

## **SURVIVING RELATIONSHIP BREAK-UP**

It is a hard decision to break up but very hard indeed if you are the one who didn't want it to end. Even a dull or destructive relationship hurts when it ends because you still have to let go of your hopes and dreams.

Emotional hurt can be more painful than physical pain and affects our physical as well as mental health. Eating, sleeping and thinking clearly are particularly difficult and when under pressure from studies, particularly worrying.

The following tips may help you take care of yourself through the break-up, much like you have to take care of yourself when you are sick. Gradually you do start healing and begin to enjoy life again.

### **DO'S of relationship Break-up**

- Seek out the company and help of supportive friends and family.
- Talk it out or write out your thoughts. This can be the bravest and quickest way through it. But do not overshare information on social media.
- Give yourself realistic time to get over it. There are no short cuts when the relationship has mattered to you.
- Avoid places that remind you too much of the past.
- Distract yourself when it all gets too much with easy activities such as walking, watching tv shows or movies, music that lightens you up.
- Take gentle physical care of yourself each day. Eat, rest and exercise within capability. Eat easy simple food, take short naps etc.
- Make a list of comforting things that you like and indulge yourself a bit.
- Do some fun things as soon as you are able.
- When you are ready, think about what you have learnt, given and gained from the relationship.

### **DON'T'S of Relationship Break-up**

- Don't isolate yourself and withdraw from those you like and those who care for you.
- Don't overuse alcohol or harming substances to 'numb out'. It will rebound on you later and you will be even more depressed. Hangovers hurt and can create depression.
- Don't take revenge and don't slander anyone on social media. It will end up prolonging your own hurt and you will probably regret it.
- Don't try to be friends again too quickly.
- Don't bottle up feelings too long, but let them out gradually or you may "explode" and scare yourself and others.
- Don't wind yourself up with endless questions, and "whys" that can't be answered, or focus too much on your ex-partners and your own faults.

- Don't let self-doubt grind you down. If it starts to get a grip distract yourself with something more entertaining or switch to self-strengths.
- Don't harm yourself or drown in grief. See a counsellor if you can't stop.

### **You may feel worse if**

- You didn't see the break-up coming
- You didn't make the decision to break-up
- You still see your ex-partner around campus etc.
- You live in the same residential college.
- The relationship was fundamental for you to feel OK about yourself.
- This is your first serious romance
- They have moved onto a relationship with someone else.
- They were your only real friend.

*If you feel 3 or more, counselling could be really helpful.*

### **You need to know that:**

- You will experience many different feelings in grieving the break-up – all normal. These are shock, denial, anger, depression and sometimes bargaining to get it back. All very unsettling until the final stage of acceptance that it is over.
- Intense grief feels like it will last forever. It will pass into something less painful over the weeks ahead.
- A serious romantic relationship is just that – serious – but not the only one you will have in your life. You are now learning more about yourself and what love and loving relationships are best for you in the future.

### **More Information:**

Relationships Australia: [www.relationships.org.au/relationship-advice](http://www.relationships.org.au/relationship-advice)

Headspace: [headspace.org.au/young-people/dealing-with-relationship-breakups/](http://headspace.org.au/young-people/dealing-with-relationship-breakups/)