

## Relationships

Relationships begin with you because you are half an any relationship you join.

The kind of relationship you have depends on your ability to build and maintain good relationships.

Everyone experiences relationships/connections differently.

### Factors that make up a good relationship

Trust

Good communication

Respect

Listening

Honesty

Love

Self-disclosure

Understanding

Support (giving and receiving)

Quality time spent together

### Factors that make up a bad relationship

Fighting

No respect

No listening

No trust

Dishonesty

No self-disclosure

Control

Abuse

Change the World

**NELSON MANDELA**  
UNIVERSITY

### Enquiries

**Student Counselling, Career and Development  
Centre  
Nelson Mandela University**

<http://counselling.mandela.ac.za>

[counselling@mandela.ac.za](mailto:counselling@mandela.ac.za)



[mandela.ac.za](http://mandela.ac.za)

# Relationships

## When in a relationship

It is always important to hold on to your sense of self.

It is important that your relationship is equal and reciprocal.

It is important to establish assertiveness skills (please see the assertiveness brochure for more information)

Learn how to express your feelings, beliefs, opinions and needs openly and honestly.

## Guidelines

- When stating your feelings, use “I statements” (“I feel as if..”)
- State your requests and feelings firmly and directly
- Acknowledge the other persons point of view
- Learn to say no to unreasonable requests
- Express your wants and needs rather than expecting your partner to already know them
- Set aside time to discuss unresolved issues
- Stay in the present, don't dwell on past grievances
- Listen actively
- Learn to admit when you are wrong

## Co-dependency

It is a term used in relationships where one person feels incomplete without the other and thus tries to control him/her.

### Characteristics

- Fear of change/growth in the other person
- Looking to the other person for affirmation and self-esteem
- Feeling unsure where you end and the other person begins
- Exaggerated fear of abandonment
- Psychological games and manipulation

## Decisions/questions about sex

1. Will my behavior harm me or the other person?
2. Do I believe in premarital sex?
3. Does my sexual expression enhance my self-esteem, self-respect, positive feelings about myself?
4. How will a sexual relationship affect the relationship beyond sex?
5. Do I have good knowledge about safe sex practices?
6. What will I do if I fall pregnant?

## Long distance relationships

**Effective communication** (both parties feel that they need to talk or write to each other and that communication is welcomed and reciprocated)

**Demonstrated commitment** (Both parties find the relationship important and have spoken about the kind of commitment and how serious the relationship is)

**Willingness to take risks** (This can be necessary or risky depending on the couple)

**Trust** (Each person trusts each other that their social lives aren't a threat to the relationship. This aspect needs to be consciously worked on/established if it is lacking)

**Independence** (For each individual, with a healthy level of dependence. There is a balance of power where each person has the freedom/is encouraged to grow and change as an individual)

**Mutual respect** (Should be naturally present in the relationship)

**Clear expectations** (It is important to figure out your own expectations and have a clear understanding of the expectations of your partner by discussing it so that there is a time and space to work out differences)

**Quality time** (When you do see/visit each other)

## Coping strategies

- Incorporate more meaningful things/experiences in your life other than your partner
- Help those who have challenging life circumstances/experiences
- Make sure you have a good support system
- Take care of yourself (spoil yourself once in a while/have fun)
- Tend to your spiritual needs

## When you miss someone

Let your emotions out

Exercise

Write a letter to the person

Write poetry/a journal entry

Watch a sporting event

Come to Student Counselling

See a movie

Try and have more people around you so you have more company

Call/visit a friend

Socialise over coffee/a meal

## When a relationship ends

1. Allow yourself to feel all of the emotions
2. Make time for the healing process
3. Engage in self-help practices. (books, creative writing, journaling, workshops)
4. Give yourself space to be without pressure/high demands (do activities that give you time to nurture yourself, for self-discovery, growth and healing)
5. Mobilise your support system (spend time with friends/family)
6. Use this time for self-renewal (renew your commitment to yourself and areas of your life you may have overlooked when you were in your relationship)
7. Connect to your body, nature and spiritual needs
8. Spend some time each day doing something you enjoy
9. Highlight/understand the reasons your relationship ended (review your thoughts/behaviours)

## Look out for patterns

- ★ Do you seem to get into the same patterns in all of your relationships?

Some people get into a variety of painful/dysfunctional patterns in a relationships. Something these patterns are caused by fears/unresolved business from your childhood.

If you feel stuck in a pattern and unable to make changes, it is advised to talk to a professional counsellor at student counsellor for some help.

### Available Resources (Nelson Mandela University)

South Campus: **041 504 2511**

North Campus: **041 504 3222**

Missionvale Campus: **041 504 1106**

Second Avenue Campus: **041 504 3854**

George Campus: **044 801 5047**

In case of an emergency, please use the following numbers for assistance:

Protection Services: **041 504 2009** or **041 504 3483**

Suicide Emergency Line: **0800 567 567** or **SMS 31393** for a **call back**

Life Line: **0861 322 322** (Counselling available 24/7)

SA Anxiety Group 24-hour helpline: **0800 12 13 14**

**Note:** Student Counselling services are confidential, free of charge to registered Mandela students and offered by qualified counsellors and psychologists.