

# How to have a healthy relationship

Relate North East provide relationship support across the area from Sunderland to Scarborough. We aim to help people in our area to have healthy relationships. There are some tips in this leaflet which can be applied to all of the relationships in your life

## Handling arguments

If you want to raise a tricky subject start the discussion amicably, not with sarcasm or criticism. For example if overspending, start with 'can we talk about the credit card bill as we need to work out a spending limit that suits us both', not, 'look at this bill, you always go over the top every time and I've had enough of it'.

Try to understand your partner's reactions. Due to the role models they grew up with it may be that they may say 'leave it, I'll deal with it myself', and it may take some time to alter these patterns of expectations.



Respect your partner's views, even if you are annoyed. Accept that they need to have a say in how your money is spent or how you both look after your children.

Take responsibility of your emotions. Why are you so upset, has this stirred something up from the past? Do you fear loss of control in other areas of your life? Your partner may have made you angry but the depth of your feelings may have little to do with the current problem.

Be aware of physical feelings that warn you if you are close to losing control – a knot in your stomach, tears, and breathlessness. Leave the room or take time out to calm down.

Be prepared to compromise. Often the only way to reach a 'win-win' situation is for both partners to give some common ground. Don't stick rigidly to your preferred outcome, there may need to be some give and take. Explore different possibilities until you find a solution you can both live with.

## Drifting apart

Communication is at the heart of all relationships and if this breaks down our relationship can suffer. Try to get back on track by setting aside time to talk to each other. Take it in turns to talk whilst the other listens, explaining how you feel about something without blaming them. Own your own feelings. Try to set some time aside to spend together where you can relax or enjoy each other's company. It has taken time to drift apart so give it time to improve.



## Stuck in a Rut

We don't stay the same and neither do our relationships. When we first meet it can be exciting and sex can be a big part of your relationship. But inevitably the falling in love stage matures and sex can become less urgent, especially if there are children around and it is hard to find the privacy that you once had.

As long as you recognise that this is a natural part of the relationship then you can both make the necessary adjustments or changes. Living together can be a major life changer – seeing your partner day in, day out can mean that you face new challenges and couples can start to argue as you negotiate the rules and roles of your relationship

## Low Self Esteem

We can all be lacking in confidence at different times in our lives and recognising this is the first step to regaining your self-confidence and self-esteem. Low self-esteem can mean that you avoid opportunities and responsibilities. You can also become overly dependent upon others and avoid making any decisions. You may also become isolated, highly emotional and possibly depressed.

To change this you must find time to relax, unwind and start appreciating yourself. Accept that you have limitations and stop being critical of yourself. Identify what you are good at and what you have achieved, pamper yourself and focus on good feelings not negative ones. Try to start accepting compliments and keep reminding yourself of your good qualities. Set yourself some realistic, achievable goals and even start thinking of an exercise regime.

## Coping with Divorce or Break Up's

This can often feel like an emotional rollercoaster. On some days you will feel hopeful and positive, whilst on some you will feel sad, angry and anxious but it is important to keep talking to someone to prevent isolation and maintain perspective. Let yourself grieve the relationship, it is a big shock and you need to give yourself time. Let go of anger as holding on to it can hinder you moving forward, set yourself small goals to boost your confidence and look after your health.

## Relationships aren't always perfect - Relate can help

Relate North East deliver face to face, telephone, email and Skype counselling.

Face to face counselling is available in Darlington, Durham, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Northallerton, Pickering, Scarborough and Sunderland.

To make an appointment please call us on 01325 461500 or email [counselling@relatenortheast.org.uk](mailto:counselling@relatenortheast.org.uk).

More details can be found at [www.relatenortheast.org.uk](http://www.relatenortheast.org.uk).

Relate is an LGBT friendly organisation and our counsellors are trained to be aware of the role of cultural background in relationships.