

A photograph of two men in a professional setting, possibly a conference or meeting. The man on the right is speaking and gesturing with his hands. He is wearing a grey blazer over a white shirt and a lanyard with a badge. The man on the left is listening, wearing a dark jacket and glasses. They are seated at a table with papers and a laptop. The background shows a bright, modern office environment with large windows and other people in the distance.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

LEARN TO MANAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

WHAT ARE RELATIONSHIP ISSUES?

Sometimes we struggle with undesirable/uncomfortable feelings triggered by the actions and behaviours of others. If this feels like you, you are among the many Canadian adults dealing with similar relationship issues.

It can be a struggle to work through difficult or emotionally challenging problems with others however, with the right tools and strategies you can learn to address these issues head on.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Relationship issues can have far reaching effects on overall mental health and wellness. Whether it's at work, at home, or in everyday life, the management of relationships can be improved with the right approach.

If you're struggling with relationship issues, try some of the below listed strategies.

- **Assertive communication** - To develop the self-respect and self-worth that are required for effective assertive communication, start by knowing what you want and believing that you have the right to ask for what you want. Clear and calm communication is key.
- **Communicating shared goals** - When conflict arises, try to find a common goal and the shared value of those goals (e.g., 'we both want less conflict' or 'we both want to feel closer'). This way, you will work together toward a positive outcome rather than working against one another.
- **Shifting expectations of others** - Sometimes it can be difficult to live up to our own and others' expectations of the roles that we play in our lives (e.g., being a good partner, employee, parent, friend). To avoid frustration and conflict, be thoughtful and open about realistic expectations.

Note that this article should not to be considered medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment and should not be used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Layla is not a healthcare provider so your use of this article is at your own risk. If you or someone you know are in need of immediate care, or are in crisis or danger of harm, call 911 or proceed to your nearest emergency room immediately.

Layla empowers you to **take greater control of your mental health**. Through a personalized approach, we make it simpler and faster to connect with the right therapist.

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www.layla.care

WORKSHEET:

EXAMINING CAUSE AND EFFECT

The following worksheet can be used to explore the cause and effect relationship between actions or behaviours that are a common source of conflict or discomfort in relationships and can help facilitate **assertive communication**.

1. Find a quiet private space where you can take time to reflect on a circumstance within which you experienced relationship issues, and where you can complete the following worksheet.
2. Consider a circumstance in which an individual has made you feel uncomfortable feelings as a results of some specific action or behaviour.
3. Imagine an alternative to the triggering behaviour that in future, would help to avoid the resulting uncomfortable feelings.

You can use this worksheet or a separate piece of paper to fulfill the following sentence:

When you do

I feel

Could you do **instead?**

4. When you have completed worksheet sentences, find an opportunity to speak with that individual using the completed sentence from this worksheet.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The following are some self-help books that you could choose to explore for more information:

- *How to Talk to Anyone: 92 Little Tricks for Big Success in Relationships* by Leil Lowndes
- *Conversationally Speaking* by Alan Carner
- *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others and Resolve Conflicts* by Robert Bolton, Ph.D.

If you are experiencing prolonged relationship issues and the strategies from this worksheet are of little help, it may be time to seek the support of a qualified mental health professional.

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