



Relationships

**Quiz - test
your relationship**

Is this Love?

Respect checklist

**Abuse
warning signs**

Personal stories

**What to do
when love hurts**

People want different things from a relationship. Some want a casual relationship, some want romance, some want sex, and others want someone to be close to.

It can take time to find someone who wants the same as you.

Then there's pressures from friends and family about relationships. Like if all your friends have boyfriends / girlfriends and you don't. Or if your family don't want you to be in a relationship. And what if you're attracted to someone of the same sex?

With all these pressures, it's hard to work out what **you** want. Sometimes you might find yourself just going along with what other people want.

Remember, it's ok to take your time, and to ask yourself →

what do I want from a relationship?

○ ○ ○ ○

what don't I want?

what qualities do I like in a person?

○ ○ ○ ○

what don't I like?

H healthy relationships

A healthy relationship is when

- you have fun together
- you both feel able to be yourself
- you can have different opinions and interests
- you can listen to each other
- you can both compromise, say sorry, and talk arguments out
- you don't have to spend all your spare time together. You can spend time alone or with friends or family.



A healthy relationship is based on **RESPECT**.

Respect checklist

Someone respects you when they accept that you have a right to do and say what you want.

If someone is treating you with respect, you feel:

- ✓ **free** to say no to things you don't want to do
- ✓ **safe** and never scared
- ✓ **free** to see other friends & family when you want
- ✓ **free** to express your opinions and beliefs
- ✓ **free** to change your mind
- ✓ **good** about yourself
- ✓ **supported** to make your own decisions
- ✓ **free** to end the relationship if you want to.

Think about how you feel in your relationship, or in your friendships. If you don't always feel like this, maybe you are not being treated with respect.



Being around people who respect you and accept you for who you are helps to build your confidence.



You deserve to be treated with respect.

Sex

Having a good relationship doesn't mean you have to have sex. But whatever you do, whether it is kissing, touching, or having sex, it should always be something that you both want to do.

Sex is meant to be:

- ✿ something you decide to do when you're ready to
- ✿ something that makes you both feel good
- ✿ something you can interrupt or stop
- ✿ safe (because you're prepared with condoms to protect you from sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy).

Sex isn't meant to be:

- ✿ the only way to prove that you love someone
- ✿ something you feel pressured or forced into
- ✿ something you do because 'everyone else is doing it'
- ✿ something that makes you feel used.

Remember, if you've been kissing or touching but don't want to go any further, that's ok. Kissing is not a contract.

Trust and communication

are what's important in a sexual relationship.
Ask yourself →

How well do I trust this person to respect what I do and don't want to do?

How comfortable would I feel talking with them about safe sex and contraception?

How comfortable would I be saying no to them?

Someone who loves you should respect your right to decide if and when to have sex.

If you don't feel ready to have sex, you could say →

'I do love you but I don't feel ready to have sex yet.'

Did you know that only about 20% of 16 year olds, and about 50% of 18 year olds in Australia have had sexual intercourse?
Source: Lindsay, J., Smith, A., Rosenthal, D. 1997 Secondary Students, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health, Australia.

Sex and pressure

"I kept on pushing his hands away but he just put them back there, then I just froze, I couldn't say anything, it was horrible"

-Trang

What if someone has touched you or made you touch them in a sexual way, and you felt like you had no choice?

You might have → felt scared to say no

felt pressured into having sex, because you thought that if you didn't, they'd break up with you, or they wouldn't like you.

been asleep or drunk and didn't really know what was going on

been forced into sexual contact.

No-one should force you into any sexual contact. In fact, it is sexual assault, and it is a crime that can be reported to the police.

Remember - they have done the wrong thing, not you. It can help to talk to someone about it. See the back pages of this booklet

Did you know →

A survey found that 1 in 7 Australian teenage girls said a boyfriend had tried to force them to have sex.

Source: Young People and Domestic Violence. Canberra: National Crime Prevention, 2000.

Is this love?

"I thought our relationship was fantastic at first. But now things have started happening that I don't understand. He gets mad at me for wanting to be with my friends. And any time he sees me speaking to any other guy he accuses me of flirting. He says it's because he loves me."

- Chris



Jealousy might seem like a sign of love. But when someone uses anger or jealousy to try to control what you do, or acts like they 'own' you, this isn't love - it's control. You've got every right to talk to anyone you want to.

Fill in the quiz on the next page. It will help you to think about your relationship and whether you're being treated right.

Relationship quiz

How do you know if you are being treated right?
statement applies to you:

My boyfriend or girlfriend:

seems to like me as a person

won't let me to talk to other

respects my feelings, opinions

doesn't want me to spend

makes me feel like I have to

is ok if I say no to something

is happy for me to make my

often puts me down or

tries to work out arguments

sometimes scares or hurts

is happy for me to see my

might try to hurt me or them

makes me feel scared to

→ Be honest with yourself. Tick the box if the



guys / girls

and beliefs

time with my friends or family

watch what I do or say

(including sex)

own decisions about my life

criticises me

by compromising or talking

me by being aggressive or violent

own friends if I want to

oneselves if I wanted to break up

disagree or to say no to things

are being treated right, you should have ticked all of these.
that you are not being treated right.

The purple statements are signs of love and respect. If you
have ticked any answers in black, then there are signs

When love hurts

When someone who is supposed to love you treats you badly, it can be very hurtful.

They might not always treat you like this - sometimes they might be really nice. So you might think 'it's not that bad'. But you should always be treated with respect.

The first step in changing things is to understand what's happening.

Abuse happens when one person tries to control, or hurt the other. The abuse might be physical, sexual, or emotional.

Physical abuse is when someone is violent, or threatens to hurt you (eg; pushes you, smashes things, drives dangerously to scare you, etc).

It's against the law for someone to physically hurt you, threaten to hurt you, or force you into sexual contact. You can contact the police and the person can be charged with a crime.



Emotional abuse

includes when someone →

checks up on what you are doing all the time

stops you seeing friends or family

puts you down or humiliates you

says they will kill themselves if you break up with them

blackmails you (like threatening to tell your family something that you don't want them to know)

Emotional abuse can hurt you just as much as physical or sexual abuse.

If you are being abused - It's not your fault

Feelings

It's important to listen your feelings. They can help you to know if the way you are treated is ok or not.

Think about your relationship. How is the way you are being treated making you feel? For example,

In a loving relationship you might feel:

- happy
- liked
- respected
- supported
- free
- safe
- able to be yourself
- cared for.



If you are abused you might feel:

- humiliated
- angry
- bad about yourself
- confused
- nervous
- guilty
- depressed
- scared
- trapped.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions about abuse)

Why are they doing this to me?

People who are abusive will often make excuses for the way they act. They might say →

'I was just joking', 'You made me do it', 'I couldn't help it', 'I was drunk'.

But really, they act this way to try to control you. They pressure you or scare you as a way of getting you to do what they want. Guys often think they have a right to dominate their girlfriends, to be 'the boss'. But they haven't.

How can I get them to change?

The abuse will stop when the abusive person decides to start respecting your rights. But you can't change them, or their attitude. Only they can. Unfortunately, most people who have been abused say it keeps happening, and gets worse, not better. It's important to think about your own safety - things could get more dangerous than they are now.

Am I causing them to abuse me?

No. The abuse is not your fault. Even if they feel upset or angry with you about something, they could deal with these feelings by talking to you or to their friends or family.

They don't have to treat you like this.



A true story

"Jose didn't want me to go anywhere without him. At first I thought it was cute that he missed me. After a while I started to see the real him. He started to control what I wore, where I went and who I chilled with.

One day I was late to meet him and he was so angry that he hit me. Afterwards he said he was sorry, he loved me so much he'd kill himself if we broke up. But then things got worse. A month later we got into an argument and he nearly killed me - he strangled me and I started to black out. The next thing I remember was him on top of me begging me to forgive him.

I'd been scared to tell anyone, but I just couldn't take it any more. I told my best friend and she helped me to see that he wasn't going to change. Then I rang him and said I didn't want to see him. He kept trying to come around and I ended up having to tell my mum about him, so she didn't let him in the house. It's been hard, but I feel stronger now I'm not seeing him.

If I knew someone who was being abused I'd say that you might think that it was only a once off, but it's not. Be careful. If there's someone you trust to tell then do it - it will make you feel so much better" - Stef

Should I stay or should I go?



Working out whether to stay or break up can be a hard decision.

Maybe you still love them, or you feel like you'd be nothing without them. Maybe you feel trapped, or scared of what they might do if you leave.

Talking to someone can help you decide what to do. You don't have to go through this alone. Talk to a friend, a family member, a teacher, or a counsellor (see the back of this booklet for ideas). Have a break from the relationship, if you can, or don't see each other as much. Give yourself time to think. It can help to write your feelings down.

Ask yourself these questions →

How is being in this relationship affecting me?

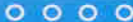


What would be the good things about breaking up?

What would be the bad things?

What would be the good things about staying?

What would be the bad things?



Are things getting worse?

Safety plan ideas



Whether you decide to break up or stay, be prepared for any possible danger they could put you in.

- Tell friends, family, teachers or workmates, and ask for them to help protect you.
- Try not to be alone with the person who is abusive.
- Stay aware of what's going on. Try not to drink or use other drugs. Listen to your feelings - if you start to feel unsafe, leave as soon as you can.
- Have an excuse prepared so you can leave quickly if you feel intimidated.
- If you are out, arrange your own way home, rather than going with them. Take phone and transport money.
- Use an answering machine or get someone else to screen your phone calls.

- **Call the police on 000 if you are in danger.** Violence is a crime and your boyfriend or girlfriend can be charged.
- **Apply for an Intervention Order.** This is a court order that says the abusive person isn't allowed to abuse you again. Also, the order could say that they aren't allowed to come near you or contact you. If they disobey the order, the police can charge them with a criminal offence. Ring a service in the back of this booklet to find out more.
- **Contact a counselling service** for help to make a safety plan. See the back pages of this booklet.



Self-esteem

Your self-esteem is the value you give yourself. The way others treat you can affect your self-esteem.

Things that help to build your self-esteem:

- ✿ don't be hard on yourself, or focus on mistakes
- ✿ don't blame yourself for the way other people act
- ✿ focus on positive things. For example →

Things I've done that I feel proud of are _____

What I like about myself is _____

My favourite things are _____

Some things that I'd like to do in my life are _____

Remember:

- You are important.
- You don't have to match up to anyone's standards except your own.
- You have the right to express your racial or cultural beliefs.
- You have the right to have your own feelings, opinions and friends.
- You deserve love and respect.

A

na's story



"After I split up from Nick I got my confidence back, and I started to hang out with my friends again. Even though sometimes I did miss him a lot, I didn't miss all the shit he put me through. Now a year later I've got a new boyfriend who I really love and trust, he's like one of my best friends, I can tell him anything. He just wants us to have fun together, there's no pressure, and he doesn't make a big deal of it if I don't want to do what he wants. I can be myself with him". - Ana

Who can I talk to?



You could talk to a friend, a sister or brother, your parents, a teacher or a counsellor.

Whoever you talk to shouldn't judge or criticise you.

Counsellors can listen and give you support and ideas. It's ok to feel nervous about ringing a service. If so, you could ring first and ask about how their service works, before you talk about what's been happening. You don't have to give your name if you don't want to. Counsellors will keep what you tell them private (except if they think you are in immediate danger).

Family members and friends can ring a service for advice on how to help too.

Kids Help Line - Telephone counselling for young people. Ph. 1800 55 1800 (24 hrs)

Action Centre - Counselling for young people
Ph. 9654-4766 or 1800-013-952

Domestic Violence Outreach Workers

Support and information if you are being abused. Call the Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre for the outreach service in your area. Ph. 9486-9866

Immigrant Womens Domestic Violence Service

Ph. 9898-3145

School support services - Student Welfare Coordinators, psychologists or chaplains can help.

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Support & safe accommodation if you are being abused Ph. 9373-0123 or 1800-015-188 (24hrs)

Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Support if you have been sexually assaulted.

Ph. 9344-2210 to find your local CASA or 1800 806 292.

Community Health Centres - these have

counsellors who can help. See your local phone book under 'Community Health'.

Women's Information & Referral Exchange

Ph. 1300-134-130 TTY: 9654-5124

Websites that can help →

When Love Hurts - ideas & legal info, stories & advice from other people who have experienced abuse.
www.dvirc.org.au/whenlove

Somazone - answers your questions on relationships, drugs and health. www.somazone.com.au

Lawstuff - email a question about the law, and a lawyer will email info back. www.lawstuff.org.au

Kids Help Line email and online counselling - email a counsellor for help & support. www.kidshelp.com.au

Bursting the Bubble - if things are not ok in your family.
www.burstingthebubble.com