

Tips for managing relationship pressures and break-ups during lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic means that we're all having to make big changes to the way we live our everyday lives. While our relationships will be so important in helping us to get through the lockdown, the experience of spending so much more time or so much less time than usual with our loved ones, along with the worries and concerns that come with living in such an uncertain time, will naturally make us feel more anxious, emotional and scared than normal. Previously happy relationships might begin to feel the strain and relationships that were feeling strained before COVID-19 might be hit even harder. This could be because of some of the following and probably lots more!

If you're isolating apart

- ◆ Feeling very far apart or distant
- ◆ Uncertainty
- ◆ Break down of trust
- ◆ Different coping styles
- ◆ Feeling like your needs aren't being met
- ◆ Different expectations
- ◆ Jealousy
- ◆ Loneliness
- ◆ Lack of physical intimacy
- ◆ Money pressures

If you're isolating together

- ◆ Being together 24/7
- ◆ Uncertainty
- ◆ Money pressures
- ◆ Annoying habits
- ◆ Bickering
- ◆ Individual work pressures
- ◆ Missing hobbies/friends and socialising
- ◆ Different coping styles
- ◆ Parenting differences
- ◆ Arguing over chores

Even pre COVID-19, most of us will, at some time, have experienced a bump or two in our relationships and some of us will have experienced relationship breakdowns and break-ups. Difficulties in relationships, particularly break-ups are always very hard to deal with and can make us feel like we'll never be the same again. While it can be hard to see it at the time, for those of us who've had that experience we know that, for the most part, that's not true; we got through it and life was good again!

Although it might be difficult to see it right now, and difficult to do with everything that's going on, it's important to remember that the COVID-19 pandemic and the stressors and way of living that come with it, won't last forever. This experience isn't normal, and it isn't a normal backdrop for your relationship. Try to focus on that.

If possible, try to avoid making any big decisions right now. However if your partner is being physically or emotionally abusive, get professional help as soon as possible so that you, and your children, if children are involved, can leave safely. IF IN IMMEDIATE DANGER DON'T WAIT - PLEASE CALL 999. If your safety isn't an issue but your relationship, or the COVID situation, is affecting your mental health, there are people you can talk to and things you could put in place to help.

Support and Information:

[Government website:for COVID-19 and Domestic Abuse](#)

[Relate](#) - Relationship Support

[Police](#) - How to report Domestic Abuse

[MIND](#) - Mental Health Charity

[STONEWALL](#) - LGBT Support

[ManKind](#) - Male Victims of Domestic Abuse

[Women's aid](#) Domestic Abuse Services & Support for survivors

[Citizens Advice](#)

If you're safe and it's your choice to try to make things work, we have some suggestions on the next page that might help.....

Tips for managing relationship pressures and break-ups during lockdown (cont)

To help with the pressures you might be feeling right now, one, some or all of the following might help:

Talk to each other! It's often rejected as being overrated, but 'Communication is key' - really! Try to set some time aside (maybe use one of our 'Date Night Factsheet' options), to have an open and honest conversation. Agree not to shout or to dismiss each other's concerns. Acknowledge the difficult time, listen to each other's worries and stresses. Try to reassure each other and to make some joint decisions about how you can manage things on a day to day basis. Agree to keep reminding each other that this situation is temporary and in the same way you've managed bumps your relationship pre COVID, such as losing a job, losing a loved one, illness, being separated through work or to care for someone, you can manage and get through this.

Get some alone time. We can make rash decisions when angry, we can reflect better when calm and more relaxed. So try to calm yourself and lift your spirits in whatever way works for you. You could, if possible, go into another room with your favourite cuppa and a book or to do some breathing exercises <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>. Listen to a positive podcast or your favourite music. Don't forget, you can still go out for a walk; spending time in the fresh air and in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety, improve your mood, and boost feelings of happiness and wellbeing; you could do a workout at the same time.

If isolating separately then maybe try some of our 'Date Night Factsheet' options to help you feel closer to each other. Talk about how your feeling about being apart and reassure each other. Talk about the things you want to do when you're back together!

Write things down. If possible, try to be as specific as you can, what are the unsolvable problems? If you were to tell an intermediary why you wanted to leave your partner, would they think it was the right decision?

Talk to a trusted friend or a therapist. Encourage your partner to do the same. Talking to someone who can be objective could really help. Talking to someone that knows you both equally well and asking their thoughts about your situation might also help.

However, if you feel that this experience has only served to open up the cracks in your relationship that were already there or it's highlighted other serious problems you can't manage, and you can't/don't want to wait until lockdown is over to end your relationship, then here are some things that you might want to consider: (IF IN IMMEDIATE DANGER DON'T WAIT- PLEASE CALL 999)

Reasons for the split. As much as you may want to write an endless list to justify your reasons, try to keep the reasons to 3 main points that are clear, specific and easy to understand. It can be difficult but try not to lay blame.

Tell you partner that you need to have a serious conversation. If possible, allow your partner to give their side of things to the points that you have made. It's important that they have their say especially as this is a final break up conversation.

Consider online therapy. A lot of counsellors and therapists are offering sessions online via Zoom/Skype. Even if you have made the decision to break up, trying therapy or mediation, might be worth a shot. It may also provide you both with the support that you may need post break up and help you to stay on speaking terms or even to remain friends.

Moving out. If you need to move out, you can find a link to the Police NPCC guidelines above, with information about moving house during lockdown. If moving out is not possible then maybe agree on separate areas of the house, if possible.

Try not to bad mouth each other. Things are difficult enough at the moment. It can feel like a big relief to get things off your chest, try to be sensitive to other to family or friends and especially over social media.

Communicate your expectations. What you might normally want or expect from the other person during a break up might not be the same right now. It might be good to talk together about whether you will stay in touch or if you need space.

Remember that you loved and respected each other once. Try to keep your patience, be considerate of each other and your mutual family and friends.