

Relate NI

Relationships and Mental Wellbeing

Relationships of any type are important in our lives to help us grow as people and aid our mental well-being. Here are some tips on spotting healthy/unhealthy relationships and some 'dos and don'ts' of mental well-being and relationships.



Signs of Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours

Below are some examples of unhealthy relationship behaviours. However, unhealthy behaviours can appear in other ways. If you think a behaviour is unhealthy, reach out to a trusted friend or a helpline for advice.

Manipulation

- 'Gas-lighting'- making you think things that aren't true or making you doubt your own judgement, memory and perceptions
- Psychological and emotional games

Controlling Behaviour

- Of the clothes you wear, how you look and or sexual rules
- Of your phone, where you go and what you do

Jealous Behaviour

- Angry when you do something social without them
- Wanting to know everything about the other relationships in your life

Blackmail

- If you don't comply with your partner's wishes, there will be consequences
- Withholding affection, threatening to end the relationship, anger, silent treatment or even physical abuse

Threatening Behaviour

- Any statement that says or implies "If you ... then I'll" is a threat.
- "If you don't have dinner on the table by 6 tonight, there will be hell to pay."

Jekyll & Hyde Personality

- Someone with a split personality that may have two distinct and diametrically opposed personalities.
- A split personality can have one side that is friendly and easygoing, while the other can be disconnected or even abusive.

Isolation

- The separation from your family and/or friends
- Being totally reliant on your partner's/friend's opinion

Came from an Abusive Home

- Growing up in this environment means that healthy relationships have not been modelled in their lives so what seems 'normal' to them is actually abusive
- The lack of knowledge about a healthy and happy relationship combined with their confused view of the world may result in them hurting themselves even when they find a kind and compassionate partner.

Emotional Abuse

- An emotional abuser will ignore you, won't consider your feelings, or take you into consideration when making decisions in the relationship.
- They don't think about your happiness and they make you feel worthless without saying a word.

Verbal Abuse

- We all have arguments in our relationships, but knowing the difference between a normal disagreement and verbal abuse is important. Criticism, blaming, shaming can all be signs of verbal abuse
- Name calling, yelling and not responding can also be signs of verbal abuse. This type of "communication" wears you down, leaving you questioning yourself, and feeling humiliated, isolated, and broken.

Signs of Healthy Relationship Behaviours

Trust

- Fidelity (Sexual exclusivity), Physical safety, financial security, emotional predictability and truthfulness are all signs of trust in a healthy relationships

Equality

- Both persons needs are important in a relationship, not just one persons. Effort and work are done by both partners not just one
- You both encourage each others goals and dreams and you both express love and affection in your own way.

Honesty

- To be honest in a relationship means, telling your partner the truth not minding the circumstances surrounding you.
- It is the ability to be open and true to yourself and to your partner. An honest partner is straightforward and transparent in words and action. Honesty builds trust in a relationship

Respect

- Showing respect in a relationship is about treating each other in a considerate and friendly manner both in private and in public
- It means you are both able to express your personalities without feeling criticised and there is enough space and acceptance in the relationship to do so.

Encouragement

- Encouragement tells your partner that you have 'got their back' and you want them to succeed in their pursuits, It forges trust in a relationship because you feel accepted
- Encouragement also builds an safe environment for sharing our vulnerabilities, and your partner will feel safe and comfortable around you

Loyalty

- It's important to be reliable and dependable; someone who can be counted on to show up. Loyalty also involves consistently treating the your partner with kindness, fairness, and generosity of spirit.
- Show your partner that you value them. Communicate how important they are to you and how significant their presence is in your life. Don't take them for granted.

Care

- Caring in intimate relationships is the practice of providing care and support to an intimate relationship partner.

- Caregiving behaviours are aimed at reducing the partner's distress, helping and supporting their coping efforts in situations of either threat or challenge

Compassion

- Compassion means being empathetic and kind towards each other. Compassion should be at the core of a relationship. Both partners should be compassionate and helpful. Compassion and kindness is being generous, humane, and warm-hearted.
- Compassion and kindness is an essential factor in a relationship, and it brings two people closer to each other. It increases bonding and reliability in a relationship as it gives a feeling of safety and security.



Mental Wellbeing & Relationships

Maintaining good mental well-being and maintaining relationships are equally important and can impact on each other. Below are some tips on how to navigate a relationship when mental well-being is low.



Do

- Take time with your family/friends to catch up
- Allow yourself time to unwind – process what has been going on that day
- Share thoughts/feelings/concerns
- Go outside, on your own or with others
- Consider what you want
- Ask a family member/friend their view on your mental wellbeing
- If needed, take action e.g. GP/Counsellor/other professional
- Be patient with yourself – figuring out what works for you takes time there's a trial and error period
- Be patient with your partner
- Mindfulness/meditation

Don't

- Bottle things up, brush them off
- Constantly distract yourself
- Come away from help before ready
- Go to the internet for help (Dr Google)
- Rely on social media/online relationships
- Go for the quick fix (alcohol/drugs)
- Isolate yourself
- When something is working – obsess over it (e.g. exercise)

What now...?

If you would like to talk to someone about what you are experiencing, would like to give counselling a try, OR are unsure about counselling but feel you need something...we have an option for you.

One At A Time Therapy

Not sure counselling is for you? One At A Time Therapy is a one-off session with a counsellor which can help you in the here and now, with whatever the biggest issue is you are facing in your relationships or mental health.

Relationship MOT

This service is a light touch activity for you and your partner, a 'check-up' for your relationship which can help you to remember what you love about them and remind them off it, while finding out ways to help you move forward in the areas that you might not be on the same page about.

Counselling services

Relationship Counselling may be an effective intervention to support your relationships and mental well-being. We offer a range of counselling services including for Individuals, Couples, Families, Children & Young People.

If you would like to learn more about these or any of our other services, visit <https://www.relateni.org/services/> or call 02890 323454.

Our website also has a range of [helpful tips, tools and resources](#) to help support your relationship and mental fitness.

The Golden Threads Project is supported by the Department of Health Mental Health Support Fund through Community Foundation NI.

Some useful numbers

Lifeline: 0808 808 8000

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Textphone Users can call on 18001 0808 808 8000.

Women's Aid: 02838 397979 (Portadown Office)

Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Mens Advisory Project: 02890 241929

Parentline NI: 0808 802 0400

Samaritans: 116 123

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can
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