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Let us maintain good interpersonal relationships

Good interpersonal relationships are positive relationships between two or more people. In our lives, we have to associate with others all the time. In early childhood our relationships are restricted to our family, but when we commence schooling these relationships extend to our school friends and teachers. In addition, participation in sports and other extra curricular activities leads to building relationships with others in our community. As adults, we build relationships with various people in society including those we meet in universities and other educational institutions, workplaces and in the society at large.

In grade 10 you have learnt about emotional balance and stress management, which are necessary for mental and social well being.

This lesson teaches you how to maintain good interpersonal relationships.

Activity

In our day-today life who do we develop interpersonal relationships with? They can be individuals or groups. Write them down in the table below.

Table 15.1

Family	School	Peers	Others
Parents	Teachers	Sports teams	Religious organisations
Siblings	Youth organisations
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The importance of maintaining good interpersonal relationships



Figure 15.1

There are many advantages in maintaining good interpersonal relationships with others in the society. Much can be learnt by having relationships with people from varying age groups, religious and ethnic backgrounds, diverse areas of knowledge and socio-economic strata. We must have the ability to understand those who we associate with and be able to identify their skills, habits, talents, likes and dislikes.

Working in a group helps us to develop our skills in cooperation, problem identification, problem solving and decision-making.

Through association with elders we learn customs, habits, laws and regulations in the family, community and the country.

In addition skills in exploring, observing and reviewing will improve our ability to understand the world around us and people living in it.

Good interpersonal relationships develop our ability to understand the emotions of others and to respond to them appropriately. They improve our skills in effective communication and enable us to receive love and respect from others and to live harmoniously in society.

Outcomes of different types of interpersonal relationships



Figure 15.2

Table 15.2

	The positive outcomes	The negative outcomes
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information • Access to new knowledge • Opportunity to launch new creations • Improves communication skills • Improves critical thinking • Improves artistic appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread of false rumours • Distribution of disturbing images • Exposure to meaningless programmes • Interference with education • Promotion of alcohol and smoking • Influence people to engage in wrongful activities
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to lead and to be a follower • Learn to be flexible • Develop team spirit /camaraderie • Share love and kindness • Receive security and acceptance • Opportunity to learn about others ideas • Learn to identify social issues and take action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of alcohol and illicit drugs • Engage in dangerous activities • Engage in misconduct • Making wrong decisions

Other groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to emulate other groups • Become a self learner • Learn about customs and behaviour • Identify different social strata • Gather new information • Receive love and protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of alcohol and cigarettes • Engage in illegal activities • Exposure to bad influences • Learn harmful ideologies and adverse life styles
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Important skills in maintaining interpersonal relationships

Many skills are necessary to maintain good interpersonal relationships. Let us try to recall what we have learnt in the previous years.



Activity

Try to imagine how you would feel in the following situations:

- A friend in your neighbourhood is placed first in an all island essay competition
- Your friend's father meets with an accident while abroad

1 Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. An example of empathy is your ability to understand a friend's sadness and help him, if he had to leave a match midway due to an injury which occurred on the playing field.



Figure 15.3

Empathy also includes sharing happiness when one of your friends or a person known to you is victorious or sharing sadness when one of your friends is in trouble. Being sensitive towards the feelings of others is important in maintaining good interpersonal relationships.

2. Communication skills

Communication skills are required to exchange ideas, express emotions, hold discussions and solve problems.

3. Make correct decisions

We often have to make decisions, when associating with others. These decisions may include simple decisions such as “What game shall we play this afternoon?” as well as decisions that require deep thinking such as " which stream of subjects should I select for advanced level examination?". When making a decision, it is important to discuss with others and to respect their opinions.



Figure 15.4

4. Self-awareness

The ability to appreciate your own emotions, beliefs, likes and dislikes is known as self-awareness. It enables us to be aware of the way we should behave during interactions with others.

5. Critical thinking

In decision making you must learn to consider all the available information and critically analyse it.



6. Creative thinking

It is important to be creative in your thinking when dealing with others, as it would minimise conflicts. As a result of it, you will be a more likeable person to others.

Figure 15.5

Activity

Describe how you would face the following situations successfully.

- You have gone on a holiday with your friends. One of your friends has brought a bottle of alcohol and is insisting you drink from it.
- One of your friends, who is an active member in a political party is pressurising you to cut school and help him with his political activities.
- You have to explain to your parents, who expect you to study in a particular stream for the advance level examination, that you do not wish to do so.

Summary

We have to maintain good interpersonal relationships with many individuals and groups in our day-to-day life.

Good interpersonal relationships are important to understand others and live in harmony, to share experiences and knowledge, maintain unity, love and security.

There can be both positive and negative outcomes in interpersonal relationships.

Groups that we maintain interpersonal relationships with can shape our behaviour and influence our lives in a positive or a negative manner.

In order to maintain good interpersonal relationships, we should develop several skills such as empathy, communication skills, sound decision making, self-awareness, critical and creative thinking.



Exercise

1. Name five groups that you would have interpersonal relationships with
2. List five benefits of having good interpersonal relationships
3. Name six skills that you need to develop in order to have good interpersonal relationships