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Costs & Benefits of Jealousy

A Quick Guide

What Is Jealousy? Jealousy is an emotional response to feeling threatened by someone else's success, possessions, or relationships. It's often seen as negative—but it can also be useful.

The Costs of Jealousy

- Mental Health Issues: Jealousy can lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Vaillancourt et al., 2024).
- Relationship Damage: It can cause conflict, mistrust, and even abuse in romantic relationships (Aracı-İyiyaydın et al., 2020; De Cristofaro et al., 2023).
- Workplace Problems: Feeling jealous at work can lower job performance and increase tension among coworkers (Sahadev et al., 2024).
- Social Media Stress: Seeing friends online can trigger jealousy and hurt mental health (Vaillancourt et al., 2024).



The Benefits of Jealousy

- Protecting Relationships: Jealousy can help us notice when something is wrong in a relationship and motivate us to fix it (Arnocky et al., 2024).
- Inspiring Achievement: Healthy jealousy may push us to work harder or pursue goals (Toohey, 2014; Kampen, 2025).
- Showing Emotional Depth: Feeling jealous may reflect how much we care about someone or something (Simon, 2025).

Alternatives and Solutions



- Mindfulness: Being more mindful can reduce harmful jealousy and improve relationships (De Cristofaro et al., 2023).
- Compersion: This is the opposite of jealousy—feeling joy when someone you love experiences happiness with others. It's common in some non-traditional relationships (Balzarini et al., 2021; Brunning, 2020).

Key Takeaway. Jealousy isn't always bad. It can hurt relationships or mental health—but it can also protect what we value, motivate us, and show emotional investment. The goal is to understand and manage it wisely.



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