Session 3 of 4
A Webinar Series : Focus on Autistic Girls and Teens

For Girls and Teens: Friendships and Relationships

Presented by: Stephanie Moeser M.S.W, R.S.W

Autism ONTARIO

Welcome

Today I will be talking about several factors relating to developing friendships and relationships.

Including:

- Emotions in friendships and relationships
- Healthy boundaries
- Signs of healthy friendships and relationships

Importance of personal relationships

Why do people have friendships and relationships? Some of the reasons include:

- Someone who shares your interests
- Someone who can share in your happiness and help you through challenging times (and vice versa)
- Supports feelings of connections
- Less isolation

Questions you may have

Sometimes relationships can be confusing

You may wonder things like:

- How many friends do I need or want?
- Why do others make friends easier than I do?
- I don’t want a lot of friends, but other people think I should.
- I worry about making mistakes.
- I don’t have the same interests as others my age.

Emotions

Some of those questions may lead to different emotions:

- Excitement
- Worry
- Happiness
- Disappointment
- Acceptance
- Trust

Importance of being yourself

- Trying ‘hard’ versus being you
- Social connections through shared interests
- Telling people what you need
- Listening to and responding what other people need
- One person can’t fulfill everything you want or need
- You can’t fulfill everything that another person needs

Boundaries

- It’s okay to say no in relationships
- It’s okay for others to say no in relationships
- Sometimes we should participate in activities that aren’t overly interesting to us
- Sometimes others should participate in activities that are interesting to us but aren’t interesting to them
- We should respect others’ boundaries
- Others should respect our boundaries

Rest and alone time

- We can both want to have friendships and relationships and want (or need) time to ourselves
- Rest and time to recharge supports wellness
- It’s okay to say no to social activities to rest and have alone time
- If we feel we are getting too comfortable on our own, that’s a sign that we may need to try and reach out to others
- Consider a list of things you like to do on your own that allow you to rest and recharge
- Consider a list of things that you prefer to do with other people

Signs of healthy relationships

- When you can feel like you can be yourself
- When you can be honest to another person and aren't worried about their response
- When you can tell someone what you need, and they listen and modify their behaviour
- When you listen to what someone else needs and modify your behaviour
- Someone who makes you feel good to be around
- Friends also respect other people's need for personal time and space

Next Session

- Session Four for Girls and Teens: Puberty and Menstruation

Thank you!

Thanks for spending some time with me to hear about ways to support healthy friendships and relationships! Remember you are deserving of fun and supportive relationships!