Relationship tree

Year: Y3

Subjects and Issues

Self-esteem Caring Community
Emotional needs Feelings Friendship
Respect Support networks Trust Family
Relationships education LGBT+ Keeping safe
Relationships

Introduction

We have lots of different types of relationships.

In pairs, tell each other who you have a relationship with.

The class can say them aloud so they can be written on a whiteboard. See how many different types of relationships the class have [e.g. pets, parents/carers, siblings, aunts, friends, leaders of groups outside school such as gym coach etc.]

Think about how we greet (say hello to) the people we have a relationship with. Do we treat them all in the same way?

How do we greet our parents/carers? Friends? Brothers/sisters? Grandma? Shopkeeper? Pet? Football coach? Teacher?

Some of our interactions in our relationships may continue online - for example through messages on smartphones, tablets or computers. We might speak to friends and family members who don't live nearby, or maybe even live in other countries by connecting online. We may communicate with our friends through online gaming. Some of us might message friends and family through a device.

We have different relationships with different groups of people.

We have different relationships with different groups of people. Why do we need these relationships? [get a few ideas from the children.] These people can help us feel happy and safe – we can have fun together; they can give us support and encouragement if we're struggling with something. f

Activity - Relationship tree

Have prepared and cut out sets of: 5 green leaves, 3 brown or orange leaves, 5 brown branches, 3 brown roots (the roots and branches can be strips of brown paper). Distribute these - one set per child.

1. Green leaves

Ask the children to write on the green leaves 5 things (one word per leaf) that can make a positive, healthy relationship, e.g. ***trust***. Any idea what trust means? [e.g. we can rely on someone (e.g. if they say they'll do something, they do it), they can help us feel safe, they can take care of us]

2. Branches

Choose a leaf from a child, read it out and ask the class to suggest ways to achieve this e.g. for ***trust*** this might be '*...being able to talk to the person about anything*.' The child (and any other who has ***trust*** on a leaf) can write down one of these suggestions on a brown branch.

Make the following clear:

- Remember that because a lot of relationships can continue online, through devices like smartphones, tablets or computers, it's important to think about how to make sure healthy relationships continue to stay healthy through these devices.
- Remind children that when people are online, they can't always see the other person or hear the person's voice. Sometimes, written messages may be misinterpreted. Explain how a big part of communication is non-verbal, but through body language.

- Good communication is really important in this situation. If we're not sure how someone is feeling or what they mean by a message, it's important to *ask* them, rather than just guessing and maybe getting it wrong.

Repeat this process a few more times until the children get the hang of what to do.

They can then write on the branches ways to achieve the words (how to have a positive relationship) on their leaves.

The writing on the branch can include how behaviour online can help them achieve their word on the leaf. E.g. trust - agreeing before a game *how* to behave and trusting others and themselves to do this.

3. Roots

On the roots, write down the different people you have these relationships with e.g. Mum, friend, gran, Dad.

4. Brown leaves

Finally, discuss what sort of things can make a relationship negative or unhealthy e.g. promises get broken, when people get angry all the time. Write these down on the 3 brown leaves.

Include here things that can make online relationships negative or unhealthy.

Examples could include:

- People saying unkind things that they might not actually say to someone's face.
- Messages that could be misunderstanding or are just a bit thoughtless.
- Being left out of group games.
- If someone has shared a photo of you that you don’t like, without asking your permission.
- It could even be that a stranger tries to talk to you online through a game and they pretend to be a friend when they are not.

Summing up

Construct a tree on a big piece of paper or straight onto a display board. The branch strips make up the trunk and branches of the tree. The green leaves hang onto the branches. The roots spread across the bottom of the tree to anchor it. The brown leaves are falling.

Review the lesson by asking the class how we can help to look after relationships and also what we should expect from others.

Who are our trusted adults? Which relationships are these? We can talk to these people anytime we feel worried, concerned about something that doesn't feel right or have any questions.

Remember, we all need kind people around us to feel safe, but we can be a good friend/ trusted person for someone else as well. We can be kind, helpful, caring and supportive. This can make others feel safe and happy too.

Adapting lessons for learners with additional needs

Our additional Signposting and Support page provides further guidance on adapting SCARF lessons to meet the needs of learners with additional needs.

Version History

Mon, 23 Mar 2026

- Wording updated to include being left out of a group and why relationships are important

Mon, 18 Aug 2025

- Wording and related activity updated to extend the learning about how online communications can impact relationships and need special care.

- Key vocabulary updated to reflect the changes.

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Identify different types of relationships;
- Recognise who they have positive healthy relationships with.

Key Vocabulary

positive
relationships
healthy
trust
caring
online relationships
misinterpretation

Resources needed

Set of following shapes made from coloured paper (1 set per child): 5 green leaves, 3 brown leaves, 8 roots and branches, (paper strips).

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- Relationships Education Caring friendships 1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.

- Relationships Education Caring friendships 2. The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- Relationships Education Caring friendships 5. How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
- Relationships Education Online relationships 2. That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements (2025)

- Caring friendships 1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- Caring friendships 4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
- Caring friendships 6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- Online safety and awareness 1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- R10 . About the importance of friendships; strategies for building positive friendships; how positive friendships support wellbeing.
- R11 . What constitutes a positive healthy friendship (e.g. mutual respect, trust, truthfulness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences, support with problems and difficulties); that the same principles apply to online friendships as to face-to-face relationships.
- R16 . How friendships can change over time, about making new friends and the benefits of having different types of friends.
- R17 . That friendships have ups and downs; strategies to resolve disputes and reconcile differences positively and safely.
- R18 . To recognise if a friendship (online or offline) is making them feel unsafe or uncomfortable; how to manage this and ask for support if necessary.
- R30 . That personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online.