

Relationships with Others

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their relationships with others; this is usually done by relationships being based on honesty, trust, respect and effective communication.

Relationships with others such as family, friends, peers and partners are important aspects of a young person's life; there are also determining factors in their health, wellbeing, social development and assist in building resilience. Young people spend a significant amount of their time with family, friends, peers and partners and their relationships with these people can create feelings of acceptance, care and safety. However, young people can find themselves in unhealthy or abusive relationships with little knowledge or understanding of the situation. Therefore, it is important that young people feel supported by services aimed at promoting positive relationships with others and assisting those in an abusive, violent or disrespectful relationship.

Promoting respectful and supportive family relationships is important for the health, wellbeing and development of young people. It is important that the relationships within families are stable and positive as children and young people often model behaviour they see in the family home and can view behaviour they witness at home to be the norm, regardless of its nature. It is also important to acknowledge and support the fact that families can be structurally diverse and as a result many individuals and groups have different ideas regarding what a family is.

Young people's relationships with friends and peers often provide support for young people with friends being one of the first people a young person turns to when they are in trouble or need support. A circle of caring and supportive friends can have a positive influence on healthy development. Forming and maintaining positive friendships can be a challenge and young people often turn to other relationships for clues as to how to make friends and maintain friendships. Young people need to have the freedom to make their own friendships and to be supported in maintaining them.

Romantic or intimate relationships are often central to the social lives of young people and many young people spend a significant amount of time thinking about, discussing and being involved in romantic relationships. Romantic and intimate relationships can have lasting



effects on a young person's self esteem, personal values and can affect future intimate relationships, therefore it is important that these relationships are supportive and respectful. Research suggests that one third of all young people have been in, what they define as, a serious relationship and given that healthy romantic and intimate relationships help young people to confirm their sense of identity, develop interpersonal skills and to provide emotional support, it is vital that healthy relationships with partners, family and friends are promoted.

YNOT is committed to:

- Promoting the importance of supportive relationships.
- Promoting information and services relating to abusive and unhealthy relationship allowing young people to have the access they need to be informed of the relationships they have with others.
- Emphasising that an abusive relationship should not be tolerated.
- Advocating for service promotion of healthy relationships and assistance with unhealthy or abusive relationships.
- Advocating for education programs focusing on caring and supportive intimate relationships to be introduced in Tasmanian schools.
- Assisting with building resilience in young people in Tasmania.

Future Vision

A Tasmania in which young people are informed and educated on the defining characteristics of healthy and positive relationships. Support services will be accessible for young people who are unsafe or concerned about their relationships and service providers will be accepting of these concerns and work with young people to create a safe relationships and healthy attitude towards relationships with others.

References

Building Healthy Relationships (2014) retrieved from www.thesafespace.org/wp-content/uploads/Building_Healthy_Relationships_6.10.pdf

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Sorensen, S (2007), *Adolescent Romantic Relationships*, retrieved from www.actforyouth.net/resources/rf/rf_romantic_0707.pdf