work more enjoyable and it makes us more comfortable at work. Being more comfortable at work often makes us more confident in voicing our opinions and bringing up interesting ideas and brainstorming. Even getting on board with new ideas. We feel like we've got that healthy relationship at work. And also provides freedom. Instead of spending time and energy on negative interactions you can focus on opportunities like taking care of customers and clients in your own personal development and what you want to get out of that career or relationship. It opens up opportunities, having a strong professional circle help you develop your career which opens up opportunities that might pass you by. Make sure those relationships at work are healthy and positive means someone thought of me for a position and I couldn't believe that the thought of me and it's really exciting but that means people in your work value and respect you it opens up doors knowing that you are trustworthy and dependable and can be counted on. You are generally atypically positive person. It'll open up toys for other career opportunities.

We have our second poll question, our last one. What else can you identify you get out of your positive relationships at work that wasn't mentioned?

Laughter. Yes, you need that laughter more than anything else. I always joke and say the darkest most hilarious happy hours are either teachers or therapists or anyone in the medical profession. Good humor in those groups. Help weather the tough days. For sure. Makes work light, definitely.

Someone said modeling it for others.

Absolutely. I'm sure people have had the experience of being a negative work environment, sometimes it just takes one negative a person to make the tire environment are negative quickly.

It's nice that somebody doing the opposite of that can help change that.

It can change the vibe. It's amazing how much one person's energy can shift a room one way or the other.

There are some great comments here. Of Sinaloa people talk about the work environment being so much better.

Yes. Doesn't have to be toxic positivity, it doesn't mean you can't ever complain talk about what is stressing you out but sometimes when you go to someone with something that's stressing you out and you can vent and have a laugh with them, I think I can go a long way in defusing the stress. It doesn't mean you can't talk to somebody or open up about the struggles and stresses. It means you can see through that and have a laugh about it or talk about solutions to that stress or problems. I felt less stressed when I have a good day. When you get home you not dragging it with you day-to-day, that is a big one. The last part we are going to talk about today is how to deal with conflict. Even the best relationships in the most healthy and positive that is going to be mystic medications or conflict so we'll talk about how to do with it. One is calm down. First and foremost future self, calm down. Sometimes we fly off the handle and say something we wish we hadn't but if we had taken five seconds to take a deep breath maybe we wouldn't have reacted the way we did. We take that breath it can make for a better result. A lot of different ways to do that. You can come at things from a better angle after that deep breath. Sometimes it might mean you just go to the restroom real quick or go get something out of your car or a walk around the building. What ever you need to do to calm down. Hungry, angry, lonely or tired. Those will not lead to a good place. Definitely take the time to take a breath and let your

nervous system reset before you start to have the discussion. Self reflect, this is the ability to look at yourself in the mirror, look at yourself and see where your part is in this. A lot of people don't look at that. They don't look at what role they are playing or what they are bringing to the situation and if they are causing more problems. Take accountability and responsibility for your own part in thanks.

Start seeing the person you are in conflict with with a reasonable person that you want to arise to a solution with. I used to tell my employees give everyone the benefit of the doubt and assume best intentions. Assume whatever you are upset or frustrated about right now that whoever you are upset or frustrated with did not do this with the intention to upset or frustrate you. They were doing their best and don't know. May be they just need to be told. Versus just flying off the handle and assuming there out to ruin your day. It's not typically personal. Recognizing the other person and splitting that up so you can see that we are both people and want to get to a good solution. Separating the person from the conflict. We talk with parents about dealing with the kids that we pick separate a kid from their behavior you want to separate the person from the conflict. Start by clarifying what everyone wants and what you get from this and work on some resolutions for everybody. Ask for additional information if you need to to understand thanks and I'll try to offer solutions or Mr. fix-it statements. Don't try to swoop in and fix everything, separate the other person from the conflict to start. Clear communication, I often see communication breakdowns most commonly. That means people aren't hearing each other or listening to each other and typically a lot of us are interpreting, I know she's going to say this next. Maybe she is but we don't know. What if she has something completely different to say. Sometimes we want to mind read or assume and jump into things but if we can take a minute and use I statements instead of you statements. I feel or I get upset versus you are always doing this or you are always doing that, it's much better and less were well received. It keeps people from getting on the defensive. Actis active listening. This is when you are truly paying attention to what someone is saying. Not looking at your phone or playing a game or typing an email, you are tuned into what that person is talking about. This as it may be necessarily all the time but if you are having a serious discussion you can ask for the undivided attention the next 10 minutes. It can be vital to solving the conflict. I also have people practice active listening and counseling which some people roll their eyes at initially but if there's been a comedic Asian breakdown it can be a good starting point to get back to the health. Medication pattern. Will start with where you want to have dinner tonight and they say I want Chinese but the other person says we just had it. I'm actually in the mood for Greek, what do you want to say about that versus coming at each other from a negative place. Gets people to focus on what did the person actually say, not assigning meaning, interpreting or mind-reading. You are assigning meaning to something that isn't there or coming up with your own solution. Practicing active listening gets back to the basics of medication. We are actually hearing each other, not just listening to the person talk. Recognize that there are a lot of possible solutions. Often times we are both thinking I want a or B and what about all the other options? There are lots of possible solutions and this is in a take it or leave it time. You got your opinions and I've got mine and there are 10 or 15 in between. There are even options that are 100% off the table, write it down even if it's not when you take. Often people feel like they don't have any options and that's what I like to talk to my counselors about. You've always got options. You just have to look at and say options I like but it is options. Sometimes it's the lesser of two evils but it is there. That is our presentation for today.

Thank you. I want to remind you all, for some of you I know you can't stay for the q&a pod section so I will put the certificate of completion in the handout pod. Same download process recover over the title and click the arrow to save it to your computer. I want to remind you about is this is brought to you by your benefit program for your EAP program are the embrace program. Either way you can use your program to help you learn more about this topic or all other kinds of topics. If you are having a struggle

with a relationship feel free to call in or go on the website. We will be able to connect with someone who over the phone can do a consultation with you and determine if you need a little bit more help or problem solve and you can find out that's all you need. We want you to know that these benefits are prepaid by your employer completely confidential. We don't give your employer any information about you unless you agree to us releasing the information. Use these services, they are so beneficial. With that, we do have a few minutes for some questions. I just want to say I had a couple people ask a similar question and that was about the conflict management part. When he said calmed down, should I say calm down? And someone else said how do you recommend we frame the situation if the other person needs to calm down?

It's referring to ourselves, I think everyone in here who has ever been told to calm down, especially a woman, you never seen somebody less comp them when they've been told to calm down. Don't think we necessarily say that but there are ways to say without saying it like that ways that are less problematic or irritating. Maybe you say when we take a break, that's a good one. Like the other person is escalating, you can say I need to take a break I will even tell people say you just have to go to the bathroom. Were not done with this conversation, we will pick it back up, it's always important especially if the other person struggles with anxiety. They need to know how long of a break, just say we need to take a pause. Let's both do our own thing for a minute and come back in 30 minutes. I will go to the restroom, let's take five. You can always do that. Bathroom is a good option. Nobody's going to question that most of the time. They do a timeout and with couples I will say let's make a plan for what your timeouts look like in every but he has her own variation but for some couples somebody throws up a T and every but he goes to their own corners, someone goes to the bedroom someone downstairs was he takes a walk around the neighborhood. Couples they make up their own rules and what that break looks like. Even at work it's okay to say I have to run to the restroom, I have to pick this up in a minute.

Had somebody make a comment when I took a deep breath yoga style like a sigh and it releases my stress and the other person thought it was at them.

I know. Not everything is about you. I'm just taking a breath, am I allowed to breathe? There are ways to do it that are less obvious.

Absolutely. It looks like we have time for one more question. I did have somebody ask this, how much grace do you give to someone and how much should you be kind and patient with them without being in a position of them taking advantage?

I do not understand the last part.

How much grace or patience should you give to someone without being taken advantage of.

Okay. I think if you start to feel you're being taken advantage of or trampled on and maybe that's an indicator. Think some of us are more sensitive to that than others. Unfortunately sometimes we put ourselves in that situation where we give and give until we are resentful and frustrated and drained. Sometimes that is where the boundary setting comes in. If you can fill yourself edging towards getting frustrated and resentful before that gets there, there are usually other indicators like this person is not respecting my time or whatever. But in that boundary. My fiancé's father calls to ask for help and it's okay to say I can't help you right now but I can on Saturday. You are not telling him know you are telling him what works. Sitting that boundary of I want to help you and also I need to do it in a time that makes

sense for me. Extending what you can and not overextending because only overextend that is only feel taken advantage of. Sitting boundaries helps prevent that from being an issue in the future.

Thank you so much. It looks like we are running out of time. Some of you are asking what is a toll-free number? We are from all businesses in the United States and I don't have your particular toll-free number. If you click that link and put in your company name, maybe your parent company, your overarching company that owns you, but that name in there and it should give you your information for your website and how you can get your member benefits. If it doesn't go to your human resources department or leadership and ask them for your program's phone number and website. What you are on the website the phone number is listed there. think all of you for filling out the poll questions. You can write your overall satisfaction with today's webinar. We appreciate your feedback. We've got a lot of great comments and I can't wait to read through them. Thank you Lacey for sharing your expertise with us, it was wonderful. We appreciate it and I think everyone for attending. Have a wonder