

Proposed Relationship Agreement and Statement of Expectations

This Agreement and Statement is understood to apply to the single relationship between two individuals. For the case where several individuals are involved in a multi-person group relationship, this agreement is to apply to each couple within that group. It is assumed that if each person in the group accepts this Agreement and Statement with each other person in the group individually, it will be universally accepted as proper treatment for the group as a whole and/or the group as a whole will have a separate Agreement and Statement that accommodates the larger group dynamic for any details that are not covered in this Agreement and Statement or that are specific to that group as a whole that does not apply to other relationships engaged in by each individual outside the group.

It is also understood that additional unique rules, limitations, exceptions, restrictions, contradictions, etc., may be applied to the two people in this relationship that are not covered by this Agreement and Statement and are not necessarily applicable to the other partner(s) with whom each individual may also be involved, so long as everyone affected accepts said amendments. This Agreement and Statement is not intended to offer complete coverage for all possible relationships between all possible people or all possible scenarios and situations. Individuals have unique and individual needs and therefore may require additional structure to their individual relationships that may not be required with all of their relationships. This document is intended to be an overall Agreement and Statement pertaining to the ethical and respectful treatment of both people in this relationship and to clarify the nature of this relationship as network-based and intentionally polyamorous with inclusive intentions.

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I. General:

A. This relationship is expected to be poly and open about it. Neither person should be expected to hide that (s)he is in a relationship with each other nor that the relationship is poly in nature.

B. This relationship is a relationship of equals. Neither person is expected to allow the other to make decisions for him/her. Each partner is to make his/her own choices.

C. This relationship expects that each individual carries personal responsibility for the consequences (intended and unintended) for his/her own choices. It is not necessary for each individual to police the actions of the other because both partners desire to treat each other with consideration and care and do so by making choices with respect to how those choices affect the other person.

D. The basis of this relationship is a mutual agreement that both parties are happier being together than not being together.

E. This relationship is intended to abide by safer sex practices. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid risk of illness.

F. This relationship is founded on a notion of intertwined, entwined, inclusive or "family-oriented" poly - that it is preferable for the significant others of each person to be friendly with each other and a part of the overall group and that the significant others of each person do not view any other significant other as "competition" for time or resources.

G. This relationship is founded on honesty. The truth may not always be pleasant, but if the truth is so unacceptable that it cannot be shared, there are more significant problems in the relationship.

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II. Expectations of general treatment:

A. If arrangements to be together are made, it is expected that each person will spend that time together unless a very good reason comes up that it will not work out. Such exceptions should be rare.

i. "Good reason" may include (but not be limited to) work conflicts, medical emergencies, long distance partners/family/friends become available after arrangements are made (covered in next paragraph), important situation or circumstance arises that is difficult or impossible to schedule for another time.

ii. "Good reason" should also be considered acceptable by both partners affected by the cancellation/reschedule.

iii. However, even if both partners accept the "Good Reason", it is still reasonable for each or both partners to feel disappointment at the cancellation/reschedule and should be allowed to feel this disappointment without reprisal, embarrassment, shame, or punishment from the other partner for having these feelings, as long as these feelings are not used in any form of retaliation or passive-aggressive punishment for the cancellation/reschedule of the event.

B. A reasonable amount of time is expected from each person to be given to the other. Spending time together is a large part of what a relationship is. When there is a long distance aspect, people who generally cannot spend time together should usually take priority over those who can spend time more often. Prior commitments should be avoided as much as possible during such times, to avoid conflict with the above. In situations where conflict is unavoidable and the time in question would not use up an unreasonable portion of the time together with long-distance party, the activity should be adjusted to include both/all relevant parties if at all possible. When not together in person, moderate levels of communication should continue using other means.

C. When time is spent together, each person should be treated as a partner in a relationship. This does not mean always staying physically together or constant public displays of affection, but the general level of respect and closeness should be maintained. The way each person is treated should not significantly vary based on any other person who may be present. There are some reasonable exceptions, as follows:

i. Some activities or discussions are private in nature and not expected to happen in public unless all parties involved are comfortable with the discussion and/or activity;

ii. Some situations are inappropriate for certain activities because of the setting or content, such as a funeral or a religious observance. Reasonable consideration for relevant social standards should be observed.

iii. However, simply the presence of other people is not adequate reason to cease acting as a partner, since the relationship ought to be recognized.

iv. When multiple partners are present, all are expected to be treated as important romantic relationships.

D. Each person should keep the other informed of generally important life events. Such important life events may include (but not be limited to):

i. addition of new partners;

ii. removal of prior partners;

iii. changes in status of any existing partners;

iv. changes in work/employment situation;

v. changes in domestic location (moving);

vi. changes in health;

vii. things that affect one's financial status - not necessarily the actual dollar amount or specific details like creditors (unless the people in this relationship choose to intertwine finances), but overall status and any changes to that status, particularly as they affect this relationship, such as the ability to enjoy certain activities.

viii. participation in events or activities that are important or significant with regards to one's time and/or one's emotional well-being.

Keeping each partner informed of important events and significant daily events furthers intimate relations and is part of the overall human connection and therefore important to the health of a "serious" or non-casual relationship.

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III. Expectations related to other partners:

A. Information should be given about potential new partners, and updates should be given as things progress, or information given if it becomes clear that things will not progress. Part of this is to make sure that nothing comes up as a sudden surprise, part of this is to stay informed about each other's lives, and part of this is to assess risk.

B. New potential partners are to be informed that you are poly and in (a) relationship(s) *before* the potential partner becomes an actual partner, regardless of ranking or category (i.e. primary/secondary/tertiary/casual/serious/etc.).

C. If a relationship with a new partner progresses, an effort should be made to open communication between a new partner and existing partners directly as early as possible, so an attempt can be made for everyone to get to know each other.

D. When possible, friendship between each person's other partners should be fostered. To encourage this, communication between the other partners should be initiated as early as practical, as situations tend to go better when each party gets to know each other sooner rather than later. Optimally, an introduction in a neutral social setting should be made before any "romantic" relationship begins. Any "friend" who is not yet a romantic partner should have no difficulty attending social gatherings with other "friends". Any potential partner who is not yet a partner that does have difficulty attending social functions with other friends that include existing partners may be seen as "red flag" material by existing partners and subject to whatever agreement each person has made regarding "red flag" people.

E. Both people in this relationship should have the contact information for the other partners of each person, in order to foster trust and better communication and relationships, to emphasize the interrelatedness, and to allow for easy communication when it is needed.

F. Each person's other partners are to be treated with civility. The expectation is that all parties willingly share, and that there is no need to fight over someone or try to control that person in order to ensure the health of any relationship. Acceptance is preferred over mere tolerance.

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IV. Expectations regarding health:

A. STD information is to be exchanged. This should take the form of an in-depth discussion between both people in this relationship and between each person and his/her potential partners involving sexual history, estimated risk-level, and assessment of each person's knowledge of STDs and risks, as well as exchanging physical test results from all possible STD tests given by doctor or clinic.

B. Each person and each potential partner should be ready to make or provide copies of said test results for the other person in this relationship and be willing to have the details of the discussion and test results shared with the other person in this relationship and with existing other partners of both people in this relationship, including having the other partners view the test results and/or requesting copies for themselves. It should be expected that these details will be shared with each person's other partners and their other partners, regardless of whether or not any prevention boundaries are in place.

C. If there is a reason to suspect a health problem from a potential/new partner, all current/existing partners should be informed as soon as possible, and certainly before any risky behavior ensues with said current/existing partner(s). This goes for STDs, but also for more mundane illnesses, such as mononucleosis, flues, colds, coldsores, etc. One may choose to be with the person despite some health risk, but each person should get to make an informed choice. Obviously, if one is coming down with

something but does not realize, it is an acceptable omission. But whenever possible, each person should be fully informed.

D. If there is reason to suspect a possible significant health issue, testing should be done immediately.

E. New partners should be tested before actions are engaged in that incur risk. This may not be 100% possible as some risk comes even from actions like kissing, and generally the kissing stage precedes the paperwork exchanging stage, however this is part of why each partner should keep the other well-informed of exactly which risks they are taking, so they can decide whether or not it is acceptable to them. Which is why informing all current/existing partners about *potential* partners before they become partners, before dating, before kissing, etc., is so important.

F. Each person should discuss safer sex precautions with each new partner and come to an agreement about what will and will not be considered acceptable, factoring in any pre-existing agreements from this relationship. That agreement should be shared with each person in this relationship and each person's other partners, and each person in this relationship consents to that agreement being shared with everyone their current/existing partner(s) and new partner is connected to.

G. If the agreements that either person has with other people changes, all other partners should be notified as soon as possible. Similarly, if either person's other partner violates the agreement they have, this information should be shared with all concerned parties, as it affects both safety and trust.

H. If either person wishes to decrease contact because of perceived risk (physical or emotional health), it is not to be seen as either punitive nor a lack of respect. Each person must make choices for his/her own safety. Life is a balance of reasonable risk for reasonable reward, and it is expected that different people will accept different placements on that scale. Similarly, either person in this relationship may make a statement that he/she has certain requirements for certain levels of contact; this is to be made a simple statement of what is necessary for personal safety, and to be considered acceptable, as long as that person allows his/her partner to choose either the measures requested or the decreased contact. This isn't to say that decreased contact will not affect the relationship, but that is considered fair. Relationships are about two people who can get along, and whose needs and requirements mesh. If they do not mesh, that is unfortunate, but not a cause for anger and each person should try to keep that in mind.

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V. Expectations about conflicts:

A. If something is irritating someone or causing problems, it should be mentioned as soon as the person realizes that this is the case and has an opportunity to discuss it. This is to prevent it from festering such that the first time the other person hears about it, it is presented as a large problem or with anger. Neither partner is expected to be aware of the other person's needs or problems unless informed.

i. If a person does not recognize an issue until it has become major, that is acceptable, as each person is human and may not understand what the problem is until it becomes major and, hence, identifiable. However, it should be raised civilly and with an apology that the person was not informed sooner, and with recognition that the other person has had no chance to address or fix the issue yet.

ii. However, once an issue has been brought to the person's attention, all efforts to address it as early as possible should be made top priority, regardless of perceived severity, to prevent the issue from growing even further.

B. As this relationship is founded on polyamory, if a person's other partner has problems with polyamory, those problems should not become a problem for the people in this relationship. That means:

i. if an event is to include multiple partners or the person in this relationship is already invited to an activity, the more monogamous partner may not turn the activity into something exclusive.

ii. If the more monogamous partner has problems with this relationship being obvious in the more monogamous person's presence, it is not acceptable for a decrease in connection or affection of the poly partners around the monogamous person.

ii. It is acceptable for the monogamous person to have a preference for monogamy, so long as monogamous actions are not forced into the poly relationship. The monogamous partner should still be expected to be treated as poly, since that person is in a poly relationship regardless of personal relationship orientation. This means that the more monogamous person will be accorded all of the respect of an OSO, and assumed to be open to contact and friendship.

C. The people in this relationship agree that this is an openly intertwined polyamorous relationship and hence agree to not accept behaviour from their other partners that limit the intentions of this Agreement, such as: reducing or limiting romantic or relationship-announcing behaviour in the presence of the more monogamous partner (II.C), reducing or limiting time shared together (II.B), not sharing safety details with each other (IV.A-B), not sharing other life details as they pertain to the individual in this relationship with the other person in this relationship (II.D), unwillingness to share contact information (III.E), and any other point brought up in this Agreement as well as any specific rule or amendment made outside of this Agreement between the two people in this relationship.

D. If another partner has serious problems or difficulties come up, it can be okay to spend time with that person in an unbalanced way for the duration of the problem or difficulty. Helping friends in need is an understandable and admirable thing to do. However, if someone else is in consistent need and seriously affecting the amount of time given to this relationship, that situation should be adjusted. Neither partner is expected to have dependents, and thus other partners or friends are expected to be self-sufficient adults. If an adult seriously and for a prolonged period of time requires massive assistance, they probably need either medical or psychological care that is best not given by either partner in this relationship, and thus that relationship should be altered.

E. Each partner is expected to have their own opinions and beliefs. These may not always agree, however, that is considered acceptable and this is not a relationship of clones. Respectful disagreement should not be seen as a lack of respect overall. Each person is expected to have their own judgment, and as such makes their own choices for themselves. Neither person is expected to replace the other person's judgment with their own.