

## **I Choose To Have Healthy Relationships**

*By: Kristin Roeing; Student Counseling Services, CHOICES Outreach Intern*

The college experience is not only intended for an academic education. It is a “crash course” in the world of relationships. College can be an opportunity to form strong relationships and great experiences with friends, family, mentors, etc.

It would be unrealistic to say the entire allotted time you will spend in college will be all sunshine and roses. This aside, you can choose to surround yourself with people who will make your experiences positive, enjoyable, and productive.

We live in a very social world, especially as college students. As much as we like to think of ourselves as individuals free from social influence, at times, we can't escape it. The point is, if we are to be influenced in the way we act or think, we should maintain relationships that are conducive to a happy and healthy lifestyle.

How? Ask yourself these questions: What is your role in the relationship? Are you stuck in a role that isn't always “you” (i.e. always have to make people laugh)? Can you be comfortable being yourself? Can you share intimate information about your past, your aspirations, and your feelings openly without being put down and ostracized? What is the basis of your relationship? Are you connecting through healthy activities (i.e. sports, study groups), or interests (i.e. music, favorite TV shows)? Or are you connecting through negative activities (i.e. drugs, drinking, gossiping about others)?

Healthy relationships are flexible. They are kind. They are caring. They are supportive. They make you happy. They leave you looking forward to seeing, speaking to, or spending time with them again. Your relationships are bonds to a healthy lifestyle. Healthy relationships lift you up, bring you forward, and encourage a positive way of life.

Choose to live with roommates that will aid in maintaining your desired lifestyle and be there to talk to if you need. Choose friends that make you laugh and smile. Choose a romantic partner who will appreciate you for who you are, who will keep your spirits high, and will support your academic and social efforts. Choose to create contacts with those in academic influence who will help you learn and feel intellectually stimulated. Choose relationships that will make you look forward to a bright future.

Admittedly, college can be stressful with class, work, and “not enough time.” It is important that the relationships you have help to balance or alleviate the weekly rush. Choose to keep some time for yourself where you can enjoy time with these people without interruption or worry of academics. Choose relationships that will make you happy, challenge you to grow, and to take risks to be a better person. Some of your greatest memories will be created from this time. Make every relationship count.

**Now I think everyone should ask, 'Am I going to be able to be the person I want to be in this relationship?'**

**- Ali**

**MacGraw**