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9.6 SUSTAINING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and apply strategies that positively contribute to relational maintenance (positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks).
- Recognize the effects of these strategies on the sustainability of significant relationships.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. For the relationships below, choose two of the five relational maintenance strategies to keep the relationship successful and satisfying (positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks).
2. Describe in words and actions how each person in this relationship might implement these strategies.
3. Reflect on the possible impact on this relationship if these strategies are implemented.

EXAMPLE

Relationship: mother and teenage daughter

Strategies: *Openness and positivity*

Description: *Mother: I appreciated you calling me last night to let me know you were going to be out later than you'd said. Now that you have your own car, I do worry. When you're thoughtful about my needs, it helps me to relax and trust you more.*

Daughter: My friend Jen was being a jerk and wouldn't leave the party when I asked her to. I didn't want to leave her there without a ride, but I didn't want to stay out later than I said I would. I started getting angry and stressed, so I called. Thanks for understanding.

Effects: The mother will feel better about asking for what she needs and will trust her daughter more the next time. The daughter will trust that her mother won't automatically assume the worst and yell at her. She'll feel more empowered to make mature decisions.

1. Relationship: a newlywed couple

Strategies:

openness
~~positivity~~ & *social networks*
~~sharing tasks~~

Description:

Husband: Thank you because I wanted to spend time w/ my friends + family for the holidays.

WIFE: I've noticed that spending time w/ my friends + family is regular for me, so I wanted for us to see both of our families. They mean so much to us.

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Effects:

It's important for both partners needs to be valued and gratitude was expressed for negotiating.

2. Relationship: college roommates

Strategies:

Sharing tasks + openness

Description:

Roommate 1: ~~I would be helpful if we~~ ^{let's be nice} ~~both to~~ take turns ~~doing~~ cleaning the bathroom. Roommate 2: I think that would be really beneficial for us both, since we do live together.

Effects:

instead of criticizing they were able to discuss their needs and come up w/ a plan.

3. Relationship: adult brother and sister

Strategies:

social networks + Assurance or openness

Description:

Brother - I feel like you don't make time for my kids.
Sister - I really care about my nephews but I've been so busy. please don't allow my lack of visits. MAKE you believe I don't care about you all.

Effects:

Brother was reassured and matters of pending matters were addressed.

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4. Relationship: employee and supervisor

Strategies:

Sharing TASKS + openness

Description:

Boss: I don't understand what you did there. We can go over the report together and finalize it.

Employee: I would really appreciate the support

Effects:

Doing things together could be a good way to teach and learn. Employee did the report wrong and could have been criticized or

5. Relationship: romantic couple who are experiencing relationship stress

Strategies:

openness + assurance

Description:

BF - I really need you to trust me more. I love you + don't want to hurt you.

GF - I don't know if I can but I need you to call me more and check in regularly.

Effects:

Despite of their relationship stress, they are able to express care for each other and what they need from each other.

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6. Relationship: you and a significant relationship

Strategies:

Social networks + openness

Description:

#1 - You're supposed to be my best friend. But where were you when I gave birth?

#2 - I've invited you to numerous events I hosted and you didn't make it. I've been busy and so have you. It's no excuse but I hope you forgive me as I forgive you, I love you so much and I want to ~~ma~~ work on this.

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Amends:

~~I know~~ ^{TAKING} responsibility - ~~made~~ ^{Rest} ~~Expressing~~ regret

Description:

I'm sorry for what I've done

Effect:

It can lead to a conversation. And accountability.

3. Relationship: student and teacher

Transgression: The student repeatedly fails to submit assignments on time, makes up stories to justify the delays, and doesn't respond to the teacher's email requests.

Types:

Lack of commitment + distance

Relative Dimensions:

Social versus relational.

Amends:

restitution, repenting, regret

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Description:

I'll make this up to you. I'll try not to do this again.
Im ^{wrong} sorry for not responding to your emails.

Effect:

The teacher may give another chance for
the student to submit work.

4. Relationship: parent and 13-year-old child

Transgression: A distressed parent displays rage when the child fails to perform a task, calling the child names and slapping them across the face.

Types:

* RAGE + AGGRESSION

Relative Dimensions:

Deliberate versus ~~intentional~~ unintentional

Amends:

Im sorry. responsibility. repenting.

Description:

Im sorry. I overreacted I'll try not to do that
again.

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Effect:

child may be able to relax and see that mom didn't mean to.

5. Relationship: you and a significant relationship

Transgression: Identify a transgression you committed in one of your significant relationships

DAD ASKS SON TO PICK HIM UP IN HIS CAR IN CASE HE GETS STRANDED DURING A NIGHT OUT AND ~~THE~~ ^{THE} NEXT DAY DAD CURSES SON OUT FOR HAVING CAR IN FRONT OF ^{HIS} GIRLFRIEND.

Types:

Problematic emotions + disrespect

Relative Dimensions:

Deliberate versus unintentional.

Amends:

restoration. ~~reporting~~ Accepting responsibility. + requesting forgiveness. can you forgive me.

Description:

↓
I was wrong about lashing out on you. can I get you something to eat?

Effect:

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9.7 REPAIRING DAMAGED RELATIONSHIPS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the types and dimensions of relational transgressions.
- Identify and apply ways to make amends.
- Recognize the possible effects of making amends on relationships.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. For each of the transgressions described in the relationships below, identify the types of transgressions (lack of commitment, distance, disrespect, problematic emotions, aggression).
2. For each of the transgressions described in the relationships below, identify the relative dimensions of that transgression (minor versus significant, social versus relational, deliberate versus unintentional, one-time versus incremental).
3. Identify the ways the person who committed the transgression might make amends (expressing regret, accepting responsibility, making restitution, genuinely repenting, requesting forgiveness).
4. Describe the words and actions that person might use to express her or his amends.
5. Reflect on how this expression of amends might impact this relationship.

EXAMPLE

Relationship: boyfriend and girlfriend
 Transgression: *He buys tickets with friends to attend a sporting event that she has no interest in, forgetting that the game is on her birthday.*
 Types of transgression: *lack of commitment and distance*
 Relative dimensions: *relatively minor, relational, unintentional, one-time*
 Amends: *express regret, accepting responsibility, and making restitution*
 Description: *I'm so sorry that I forgot your birthday when I made my plans. It was my fault because I didn't add it to the calendar on my new phone. What can I do to make it right? I'm willing to sell my ticket to one of the other guys. Or we maybe could plan a trip on the weekend and have a romantic get-away.*
 Effect: *She will likely accept his apology and forgive his transgression.*

1. Relationship: coworkers

Transgression: *In meetings with their boss, one coworker repeatedly takes credit for work the other person successfully completed and openly criticizes the other person.*

Types:

LACK of Commitment + Disrespect

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Relative Dimensions:

Social versus Relational

Amends:

repenting - Expressing regret - Requesting forgiveness

Description:

I'm sorry for what I did. I went overboard and I won't do it again. Please forgive me.

Effect:

She will accept the apology and forgive her.

2. Relationship: girlfriends

Transgression: One girlfriend feels left out and jealous of the other's new romantic relationship. She stops responding to her phone calls and texts, deliberately stands her up for a lunch date, and is rude to her when they do talk.

Types:

AGGRESSION + LACK of commitment
~~DISRESPECT~~ + ~~DISTANCE~~

Relative Dimensions:

minor
insignificant versus significant