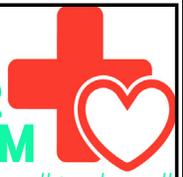


HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTH
WORKER
PROGRAM



helping you be well to do well

HEALTH TIP #9
OCTOBER 19, 2014

Hey everyone, Lexa here again. This week is about relationships—including those that are neither sexual nor romantic—your connections with friends, roommates, floormates, family, and basically everyone with whom you interact. Your mental and physical health are both hugely affected by these relationships. Also, keep in mind that we're here to keep you healthy in all areas, so you can come talk to us about more than just band-aids or condoms (surprise!). Another reminder—we are not staff of I-House and whatever you tell us is 100% confidential.

(as long as you don't tell us you're planning to harm yourself or others)

Social Health

Every social interaction has an emotional subtext. We can all influence how each other feels—for better or for worse. Social health is generally comprised of:

• Social Support

our ability to give and receive social resources and support in times of need. This can include tangible support, such as bringing food when sick, or intangible support, such as listening and encouragement

Need justification to spend more time with your friends? Seeking social support can lower your stress levels, which can enhance your ability to focus and learn when you study! Procrastination leads to efficiency ;)

• Social Intelligence

how the brain regulates our interpersonal dynamics and how our interactions with others have the power to shape our brains

Every time you interact with someone, your brain is actually undergoing chemical changes, which changes the anatomy of the brain over time. This phenomenon is known as neuroplasticity.

• Social Skills

our ability to get along well with (and relate to) a wide range of people and groups in a variety of social situations

Could your social skills use some improvement? If you:

- Consider yourself a shy person
- Wish you had more friends but don't know how to make them
- Often feel uncomfortable with other people
- Think of yourself as a 'loner'
- Feel as though there's no one to turn to when you need social support

Lucky you! Social skills, like any other skill, can be learned!

Here are some simple skills involved in social interactions

Basic interaction and making conversation:

- Make frequent eye contact
- Show interest in others (ask about their day; listen intently to them)
- Smile in greeting and in conversation

Empathy

- Be aware of (and express concern and understanding for) others' feelings
- Consider the effects of what you say on others

Building/maintaining friendships

- Be supportive and non-judgmental
- Allow distance as well as closeness (people need alone time too)
- Show appropriate affection and appreciation
- Maintain contact and be thoughtful (this is closely related to expressing empathy)

Conflict Resolution

- Be assertive, but not aggressive—it's important to get your point across, but don't belittle others' opinions
- Negotiate: be able to discuss a conflict calmly and approach a reasonable agreement

*****DISCLAIMER:*****

Since we're on the topic of relationships, I want to make an important point about our frequent references to sexual health. We practice what is called **sex positivity**. Sex has been historically stigmatized for various reasons, and it is often shrouded in shame and guilt, which leads to a lack of communication and ultimately unsafe practices. Of course, many people are not engaging in sex for various reasons, and we don't mean to make you uncomfortable if you fit in that category (though, on the bright side, if you blush, you are in an enclosed stall where no one can see you). However, education is extremely important, and we don't want to allow social stigma to impede our goal of making sure you all are healthy and make good choices. **There is by no means anything wrong with you if you choose not to engage in sex, and you should never feel pressured to do so if you are not comfortable with it.** Sexuality comes in all forms and magnitudes, including asexuality and aromanticism.

I dated a mummy
once



But we kept it...
UNDER WRAPS



Tang Center & Resources

2222 Bancroft Way
Appointments (8-5 M-F): (510)642-2000
Advice Nurse (8-5 M-F): (510)643-7197
Self-Care Resources: (510)642-7202
Social Services (SOS):
<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/socialservices.shtml>

In-house counselor for I-House

Dr. Jung Yi: 510-642-9494
Drop-in Hours: Wednesdays 12-1 PM

Health Tips are written
by I-House Health
Workers for I-House
residents. But many
of these tips may
be applicable to all
international students
at UC Berkeley.