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FRIENDSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Why Social Relationships Matter

- » We form social relationships because we need to belong – relational needs.
 - We need social bonds that are both interactive and emotionally close. This includes relationships with people at work, at school, neighbors, church, sport teams, and even online. These are relationships that not romantic. These are our friends and family.

Why Social Relationships Matter

» Social relationships bring rewards

- **Emotional rewards:** friends provide us with at least two types of emotional rewards – support and encouragement.
- **Material rewards:** Friends help us meet our material needs such as money, food, shelter, and transportation.
- **Health rewards:** The happiness we feel with good friends wards off stress. Also, friends tend to watch out for our well-being.

Why Social Relationships Matter

- » Social relationships carry costs as well as benefits
 - **Time** – you might want to spend the time along, but your friends want to hang out.
 - **Emotional investment** – offering support and encouragement
 - **Material costs** – going out, or just assisting when they are in need.
 - **Physical investment** – moving a friend

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

- » **Attraction theory** explains why individuals are drawn to others
- Physical attraction - looks
 - Social attraction - personality
 - Task attraction – ability and dependability

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

- » Particular characteristics make someone attractive
 - **Appearance** – we value and appreciate attractiveness, therefore, we like to be around people that are attractive.
 - **Proximity** – we are most likely to sustain relationships with those that are close to us, rather than those that live far away.
 - **Similarity** – we are drawn to people that like the same things we do, or share the same values that we do.
 - **Complementarity** – provide something we lack

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

- » **Uncertainty reduction** theory suggests that we get to know others to reduce our uncertainty about them
 - We find uncertainty unpleasant, so we are motivated to reduce it. For instance, you meet a new co-worker. You know nothing about them, so you ask questions. This alleviates uncertainty. In some cases, the less our uncertainty about someone, the greater our liking becomes for that person.

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

» **Predicted outcome value** theory suggests that:

- When we first communicate with others, we try to predict whether continued communication with them will be worth the effort
- If it is, we use approach behaviors to pursue a relationship
- If it is not, we use avoidance behaviors

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

- » **Social exchange** theory says we seek relationships in which benefits outweigh costs
 - Comparison level = our realistic expectation of what we want and think we deserve from a relationship
 - Comparison level for alternatives = our assessment of how our current relationship compares to our other options

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

- » **Equity theory** suggests we seek relationships in which our ratio of costs and benefits is the same as our partner's
- **Over benefited** = receiving more from the relationship than you are giving
 - **Under benefited** = giving more to the relationship than you are receiving

Forming and Maintaining Social Bonds

» **Relational maintenance** behaviors are actions we take to maintain relationships. Over time there can also be a shift in costs and benefits in each relationship.

- **Positivity** –acting friendly, being courteous and remaining from criticism.
- **Openness** – the willingness to discuss your relationship.
- **Assurances** – expressing your commitment
- **Social networks** – introducing one group to another
- **Sharing tasks** – performing your fair share

Characteristics of Friendships

- » Friendships are voluntary
 - We choose our friends and they choose us
 - We don't have to be friends with anyone we don't want to be friends with

Characteristics of Friendships

» Friendships are usually between peers

- A peer is someone similar in power or status to oneself
- Friendships with non-peers are possible but are often more challenging, because of the power difference

Characteristics of Friendships

- » Friendships are governed by rules
 - A friendship is like a social contract to which both parties agree
 - Common rules in friendships include
 - » Trust each other
 - » Offer help when needed
 - » Respect your friend's privacy
 - » Keep your friend's secrets

Characteristics of Friendships

- » Friendships have a life span
 - **Role-limited interaction**: Meet for the first time
 - **Friendly relations**: As the conversation progresses, the decision is made on whether or not the relationship will move on to the next phase.
 - **Moves toward friendship**: norms and values are established
 - **Nascent friendship**: you are now friends
 - **Stabilized friendship**: the relationship is maintained
 - **Waning friendship**: The relationship changes

Social Relationships in the Workplace

- » Social relationships with co-workers
 - Co-workers are usually peers
 - Friendships with co-workers have both a social dimension (**personal**) and a task dimension (**professional**), which can conflict with one another.

Social Relationships in the Workplace

- » Social relationships between superiors and subordinates
 - Include a power difference that co-worker relationships generally do not. Therefore, they often require agreeing to keep professional and personal sides of the relationship separate
 - Can provide a context for sexual harassment

Creating a Positive Communication Climate

- » Use confirming messages and minimize disconfirming messages
 - Confirming messages indicate how much we value another person
 - » Recognition
 - » Acknowledgement
 - » Endorsement

Creating a Positive Communication Climate

- » Provide effective non-evaluative feedback
 - Probe
 - Paraphrase
 - Offer support
- » Provide effective evaluative feedback
 - Provide praise
 - Criticize constructively