

- **Similarities and differences:** In order for a romantic relationship to work well, parties do not have to be the same. Similarities in terms of personality traits, moral values and worldview surely connect us to each other but differences work too. Sometimes, because of the differences between individuals, resolving an issue completely is not possible. However, by being flexible, understanding and accepting, we can get partial solutions. Differences make us and our relationships grow.
- **Languages of love:** Some of us say 'I love you' very easily, some of us don't. Some of us prefer to show the love by body language, by spending quality time together, buying gifts, by words of appreciation or by acting in such a way that would take the load off our partner or benefit him/her. Remember that there is no right or wrong way of showing love and all of those ways (languages) are just fine.
- **Sexuality:** Sexuality is a natural and healthy ingredient of a romantic relationship. Having sex is a grown-up behavior. When a person reaches a certain level of physical and psychological maturity, s/he is free to enjoy sex while undertaking the responsibilities for his/her actions. Partners' mutual desire and readiness is a MUST for this act.

Just like all the other aspects in life, we have the **freedom/right to choose** which relationships to build. In any type of relationship we have the right to choose the ones that make us feel peaceful, relaxed, free and accepted... And we have the right to get away from the ones that are not satisfying, limiting and harmful.

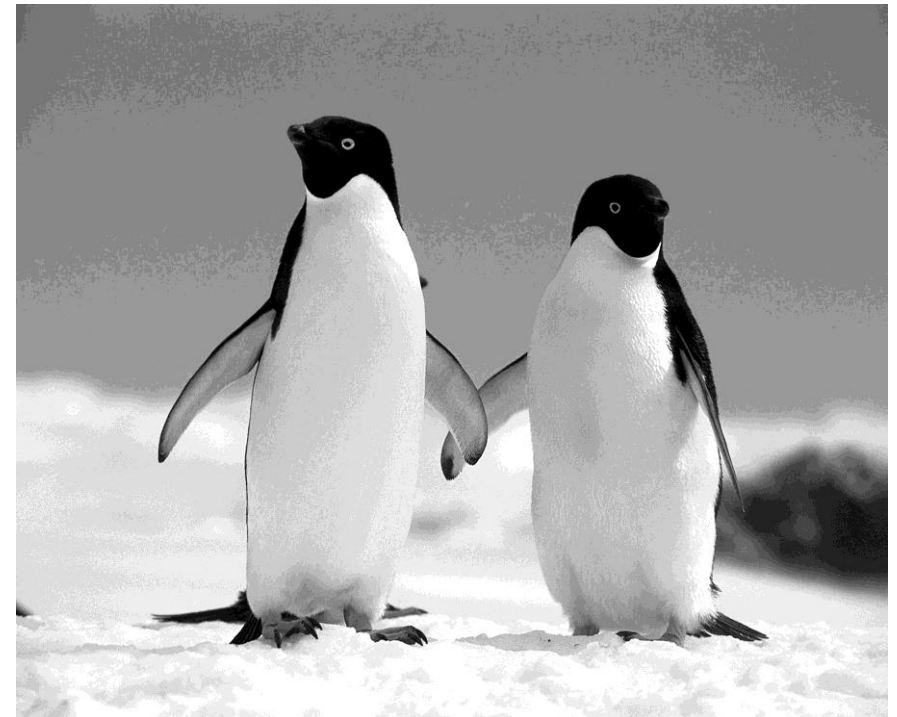
Relationships are unique and complex. Do not hesitate to visit EMU-PDRAM both for interpersonal conflicts and relationship troubles.

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Healthy Relationships



The secret behind healthy relationships

During your stay at EMU, along with your academic education, there will be many non-academic experiences and interrelationships. You will learn how to get along with others in a mature and satisfying way.

Friendships don't just happen. Although one person may start a friendship, both parties will need to contribute to the process.

Remember that relationships are processes that take time. People often expect that a relationship is an all-or-nothing deal. However, it takes time to identify and sort out your feelings about someone and determine the quality of a particular relationship. Allow yourself to take this time.

The Art of Communication

When people are asked what the most important ingredients in a relationship are, communication almost always is top of on the list. On the other hand, we rarely are taught HOW to communicate effectively. If we learn to communicate effectively with others and are willing to risk sharing our own feelings and respect other's feelings, many rewards will await us as we learn to get close to another person.

When you are stating an opinion, making an observation, or expressing a feeling, the most appropriate format to use is called the "I-statement". I-statements allow us to state things in positive terms, to express ourselves directly and honestly, and to take responsibility for what we think, feel and need while avoiding blaming or accusing others.

In contrast, "You-statements" blame the other person, put him/her on the defensive, and often cause communication to be blocked. For example, instead of saying 'You didn't wash the dishes!' you may say "I am not happy when the dishes are left in the sink unwashed. Can you please wash them?"

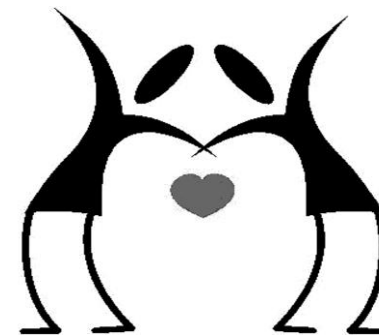
Romantic Relationships

Being away from home, in a university setting is liberating. The free atmosphere of the university may lead to new experiences with others. Having a romantic (intimate) relationship is often exciting and fulfilling, but it can also be confusing and frustrating when both parties do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the relationship.



Some of the positive qualities in a healthy relationship

- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Two-way communication - Are communication channels open?
- ✓ Mutual care - Is there equal amount of give and take in the relationship?
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Commitment - Are you ready for the responsibility to nurture the relationship?
- ✓ Quality time - Do you enjoy each other's company?
- ✓ Mutual respect
- ✓ Trust for each other
- ✓ Patience, thoughtfulness and appreciation
- ✓ Willingness for compromise
- ✓ Intimacy - feeling physically comfortable with each other as well as sharing a mutual willingness to meet the needs of sexual intimacy and safety.



Healthy development of a romantic relationship is related to:

- **Personal development:** In order to experience a balanced and harmonious romantic relationship, first, we need to develop personally. When we try to get to know ourselves, develop our uniqueness, be in touch with our own emotions and mobilize our inner strengths, then it is much easier for us to connect with someone else.
- **Respect towards individual responsibilities:** Being a student carries it's own responsibilities. University students who are involved in romantic relationships should be open about their individual needs. When they realize that some of these needs can be satisfied outside of their romantic relationship, such as studying, they should show mutual respect and understanding towards each other.
- **The balance between Me & We:** In spite of the assumption that happy couples always do things together, being in a healthy relationship has nothing to do with constantly being within each other's eye-sight. On the contrary, research findings show that individuals need to have flexible and appropriate boundaries, spend time separately for their personal hobbies and keep making new friends in order to enhance self-awareness and personal well-being.