

Navigating Adult Friendships

United States Postal Service 

Overview



- Why Adult Friendships Matter
- Friendship and Emotional Wellbeing
- Characteristics of Healthy Friendships
- Setting Healthy Boundaries
- Navigating Changes in Friendships
- Rebuilding and Maintaining Connections
- Coping with Friendship Loss
- How EAP Can Support You
- Key Takeaways and Resources

Why Talk About Adult Friendships?

Friendships matter. They:

- Support emotional wellbeing
- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Help us cope with stress
- Create a sense of belonging

Friendships often compete with:

- Work responsibilities
- Family obligations
- Caregiving duties
- Limited time and energy

Friendship and Mental Health

Healthy Social Connections Can:

- Improve mood
- Reduce stress
- Increase resilience
- Enhance overall life satisfaction

When Social Needs Go Unmet:

- Loneliness may increase
- Stress may feel heavier
- Emotional fatigue can grow
- Motivation may decrease

Quality Over Quantity

It's Not About Having Lots of Friends

Healthy Friendships Provide

- Trust
- Respect
- Encouragement
- Honest communication
- Emotional safety

Ask Yourself:

- Do I feel supported?
- Can I be myself?
- Do I feel heard and respected?

Foundations of Healthy Friendships

Key Elements

- Mutual Respect
- Trust and Emotional Safety
- Balanced Effort
- Open Communication
- Flexibility and Growth



Reflection Activity

Think About One Friendship

Ask Yourself:

- Do I feel comfortable being honest?
- Is there mutual respect?
- Do both people contribute to the relationship?
- Does this friendship support my wellbeing?





Understanding Boundaries

Boundaries protect:

- Time
- Energy
- Emotional wellbeing
- Personal responsibilities

Boundaries are:

- Healthy, Respectful, and Self-care

Boundaries are not:

- Rejection, Punishment, or Selfishness

Signs Boundaries May Be Needed



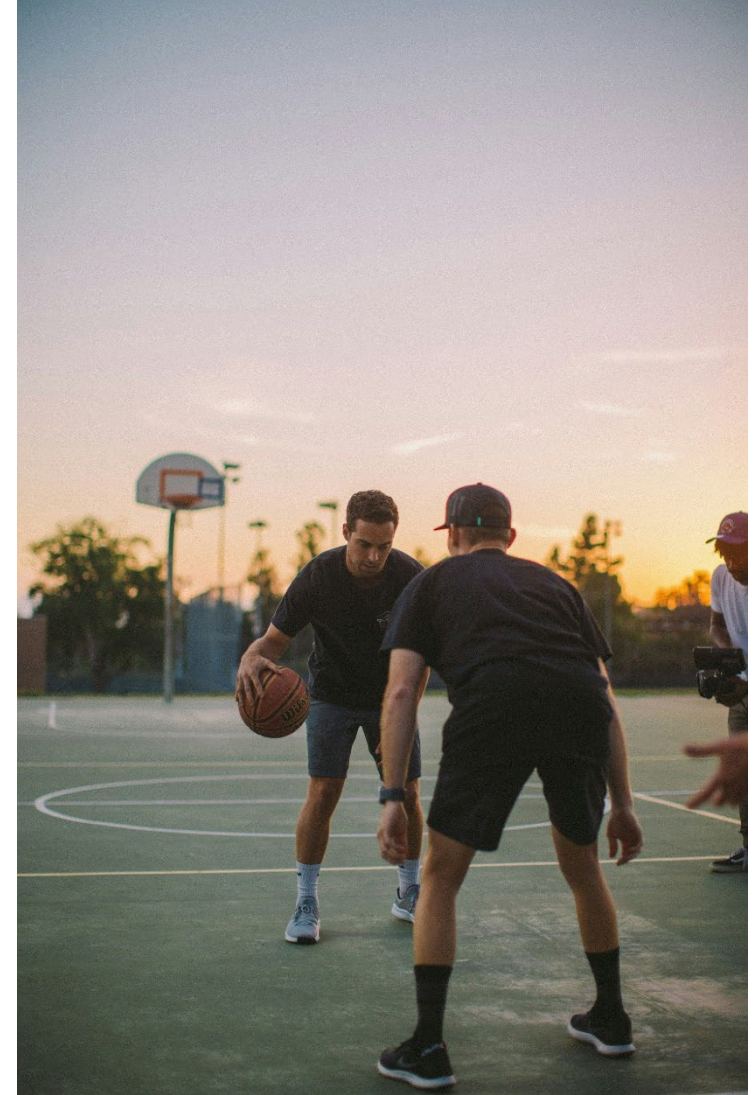
You may need stronger boundaries if you:

- Feel emotionally drained
- Avoid honesty to prevent conflict
- Feel responsible for others' emotions
- Feel guilty prioritizing your own needs
- Notice an ongoing imbalance

Adult Friendships Change

Life happens. Friendships often shift because of:

- Schedule changes
- Parenting responsibilities
- Caregiving roles
- Relocation
- Changing priorities



Rebuilding and Maintaining Friendships



Small actions matter:

- Send a quick text
- Check in periodically
- Schedule time in advanced
- Combine connection with everyday activities

Progress Over Perfection

Meaningful friendships often grow through small, consistent efforts.

Reaching Out After Time Has Passed

It's okay to reconnect. Try:

- “I’ve been thinking about you.”
- “I’d love to catch up.”
- “How have you been?”

Keep it simple: No lengthy explanation is required.



When Friendships End

Friendship loss is real.

Common emotions include:

- Sadness
- Disappointment
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Self-doubt



Coping With Friendship Loss

Healthy Ways to Cope:

- Acknowledge your feelings
- Talk with someone you trust
- Avoid self-blame
- Reflect on lessons learned
- Give yourself time

Growth Can Follow Loss:

Loss may clarify:

- Values
- Boundaries
- Relationship needs

Take One Small Step



This week:

- Reach out to one person
- Plan one future connection
- Notice which relationships feel supportive



How EAP Can Help

EAP Support Includes:

- Relationship challenges
- Friendship loss
- Communication skills
- Boundary setting
- Stress management
- Life transitions

Confidential | Voluntary | No Cost

Key Takeaways



- Friendships are important for wellbeing
- Quality matters more than quantity
- Healthy boundaries strengthen relationships
- Friendship loss is a valid experience
- Small actions can strengthen connection
- EAP is available to help



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