

Figuring It Out Together

Building Relationships for Healing and Hope

One thing we know about mental health is that it is impacted by the relationships we have with the people around us. Relationships can impact mental health conditions, sometimes they help heal and sometimes they harm.

There are many different relationships at play in our lives. Some of these are...

- With God/Spirit/Higher Power
- With Family
- With Significant Others
- At Work
- With Kids
- With Friends
- With Animals/Nature
- With Self - When every other relationship is challenged you always have yourself
- Other...

Which relationships are most valuable in your life? How do you feel in them, why? What attributes (words, actions, nuances, attitudes, etc.) are present in relationships that feel good? What are they in relationships that do not feel good? We can begin to make powerful decisions about our relationships when we become aware of what is really happening in them and how we feel.

Key Muscles for Building Healthy Relationships



Muscle #1 **Quit Taking it Personally - QTIP** **Offering the Benefit of the Doubt**

When we are able to **notice** our judgments and the blame we cast on others or ourselves, we are able to **choose** to give grace to imperfections. This reduces the defensiveness that immediately leads to conflict. From this place, we can **act** in ways that offer benefit of the doubt, which develops trust - the gateway to positive relationships.

Muscle #2 **Using I-Statements to Communicate**

When we **notice** how we are feeling and what we need, and then **choose** to voice it in a way that is accountable and compassionate, our words are more likely to be received as authentic and powerful rather than accusatory and harsh. Others become more open and willing to receive; to listen to us, relate to us, and learn from us.

Muscle #3 **Ask vs Tell**

When we begin to **notice** what our intentions are when communicating, we are able to **choose** what position we want to be in. When we ask, we learn to be problem solvers, and open ourselves up to new possibilities. When we tell, we already know the answer we're looking for, distancing ourselves from others. Asking for what we need, rather than telling people what's wrong, makes a significant difference in how we relate to others and them to us.