

RELATIONAL HEALTH

We tend to credit the healthy for good habits and discipline, and assign blame to the sick. All too often we view our health as a product of individual inputs rather than through a lens of interconnected, relational health. The relational health perspective offers an alternative way to view how our health is shaped and what the most productive avenues are for achieving long-term positive outcomes. This book draws on empirical research that illuminates how social relationships affect health outcomes, with a focus on three specific health problems: obesity, opioid use disorder, and depression in older adults. It incorporates examples of the untapped potential of community resources, social networks, and varied partnerships. The research presented is supplemented by perspectives from health care providers, patients and their families, and health policy experts, examining the role of relationships in health production and maintenance.

LAURA S. RICHMAN is a health psychologist who has published widely in the field of social drivers of health. She has been a professor at Duke University, North Carolina since 2003 and is currently a visiting professor at George Washington University. This book was developed when Richman was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University from 2019 to 2020.

RELATIONAL HEALTH

How Social Connection Impacts Our Physical and Mental Wellbeing

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