

Fact Sheet

Relationships



A relationship is when people know each other. People have different types of relationships with the people they live with, the people they work with, their family, their friends, their support workers and the people they do not know well.

Usually the closest relationship a person has is with their girlfriend or boyfriend, or husband or wife. Sometimes people call this person a partner.



Some good things in a close relationship can be sharing, talking to each other, doing things together and helping each other. Close relationships can make people feel happy and good about themselves.



Talking about relationships can be helpful

Sometimes when a person wants to have a girlfriend or boyfriend but they do not have one, this can make them feel very sad. If a person feels sad about this, they should talk to someone they trust.

Some people do not know many other people. They may not have a girlfriend or boyfriend or a family. That is OK. Everyone is different. If a person wants to meet more people so that they can have more relationships they should talk to someone they trust about how they could do this.

Sometimes people in a relationship argue

Sometimes people in a relationship do not agree with each other and they argue. It is normal for people to have arguments sometimes. Small arguments are OK when both people say sorry. Arguing can make people feel very sad, especially when they argue a lot. If this happens, they might decide that they do not like each other anymore, and then they end their relationship.

People can decide for themselves who they want to have a relationship with. It is OK for a person to end a relationship if they want to.

Some people have more than one close relationship in their life

People often have more than one close relationship in their life. Sometimes when two people are in a relationship, one of them decides to end the relationship. People often feel sad when a relationship ends. This is normal. Sometime later one of the people might have another relationship with a different person. This is normal too.

Sometimes a person might want to be in a close relationship with another person who does not want to be their boyfriend or girlfriend. People can only be someone's boyfriend or girlfriend if both people want this. A person should say "No" if someone wants to be their girlfriend or boyfriend but they do not want this.

Different types of relationships

Shaking hands is OK if people do not know each other very well

It is OK for people who work together to shake hands or wave to each other. It is OK for two people to shake hands or wave to each other if they have been introduced to each other by someone that they know.

Close friends can hug

It is OK for close friends to hug each other when they first meet or are saying goodbye. A person should always ask someone if it is OK before they touch or hug them and wait for them to say "Yes".

Family members can hug but they must not have sex

It is OK for someone to hug and give a friendly kiss on the cheek to someone in their family if they both want to. It is not OK for a person to have sex or do sexy touching with someone in their family. If a family member tries to make another person in their family have sex with them, they should try to say "No" and tell someone that they trust about what has happened.

Kissing, touching and sex are OK in a close relationship

It is OK for people in a close relationship to hold hands, hug, kiss and touch each other's bodies if both people want to.

It is OK to have sex in a close relationship like a boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife if both people want to and the law says that both people are old enough.



What the law says about having sex

In different parts of Australia, there are different laws about how old a person can be before they can agree to have sex. In New South Wales it is against the law to have sex with someone who is under 16 years.



What you need to know:

- You may have different types of relationships with different people in your life
- It is up to you to decide who you want to have a close relationship with
- You can only have someone as your boyfriend or girlfriend if you and the other person both want this
- You can talk to someone you trust if you want to meet more people so you can have more relationships
- It is OK for you to end a relationship if you want to
- You might feel sad when a relationship ends but you may have another one at some later time
- There are different types of touch you can have with another person. This will depend on the type of relationship you have with the other person
- Always ask someone if it is OK before you touch or hug them and wait for them to say "Yes"

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