



# Peer Support Team Newsletter

Jack A. Digliani, PhD, EdD  
Police Psychologist  
[www.jackdigliani.com](http://www.jackdigliani.com)



Peer Support Teams are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

---

**Serve - Protect - Support - Surpass**

**January 2024** Volume 2, Issue 1

---

## A New Year: Time to Think About Relationships

A new year is a good time to think about relationships. Most of us have many relationships, including those with family, friends, co-workers, supervisors, and so on.

We also have a relationship with ourselves. This is why you can be pleased with yourself, angry with yourself, and have various other thoughts about yourself. Self-thoughts are sometimes referred to as those that comprise our *self-concept*. Self-concept is related to how we feel about ourselves - *self-esteem*. As you know from life experience, self-concept and self-esteem are interactive, mutually influential, and dynamic. They can and do vary, and they can change substantially over time. Where does this self-relationship capability come from? Most psychologists agree that we can thank the complexity of the human brain. Hopefully, you have a positive, even if imperfect, relationship with yourself. If not, improving your self-relationship is possible. You can bring about desired self-relationship improvement by a self-assessment followed by implementation of various change-strategies. You can do this on your own or enlist the support of trusted others - including PST members and mental health professionals.

What of your relationships with others? If most of these relationships are satisfying and rewarding, congratulations, you're doing okay. But if some of these relationships are distressing and unrewarding, you can accept the status quo or consider the following:

- Talk to those with whom you would like the relationship to change – be clear, avoid ambiguity (“I would like to talk with you without us yelling at one another” **not** “I would like better communication”) To be maximally effective, this option usually requires a change in thinking and behavior of all involved persons, including yourself.
- Work on developing new ways to interpret others behavior so that it is less distressing to you (“It’s not about me, maybe they’re just having a bad day”).
- Minimize contact. You may need to consider minimizing contact with a distressing person. While this can be difficult with some persons, like family members or co-workers, it can be done. Avoid “minimizing” in ways that create additional difficulties.
- Withdraw. If nothing else works and you feel the relationship is beyond improvement, consider withdrawing. Remaining in a distressing, barely tolerable, or toxic relationship is detrimental to your psychological and emotional well-being. When do such relationships cross the line to become intolerable? There is no single answer to this question. This is because toleration of maltreatment varies widely. Factors include: relationship expectations, sense of psychological/emotional abuse and/or dependence, threats of or actual physical violence, and an assessment of what is possible for you within your value system and current circumstances. Happy New Year...JAD

**Redefining distressing relationships is a great way to mitigate stress and improve well-being**



### Good advice from the Mayo Clinic on how to avoid slip-falls during winter:

#### Stay Inside

Also, wear proper footwear, take your time, use assistance, take small steps.

### On the Science Scene

What is the easiest way to lose weight (if you don't mind traveling)

*Weight* represents the relationship between mass and gravity. Simply, for objects, *mass* can be thought of as the quantity of matter that comprises the object. As a person (and object), your mass is determined by the total number of atoms that comprise your body. Weight is the result of the effect of gravity (and other forces) on mass. In various gravitational fields, your weight will change while your mass will not. This is why you will weigh less on the moon than you do on earth (gravity on the moon is about 1/6 that of earth). Therefore, a 150-pound person on earth will weigh about 25 pounds on the moon. But you don't need to travel to the moon to lose weight this way. A trip to a mountain top or the equator will do. This is because the gravity force of earth is determined from the earth's center. The farther you get from the center of the earth, the less you will weigh. Weighing less on a mountain top is easily understandable, but why would you weigh less at the equator? You weigh less at the equator because the earth is not a perfect sphere. Its rotation causes it to bulge around the middle, thus you're farther from the center of the earth at the equator than at other earthly locations. Mountain top or equator, you won't look different, but you'll weigh less...not much less, but less.

## Signs of a Toxic Relationship

**Toxic people do not show their negative side early in the relationship** - they are often extremely charismatic and seem to be the ideal or perfect partner. Then, over time, they start to show their true colors and become controlling, demanding, and emotionally abusive to their partner. Signs of a toxic relationship may take months or even years to evolve. Typical signs of these damaging relationships include:

**Isolation** — the toxic person attempts to isolate the partner from family and friends to limit support and to increase dependence on the relationship.

**Ongoing disagreements and arguments** — it is common for people dating and in relationships to have minor disagreements, but toxic relationships are primarily based on arguments and negativity. The controlling partner is always berating, belittling, and putting down the other person or criticizing their attempts to do anything positive or independent.

**Blaming** — a toxic person has no sense of personal responsibility for negative things and events in a relationship. If your partner is willing to take full responsibility for all the good but none of the responsibility for anything bad or unpleasant, this is a critical sign of a toxic relationship.

**Jealousy and dishonesty** — a toxic relationship is often one of accusing a partner of flirting, dating, or even having a sexual relationship with someone outside of the relationship. At the same time, the controlling or toxic person may actively and openly engage in these same behaviors.

**Denial and gaslighting** — a toxic person is unable or unwilling to see his or her impact on the other person. They deny issues, attempt to gaslight the other person, manipulate events, or attempt to recreate history to put themselves in the best light.

**Giving in on everything** — while it is important to be willing to give and take, compromise, or even do what the other partner wants in a healthy relationship, this is expected behavior in a toxic relationship. If you find you are giving into everything, even things you find morally, personally, or ethically objectionable just to keep the other person happy, you are in a toxic relationship.

(Sherry Gaba, LCSW) [www.sherrygaba.com](http://www.sherrygaba.com)