



# IO1 Training Materials

## RELATIONSHIPS

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## OBJECTIVES

At the end of the module the participants will be able to:

- understand how relationships are formed and how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships
- know how parental relationships affect child's physical and psycho-emotional development
- know which parent`s activities contributes to the formation of a healthy child
- know the consequences of negative and conflicting parental relationships
- know that in case of problems specialist help can be received



# 1. General description of relationships

## 1.1. Context. Description/definition of relationships

The relationship between two people is the way they feel and behave towards each other. A couple's relationship can change and evolve over time.

The child begins to learn about relationships and communication from the people around him in an early age. Later in life, we unknowingly bring into our partnerships the behaviors and stereotypes that were in our families. Our childhood experiences can be very different. Everyone can have their own ideas about what a relationship should look like. Sometimes these perceptions can be very different and then problems start.

So how do you understand what is good or bad? The key indicator is your emotional wellbeing. In a healthy relationship both partners feel happy and joyful, self-esteem rises up, they feel mutual support towards each other, develop and improve their personality.

### Key features of a healthy partnership



**Respect**

Respect is the key to a healthy relationship. Value each other's opinions, feelings, and needs.

**Be yourself**

Give each other the freedom to be yourself and be loved for who you are.

**Honesty**

You're honest with each other but can still keep some things private. Couples that are honest with each other feel more comfortable to talk about certain relationship issues, including problems and concerns.

**Communication**

Talk openly about problems and listen to one another. Respect each other's opinions. Listen to each other when you are stressed out about something and need to talk about something. Set aside time to speak to each other without interruptions. Don't rely on the other person to guess what is going on, or how you are feeling.

**Feeling Safe**

Feeling safe emotionally and physically is essential. You should feel confident that your boyfriend or girlfriend would not try to hurt your feelings or your body.

**Trust**

Trust is when you are able to rely on someone. You believe what your partner has to say and don't feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.

**Equality**

You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards. You and your partner have equal say with regard to major decisions within the relationship. All partners have access to the resources they need.

**Practicing consent.**

You talk openly about sexual and reproductive choices together. All partners always willingly consent to sexual activity and can safely discuss what you are and aren't comfortable with.

If a couple thinks about a child, it should be taken into account that new nuances in the relationship will begin not only after the birth of the child but also with conception.

It is highly desirable to inquire about the changes that pregnancy will bring before conception. It is important for a man to know how pregnancy affects a woman's emotional state in order to be able to understand and provide support. A woman during pregnancy due to hormonal changes can have very strong emotions, both positive and negative, which can change rapidly. In such moments, it is very important that the man is able to tolerate these emotions and mood swings and not be angry or blame her.

A man can also feel a variety of emotions - from joy, pride, willingness to care, to confusion, perplexity, doubt and fear. The best solution in such cases is free communication. Both can tell each other about their emotions, desires, dreams and fantasies about the child, his upbringing and much more.



Women are often worried that their bodies will change and they may therefore not seem attractive. Men are afraid of being "forgotten" because the focus will be on the woman and the unborn child. All this can be talked about before the actual pregnancy.

Not only conversations with each other, but also conversations with friends who already have pregnancy experience, as well as healthy humor can sometimes reduce anxiety.

## **1.2. The proved impact of relationships on pregnancy /mother/child health**

The quality of a couple's relationship is very important at a time when family growth is being considered. It is important for both of them to understand and talk about why each of them wants a child. Different thoughts and opinions about the child's gender, upbringing and other related issues should be discussed before conception. Then it will be time to focus on the main thing - the formation of a healthy child, which will continue for all 9 months.

As much as possible, the mother should spend the pregnancy in a good mood, calm, joy, uplifting and in love, so that the hormones of happiness circulate in the blood and the child's body develops harmoniously. The brain will then develop well, and later your child will be intelligent, attentive, healthy, active, balanced, sociable, patient, psychologically resilient, caring and happy! The positive emotions of the mother are a great material for a solid foundation of the health, intellect and talents of this future child!

Dr. Thomas Verny, one of the founders of prenatal psychology, explains that your love is your child's shield against life's difficulties.

This is how you prepare your child to succeed in life, face the challenges of dynamism, optimism and hope.

During pregnancy, the harmonious life you live as a couple neutralizes even the negative aspects of your genetic heritage, while promoting and enhancing its positive aspects.

Studies demonstrate the importance of partner relationship quality as predictors of maternal emotional distress in early pregnancy. Perinatal depression is a well known clinical phenomenon and quite often it is connected with relationship quality.

Dissatisfaction with a partner is an important predictor of maternal emotional distress during pregnancy, but a good relationship can have a protective effect against some stressors. Thus, it can also be concluded that women who have a good and close relationship with partners are able to tolerate some amount of stress without consequences.

The mental health of the mother is important both for herself, and for the physical and psychological health of her children and the welfare of the family. Scientific studies have shown a link between the mother's emotional state during pregnancy and the course of childbirth, as well as with the child's health.



Healthy relationship and communication skills are vital to raise a family. For couples who enjoy communication skills, parenthood will be the best and most pleasant experience in their lives. High levels of positive communication will lead to couples and their children's mental health and couple's good relationship can have a protective effect against stressors including anxiety of pregnancy.

The foundation of socio-emotional competencies and especially affect and stress regulation capacities are laid early in life. They are primarily learned in the context of parent-infant/child interaction with possible long-lasting effects regarding stress regulation for future relationships and mental health over the lifespan.

Couple's positive communication will lead to couple's and their children's mental health and couple's good relationship can have a protective effect against stressors including anxiety of pregnancy. The latest studies show that antenatal partner support is important during the pregnancy and can improve or make worse pregnancy outcomes.

The importance of a good partner relationship that consists of both emotional and practical support should be highlighted to all expecting couples.

Parent's attitudes towards pregnancy, or rather the future child, can greatly influence the child's future life scenario and the development of his or her personality. If a child enters the world as desired and expected, he will grow up safe and confident in himself and his place in life. Otherwise, he may be low in self-esteem and unsure.

The emotions a woman feels during pregnancy also directly affect the baby. The mother and child have a unified circulatory system and the composition of hormones in it changes depending on the mother's emotions. From a scientific point of view, human well-being can be explained as the result of brain activity, which is helped by the correct and balanced action of hormones. The effect of several hormones on human well-being has been scientifically proven, so some of them have acquired the status of happiness hormone. Well-being is affected by hormones such as dopamine, adrenaline, melatonin, oxytocin and endorphins. Hormones generally have a significant effect on various processes that are important for health and development, such as growth, metabolism, reproduction and emotions.

If the mother experiences a lot of stress during pregnancy, the so-called stress hormone cortisol is released. If this happens often and for a long time, it can negatively affect the child's nervous system and his development in general.

The mother and child are perceived as a dyad during pregnancy, and everything that happens to the mother also affects the child. That is why it is very important that the couple's relationship is orderly, peaceful and supportive. In case of relationship problems, it is recommended to seek help and support from specialists.

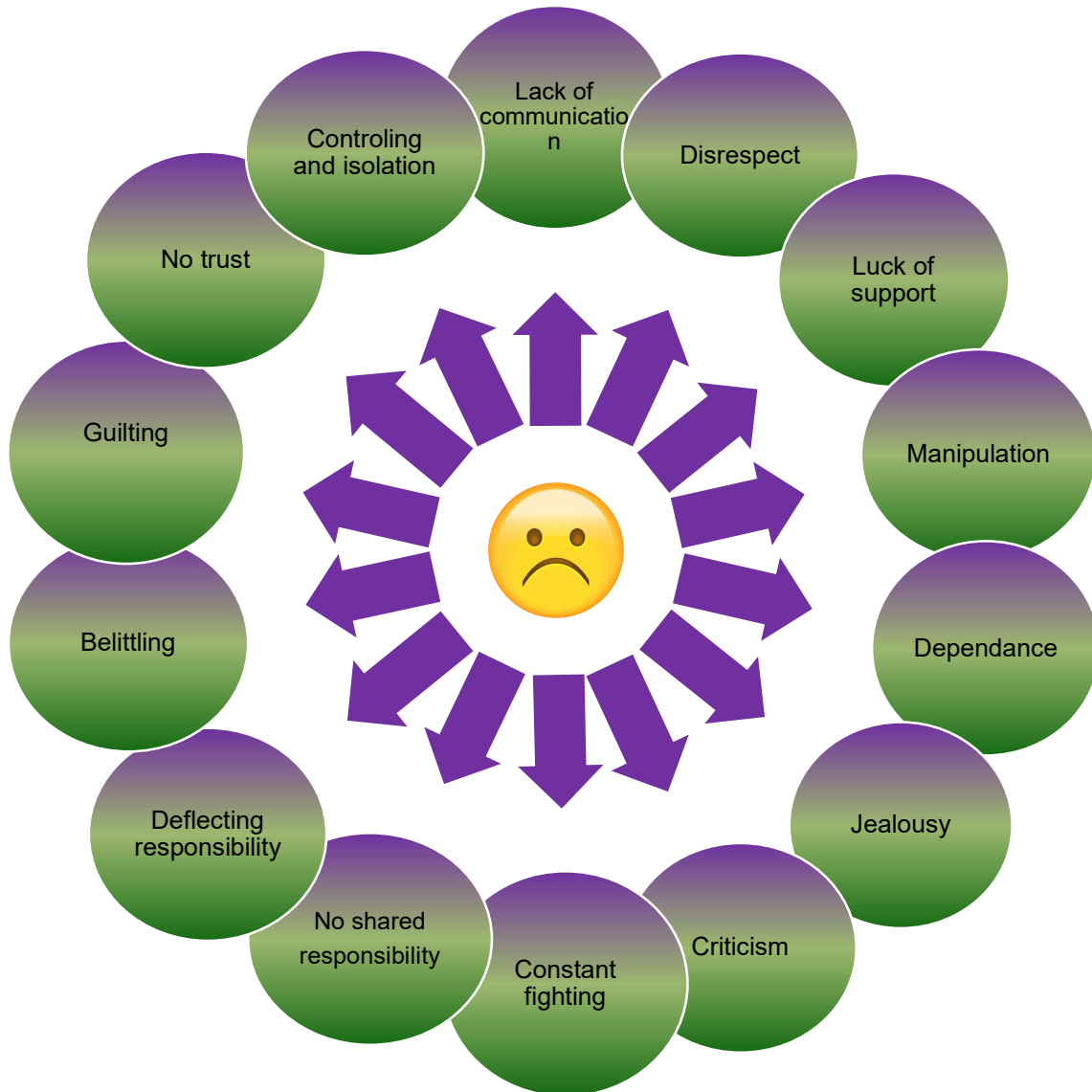
### **1.3. The root of negative behavior – how behavior starts in general**

As mentioned earlier, we gain relationship experience in the family. So, the way we build our relationship would be similar, but we can also change it deliberately.



How to understand that we are in an unhealthy relationship? The main indicator will be our well-being. If a relationship does not bring joy and happiness, but, on the contrary, makes you feel resentment and guilt, anxiety, depression and insecurity, even fear, then you must definitely think that something is wrong.

### Key features of an unhealthy partnership



**The main rules of dysfunctional relationships are with three "no": do not speak, do not feel, and do not trust.**

**Dysfunctional relationships are all about one person's emotional "ownership" of the other.**



### **Lack of Communication**

Unable to talk about difficult topics. There are a lot of misunderstandings that never to get worked out. Engaging in arguments versus discussion.

### **Disrespect**

Disrespect includes name calling, breaking boundaries, and constantly questioning and criticizing the other person's choices and decisions.

### **Lack of support**

You do not feel the partner's support for your goals, interests, desires and needs.

### **Manipulation**

When someone tries to control your decisions, actions or emotions. Manipulation is often hard to spot, because it can be expressed in subtle or passive-aggressive ways. You know you're being manipulated if someone is trying to convince you to do things you don't feel comfortable doing, ignores you until they get their way, or tries to influence your feelings.

Manipulation can take many forms to include: mind games, convincing a partner to ignore their wants/desires/needs and using guilt to manipulate others.

### **Dependence**

Every person deserves a certain level of independence. If someone is dependent on someone financially, emotionally, or psychologically that could indicate an unhealthy relationship.

### **Jealousy**

Jealousy becomes unhealthy when its constant or excessive and becomes about one partner possessing the other.

### **Criticism**

Using criticism to tear the other person down could be a form of emotional abuse.

### **Constant fighting**

While all relationships will have some conflict in them, if you are constantly fighting, this could be a bad sign. You shouldn't have to feel combative when you're with your partner, family or friends.

### **No shared responsibility**

One of the partners lives as if the care for the common housing, finances, food would not apply to him.

### **Deflecting Responsibility**





When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior. They may blame you or other people for their own actions. Often, this includes making excuses based on alcohol or drug use, mental health issues or past experiences (like a cheating ex or divorced parents).

### **Belittling**

When someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself. This includes name-calling, making rude remarks about people you're close with, or criticizing you. It's also belittling when someone makes fun of you in a way that makes you feel bad, even if it's played off as a joke. Over time, this can make you lose confidence in yourself or your abilities.

### **Guilt**

When someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it's your job to keep them happy. They may blame you for things that are out of your control and make you feel bad for them. This includes threatening to hurt themselves or others if you don't do as they say or stay with them. They might also pressure you to do something that you're not comfortable with by claiming that it's important to them or that it'll hurt their feelings if you don't do it.

### **No trust**

You cannot be sure that your partner is telling you the truth and cannot believe his promises.

### **Controlling and isolation**

Behavior includes controlling where others go, see and do. Other examples include demanding social media passwords, checking text messages, and using intimidation or coercion to get their way. Emotional, verbal and physical abuse is also a form of control.

When someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people. This behavior often starts slowly with someone asking you to spend more 1:1 time with them but can later escalate to demands that you don't see certain people. Often, they will ask you to choose between them and your friends, insist that you spend all your time with them, or make you question your own judgment of friends and family. If you are experiencing isolation, you may end up feeling like you're dependent on your partner for love, money or acceptance.

If you notice any of these signs in a relationship or a partner talks about it, it's worth remembering that "we all come from our childhood" but as an adult you have to start taking responsibility for your own life. This means that we can change unwanted behavioral habits.

You don't have to blame your partner, yourself or parents if things don't go smoothly. The best solution is for both of you to talk about it all together and think about what you can change in your behavior. If necessary, it is possible to seek the help of specialists (couple counselors, family therapists, etc.).

When you think of a child, it is very important that there is stability, peace and harmony in your relationship.



## 2. Main researches/ studies concerning the relationships.

### 2.1. Conclusions about negative aspects of future parents' behaviors concerning relationships and the impact on children health

There are many studies that examine the relationship between a mother's emotional state and mental health during pregnancy, which in turn is largely related to the couple relationships, the quality of childbirth and the child's mental and physical health.

In one of them is presented considerable evidence that a mother's emotional state during pregnancy can affect a baby's **brain development**.

This is due to the effect of the changing uterine environment on the development of the fetus during different sensitive periods. This effect persists on children over time and into adulthood.

It is undoubtedly important for physical health; if the baby grows worse than it should in the womb, he will have a higher risk of developing various diseases later in life. But there is considerable evidence that it is also important for neurological development of the brain.

Studies have shown that elevated levels of cortisol in the fetal fluid were later associated with lower cognitive function in the child.

Maternal anxiety also alters placental function. The amount of cortisol-degrading enzyme decreases, more cortisol passes through the placenta and affects the baby's development.

Another study shows accumulating evidence that maternal antenatal stress, including depression and anxiety, is associated with an **increased risk of behavioral and emotional problems** in the child.

The quality of family or couple relationships, including support (e.g., providing love, attention, interest and care) and stress (e.g., arguments, criticism, making too many demands), can affect well-being through psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological pathways. Stressors and support are key components of stress process theory, arguing that stress can reduce mental health, while support can serve as a protective resource.

Studies clearly show that stress undermines health and well-being, and strains in relationships with family members are an especially salient type of stress. Stress in relationships may also lead to **health-compromising behaviors** as coping mechanisms to deal with stress. The stress of relationship strain can result in physiological processes that **impair immune function, affect the cardiovascular system, and increase risk for depression**, whereas positive relationships are associated with lower allostatic load (i.e., “wear and tear” on the body accumulating from stress). Clearly, the quality of family relationships can have considerable consequences for well-being. Dissatisfied couple relationships can be a **critical predictor of mother’s emotional distress in pregnancy**.

The stressful or torturing relationship by the spouse can **raise the woman’s mental disorders during gestation**. Virtually, poor marital relationships are the most stable factor influencing anxiety and other psychological health-related problems in gestation.



Not feeling affection about family circle and generally, disorder in marital relationships can **increase anxiety, pregnancy aversion.**

Pregnancy born anxiety is high and this anxiety can **create physical and psychological issues during gestation and even after delivery.**

Also, it can cause **complications for the fetus and newly born baby** and these complications can **influence the child's future.**

Pregnancy born anxiety has reverse effects on the mother and her newly born infant's health including **preterm birth, lower birth weight, increased nausea and vomiting, higher risk for preeclampsia, lower Apgar score, neurological disorders, cognitive disorders and behavioral/emotional problems.**

There is known evidence linking prenatal psychosocial stress and social support to perinatal maternal and infant health. This is also demonstrated by a study on couple conflict behavior during pregnancy as a predictor of subsequent birth outcomes. These findings highlight the significance of couple interactions in predicting **parental birth stress and birth outcomes.**

Negative conflict behavior was related to **higher birth risk** scores, and conversely, positive conflict behavior was associated with lower birth risk. Similarly, more negative conflict behavior predicted higher mother-reported birth stress, while positive conflict behavior predicted lower father-reported birth stress.

These results have important clinical implications for potential couple interventions during pregnancy that can shape fetal development, the labor and delivery experience, and influence child and family health.

One more study shows prenatal parental stress linked to **behavior problems in toddlers.** Expectant parents' emotional struggles predict emotional and behavioral problems in 2-year-olds, new research shows. The same study reveals, for the first time, that couple conflict helps explain emotional problems in very young children.

There is accumulating evidence that maternal antenatal stress, including depression and anxiety, is associated with an increased risk of behavioural and emotional problems in the child. Many studies have shown maternal depression and anxiety during pregnancy to be associated with altered infant temperament and behavioural stress reactivity. These altered infant responses can be an indicator of vulnerability for the development of psychopathologies later in life. There are also a small number of studies that show an increase in psychiatric risk during later childhood and adolescence.

Study of two economically and ethnically distinct regions highlights **higher levels of antenatal anxiety, depression, and smoking among pregnant women** who report low partner support.



## 2.2. Conclusions about positive behaviors concerning relationships and the impact on children health

A large attitude study shows that the warmth of parental relationships contributes to a positive birth outcome and better health for the child.

Healthy relationships may prompt social support, enhance self-esteem, and promote healthier behaviors in general and in coping with stress. As the above studies show, it is very important to reduce stress during pregnancy.

Mutual support may provide resource for coping that dulls the detrimental impact of stressors on well-being, and support may also contribute to well-being by increasing self-esteem which involves more positive views of oneself. Those who receive support from loved ones may feel a greater sense of self-worth, and this increased self-esteem can be a psychological resource, encouraging optimism, positive affect, and better mental health. The couple may also regulate each other's behavior (i.e., social control) and provide information and encouragement to behave in healthier ways.

The more relationships contentment, the lower pregnancy born anxiety where the relationship signals the very decisive role of the partner in modifying or aggravating gestation anxiety.

Pregnancy will be the time for nurturing relationships, because of the emotional and physical changes that you both will going through and the new roles that you're thinking about.

Communication is an important way of nurturing healthy relationships in pregnancy.

This includes:

- Talkings to each other about how you both feel about pregnancy and what to expect - both positive and negative. Try to talk in a way that explains your point of view, not to criticize what your partner has said.
- Sharing about your hopes and dreams for family and what rituals and traditions are important to both of you.
- Talkings about your parenting styles. If your styles turn out to be different, you may have to work on finding compromise.
- Open and honest sharing about your sexual needs to avoid misunderstandings.
- Attentive and empathetic listening to each other. Good listening is to let your partner finish the conversation before you speak. You can make also a questions to help test if you understand what your partner is saying.

### **Some examples of positive behaviors that can help change and improve relationships:**

#### ➤ **Share your feelings**

Discussing your feelings and needs can be difficult. However, people can only begin to understand you at a deep level if you share your feelings with them. Try to express yourself. When you don't want to talk, use a journal to explore the feelings that you have trouble communicating. This will give you some time to reflect until you are ready to talk about it.



➤ **Build trust**

Trust is the safe feeling that enables you to be vulnerable with another person, without fear of judgment, abandonment, or betrayal. There are particular times during a relationship when trust can be cultivated and strengthened: when someone expresses a need for emotional connection or support, during disagreements, and when discussing a conflict from the past. Listening deeply to your partner during these moments can pave the way for trust to build, enabling you both to be more open and supportive of one another.

➤ **Listen deeply**

One of the best ways you can show your partner how much you care is to listen to them with an open mind and your full attention. Turn off the television and remove distractions. Make eye contact and try to hear what the person is saying, without letting your own judgments get in the way.

Creation an open space allows us to fully understand others for who they are. This can make us better communicators and increase the level of trust and comfort in the relationship.

➤ **Be vulnerable**

Although the idea of being vulnerable exposing yourself emotionally to another person may sound frightening but it can help in developing strong relationships with others. Without truly opening up to another person, we are unable to form bonds of complete trust and intimacy. Vulnerability holds intimate relationships together. You can be vulnerable by sharing your feelings, even when they are uncomfortable—for example, by telling a friend that you need someone to listen, or allowing yourself to cry when describing a difficult time in your life.

➤ **Manage conflict**

Conflict management is one of the most important skills for sustaining healthy relationships. This includes clear and open communication, mutual respect, shared exploration, an orientation to collaborative problem solving, and a commitment to resolution.

Conflict management involves analyzing a situation and developing a solution that meets the needs of all concerned. Remember to actively listen and speak in a fair and balanced manner. If you are caught up in the heat of anger, try defusing it, so you can approach the situation less reactively.

➤ **Don't stereotype**

Within any given group, there is a very broad variation due to individual uniqueness. Gender, age, and cultural stereotypes are common in our society. Do not use statements like these:

"Oh well, he's a guy."

"Of course she feels that way, she's a woman!"

"He's too old for that!"

➤ **Put your relationship first**

Do not allow job responsibilities and business to shift the relationship to the background

➤ **Practise gratitude**

Gratitude is one of the most accessible positive emotions, and its effects can strengthen intimate relationships and this positive boost is felt by both parties—the one who expresses gratitude and the one who receives it. Remembering to say “thank you” when a friend listens



or your spouse brings you a cup of coffee can set off an upward spiral of trust, closeness, and affection.

➤ **Learn to forgive**

It's normal for disagreements or betrayal to arise in relationships, but your choice about how to handle the hurt can have a powerful effect on the healing process. Choosing to forgive can bring about a variety of benefits, both physical and emotional.

➤ **Be compassionate**

Compassion is the willingness to be open to yourself and others, even in painful times, with a gentle, nonjudgmental attitude. When you feel compassionate toward another person - whether a romantic partner, friend, relative, or colleague - you open the gates for better communication and a stronger bond.

➤ **Accept other person as he is**

Don't think he needs to change to please you.

➤ **Balance social and alone time**

Plan time for common activities and let each other meet your friends or relatives, or spend time alone.

Caring for the quality of relationships is a very important and valuable contribution to the well-being of your family and to the future child's psycho-emotional and physical health, and thus to shared happiness.

It is possible to find different ways of communication with the baby during pregnancy, which will provide joy and pleasant moments for you all. These are various art therapies, touch therapy, moving and dance therapy, music therapy and much more.

You don't need to wait until your baby is born to bond with them. Pregnancy can be the perfect time to start forming an attachment with your baby, which is very important for their development once your baby has actually arrived.

Attachment formation during pregnancy is possible due to the development of the baby's senses:

- 18 weeks - begin to hear the sounds of mothers body, such as heartbeat and stomach rumbling
- 22 weeks they open their eyes and can see light.
- 26 weeks - may react to noises both inside and outside the mother's body, and may be soothed by the sound of her voice. The outside noise baby hears inside the uterus is about half the volume we hear. However, unborn babies may still startle and cry if exposed to a sudden loud noise.
- 26 weeks they can move in response to a hand being rubbed on the mother's belly.
- 32 weeks - baby may start to recognise certain vowel sounds from your language and may remember music played to them in the womb.

**Communication and attachment forming with baby during pregnancy:**

- Talk and sing to your baby, knowing he can hear you.



- Play music that mimics a heartbeat of around 60 beats per minute, such as lullabies. You can also use joyful or calming classical music and relaxing music.
- Gently touch and rub a belly or massage it.
- Respond to baby's kicks, gently push against the baby or rub the belly where the kick occurred and see if there is a response.
- Give yourself time to reflect, go for a walk or have a warm bath and think about the baby. You may like to write a diary or stories to the baby about what you are experiencing.

The connection with the child will help to experience the birth process more consciously, which will lead to a positive birth result.

### **3. Recommendations (WHO) Examples of evidence-based interventions**

Increasingly, the importance of the couple relationship has been recognized in relation to the mental health and well-being of partners, children and wider family. The move to include the couple relationship as a key aspect of life is supported by a broad evidence base.

#### **4. How behavior can change- the role of professionals**

Different kind of professionals (health care specialists, educators, social workers, media and others in contact with young people) can disseminate information widely among young people about the importance of responsible attitudes in personal relationships and the creation of the next generation, as well as about support and assistance in the region.

Negative conflict behavior was related to higher birth risk scores, and conversely, positive conflict behavior was associated with lower birth risk. Similarly, more negative conflict behavior predicted higher mother-reported birth stress, while positive conflict behavior predicted lower birth stress.

These results have important clinical implications for potential couple interventions before and during pregnancy that can shape fetal development, the labor and delivery experience, and influence child and family health.

Professionals can offer groups to gain a better understanding of relationships, self-awareness groups, individual and couple counseling, communication training, stress management, family planning, courses for future parents, and a variety of other opportunities to help young people prepare for the role of future parents. Training communication skills results in family efficiency in issues such as problem solving, communications, roles, emotional accompaniment, emotional association or intercommunion, behavior control, and general family function.

The more positive interaction between the couple, the higher problem solving and negotiation skills while the higher the negative interactions between them, the fewer the problem solving & negotiation skills.

Training communication skills has been recognized as the most effective method to make marital relationships closer because the depth of the intimacy created between two persons depends on



their capability to convey thoughts, feelings, needs and desires clearly and effectively. If the couple can share each other's feelings more comfortably and express their requirements without fear and misunderstanding by communication training, undoubtedly, they will get close in their relationships boosting all dimensions of their life.

### **5. Education for future parents/population for a healthy lifestyle concerning the relationships and in general – the role of educational programs, the role of community, schools. How information can be spread**

In view of the conclusions of all the above-mentioned studies on the impact of the quality of the relationship on the quality of childbirth and the health of the mother and child, it is very important to inform the young people about it.

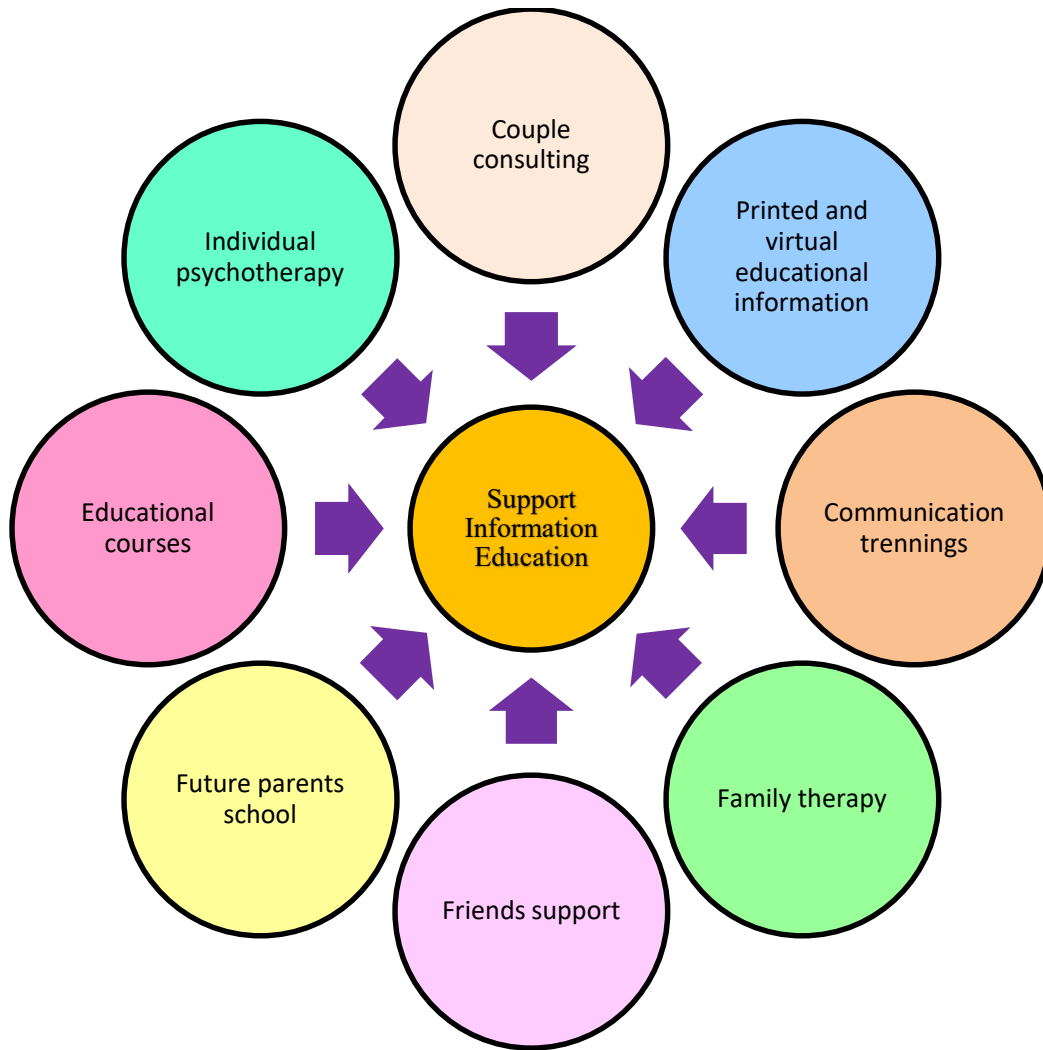
The results of studies demonstrate that emotional intelligence program for couples focused on enhancing mutual support and with preventive effects on maternal mental health, can reduce incidence of birth problems among women at elevated risk. Such improvements in birth outcomes could translate into substantial reductions in public and personal healthcare costs.

School curricula should include topics on sex education, healthy life style, including healthy relationships, and an understanding of the impact of couple relationships on the future child's mental and physical health.

Information on support and assistance opportunities for future parents should be widely available. Information on support centers and their educational programs should be posted on municipal websites and different other sites attended by young people. Printed and visual information about family support centers and their offerings should be placed in various gathering places and events.

Study of two economically and ethnically distinct regions highlights higher levels of antenatal anxiety, depression, and smoking among pregnant women who report low partner support. Partner support may be an important and potentially modifiable target for interventions to improve pregnancy outcomes. This confirms the need for wide dissemination of educational information.





**Education for future parents.**



Research suggests that parental education is indeed an important and significant unique predictor of child achievement. For example, in an analysis of data from several large-scale developmental studies concluded that maternal education was linked significantly to children's intellectual outcomes even after controlling for a variety of other SES indicators such as household income. There are direct effects of parental education, but not income, on European American children's standardized achievement scores; both parental education and income exerted indirect effects on parents' achievement-fostering behaviors, and subsequently children's achievement, through their effects on parents' educational expectations.

Parent education and family interaction patterns during childhood also might be linked more directly to the child's developing academic success and achievement-oriented attitudes. In the general social learning and social-cognitive framework, behavior is shaped in part through observational and direct learning experiences. Those experiences lead to the formation of internalized cognitive scripts, values, and beliefs that guide and maintain behavior over time. According to Eccles, this cognitive process accounts for the emergence and persistence of achievement-related behaviors and ultimately to successful achievement. Eccles' framework emphasizes in particular the importance of children's *expectations for success*, with parents assuming the role of "expectancy socializers".

Thus, for example, a child exposed to parents who model achievement-oriented behavior (e.g., obtaining advanced degrees; reading frequently; encouraging a strong work ethic) and provide achievement-oriented opportunities (e.g., library and museum trips; after-school enrichment programs; educational books and videos) should develop the guiding belief that achievement is to be valued, pursued, and anticipated. This belief should then in turn promote successful outcomes across development, including high school graduation, the pursuit of higher learning, and the acquisition of high-prestige occupations. Not surprisingly, there are positive relations between parents' levels of education and parents' expectations for their children's success, suggesting that more highly educated parents actively encourage their children to develop high expectations of their own. Importantly, on the other hand, a review found that parents who experience difficult economic times have children who are more pessimistic about their educational and vocational futures.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dubow, E. F., Boxer, P., & Huesmann, L. R. (2009). Long-term Effects of Parents' Education on Children's Educational and Occupational Success: Mediation by Family Interactions, Child Aggression, and Teenage Aspirations. *Merrill-Palmer quarterly (Wayne State University. Press)*, 55(3), 224–249. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mpq.0.0030>



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