

CONCERN[®] Services

We're More Than An EAP . . .

Our goal is to Help People Live Better & Help People Work Better. The following information from the **CONCERN WorkLife Services** program is intended to help you accomplish that goal and remind you that, as your Employee Assistance Program, we are here for you and your family. Visit us on-line at www.concernservices.com or call (513) 891-1627 / (800) 642-9794 for no-charge, confidential assistance.

What Makes a Healthy Relationship?

Relationships are the center of the human experience. They satisfy our need for belonging, emotional attachment and partnership. On a daily basis, our love ones give us comfort, cheer, solace, and humor. And healthy relationships need these essential ingredients, according to Dr. John Gottman, the nation's foremost researcher into relationships and marriage.

Friendship and Respect

The foundation of a good relationship is genuine affection and enjoyment of each other. Underneath the love, we need to genuinely like each other. That means enjoying being around them, talking to them, and sharing time with them. It also means that even in the middle of a disagreement, we don't forget that underneath, we still like them.

Intimacy

Intimacy is the most intensely felt aspect of a relationship, as it is the emotional connection we have with each other. It means being our genuine selves around the other, with no pretensions, and to be able to talk honestly about our feelings, beliefs, and values. And it takes the courage to open up with that person, despite the fear of being rejected for being ourselves.

Commitment and Trust

The sense of commitment is a promise to continue working on the relationship despite difficulties and hardships. It is an agreement to let that partner into our lives. It means that together we share a sense of purpose and goals, as well as a shared sense of responsibilities, that may include a home, finances, and child-rearing responsibilities.

Good Communication

Good communication is essential to a healthy relationship. It means more than daily coordination: it means a mutual understanding, and an ability to understand the other person's viewpoint, even when we don't agree with it. Also essential to a healthy relationship is the quality of the communication: there should be five positive comments to the partner for every negative one.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a natural and normal part of all relationships; what is important is finding a way together to resolve the issue in a way that leaves the relationship stronger as a result. It means being able to openly discussing issues that are painful, difficult, or contentious. Using "fair fighting techniques" allow us to be assertive about our needs while still respecting the other person.

Shared Time Together

It is important for a couple to pursuing shared interests and activities together. Shared time can be date nights or outside activities, or they can be low-key activities by running errands together, doing chores together, taking walks, or camping in the back yard. The key ingredients are a genuine enjoyment of the other person, shared memories, and a sense of fun and playfulness.

Interdependence

A good relationship has "wings" as well as "roots." It allows us to keep our identity and interests while being in the relationship. No one person can meet all our needs. When we are actively pursuing individual goals, we create our own self-fulfillment, and bring excitement and energy back home to the relationship. When we continue to cultivate our own friends, family, and social activities, we are freeing the other person to pursue theirs.

To achieve these goals, often takes a lot of patience and good communication. Other help can include:

- Relationship Counseling – CONCERN Services provides couples therapy, to help improve communication in the relationship and to learn the skills to resolve conflict together.
- Reading articles on improving relationships -- Many can be found at through CONCERN's worklife services or from the National Healthy Marriage resource center at: <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/index.aspx>
- Self-knowledge -- Psychology Today offers self-tests on relationship skills such as commitment readiness, communication skills, and your arguing style, at: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/tests>