



**Griffith**  
UNIVERSITY

Queensland, Australia

# SEX LOVE DATING

COUNSELLING AND WELLBEING



**This booklet seeks to empower you with the knowledge and understanding to identify healthy and unhealthy qualities in behaviours and relationships and to offer and seek support for yourself and others if you notice something is not right or respectful.**

For further information in relation to support and reporting options at Griffith University please visit [griffith.edu.au/safe-campus](https://griffith.edu.au/safe-campus)

# Acknowledgements

Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence,  
and Griffith University MATE Bystander  
Program and Safe Campuses Initiative.





**Casual** ◊ **Partner** ◊ ◊  
**Boyfriend** ◊ **Girlfriend**  
**Going out** ◊ **Polygamy**  
**Being exclusive** ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊  
◊ ◊ ◊ **One night stand**  
**Getting together** ◊ ◊ ◊  
◊ **Friends with benefits**  
**Same gender identity** ◊

# RELATIONSHIPS

All the connections with the people around us are RELATIONSHIPS— friends, family, colleagues, peers, and partners. The relationships we have with other people are important, whether these are short-term or long-term, and can have a significant impact on our lives.

## Let's talk about intimate relationships!

Being in a relationship or going out on a date with someone can be one of the best experiences, but it can also be daunting and challenging. It is also important to recognise that not all relationships look the same. Relationships come in many different shapes and sizes. Some relationships will last many years or a lifetime, where others will only last a few months or just one night. They can be casual and just about having fun together – or it might be an exclusive partnership where you're head over heels in love with each other!

Sometimes you find yourself thinking of a million questions (Am I happy? Where is this going? Should we break up?) and if you're not in a relationship you might also have a million questions (Do I want a relationship? Will dating my friend ruin the friendship? Is being single more fun?)

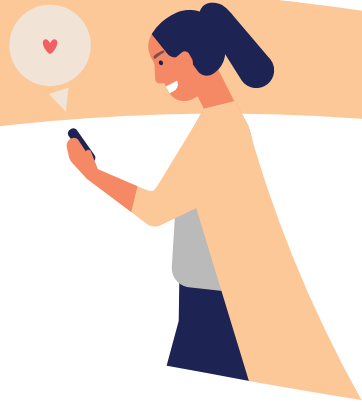
The key to any relationship (intimate or not!) is to make sure that we feel supported and respected. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and some relationships can leave us feeling controlled, disrespected and very fearful.



**Not wanting  
a relationship  
is okay too!**

# I have the **RIGHT...**

- To be respected.
- To communicate my boundaries and values.
- To set limits.
- To say 'yes' or 'no.'
- To have my own feelings and be able to express them.
- To have my feelings and thoughts heard and acknowledged.
- To lock my devices and accounts, and not share my passwords.
- To be myself without changing to suit others.
- To dress how I choose, even if others don't approve or like it.
- To talk to others about my relationships – friends, family, support people.
- To seek medical and emotional support if and when I need to.
- To have friends of any gender identity.



# I have the RESPONSIBILITY...

- To hear, acknowledge and respect the boundaries and values of others.
- To not violate the boundaries or trust of my date, partner or others.
- To look, listen and follow verbal and non-verbal cues, during sex and at other times.
- To communicate as clearly and honestly as I can.
- To check my actions and decisions to determine if they are in the best interest of me and my date or partner.
- To enable others to access help or support when they need it.
- To think about my own wellbeing.



# What does a respectful relationship **LOOK LIKE?**

- Boundaries are respected
- Caring
- Loyal and trustworthy
- Understanding
- Open and honest communication
- Listen to each other
- Support each other
- You respect each other's individual interests
- Your partner makes changes after you tell them that something makes you uncomfortable (and vice versa)
- Compromise when necessary
- You laugh together
- You share values and beliefs
- Never deliberately put each other down
- Support each other's ambitions
- Everyone uses a calm and rational tone
- You can apologise to each other when someone is wrong
- You feel good after spending time together





# When to re-evaluate a RELATIONSHIP?



- Disrespect
- Your needs are not met
- Gaslighting – causes you to question your reality, events or even memories due to being told you are irrational, imagining things, overly emotional or “crazy”
- Money is being withheld from you or what you spend is being monitored
- You feel used or are using them for something
- You do not feel safe, or you are fearful of them
- Control
- Constant putdowns and criticism
- Being monitored or being made to be accountable for where you are going, who you are seeing or how long you will be
- Going from 1 to 100 very quickly
- Being treated like you are property that the other person owns
- Using emotional blackmail to talk you into having sex
- Pressure to have sex
- Rare moments of closeness
- You feel like you are walking on eggshells
- You are not trusted, or you do not trust them
- No space for difference (friends, interests, opinions)
- Blame
- Unable to be honest
- Feeling you need to make excuses for your partner’s behaviour
- Constant lying
- Jealousy
- Passive aggressive communication
- Rigid gender roles
- Cruelty to animals
- Being isolated from friends/family or having your time with them controlled (this might be a sudden change, or it might happen over time).



**Relationships are  
about love and  
respect.**

# COMMUNICATION

## Getting to know someone

In person, online, text... talking to someone you're interested in can be nerve racking. So remember to

### **keep it simple!**

- Be yourself. In the long run, if they're not into you for who you really are, the relationship won't work.
- Be confident. Don't buy into that negative mind chatter. Sometimes you just have to fake the confidence (because really, you're dying inside!)
- Start with the stuff you have in common. Is there something you both like?
- Ask them questions! It's a win/win—you get to know more about who they are and you can settle your nerves while they're talking.
- It's normal to have some silences or nervous giggling. It's doesn't mean they don't like you.
- If you get the feeling they're uncomfortable, back off and think about talking to them another time.

## What about if you're not interested in them?

- Your body might feel tense and uncomfortable.
- You might be looking for ways to leave the conversation.
- You don't trust what they're saying is the truth.
- You feel bored.
- You don't want to make plans with them.
- You don't feel a connection.

## Someone may not be interested in you if they are:

- Often drifting off from the conversation.
- Not listening to you.
- Rarely asking you anything about yourself.
- Ignoring you.

**If someone is not really into you it's time to move on. Afterall, you deserve to be around people who appreciate you.**

# COMMUNICATION

## Express yourself! Communicating in a relationship

- Listen! No really, listen. Set your intention to pay attention with an open mind to what the other person is saying. Avoid thinking about what you're going to say next. Take in what they're saying and pause afterwards if you need to think about how to respond.
- Be gentle. If something is bothering you, bring it up gently and try to avoid blame. A great way to do this is by using "I feel..." statements.
- Seek first to understand. Be inquisitive – where is your partner coming from with their perspective? This can really shift the relational dynamic and pave the way for more open and fresh communication.
- Own your message. Acknowledge that your message comes from your frame of reference and your perceptions. This fosters understanding and cooperation.
- Ask for feedback. "How do you see this situation?" "What do you want to do?"



# Conflicts are unavoidable, so communicate like a pro:

You never talk to me

**The problem:**

The criticism is directed at the person instead of the behaviour you have a problem with.

I feel left out and I want to hear about your day

You're just so lazy!

**The problem:**

Contempt attacks the person's sense of self-worth instead of appreciating their strengths.

I love when you help me out with cleaning

I'm not talking about this again!

**The problem:**

Stonewalling happens when we're overwhelmed. It might look to someone else like you don't care. Make sure you take a break and return to the conversation later.

Can we take a break and talk about it this arvo?

It's not my fault! it's your fault because -

**The problem:**

Defensiveness doesn't lead to resolution. Instead, accept responsibility for your own actions.

I can see how that might've been hurtful, I'm sorry

# COMMUNICATION

## How do we communicate without words?

- A warm smile.
- A frown.
- A soft tone of voice can increase closeness between you and another person.
- Turning away might show they're not interested.
- Eye contact (too much, too little, just right!).
- Relaxing your face, shoulders and body can also make the people around you feel relaxed.
- Nodding shows that someone is understanding where you're coming from.
- Get to know your partner's non-verbal communication by clarifying it. If the body, tone of voice or facial expression tells you they're not okay... ask them how they feel about what you've said or what they've told you.
- But please remember when it comes to sex with someone else the absence of no does not mean yes. Please check in regularly and do not just rely on verbal or non-verbal communication!





**“To effectively communicate, we must realise that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”**

–Anthony Robbins

# “Let’s talk ABOUT SEX”



Sex can be awkward to talk about but learning what questions to ask can make the experience way better for both you and them. Just because someone is okay with kissing doesn't mean they'll be okay with anything more than that. You don't have to sit down and talk about it over dinner but these are some ways you can check if you're both actually ready to have sex...

- Do you want to have sex?
- Do you want to?
- Do you feel comfortable?
- Do you like this?
- Do you want me to keep going?
- What do you like?
- What do you want to do?
- Can I touch/kiss...?
- Is this okay?
- Do you want to slow down?
- Would you like to try...?



# CONSENT...

✓ Is a clear, enthusiastic and continuing yes

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✓ Can be given verbally and physically

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✓ Must be freely and voluntarily given

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✓ Cannot be forced or assumed

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✓ Can be revoked at any time.

**Consent means respecting boundaries and never making assumptions!**

**Sexual activity without consent is sexual violence.**

# LISTENING.

Can I kiss you?

# RESPECT.

That feels good.

Enthusiastic.

An ongoing yes. KEEP GOING.

YES YES YES. Affirmative gestures.

I like that. I want to.



# Yes.

If you want me to.

Maybe. They said "yes" last time.

LET'S SLOW DOWN.

# SLEEPING.

Back off. I SHOULD GO.

FROZEN. I'm not sure.

It feels weird.

# No more.

Mixed signals.

Pushing away.

Under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Passed out.

Pretending to be someone you or they are not.

# COERCION.

Not right now.

# \*silence\*

# FLIRTING.

Dressing in a certain way.

I want to but...

Dating does not mean yes.

Under the age of 16 (QLD).

# Umm...

I've changed my mind.

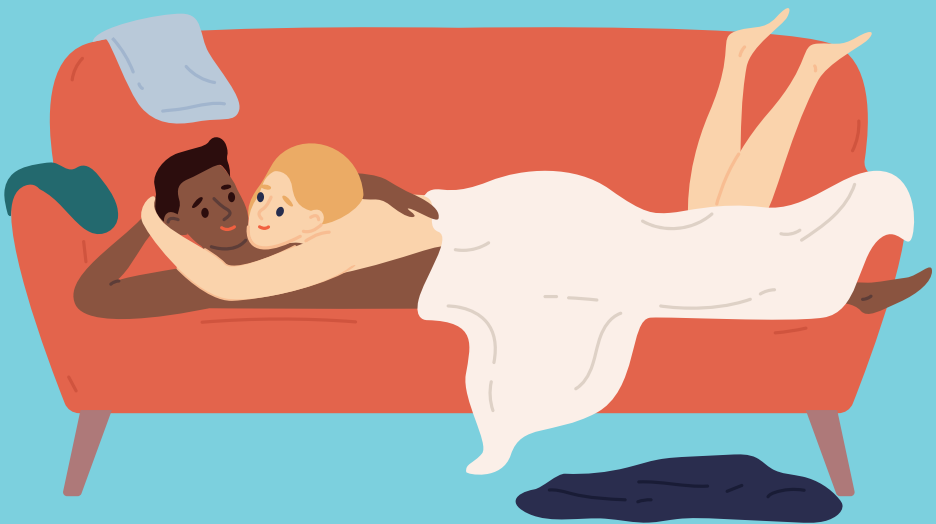
'Let's just chill.'



# Taking care OF ME

How do you check in with yourself about sex so you know if you're making the right decision for you? Here are some questions that might help you:

- How do I know the other person is consenting to this?
- Am I doing what I really want to do?
- Am I looking forward to it?
- Am I doing it because I'm frightened they'll be angry if I say no?
- Just because I've done something before, doesn't mean I have to do it again.
- Am I doing something because I think it is what is expected?
- Do I feel able to talk about using condoms and/or contraception?
- Am I sober? Are they sober?
- Do we have a safe place to be with each other?
- Do I know what the other person wants?



# The online world

## Porn

- Porn can influence expectations about sex and can lead to less satisfaction.
- Porn rarely shows the big picture – the checking for consent, the fumbling and sweat, the practice of safer sex.
- People do not have to look like or behave like they do in porn.
- Porn reinforces gender stereotypes and can normalise violence and harassment.
- Physical and verbal aggression is not a normal part of sex. If you do not want to do something, that is okay and it is important that it is respected.
- Porn does not show that there can be more to sex than just pleasure.
- While watching porn can potentially relieve stress it can also lead to an addiction. There are many other ways to relieve stress that might be more helpful.





## Sexting

Sexting refers to sending, receiving or forwarding photos, videos, texts or emails of a sexual nature. There is usually an agreement between people not to show or distribute the content however this is not always the case or it is not always respected!

Once you hit send on a photo or text, you lose control over who sees it.

## Know where you stand legally

In Australia, if you are under 18, sexting is illegal. It is against the law to create, send or save sexual images of someone under 18, or who appears to be under 18 (including yourself). You can be charged with possessing and or distributing child exploitation material.

## The ground rules:

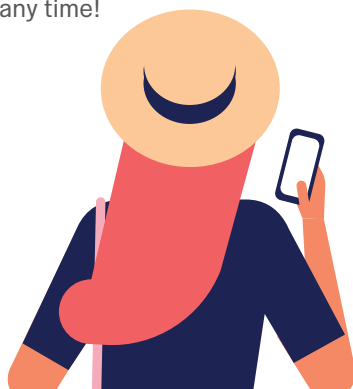
1. Sexting needs consent too! Don't just surprise someone. Ask them if they're okay with it before sending a pic.
2. If you really want to send something you could crop your face out and hide any identifying features (like a birthmark or tattoo).
3. Delete the photos straight away or put them in a vault app so they aren't easily accessible. No one wants to accidentally stumble across those in your holiday snaps.
4. Pressuring someone into sexting is coercive, manipulative behaviour and this is not okay.
5. Stay away from your phone when you're drinking or under the influence.

If you want more information or need support with tech and online concerns, visit [esafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au)

# THE ONLINE WORLD

## Online dating

- Ensure your meeting spot is public, somewhere you're familiar with. It would also be great if you could share your location with a friend before your date.
- Be mindful that people may not always tell you the truth. Trust your instincts if you feel that something is not adding up. A quick online search might help - Check out their social media profiles (pictures, age, maybe even what they share) and you can always 'reverse image search' their pictures to check these are their own!
- Not going well? Leave. Make your excuses if that feels more comfortable. Don't feel bad about cutting a date short if you're not keen. You don't owe the other person anything, no matter how long you've been chatting or what's been suggested.
- Ensure you have money for a cab —or money linked to your ride share account.
- Ensure your phone is fully charged and think about taking a back up charger.
- Just because you have agreed to meet up for sex doesn't mean you owe the person sex. You can say no at any time!



## What's not okay online?

- **INTIMIDATION**  
Sending threatening messages.
- **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**  
Pressuring someone to send explicit pics or videos. Sharing explicit images without the person's consent is a crime.
- **CYBER STALKING**  
Checking someone's account without permission or tracking someone using GPS location without their permission.
- **CAT FISHING, DEEP FAKES AND IDENTITY THEFT**  
Pretending to be someone you are not to trick or manipulate someone into talking with you, sexting you or meeting up with you.
- **CONTROLLING**  
Demanding they delete certain friends. Trying to befriend their friends online to keep tabs on them.

- **EMOTIONAL & VERBAL ABUSE**  
Spreading rumours online. Trolling. Generally being unkind or abusive.



# Fun and safe when out with your mates

So much of our culture here in Australia is about having each other's back. Learn some key ways to keep your friends safe while having fun.

## Watch their drink.

Make sure no one leaves a drink unattended. Make sure no one adds something to the communal punch without you knowing. We're talking about drink spiking!

## Designated friend.

Have a designated person each night who won't go as hard as everyone else on the drinks. This might entail the following duties: keeping track of time, watching the crowd doesn't get dodgy, passing the waters around, holding your friend's hair back while they throw up, and making sure everyone gets home safe at the end of the night.

## Buddy Up!

Buddy up with a friend for the night. This person will be your dance floor partner, bathroom buddy, after party traveller and all round safety watch. You won't let each other get into any trouble.





## You do you.

If someone is making you or a friend feel uncomfortable and if it's safe to do so, ask them to leave or walk away. You could even call someone else over. Don't feel like you have to be polite.

## Intervene.

If someone is in an unsafe position (even if it isn't one of your close friends) help them out – especially if they don't look sober enough to be making decisions for themselves. Ask directly if they need your help or if you can do anything for them. You could also ask someone else to help out.

## Feed me.

Make sure your mates eat something before they go out drinking. It makes the night last longer and overall it will be more enjoyable for everyone. Once your night out is done go grab that pizza or kebab.

## Home time!

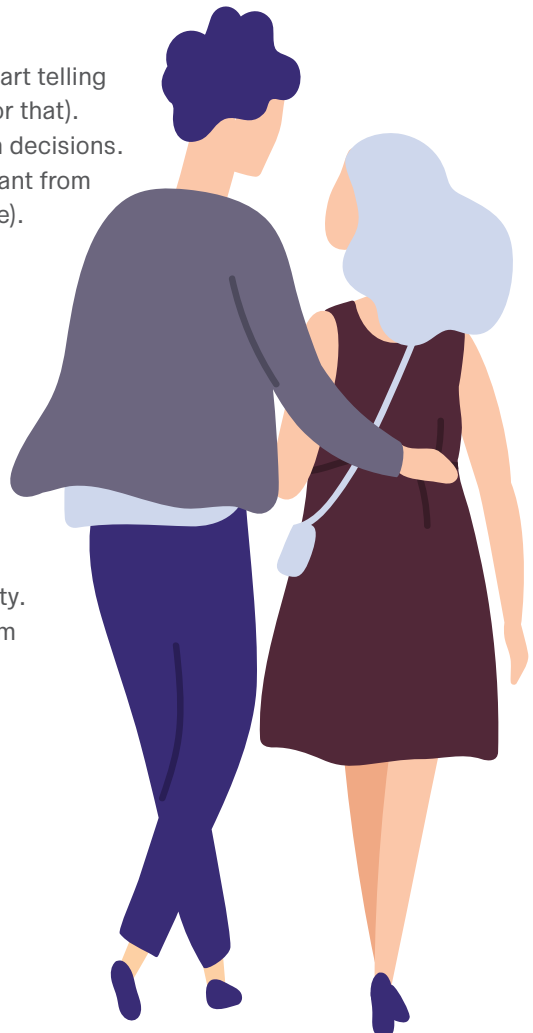
Make sure everyone is accounted for at the end of the night. Everyone should have a trusted way to get home and if not... they're coming with you! If you're catching a Taxi or ride share home alone, share your location with a friend or text someone when you are home safely.



# How to support a friend going through a difficult time

- Take what they say seriously.
- Believe them.
- Listen. Please don't interrupt or start telling your own story (it's not the time for that).
- Empower them to make their own decisions.
- Ask them what help they might want from you (accepting that it may be none).
- Encourage them to seek help in whatever way is right for them.

It is helpful to note that some people will experience added complexities in relationships and barriers to accessing help. This can include people who identify as being LGBTQI, culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations and those with a disability. Remember to be patient and help them navigate their situation whatever way they are most comfortable with.



# CONTACTS



## What support is available?

### Emergency

If in immediate danger call  
Police 000 (112 from mobiles)

### National Support Lines

#### 1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732  
1800respect.org.au

#### Lifeline Australia

13 11 14  
lifeline.org.au

#### MensLine Australia

1300 78 99 78  
mensline.org.au

#### QLife

1800 184 527  
qlife.org.au



### Griffith University

#### Griffith Mental Wellbeing Support Line 24/7

1300 785 442  
Text: 0488 884 146

#### Campus Support Team

(security)  
1800 800 707

#### Priority personal violence appointments

(07) 5552 9600  
counsellor@griffith.edu.au

#### Health, Counselling and Wellbeing

(general health, sexual health,  
family planning and counselling)  
Gold Coast: (07) 5552 8734  
Nathan: (07) 3735 7299  
studentHCW@griffith.edu.au

#### Safe Campuses

(information, resources and  
reporting options)  
griffith.edu.au/safe-campuses

# LEARN MORE

## RECOGNISE, RESPOND, REFER

Recognise, Respond, Refer training aims to help the Griffith community to understand the basics of how to:

- recognise the signs of personal violence and disrespectful behaviour
- respond with empathy to a disclosure
- refer to support and reporting services at, or external to, the University.

Griffith Students and staff can complete the program for free via [Learning@Griffith](mailto:Learning@Griffith).

## SEX AND RESPECT: IT'S ON ALL OF US

Whatever your gender, sexuality or relationship status, this free training module from the MATE Bystander team aims to help you:

- understand respect as a foundation to healthy relationships
- identify consent and non-consent in relationships and sexual interactions
- understand attitudes and assumptions in society which effect your own beliefs and boundaries
- learn ways to look out for friends and others through positive leadership as an active bystander.

Staff and students should complete Sex and Respect: It's On All Of Us, available on [Learning@Griffith](mailto:Learning@Griffith) now.

## BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER: MATE PROGRAM

If you see or hear behaviour that is not OK, you can do something to assist. If you think it's safe to do so, you can act in the moment to call out bad behaviour.

This might mean calling out at someone to stop, or telling your friend to settle down or apologise for an offensive remark. If it's not safe for you to help immediately, you might choose to call for security or emergency services, or wait and assist the victim of bad behaviour after the perpetrator has left, to make sure they are OK.

If you're not sure about the behaviour you are witnessing, just ask yourself is this OK? You can learn more about being an effective bystander through Griffith's MATE Bystander program. Griffith students and staff can complete the program for free via [Learning@Griffith](mailto:Learning@Griffith).

[griffith.edu.au/safe-campus/understanding-respect](https://griffith.edu.au/safe-campus/understanding-respect)

# NOTES

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