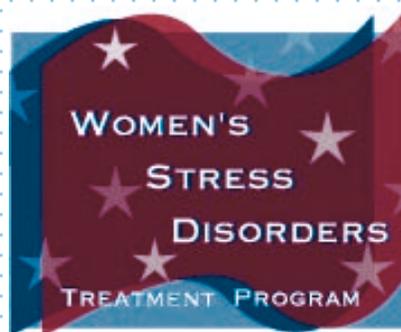


Making and Keeping Friends

◆————◆
**Choosing positive
relationships**



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I don't seem to be too good at this

- ◆ Luckily, there are some skills and guidelines that can help this go better for you.
- ◆ It is important to remember that not everyone will be your best friend and no one will meet all of your needs.
- ◆ It is helpful to cultivate friendships at different levels (e.g., your bowling friend, your walking companion, your co-worker, your heart friend).



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*I don't know how to
meet possible friends*

- One way to begin is to think about what things you already enjoy doing that might work well with others.
- If most of your hobbies are solitary you can either think of what other things you'd like to do that include other people, or you can figure out how to build people into solitary activities.

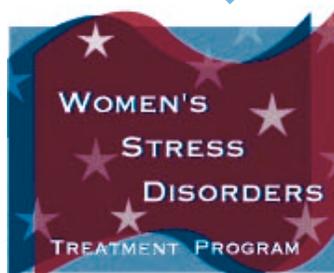


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How would I build people into solitary activities?

- ◆ Book groups are a good example of that. You all read in private, but then get together to talk about what you read.
- ◆ Gardening is another hobby like that. You may only work in your own garden, but there are garden clubs where they discuss what to plant, etc.

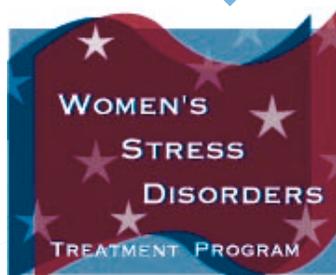


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***But I'm not much
of a talker***

- That's true for lots of people.
- It might be that you can do a more physical activity together, such as playing on a recreational volleyball team, playing chess, or helping clean the lakes with a local environmental group.
- Sometimes people do solitary things, like bird watching or drawing, in a group.

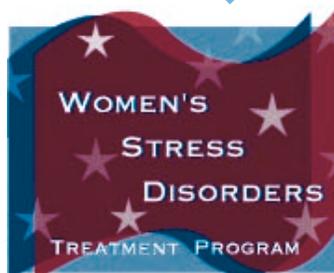


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How do you know if someone would be a good friend?

- Move in small steps. You might start with noticing whether you look forward to seeing them and if you have some common interests.
- As you consider developing a closer friendship, you can consider whether they're trustworthy, by deciding whether you would loan them money or your favorite possession.

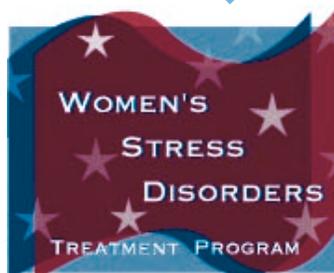


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What else?

- Notice how they treat other people. If they treat others badly, they are likely to do the same with you.
- Balance giving and receiving in a relationship. Ask them to “be there” for you in some small way and notice whether they make an effort to give as well as receive.

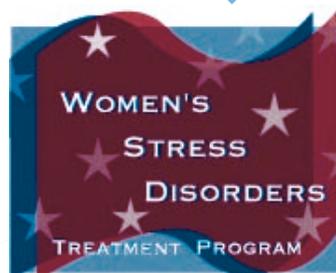


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***But I keep feeling
disappointed by my friends***

- Sometimes this is a sign that the people you have chosen as friends are not trustworthy.
- This might also mean that you are expecting too much from others.
- If you are constantly needing people to “prove” their loyalty or love, and keep having friends get tired of that and leave, you may have unrealistic expectations.

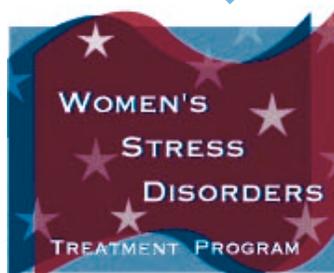


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How do I know if I'm expecting too much?

- ◆ Consider how intimate the relationship actually is. This is related to the length of time you've known each other as well as the type of contact you've had.
- ◆ For example, if you met them three weeks ago at work, don't expect them to be willing to take you to the airport at 4 am or to hear about your most personal experiences.



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What is reasonable to expect from a friend?

- ◆ In general, if someone cares about you, they try to treat you well, and most of the time are able to do so.
- ◆ They won't be able to do that every single time. Their self interest or obligations will sometimes make them act in ways you wish they wouldn't.

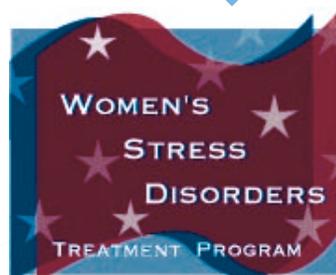


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Okay. Anything more specific?

- ◆ We'll list a number of guidelines for you to consider.
- ◆ Think about whether they make sense to you and fit with your values.



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***Do you like who they
are on the inside?***

- A new car, a nice body, or a lot of money are nice things, but they don't necessarily make for a good friend.
- What do you notice about their ability to care for you and others, about their integrity, about their ability to take care of themselves on their own?



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*Can they be both competent
or steady and sensitive?*

- By steady and competent, we mean substantial and effective in the world.
- Sensitive means that this person knows both what is happening inside and outside of themselves. It includes knowing their emotions as well as their thoughts and physical sensations.



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Do you share some of the same interests and values?

- ◆ If you enjoy gardening, you are more likely to meet someone with similar interests at a gardening club than in a judo class.
- ◆ Likewise with values. If you are devoutly religious, you are more likely to meet someone with similar values at your place of worship than at a tavern.



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*Can the two of you
discuss it when you
hurt the other?*

- ❖ It is impossible to entirely avoid hurting others. However, it is important that you do not get hurt by someone in the same way over and over. The bottom line in a friendship is they feel sorry they hurt you.
- ❖ Likewise, it is important in a friendship that the other person be able to tell you when you have hurt them, so that you have a chance to change your behavior.

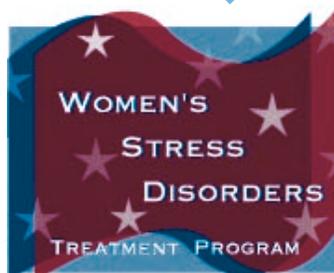


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***Have they shown they
can learn and change
their behavior?***

- ◆ This is related to the last point.
- ◆ If someone constantly responds to things by saying something like, “well, that’s just the way I am”, they probably won’t be willing and able to change those things that hurt you and the relationship.
- ◆ It’s tempting to focus on what someone *could* be. It’s important to recognize what they are *actually* able to be.

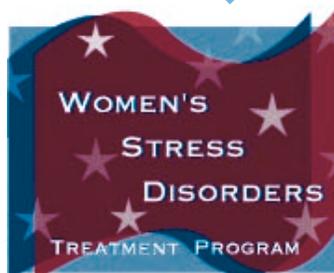
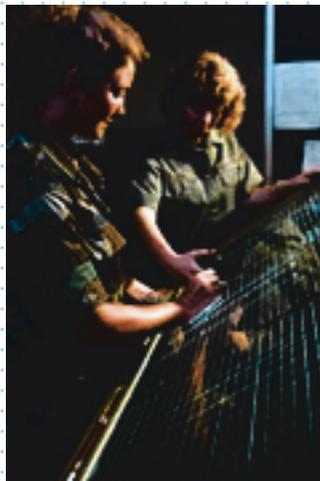


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Can they laugh at themselves?

It is good to have a friend who doesn't take themselves too seriously and shows you they are human by laughing at their embarrassing mistakes, personality traits, and weaknesses.

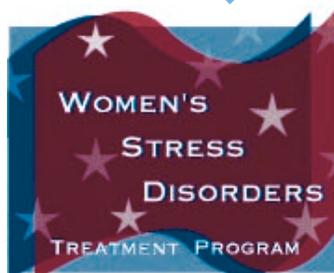


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Can they both give and take?

- Being out of balance in either direction eventually leads to problems.
- If you find yourself constantly in the role of the giver, it may be that you are not allowing others to give to you. If they seem to meet your other standards, you may need to practice asking for and accepting help from them.
- Remember to strive for balance.

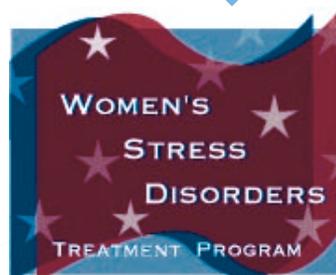


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Can you overlook their flaws?

- ◆ Sometimes the flaws seem quirky and charming at first but, if most people would find them intolerable, you may want to reconsider.
- ◆ Some faults or characteristics make it impossible to have a true friendship:
 - *Drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity*
 - *Inability to tell the truth - covering up their mistakes with lies*
 - *Controlling or threatening behavior*



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***Do they make your life
bigger or smaller?***

- This is the sign of a true, heart friend.
- Look for someone who supports your personal growth and positive goals.
- Look for someone who is genuinely happy about your successes.



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