

RELATIONSHIP RULES

Whilst we recognise that every relationship is different, we believe that there are a number of rules that should be the foundation for any relationship. These rules make sure that you are respected, safe and secure. No relationship is alike so you will need to work out the finer details of what works for you and your partner but the following provide a solid grounding.

Rule No. 1 *No violence or abuse*

Every person has the right to be free from violence and/or abuse. Any person who inflicts violence on another (verbal, physical or sexual) is committing a crime.

Rule No. 2 *Be yourself*

Each partner in a relationship has the right to express their own individuality and opinions, even if they are different to their partner's. Also, each partner has the responsibility to respect difference and negotiate to find balance where opinions are different.

Rule No. 3 *Communicate openly and honestly*

Open and honest communication is essential to building a healthy relationship. Being able to tell your partner anything from 'No, I'm not ready for sex' to 'I really want to see that movie' is important. This applies to all relationship matters and good negotiation is key.

Rule No. 4 *Respect and trust each other*

Everyone should expect respect and trust in a relationship. This relates to everything from trusting that your partner will not breach your confidence, to you respecting their choice not to have sex until they are ready. Listening and understanding are essential to building respect and trust.

Rule No. 5 *Treat each other with equality*

Each partner in a relationship should have equal ability to make choices and decisions about matters that affect the relationship.



Rule No. 6 *Don't criticise, humiliate or use put-downs*

No person should be subject to criticisms, humiliation or put-downs.

Rule No. 7 *Spend time with family and friends*

Relationships with family and friends outside the immediate partnership need to be nurtured and respected by each partner, and space created to continue these relationships.

Rule No. 8 *Ensure each person has choice*

In a relationship each partner needs to maintain their ability to choose what is good for them. Whilst this needs to be done with respect for their partner, the relationship should not mean that individual choice is lost (eg. if you always wanted to go to university – you go!)

Rule No. 9 *Foster safety and security*

Everyone in a relationship should feel safe and secure, and free from fear of their partner.

Rule No. 10 *Be consistent*

Each partner should be able to expect consistency from their partner in regards to their relationship and interactions. This means that each partner should know where they stand.

