

# Real Life Relationships

SIX

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Interview with Anna Bay Young Parents Group

## Healthy or unhealthy relationships?

We're together but I'm not lost.  
We have our own space. I'm as important as you are.  
There is no violence.



# Healthy Relationships

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'spend time together'

'loyalty'

'closeness'

'romance'

'safe & secure'

'both happy'

'friendship'

'feeling good'

'honesty'

'adventure & having fun'

'freedom to be myself'

'listening'

'openness'

'freedom to do things'

'not having to be perfect'

'being told that I am loved'

'share responsibilities'

'satisfying sex & personal connection'

'respect'

'do things as a family'

'good communication'

'acceptance - take me as I am body and person'

'comfortable'

I feel lost in our relationship.  
There is no space and you are more important than me.  
There is no respect. I feel trapped and controlled.

## Getting some support

If this sounds like your relationship, it's really important to get some help. Without help, unhealthy relationships and domestic violence tend to get worse, not better. It can hurt you and your baby or child. See Legal stuff, Useful contacts and Websites in Chapter 7.



# Unhealthy relationships

- 'violence'
- 'confronting'
- 'jealousy'
- 'huge arguments'
- 'yelling'
- 'ignore me'
- 'no trust'
- 'rejection'
- 'do all the work'
- 'feel controlled'
- 'putting down'
- 'backstabbing'
- 'over responsibility'
- 'not feeling safe'
- 'scared of the person'
- 'taken for granted'
- 'lies'
- 'infidelity (cheating)'
- 'jumping to conclusions'
- 'demands'
- 'petty arguments'
- 'to agree when I don't really'
- 'sex when I don't want to'
- 'no communication'
- 'too much in your face - not having own space'
- 'not giving enough time - neglect'
- 'promises that don't get fulfilled'

# My “ relationships have changed...”

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## “ What helped you with these changes?”

Meeting other young parents helped because we were all in the same boat. Rebecca, 18 years, Port Stephens

Young Parents Group helped heaps. Young Mums Groups are good! Cassandra, 23 years

Having a supportive partner, and access to helpful caring people and services. Looking after myself. Kim, 24 years, Port Stephens

Young Parents Network Social Worker helped me a great deal. My mum as well. Meryem, 16 years

I found the Child & Family Health Nurse helpful, some chemists, my doctor, playgroup. Amy, 21 years, Maitland”

All my relationships changed dramatically. I had a better relationship with my parents because I understood a little better. But I lost a lot of friends because I couldn't do or want to do all the things that I did before I had a baby. I broke up with my partner. It was hard. Things weren't the same and some people didn't accept the changes. I went out less and I felt upset because nobody came and saw me after a while.

Rebecca, 18 years, Port Stephens

We had more responsibilities and couldn't just do what we wanted. It was actually a good thing.

Karina, 22 years, Port Stephens

My baby's father became more abusive towards me.

Stacey, 20 years

My family and I became closer: I was over the moon. My friends and I went separate ways: made me see they weren't my real friends. Meryem, 16 years

I think our relationship became stronger:

Sue-Ellen (21 years)

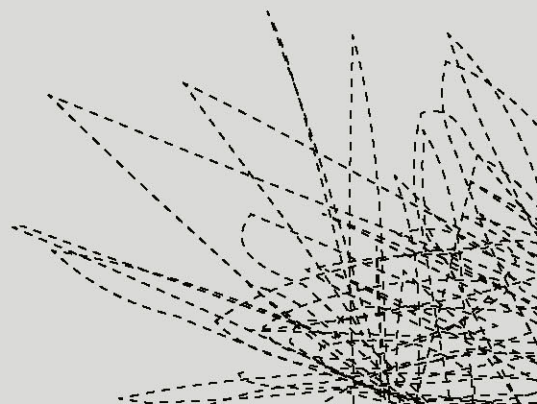
Some friendships grew closer, others faded. I got closer to my parents. Amy, 21 years, Maitland

We fight more when Sarah's sick, but I couldn't have done this without Trav. Jess, 17 years, Newcastle

Me and her dad aren't together anymore. All I could focus on was my daughter. It upsets me that I don't have the whole happy family thing but it's better than a fighting family!

Cassandra, 23 years

My sister and I are a lot closer. I no longer let people walk all over me! Kim, 24 years, Port Stephens”



# When relationships end

When close relationships end it can be really tough, even if you're the one who made the break. It is extra hard when kids are involved. Sometimes counselling can help you through this hard time.

Whether it's the ending of a love relationship, a friendship or a split with family you'll grieve. You'll probably get a whole lot of different feelings and thoughts, your body might feel different, and you might act differently. Usually this feels stronger for more important relationships. After a while, you can live with the fact that the relationship has ended.

## What about the kids?

- Some parents think it's better to stay together for the kids. The reality is that kids pick up that things aren't OK and notice that you're not happy. It's important to make the decision that is best for you.
- Children grieve too, which usually shows up in how they act. When you're not feeling great, this can be hard to handle, so it's important to get support.
- On top of this, you're trying to work out where the kids live and lots of other practical things.

## TIPS:

- Stay in touch with friends, family, groups and services.
- Get some extra support or counselling if you think you might be stuck or it feels too hard. Chapter 7 has some useful contacts.
- Do things to look after yourself (Try the ideas in Chapter 5 Looking after yourself is OK!)
- If there has been violence, threats or control: get some extra support. (See Legal Stuff, Useful Contacts and Websites in Chapter 7.)
- Sort out money matters. You might need to contact Centrelink or Child Support Agency. (Chapter 7 has useful contacts.)

## Some feelings and thoughts:

Can't believe it, sadness, anger, guilt, relief, hurt, loneliness, fear, anxious, confused, can't get your mind off it, feeling like you're not worth loving, "I can't do this on my own."

## Some body feelings:

'Hole' in stomach, tired, no energy or weak, 'heart' hurts, feeling sick, heart and mind racing.

## Some things you might do:

Cry, be forgetful, have problems sleeping or sleep heaps, not feel hungry or feel really hungry, not want to be with people or go out or don't want to be alone, keep going over it, thinking "if only..."