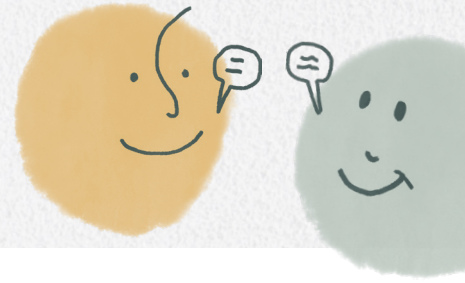


# Healthy relationships



Since birth most of us have been seeking contact and establishing relationships with other people. The nature of these relationships evolves over time and each relationship is made up of a number of different needs. Regardless of the type of relationship, there are three basic elements for any relationship to be healthy.

- 1 Communication** – this is more than talking to someone. It involves your tone of voice, body language and active listening skills. It is about being able to make the time to share your thoughts and feelings and listen to your partner express their own thoughts and feelings. It is a time to talk about what you need and want in the relationship and being able to compromise and negotiate the boundaries of your relationship together.
- 2 Trust** – to build trust you need to show the other person that you are honest with them, that you are reliable, responsible and dependable. Don't make fun of them, belittle them or judge them in any way. Behaviour which may lead to a breakdown of trust includes second guessing them, not believing each other, not maintaining their confidentiality, betraying them or obsessively checking up on them.
- 3 Respect** – is accepting someone for who they are. Let them have the freedom to be themselves and express their own opinions. Respect their boundaries and encourage them to spend time apart from you and build their self-esteem and other relationships as well. Respect is reciprocal, therefore you should expect to receive the same level of respect from those with whom you engage in relationships with.

## So what happens when relationships end?

When a relationship ends it's normal to feel a sense of loss, to experience a low mood, have trouble sleeping, changes to appetite, or difficulty concentrating. You may start second-guessing yourself: "What could I have done differently"; "I'm not good enough for them" or have a sense of confusion about where it all went wrong. You may experience fluctuations in your emotions towards your ex-partner/friend or be overwhelmed by the intensity of your own emotions at times. The following tips might help you:

- 1** Accept the painful feelings – it's normal to grieve over the loss.
- 2** Ask for help and get support from your friends, family or a professional.
- 3** Try to understand the reasons the relationship broke down – can you get closure by understanding why it ended (this isn't always possible to do with the ex-partner/friend so a professional might be able to help with this).
- 4** Avoid regular contact with your ex-partner/friend, including watching them on social media, and give yourself time to recover.
- 5** Reduce expectations on yourself, you might not be your usual self right now and that's ok.
- 6** Try to avoid beginning a new relationship whilst you are still grieving from a past one.
- 7** Try and maintain your routine, go to class, attend sports, go to work. Letting go of everything might be tempting but it will be harder to get motivated again if you do.

## Online resources

**Relationships Australia**  
[www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

## Apps

Search on the App Store or Google Play

### iMatter

Are you in an unhealthy relationship? Not sure – check out this app.

### This Way Up - Student Wellbeing Program

A free online course with practical strategies for coping with stress and study.

[www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/student-wellbeing-program](http://www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/student-wellbeing-program)



**Access support and more information**

**[www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling) or call (02) 4921 6622**

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