

ECPS4012
Exploring Emotion
and Communication

Relationships

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Developing Relationships

Interpersonal communication key to forming and maintaining relationships

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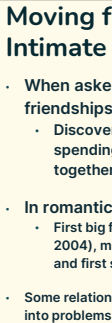
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Relationships have lasting influence on identity and well-being

All relationships start as interactions between strangers

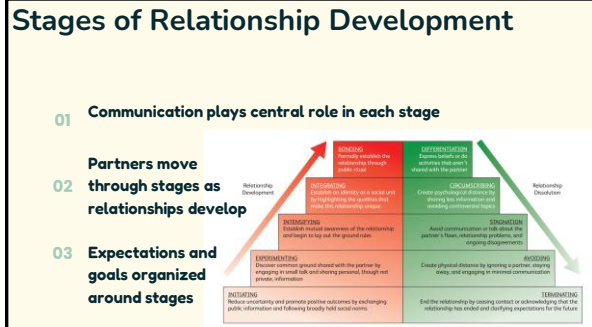
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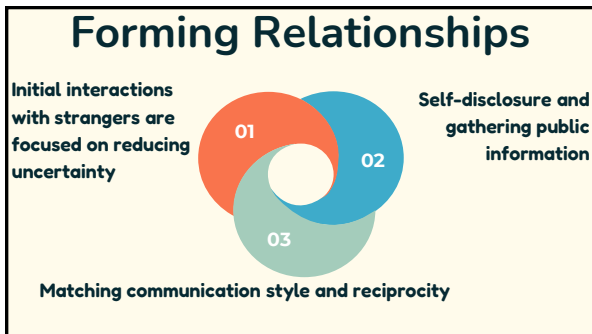
Moving from Acquaintances to Intimate Partners

- When asked to identify important turning points in friendships, people mention:
 - Discovering shared interests, disclosing private info, spending time with mutual friends, taking a trip, and living together (Johnson et al., 2003, 2004).
- In romantic relationships, people mention:
 - First big fight (Siegert & Stamp, 1994), saying "I love you" (Metts, 2004), meeting partner's family/friends (Baxter & Bullis, 1986), and first sexual experience (Theiss & Solomon, 2007).
- Some relationships move through turning points quickly, others run into problems, and some take time to develop intimate bonds.

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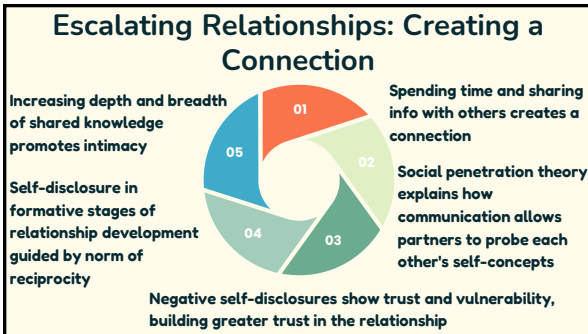
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Weighing Risks and Rewards

- Assessing risks and rewards of self disclosure
- Factors influencing disclosure decisions
- Building closeness and maintaining privacy

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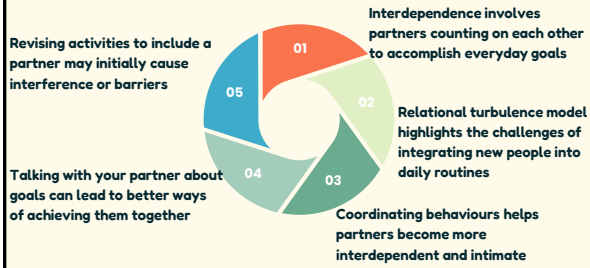


Resolving Doubts

- Relational uncertainty includes self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, and relationship uncertainty
- Secret tests are covert activities used to reveal information about a partner's involvement in a relationship
- Relationship talk can help address uncertainties and improve the quality of the relationship
- Be cautious about using secret tests in valued relationships
- Relationship talk is more effective in the early stages of a relationship

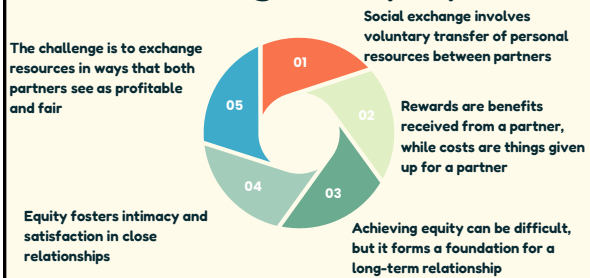
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Coordinating Behavior



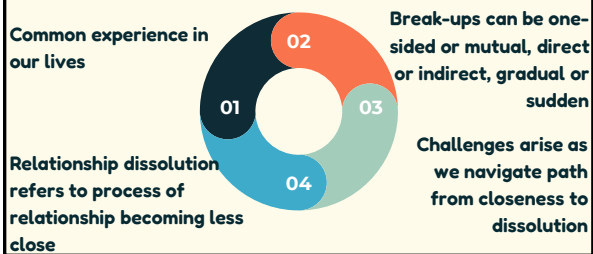
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Striving for Equity



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Ending Relationships



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Causes of Relationship Dissolution

- Loss of interest, involvement in other activities, or attraction to other people
- Lack of shared interests and activities in friendships
- Issues of independence, similarity, support, time, equality, or romance in romantic relationships
- Annoyance with initially attractive qualities of a partner
- External events like entering college or serious dating/marriage

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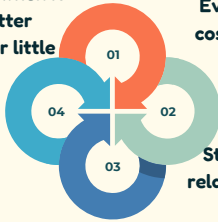
Making a Decision

Ending relationship when it is not rewarding, better alternatives exist, or little is at stake

Evaluation of rewards, costs, alternatives, and investments in the relationship

The difficulty of deciding to decrease intimacy

Staying in a rewarding relationship with limited alternatives and significant investment



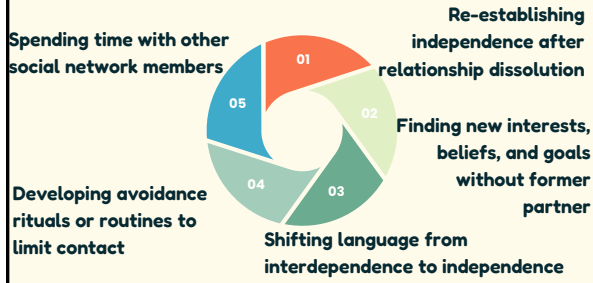
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Managing Face Threats

- Concerns about face threats during relationship dissolution:
 - Experiences that can make either partner feel constrained or disliked
- Strategies to respect partner's wishes while showing value and retaining pride
- Covert strategies to determine partner's decreasing interest
- Increase vigilance uncovering negative info about relationship
- Indirect strategies for withdrawing from the relationship
- Downsides of indirect communication

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Reasserting Independence



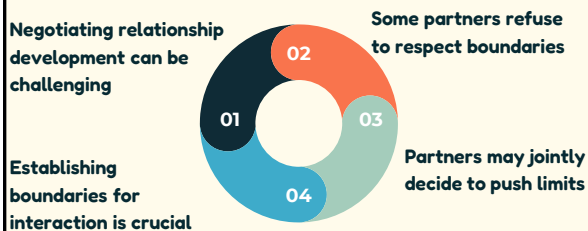
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Coming to Terms

- Stress and negative emotions associated with relationship dissolution
- Creating stories about relationship and its demise to make sense of what happened
- Feeling better with clear accounts of events and focusing on external factors
- Relationship dissolution as a gradual process
- Possibility of remaining friends or finding new ways to relate

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Establishing Ground Rules



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Unrequited Love and Stalking

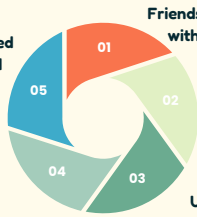
- Attraction to potential partners who are not interested
- Obsessive relational intrusion is an invasion of privacy
- Behaviours range from mild intrusion to stalking
- New technologies make it easier to stalk
- Females more likely to engage in cyberintrusions
- Personality traits of stalkers include social incompetence and obsession

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Friends-with-Benefits

Benefits include increased sexual opportunities and emotional connection

No responsibilities or commitment of a romantic relationship



Friends engage in sexual activity without romantic commitment

50-60% of college students experienced this type of relationship

Unique set of rules to maintain the relationship

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Negotiating Friends-with-Benefits Relationships

- Maintaining friends-with-benefits relationships can be challenging
- Partners face questions about the nature of their association
- Communication strategies are needed to resolve uncertainties
- Uncertainties include labeling, maintaining, and future of the relationship
- Most participants do not initiate talks about these issues
- Negotiating ground rules is rare, but some do through conversation

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