

Develop good relationships, at work, with neighbours, and generally.

Relevant to: Mental Health in the Workplace:  Depression:  Anxiety: 

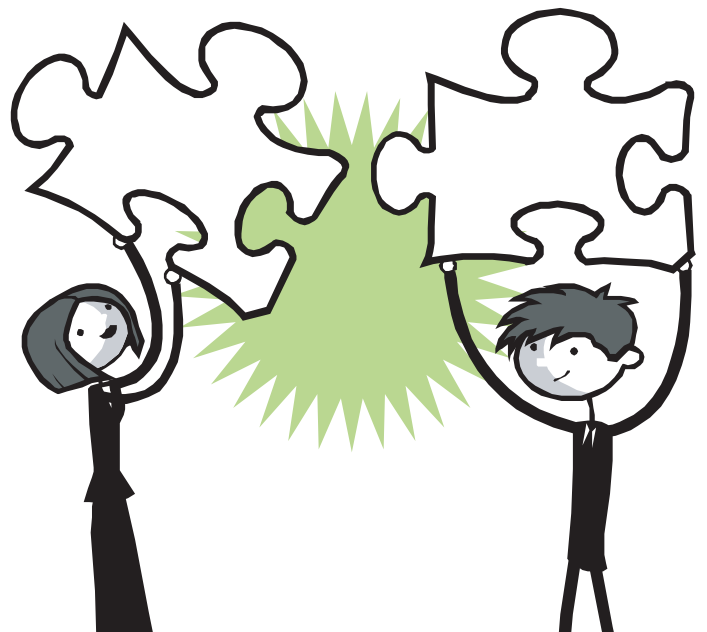
To nurture our relationships is probably the single biggest thing we can do to nurture our mental health. The most important relationships we have are with our family: a partner, our children if we have them, our blood relatives. Second most important are all the other relationships we have: with colleagues at work, with neighbours, with friends, and so on. And it is that second, very important, category we look at here.

We'll begin by examining some of the rules for building relationships.

Make contact. It's obvious, but you can't build relationships unless you make contact with people. People at work, your neighbours, anybody.

Have a sense of who you hit it off with. Or *might* hit it off with. This is important because it is at this "deep brain" level that rewarding relationships are made.

Try to develop relationships with those you sense you will get on with, by deliberately making contact. Don't be put off if you are not welcomed at first, many people take time to realise that somebody is being deliberately friendly! And there are a few people who simply don't want to return your friendship. Either way, don't be put off, but there again don't overdo it!



Don't get involved in arguments, quarrels and feuds. Either at work or elsewhere. There's no future in them!

And then there is what you might call “social skill”, some rules for getting on with people.

Don't interrupt other people when they are talking. It's just rude!

Don't badmouth other people, especially your friends! People know that if you badmouth other people, especially your friends, then you're going to badmouth them too. They will avoid you like the plague.

Be genuine. Or at least, as genuine as you can be without hurting people. People love genuineness, and hate insincerity.

Agree with people more than you disagree with them. Very few people like being disagreed with, so temper your genuineness with this knowledge.

Be reliable. Do what you say you'll do, go where you say you'll go, meet up when you say you will meet up. When I was a student I had a friend who seemed a bit boring to me, and yet he had loads of friends, so I got to asking myself why. The conclusion I came to was that he had two fantastic qualities: he was reliable, and he was genuine.



Play tennis. Not literally, but if somebody asks you what you think about the latest music album, then tell them everything you want to say, but then ask them what they think. That's known as returning the ball.

Group discussion.

What are the highlights of the two parts of this information sheet? Please share out loud your thoughts and experiences.

Project.

Attach high priority to developing your relationships: at work, with neighbours, socially. Take on board the elements you want to take on board from this sheet and practice and develop them.