



Middlebury

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There is no singular college experience. While some things such as taking classes are a given, the rest of college is by and large what you make of it. In this weekly newsletter, I will share ways to hone your strengths and take advantage of some of the things Middlebury offers that are designed to help you succeed, grow and realize your goals. Read on to see this week's tips for thriving at

Middlebury!



Jennifer Guinn Sellers, Ph.D.
Dean of the First Year Experience

Close Relationships

At this time of the semester it is common for relationships with family, friends and romantic partners to be on people's minds. While not always apparent, healthy relationships take a good amount of focused effort among everyone involved. They are also a manifestation of love, one of the defining components of the virtue of humanity. Humanity, in turn, is made up of the character strengths that involve tending to and befriending others - love, kindness and social intelligence. As with other character strengths, love is expressed through habits, or patterns of behavior.

When we have habits rooted to love in place, our relationships allow us to be our best selves, make progress towards our own

goals and feel confident and supported. There is also a sense of warmth and intimacy shared with our relationship partners knowing that we are fostering these same things for them. Unhealthy relationships, in contrast, can leave people feeling isolated, unsure of themselves and guilty. Emotions can feel intense and the other person's behavior can feel unpredictable. While some may call this love, it is important to know that these behaviors do not define love.

How do you know what kind of relationship you are in?

The following short video highlights some of the signs of unhealthy relationships and talks about how we can work to build loving habits with friends, family and romantic partners. The subsequent readings offer more information about building healthy relationships, practicing self-care when relationships end, and important guidance about how to get out of an unhealthy relationship.



Video: The Difference Between Healthy and Unhealthy Love



Reading: How to Create and Maintain Healthy Relationships



Reading: The Painful Truth About Breakups



Reading: How to Safely End Unhealthy Relationships

Resources

Seeking the counsel of someone trained to help us see patterns of behavior can be one path to building our capacity to love and be loved. It can also help us identify a path for growth when relationships end. Counselors in our Center for Health and Wellness, scheduled counseling on the TimelyCare app, and

community mental health professionals all provide a confidential space to reflect and learn new skills that can support our ability to be in healthy relationships. Additionally, Chaplains in the Scott Center for Spiritual and Religious Life are available to offer counsel and support, regardless of spiritual affiliation. Health educators can work with you on developing your own relationship goals and share information about skills that can support the development and maintenance of healthy relationships with friends, family and romantic partners.

If you are starting to recognize some of the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship, know that you do not have to navigate this on your own. Before taking steps to end an unhealthy relationship, consider consulting with a violence prevention specialist to make sure you have a safety plan in place. The Title IX office can offer a number of supportive measures for students experiencing violence, emotional abuse and/or sexual assault in any type of relationship, regardless of where it has occurred. Health Educators can offer confidential support to students looking to create safety plans. Likewise, I am available to meet with students to help coordinate support. While I am not a confidential source of support, I only share information with other professional staff on campus to support student safety and well-being. I can also meet with students to talk abstractly about different support options without students needing to divulge personal information.



Title IX Office



Scott Center for
Spiritual and Religious
Life



Off-Campus Mental
Health Clinicians



TimelyCare



Meet with a Health
Coach



On-Campus Counseling



Meet with Jen

Important Dates

- 2/24-4/17: Students May Drop a Course with Permission
- 3/18-26: Spring Recess (no classes)
- 4/1: CSS Profile and FAFSA deadline. Financial aid recipients must complete these forms by this deadline to remain eligible for aid.
- 4/14: Spring Student Symposium



Registration Information
and Instructions

Was this information helpful?

Please take less than one minute to let me know!

Feedback

No minimum order value

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Dean of the First Year Experience

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[Self-schedule an appointment here!](#)

Contact me.

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