


24 hour helpline 0300 123 5101

www.mycwa.org.uk

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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND KEEPING HAPPY AT HOME

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A RELATIONSHIP IS AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION BETWEEN YOU AND OTHER PEOPLE.

What are relationships?

A relationship is an emotional connection between you and other people.

There are many different types of relationships, which can be healthy or unhealthy.

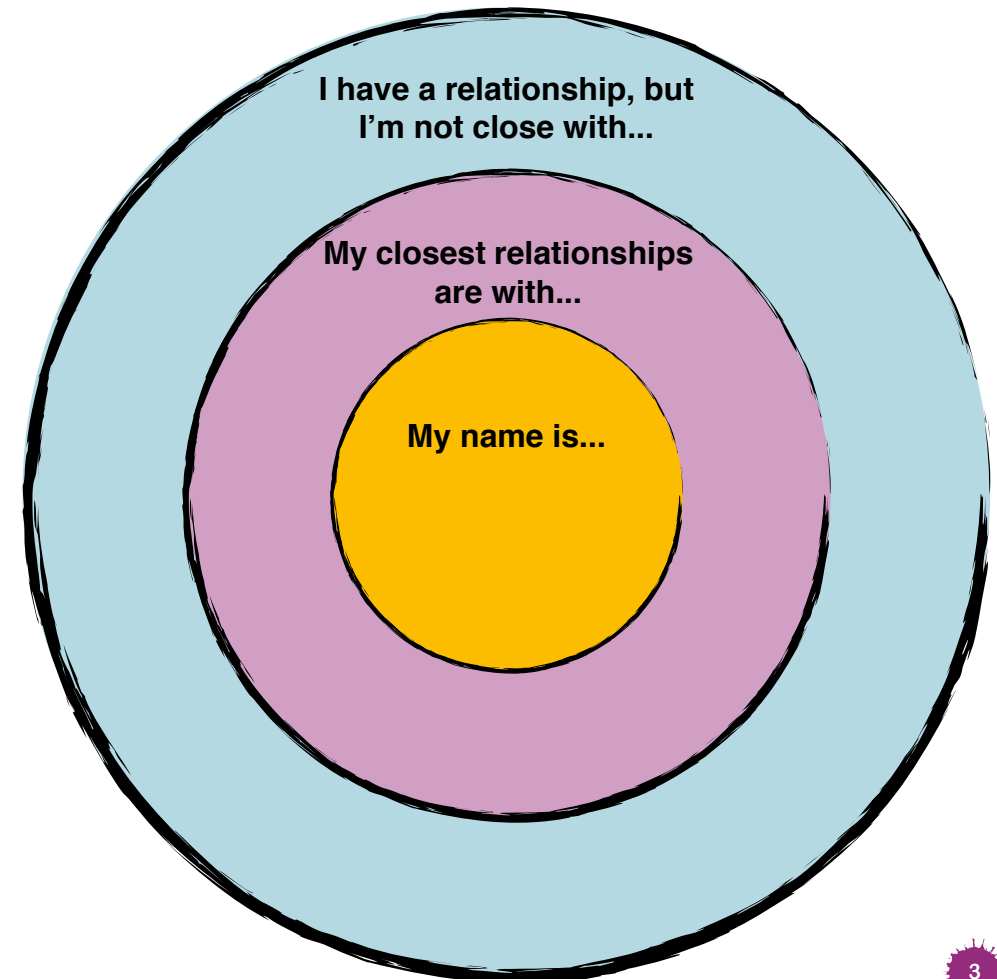
You might have relationships with your...

- 1 **Family members** - mums, dads, grandmas, grandads, aunts, uncles, sisters and brothers
- 2 **Friends** - kids your age, peers at school
- 3 **Romantic partners** - boyfriends, girlfriends, lovers, husbands, wives
- 4 **Acquaintances** - someone you know but wouldn't describe as a friend

The closer we are to people, the more our relationships with them impact us. These impacts can be positive or negative, depending on what the relationship is like.

This is why it's so important to understand how to create and maintain healthy relationships.

All relationships exist somewhere on a spectrum – from healthy to abusive.



Healthy Relationship

Mutual respect

In healthy relationships, you value each other and respect each other's boundaries.

Trust

Healthy relationships involve being trusted and being trustworthy. You give each other the benefit of the doubt.

Good communication

Within healthy relationships, you'll be able to speak honestly and openly to avoid miscommunication.

Individuality

You shouldn't have to compromise who you are. In healthy relationships, you accept people for who they are – and they do the same.

Unhealthy Relationship

Disrespect

In an unhealthy relationship, one partner might not value the other or respect their boundaries. In some cases, this applies to both partners.

Distrust

Trust issues might involve one or both partners not trusting the other – or not behaving in a trustworthy way.

Miscommunication

Problems or issues are not discussed openly and honestly and there are either arguments or issues are not discussed at all.

Co-dependence

Within unhealthy relationships one or both partners might feel a lack of freedom to express individuality. They might feel unable to be themselves.

Abuse

Verbal

If your partner has ever used language to hurt you – shouting, giving you the silent treatment, swearing or threatening you – they've verbally abused you.

Emotional

If your partner has ever manipulated you, humiliated you or made you feel scared of leaving them, they could be emotionally abusing you.

Financial

If your partner controls your finances, stops you from earning or forces you to depend on them financially, it's likely you're being financially abused.

Physical

Physical abuse usually forms part of an ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour. It rarely happens as a one-off when a partner lashes out without warning.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any form of sexual activity (involving physical contact, words or photos) that takes place without the other person's consent.



ARE ALL DISAGREEMENTS UNHEALTHY?

Fights and arguments can be upsetting, but most people (even friends and family) argue sometimes. Some people will yell at each other. Some people might ignore each other for days. Either way, you can tell they're really mad at each other. It's ok to feel stressed out by this.

It's normal – and sometimes even healthy – for people to disagree with each other and argue from time to time. Chances are, they'll start to feel better and make up soon. What isn't ok is when one person humiliates or physically hurts someone they disagree with.

People can disagree about all sorts of things. School. Work. Money. Different opinions. Even things that seem pointless or weird to you. Sometimes when we're mad, we say things we didn't mean or that we regret later. This doesn't necessarily mean the relationship is over or the disagreement is your fault.

HOW PEOPLE TREAT ME

Here are a few ways people might treat each other. Imagine it's you in the middle.

Think about how you'd want to be treated by someone you care about and write the two most important actions on the solid lines on the next page. Write more key actions that are important to you on the dotted lines on the next page. Feel free to use actions that aren't on the list.



Respected

Supported

Ignored

Trusted

Fairly

Afraid

Impressed

Amused or made
to laugh

Encouraged

Listened to

Treated
equally

Controlled

Loved

Spoiled

Committed to

Abused

Needed

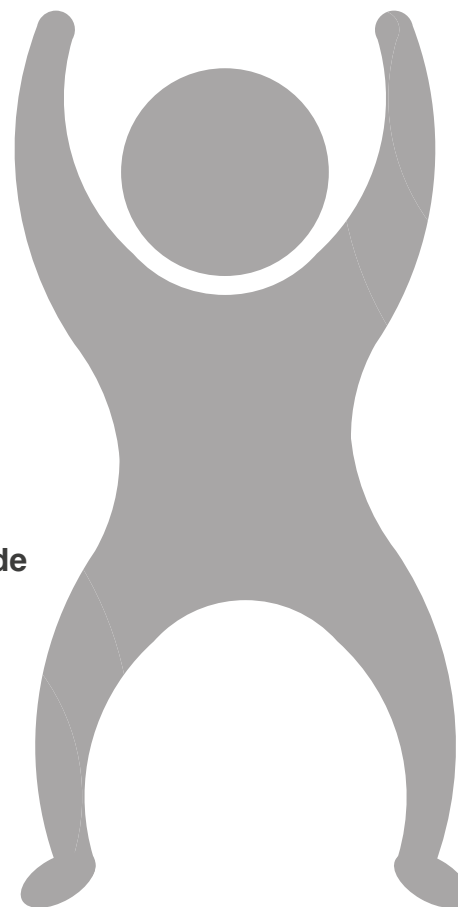
Cared for

Challenged

Cheated on

Treated like a
king or queen

Treated
honestly



FORMING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Open, honest and safe conversation is an important part of all healthy relationships. It's really important that you're on the same page – that you understand each other's needs and expectations.

If you're hoping to build healthier relationships with other people, think about the following:

- 1 If there's someone you want to make friends with, the first thing you could do is ask them if they want to be your friend. If they say yes – fantastic! If they say no, it might feel upsetting, but you can't be friends with everyone. And that's ok.
- 2 You could try exploring your own interests to make new friends. A good friend will show interest in things that interest you.
- 3 Attending clubs and events that involve things you're interested in is a great way to meet people who have similar interests to you. Why not have a look at what's happening in your area?





DEALING WITH UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

If your (or a friend's) relationship with someone has the signs of an unhealthy relationship, it can make you feel sad, scared, angry, guilty – or you might not even know how you feel. That's ok. But it's important to deal with your feelings appropriately.

- 1 Talk to someone you trust - like a friend, teacher or parent.
- 2 Write down how you're feeling.
- 3 Write a letter to the person who has been upsetting you. You don't have to send it if you don't want to - just getting your feelings down on paper can help.
- 4 Draw a picture.
- 5 Find an empty space – an empty room or outside space - and shout at the top of your voice.
- 6 Do something that makes you feel happy. Play your favourite game, read a book or do something else that makes you feel happy.

You might need some extra help if you...

Stop eating or over-eat ● Harm yourself ● Skip school

Run away ● Hurt others

Behaviours like these might make you feel better short-term, but they won't solve your problem.

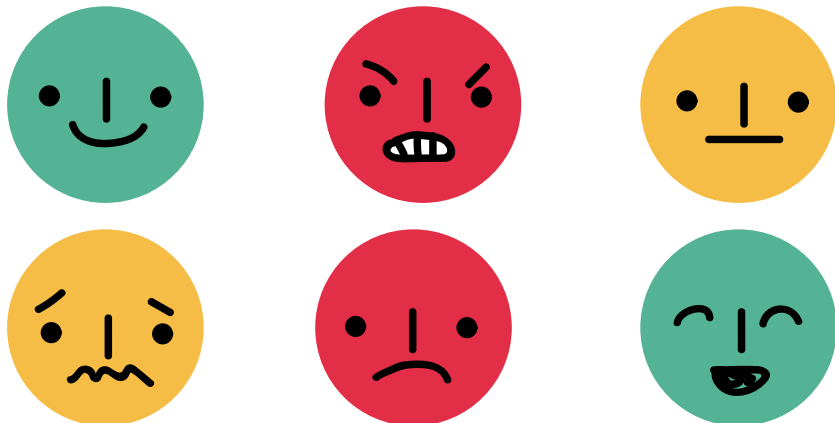
DEALING WITH PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS WHO DISAGREE

It can be really hard listening to parents when they disagree, argue or fight – and you might not know how to respond when they do.

If you're wondering whether there's anything you can do to make your parents stop fighting, the answer is – unfortunately not.

You can't make another person do something, so it's unlikely that you'll be able to stop your parents from fighting. And trying to might put you at risk. Remember, whatever they're arguing about, their disagreements are never your fault.

This can be upsetting and frustrating. But there are some things you can do to understand your parents, help them to understand how you're feeling and – most importantly – to keep yourself safe.



WHAT TO DO WHEN PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS ARE HAVING A DISAGREEMENT

Things you can do:

- 1 Find a calm place to go to that you feel safe. Try to go somewhere away from where your parents are having a disagreement. You could go to your room, if this is safe or to a neighbour's house. If you have younger brothers or sisters, take them with you to your room.
- 2 Always have your safety plan ready to look at and follow.
- 3 Know when to call 999. If you don't feel safe – if your parents are threatening to hit or hurt each other, or if someone else is getting hurt – get to a safe place and call the police.



TALKING TO YOUR PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS ABOUT THEIR DISAGREEMENTS

Sometimes parents or caregivers don't know you can hear their arguments – or realise how upset you are. When this is happening in your house, you'll need help to feel safe at home.

However...

- 1 Think about who you have a good relationship with and who you feel safe talking to. This might be a teacher or another adult at school, a grandparent, relative or a friend's parent. If you can't think of someone, you can always call Childline: 0800 1111
- 2 Have a chat with your safe person to help you to come up with a plan
- 3 In your plan you might include:
 - You and your safe adult talking to the adults in your house who are disagreeing at a time when they are calm to let them know how you're feeling
 - What you can do to stay safe
 - People who can help you and your family to feel safe

If you're experiencing relationship abuse, call My CWA on our 24/7 helpline **01270 250390**

If you need to talk to someone about abuse, call Childline **0800 1111**

IMPORTANT MESSAGES

- 1 It's not ok for anyone to hurt or frighten you or anyone in your family.
- 2 It's always ok to tell someone you trust if you're worried or frightened.
- 3 It's always ok to keep yourself safe if you're afraid.



**LINKS
FOR EXTRA
HELP AND
SUPPORT**

My CWA

✉ info@mycwa.org.uk

☎ 01270 250390

🌐 www.mycwa.org.uk

Healthy Teen Relationships

🌐 www.actonitnow.co.uk

Live Well Cheshire East

🌐 www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Starting Well Cheshire East and Chester

🌐 www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Safety Guide and visual guide Bullying

🌐 www.safetyguide.co.uk

Kooth Free safe advice for children and young people

🌐 www.kooth.com

Childline

☎ 0800 1111

🌐 www.childline.org.uk

Anti Bullying, includes cyber bullying information

🌐 www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk