



RELATIONSHIPS

Sutton

Relationship Difficulties

Good relationships with others are central to our happiness and wellbeing. This information sheet concentrates on couples, although there are many other relationships including family relationships. When a relationship runs into difficulty it can have adverse effects on all people involved. This can be a stressful time, and may lead to feelings of sadness, anger and bitterness, emptiness and hopelessness, hurt and guilt.

There are many reasons why relationships become difficult or breakdown. Relationship difficulties may arise from events outside the relationship such as money worries, illness or tragic events. Communication difficulties can contribute to relationship difficulties, perhaps resulting in arguments and sometimes violence or abuse. Each relationship is unique, each with different problems, requiring different solutions.

Many couples in intimate relationships experience sexual problems at some point. Sometimes this may be due to physical difficulties or sometimes it might be that one or both partners lose interest in sex. These difficulties can be embarrassing to talk about with each other, but have a significant impact on the relationship.

Things that may help

There may be changes that you can make to reduce the stress on your relationship. You may also be able to develop skills and strategies for maintaining a healthy relationship.

Communicate with each other

If there are external pressures on your relationship such as debt issues or stress at work it may be helpful to address these. It is important to keep communicating with each other, especially when you are in a difficult situation.

Make time for each other and yourself

You may find that you don't spend much time together any more. Try to plan things that you used to enjoy together. Make a regular slot that is your private time together. On the other hand some couples or families may find it useful to ensure they spend time apart from each other- to get "me-time". Getting the balance right can be hard, but talk through planning time together and apart.

Write it down

It may be helpful for you and the other person in the relationship to write down how you are feeling, why you are feeling like this and what you can do to make a difference. It may be useful to write down ways the situation could be resolved, then discuss the options and agree to try one of the resolutions. Do not try to do this activity if either of you are feeling angry or hurt, but step away from the emotions to find a practical, balanced solution.

Argue constructively

Disagreeing with each other is a normal and healthy part of human relationships. There are ways to make arguments constructive. These include sticking to the subject that the argument started about. Try not to interrupt when the other person is talking, and do not try to read their minds or assume they can read yours.

Relate

Relate offers relationship advice, relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and support face-to-face and by phone. There is a fee per session for relationship counselling and sex therapy.

There is a centre based in Croydon, which has outposts in Sutton, Morden, Purely, Wimbledon and Caterham Please call for more information.

Phone 0208 680 1944

Address 9 Ramsey Court, 122 Church Street,
Croydon, CR0 1RF



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Seeking professional counselling

Sometimes it might be useful to see professional help with relationships. Relationship counselling can be between couples, families, or even 1:1 if there are difficulties with relationships in general.

It might be useful to seek professional guidance when:

- You talk to your partner and it feels as though you're not being heard
- After you've talked, you feel frustrated and confused.
- You can't talk for more than a few minutes without it turning into a shouting match.
- You're afraid that if you bring up a certain subject, things will get even worse.
- There's nothing left to say.

- (BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/couples/comm_counselling.shtml)

Useful sources of information and support

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

Websites

- www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/
- www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/support_relations.shtml
- www.2as1.net/index.html
- www.relate.org.uk/aboutus/faqs/
- www.metrocentreonline.org/services.htm (specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual people and people who are uncertain of their sexuality)

Books

- Better Relationships: Practical Ways to Make Your Love Last by Sara Litvinhoff ISBN: 0091856701
- Relate Guide to Sex in Loving Relationships (Relate Series) by Sara Litvinhoff ISBN 009185668X
- How Love Works: How to Stay in Love as a Couple and True to Yourself Even with Kids by Steve and Sharon Biddulph ISBN: 0722539355

Services

Private Therapy

If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommended that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies www.babcp.com

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html

British Psychological Society
www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm

Domestic Violence

If you are experiencing or have experience domestic violence, these services or organisations may be able to help.

English National Domestic Violence helpline 0808 2000 247

Women's Aid 0808 2000 247
Sutton Women's Aid 020 8669 7608

If you are male and have been violent towards your partner and would like to seek help contact the

Everyman Project on 0207 263 8884