



## Relationships and Arthritis

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L and Julie Eller  
Guest Speaker: Katie Willard Virant, MSW, JD, LCSW

Studies have shown that having positive relationships in your life can improve your mental as well as your physical health. But having a chronic condition like arthritis can sometimes pose challenges to relationships – with a partner or spouse, other family members, friends and coworkers. It even can impact your relationship with yourself. So how do you navigate tricky emotions, open the lines of communications with others, and establish boundaries so that relationships grow and develop in a positive way?

Psychotherapist Katie Willard Virant talks to Rebecca and Julie about the importance of recognizing and asserting your own self-worth, which can help you navigate relationships with others, who may also be affected by your arthritis. She also discusses how to talk to children when one parent gets sick and the family dynamic changes.

Katie Willard Virant, MSW, JD, LCSW, is a psychotherapist practicing in St. Louis, Missouri, who lives with Crohn's disease. A graduate of the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis and of the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute's Advanced Psychodynamic Psychotherapy program. She works with adults, adolescents and children on a variety of issues, including loss and grief, life transitions, and living with chronic illness.

Read more from Katie Willard Virant on her blog at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/chronically-me>.

### Additional Arthritis Foundation resources:

To find or start a support group in your community or to connect with others in online forums, join the Live Yes! Arthritis Network at [arthritis.org/LiveYes](https://arthritis.org/LiveYes).

Help make a difference for yourself and others living with arthritis by sharing your insights at [arthritis.org/insights](https://arthritis.org/insights).

And look for more from Willard Virant in **The Ties That Bind**, a feature on relationship challenges in the May-June 2020 issue of [Arthritis Today](https://arthritis.org/ArthritisToday).

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