

# Healthy Workplace Relationships: Developing Supportive Connections

SupportLinc Employee Assistance  
Program (EAP)

Penn State Health



# Disclaimer

The general views, thoughts and opinions expressed in this presentation are expressly those of the presenter. The presentation is intended to provide general tips, advice and coping skills, and may not entirely pertain to your circumstance or you as an individual in a professional or clinical capacity. For specific advice on your unique situation, please reach out to a licensed financial or clinical professional for a confidential, one-on-one consult. CuraLinc Healthcare and the presenter are not held responsible or liable for any consequences or damages due to an individual taking action based on the information presented herein.

# Objectives

## This training is designed to help you:

- Become aware of what “relationship” is
- Understand intimacy and its place in developing connection in relationship
- View relationships from a system perspective
- Recognize the components of healthy connection
- Be prepared to identify barriers to connection and responses to those barriers

# What is a relationship?

## Relationship:

The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.



# Why are relationships important?

Fulfills a basic human need

Supports holistic health

Enhances mental and psychological growth

Combats loneliness

Provides stimulation to daily life



# Contributing factors

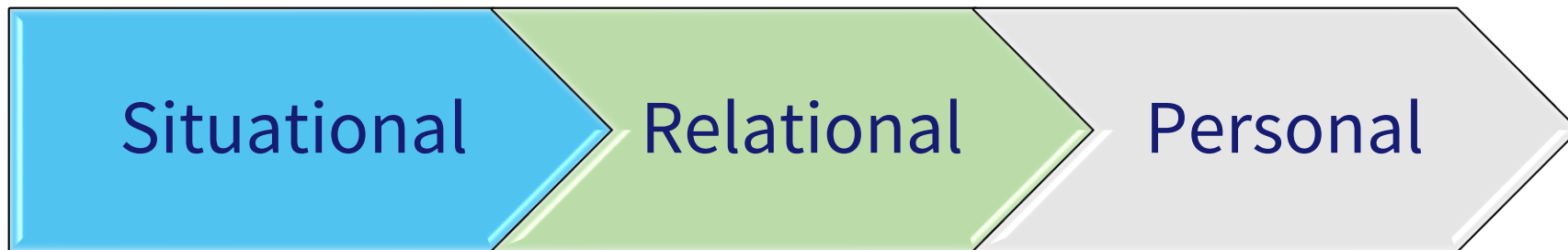
- ✓ Genetics
- ✓ Legal/social
- ✓ Proximity
- ✓ Familiarity
- ✓ Commonalities
- ✓ Intimacy



# Intimacy

**Intimacy is feeling safe to be vulnerable and being able to trust another person with that vulnerability.**

The level of healthy intimacy varies from person to person and from situation to situation.



# Scenario



One of your co-workers has very different political viewpoints than you. To be honest, it's difficult for you to find very many areas of commonality and, simply put, you don't like each other.

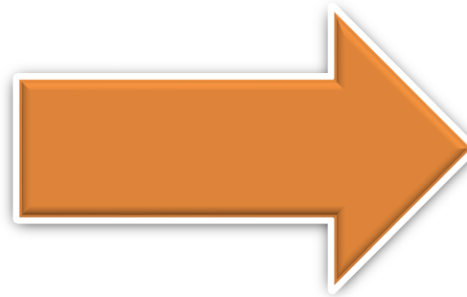
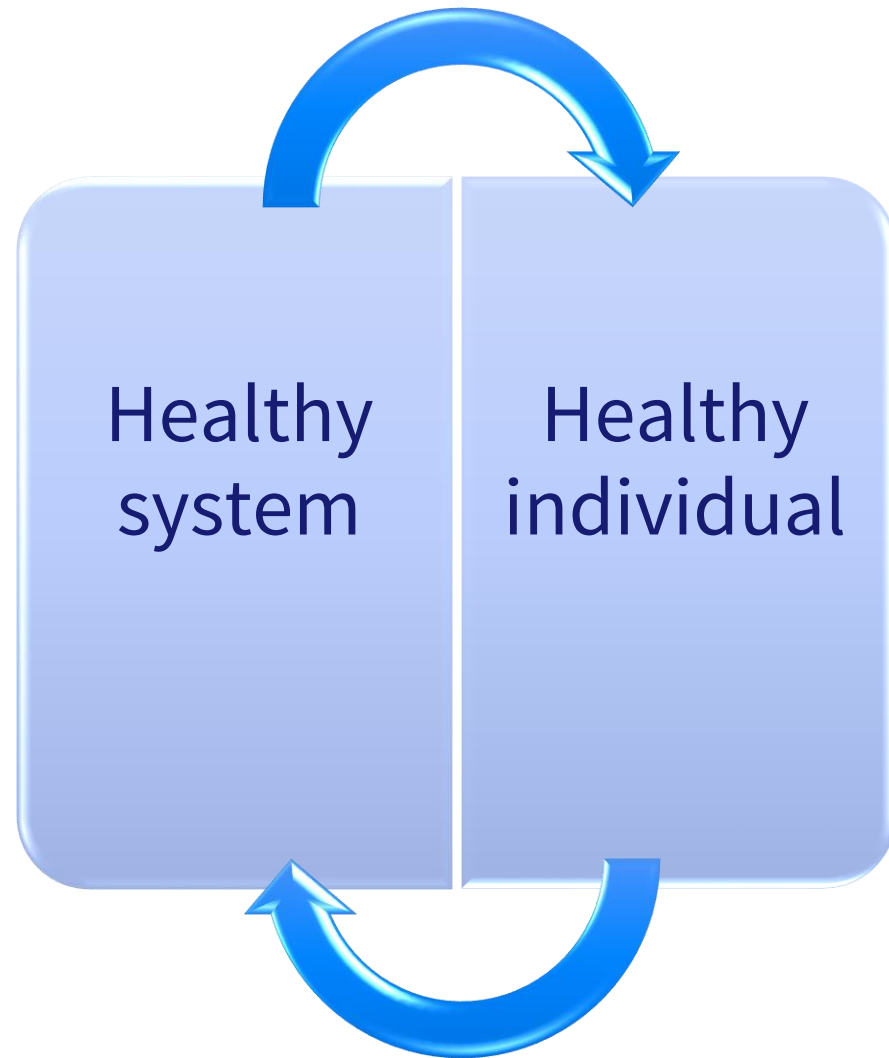
However, this person can be trusted to do what they say they will do, is consistent, and reliable. Even if that reliability is to be a jerk in the break room.

Your ability to do your job is dependent upon and enhanced by this person's job performance.

**Do you have a level of intimacy with this person?**



# System approach



# System: you and me



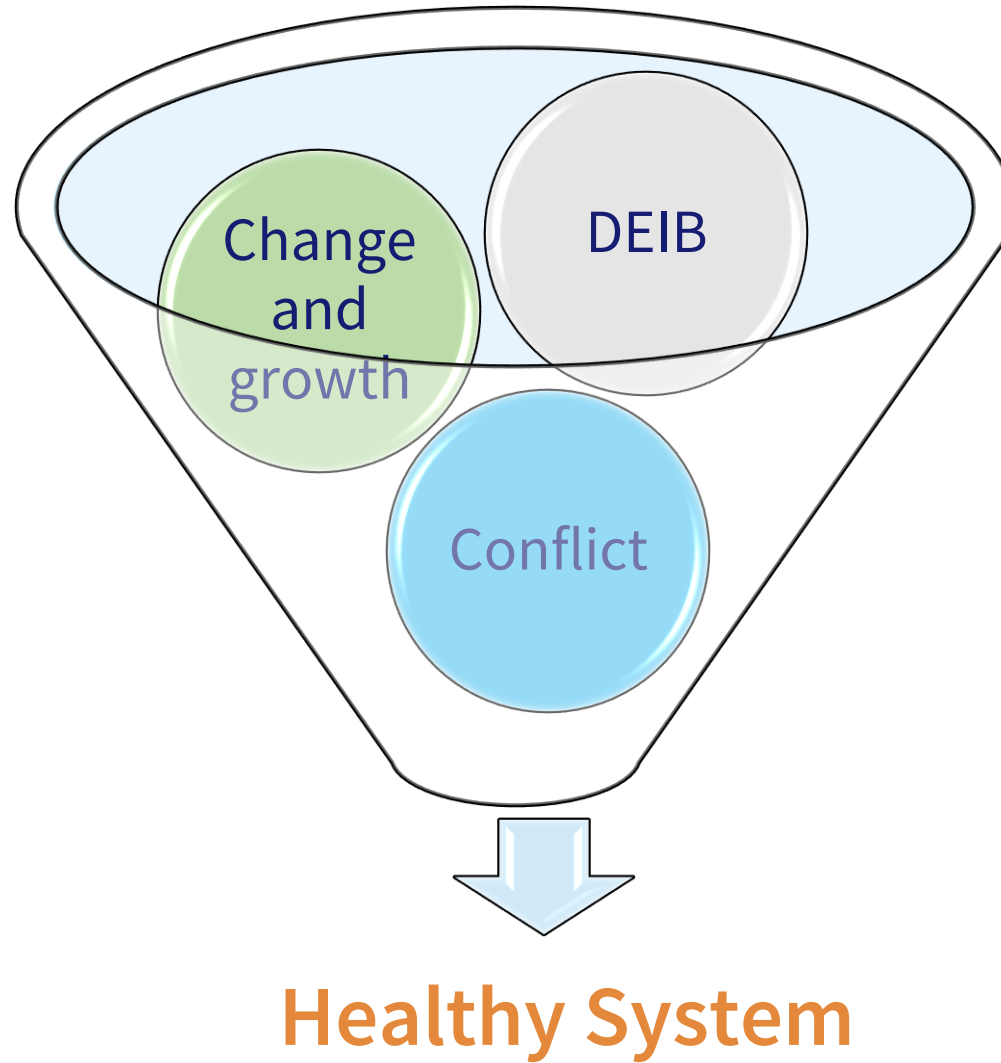
- ✓ Accountability and responsibility apply to everyone.
- ✓ Intentions and outcomes are very different concepts.
- ✓ Disagreement and compassion can co-exist.
- ✓ Everyone's perspective is valid...to the person holding it.
- ✓ Everyone's needs are important.

# Influencing factors

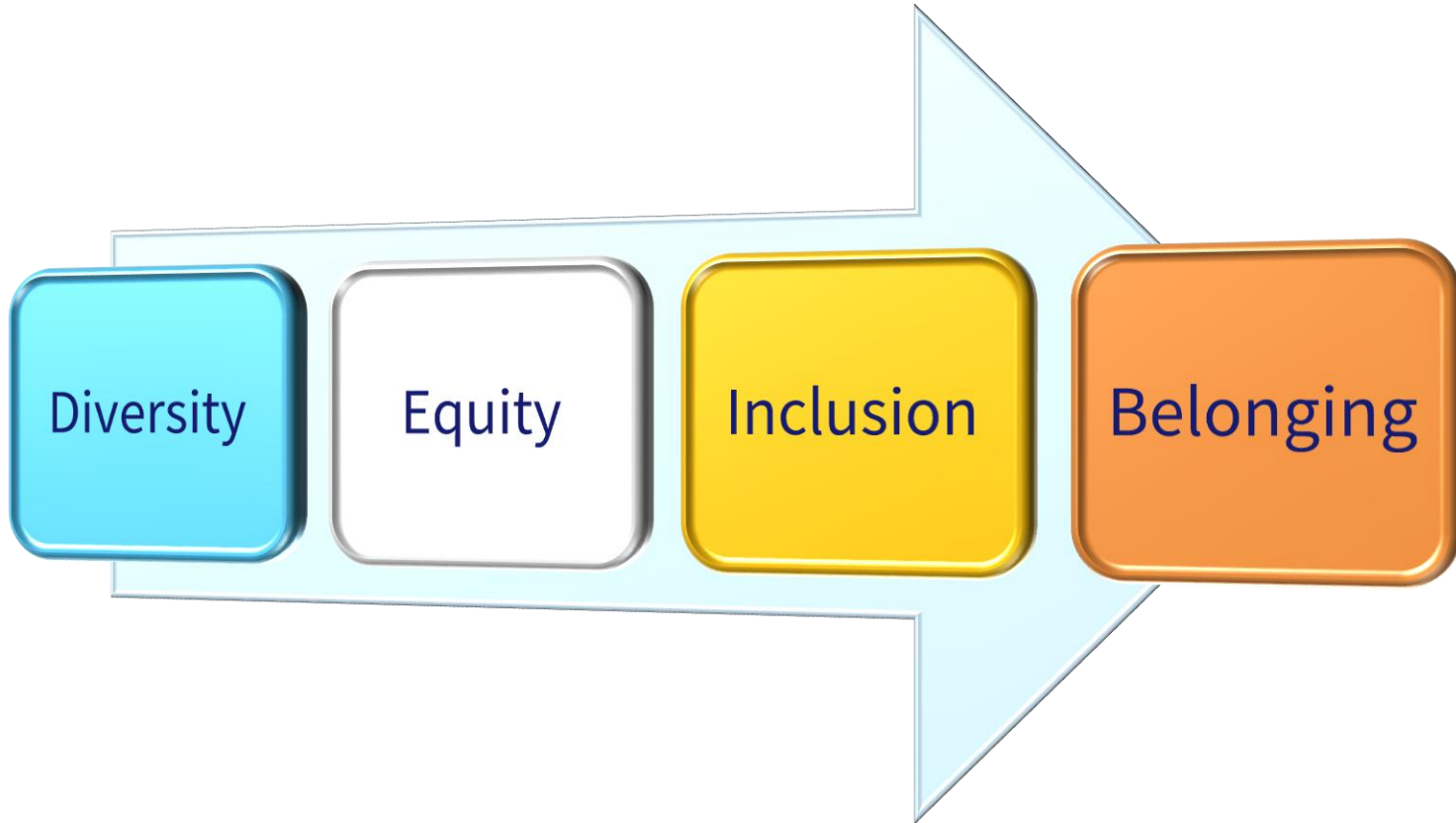
- ✓ Level of interaction
- ✓ Type of interaction
- ✓ Role/power
- ✓ History
- ✓ Motivation



# Components of healthy connection



# DEIB



“What we need to do is learn to respect and embrace our differences until our differences don’t make a difference in how we are treated.”  
– Yolanda King

# Change and growth



- ✓ Change is a normal part of life
- ✓ Lack of change leads to stagnation
- ✓ As we grow, healthy systems adapt to support that growth.
- ✓ “People are in our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.”

# Healthy conflict

**Conflict: difference of opinion, perspective, idea and/or goal.**

Healthy conflict:

- Does not need to be emotionally painful
- Does not mean the relationship is failing
- Is rooted in respect
- Is solution focused





## Time to share!

What are some ways that you have been able to work on these components in your real life?



# Barriers to healthy connections

- ✓ Habit
- ✓ Trauma
- ✓ Communication issues
- ✓ Unhealthy or nonexistent boundaries
- ✓ Unresolved conflict



# Healthy processes

- Be intentional, be present, and listen
- Allow appropriate expression of all emotions
- Engage in positive reinforcement
- Support structure and consistency
- Encourage independence
- Model good self-care and healthy choices
- Counseling/mental health supports

# Signs of success



When developing healthy relationships through supportive connections, what are some signs of success that you will notice?

- At work
- At home
- With family
- With social communities

**As a result of today's  
presentation, what  
would you like to  
focus on for the next  
30 days?**



# Interactive toolkits

## Mindfulness

[www.mindfulness.tools](http://www.mindfulness.tools)

Practical tools and exercises for incorporating mindfulness into everyday life.

## Meditation

[www.meditate.tools](http://www.meditate.tools)

Easy-to-use collection of resources that includes guided meditations, tip sheets and more.

## Resiliency

[www.resiliency.tools](http://www.resiliency.tools)

Skill development resources to help you 'bounce back' from challenging situations.

## Sleep fitness

[www.sleepfitness.tools](http://www.sleepfitness.tools)

Information and resources to help you learn good sleep habits and achieve healthy sleep.

# What is SupportLinc?

The SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a health benefit, separate from your medical insurance, offered by your employer to help you manage life's daily challenges.

SupportLinc can refer you to professional counselors, services and resources that will help you and your eligible family members resolve a broad range of personal and work-related concerns.

# What services are included?

## Work-life benefits



### Legal consultation

Free in-person or telephonic consultation with a licensed attorney

No employment law



### Dependent care referrals

Expert referrals to child and adult/elder care providers, facilities and other resources



### Financial consultation

Expert guidance and consultation from financial professionals



### “Convenience” referrals

Guidance and referrals to a variety of daily living resources: home improvement, entertainment services, pet care, auto repair, wellness, travel, handymen, volunteer opportunities etc.



### Identity theft consultation

Free consultation with an identity theft recovery professionals

Tailored recovery action plan

# Getting started



**Call:** 1-888-881-LINC (5462)



**QR Code:**



**Visit:** [www.supportlinc.com](http://www.supportlinc.com)



**Log in or create account**  
(code: psh)

## SupportLinc

Support for everyday issues. Every day.



# Additional resources

Having meaningful, sharing, healthy relationships help you maintain a positive outlook and helps you stave off feelings of depression, anxiety and anger. Sharing your feelings, concerns, hopes and challenges with others helps you stay connected and helps you maintain a healthy level of support and camaraderie. It's easy to feel isolated when life is challenging, and you are struggling with stressful situations in your life. During times like these, you may want to withdraw from socializing with people and stay by yourself, away from others. But this is exactly the time when you need friends by your side. Relationships are an essential part of life.

## **What are the signs of a healthy relationship?**

A healthy relationship should bring more happiness than stress into your life. Every relationship will have stress at times, but you want to prevent prolonged mental stress on either member of the relationship.

A healthy relationship is when two people develop a connection based on:

- Mutual respect and honesty
- Trust and support
- Fairness and equality
- Separate identities
- Good communication and
- A sense of playfulness and fondness

Most relationships have a combination of both healthy and unhealthy characteristics. Relationships need to be maintained, and healthy relationships take work.

This applies to all types of relationships, such as:

- Work relationships
- Friendships
- Family relationships
- Intimate relationships

The first step in building a healthy and fulfilling relationship is accepting people for who they are. Everyone has their own unique set of values, beliefs, interests and experiences, just like you. Rather than trying to persuade your friends to all agree with your point of view or change their value system, show a little curiosity. Be curious to find out why your friends believe what they do and how their experiences shaped their perspectives. Don't try to change people; learn from them. Accept differences as healthy ingredients for your friendships and relationships. While you can't control other people's actions, values and beliefs, you can control your own reactions to events, your attitude that you show toward others and the perspectives you develop from experiences.

Healthy relationships are built on mutual respect and equality. Everyone has unique contributions that are valuable in friendships and relationships. Instead of finding fault in people, look for the positive contributions that they bring to your relationship.

While every relationship is different, there are some common signs of a healthy relationship. When you are in a healthy relationship you:

- Take care of yourself and have good self-esteem independent of your relationship
- You maintain and respect each other's individuality

# Additional resources

- You also maintain relationships with friends and family
- You're able to express yourselves to one another without fear of consequences
- You feel secure and comfortable
- You allow and encourage other relationships and you trust each other and are honest with each other
- You have the option of privacy

Finally, you are able to resolve conflict fairly. Arguments are part of even healthy relationships. The difference is how the conflict is handled.

## **Healthy boundaries are at the root of all healthy relationships**

Creating healthy boundaries is important in all areas of your life - the workplace, with your friends, with your family, with your children and with your partner. Boundaries are limits that you impose that have consequences if they are breached. These consequences may vary depending on what boundary has been crossed. But more often than not, when you set firm boundaries in your life, most people will respect them. Setting clear personal boundaries is the key to ensuring relationships are mutually respectful, supportive and caring.

Boundaries are a measure of self-esteem. They set the limits for acceptable behavior from those around you, determining whether they feel able to put you down, make fun, or take advantage of your good nature.

When you establish healthy boundaries with the people in your life, it makes it so much easier for you maintain healthy relationships, and it also teaches other people how to treat you. When you don't have boundaries, people are likely to walk all over you, abuse you, and treat you like a doormat. This results in you feeling drained and taken advantage of, and it can also lead to feelings of depression or anxiety.

There are a number of ways you can establish healthy boundaries:

- Communicate your needs honestly
- Know who you are and what you stand for
- Be OK with spending time alone;
- Learn to say no
- Pay close attention to how you feel about people
- Give yourself space and allow others to have theirs
- Respect yourself enough to walk away from a relationship that is unhealthy

For further resources, please go to your portal and use the search bar to type in "Healthy Relationships Flash Course" and "Effective Communication Flash Course."

# Moving ahead



What did you get out of today's presentation?

Which concepts are working in your life and why?

Who can be a support for you to make change?

Which concepts are *not* working in your life and why?

What 3 ideas are going to be the most helpful for you?

How can you support someone else with change?

What can you do in the next 24 hours to apply these concepts?

What are your biggest barriers for change?