



Guide to Break-ups

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:
healthyu@umanitoba.ca



Is Your Relationship Healthy or Unhealthy?

Signs that your relationship is healthy:

- You and your partner both feel safe, physically and emotionally.
- You feel respected, and you respect your partner.
- When dealing with problems, the two of you can talk it out and try to come up with a solution.
- You respect each other's space.
- You trust each other.
- Both of you work towards creating a healthier relationship, because no relationship is ever perfect.

Signs that your relationship is unhealthy:

- You or your partner feel unsafe, physically or emotionally.
- You or your partner feel disrespected or not taken seriously.
- When dealing with problems, the two of you aren't able to discuss them well.
- Your partner doesn't respect your space, even when you ask.
- You find yourself unable to give your partner space when they ask.
- You don't trust each other.
- Your partner insults or humiliates you, or you do these things to them.

If you notice an issue in your relationship, try to talk about it with the other person if this is an option for you. Remember that **your safety is the most important thing**, and that you can leave a relationship at any time.



Should you stay or should you go?

This is a difficult question that cause a lot of stress among students.

Consider how many of these positive and negative characteristics describe your relationship.

Should you stay...

- You and your partner want to be in your relationship
- The relationship makes everyone happy most of the time
- You look forward to seeing your partner
- Communication is easy and open
- You feel equally invested in the relationship
- The relationship is and has always been physically, sexually and emotionally healthy for everyone
- You work through conflicts
- You and your partner have more positive than negative things to say about each other
- You share joy and laughter in the relationship
- The relationship makes you feel good about yourself

Or should you go...

- You or your partner don't want to be in the relationship anymore
- The relationship makes everyone unhappy the majority of the time
- You aren't getting what you want or need from the relationship
- You don't look forward to seeing each other
- One of you gives more than the other person
- Communication isn't working or feels impossible
- The relationship is or has been physically, sexually or emotionally unhealthy
- There is little laughter or joy in the relationship
- You don't resolve conflict well
- You are in a place where growth doesn't happen
- You are in your relationship because of guilt



This list can be a good starting point to reflect on your relationship. Think of reasons that are relevant for you. Trust yourself and your instincts.



How to break-up with someone

There are a lot of reasons why people break up. Folks change, schedules get busy and, priorities shift and life happens. Sometimes we just don't want to be in a relationship. Breaking up can be difficult, no matter the reason. Here are some tips for a healthy break up.

Prepare

Plan out what you want to say before you talk to your partner. Write it down if you feel like you'll forget something. Practice with yourself, talk to a friend or therapist.

Pick the right spot

Choose a place that is comfortable for your talk. If safety is a concern, meet in public.

Say it in person if you are safe

If you feel safe, talk to your partner in person. Avoid using text, a phone call or email to break up with them. Don't get a friend to deliver the news. If you do not feel safe with talking in person, choose an option that fits for you.

Be respectful

Chances are, this will be a difficult conversation. Try to be as respectful with your partner. Be honest if your partner wants a reason. Do not try to hurt or insult your partner.

Make a clean break

If possible, give each other space. It can be tempting to want to jump to friendship, however both of you need time to process the end of the relationship. You can have the "let's just be friends" conversation later, but for the time being take care of yourself and your other relationships with friends and family. Avoid contacting each other and seeing each other.

Stick with the decision

Going through a break-up is tough. There might be feelings of regret, longing and loneliness. However, you made this decision for a reason. Write down the reasons for the break-up so you can remind yourself on difficult days.



Dealing with break-up challenges

Loneliness

If you spent a large portion of your time with your ex, then you might be feeling lonely after the break-up. Reconnect with friends or family members. Join a club on campus. Talk about how you are feeling. Take time for yourself and old hobbies.

Losing faith for people and romantic relationships

It can be easy to feel cynical about love after your relationship ends. Avoid overgeneralizing ("all men are terrible", "love is dead") about folks or romance because of your experience. It will take time to heal and feel comfortable with the idea of relationships again.

Realizing your relationship wasn't healthy

When a relationship ends, you might realize that it wasn't as healthy as you thought it was. This information can come as a shock or make a lot of sense. Whatever you are feeling is valid. Reach out for help and support when you need it. Talk to someone you trust about your feelings and experience. If you don't feel comfortable disclosing this information, consider reaching out to a therapist.

loveisrespect.org

klinik.mb.ca

Exiting a 2SLGBTQIA+ relationship while being closeted

If your 2SLGBTQIA+ relationship ended, but your friends or family don't know about your identity, it can be difficult to get the support you need. Don't feel the pressure to 'out' yourself if you aren't comfortable. Tell folks as much as you are okay with. Consider reaching out to a 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly therapist or group to talk about your experience.

<https://serc.mb.ca/>

<https://rainbowresourcecentre.org/>

Seeing your ex

Sometimes it is unavoidable to see your ex. If you don't feel safe, leave the area if possible. Recognize that you don't have to make small talk or interact with them. Take care of yourself however you might need.



Surviving a break-up: Top strategies

It can feel very demoralizing to go through a break-up. Any sort of loss can cause stress, discomfort and upsetting emotions. Here are some ways to make the process more manageable.

Feelings

- Allow yourself to feel whatever you need to.
- Be gentle and understanding with yourself and the healing processes you are going through.
- Talk to others about how you are feeling. This will help with feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- If it is difficult to be kind to yourself, think about how you treat a friend in the same situation.

Write it down

- Write out the experiences you are going through. This can help when you feel the urge to reach out to your ex or don't have a friend available to talk to.
- Make a list of your ex's annoying qualities. Read this when you feel upset about the relationship ending.
- Create a list of the benefits of being single. No need to share snacks. More time for friends, yourself or your commitments.

Self-Care

- You deserve to be treated well. Show yourself kindness and be gentle. It can feel easy to neglect our well-being when we are upset. Check in with yourself and figure out what you need. Are you hungry? Did you sleep enough?
- Notice if you are using unhelpful coping mechanisms. Talk to a friend or professional if you are worried.
- Create a routine for yourself to follow. Try to have consistent bedtimes, meals, school or work schedules.
- Treat yourself! Indulge. Have your favourite food, take a bath. Take a night off from studying. You deserve it!
- Be realistic with yourself. It's okay that you might not be functioning at your normal capacity.
- Reflect on what you learned from the relationships. Determine what boundaries you have and expectations that need to be met in your next relationship.



UM Resources

Break-ups

[Student Counselling Centre \(SCC\)](#)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

[Health and Wellness](#)

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

[Healthy U](#)

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

[Indigenous Student Centre \(ISC\)](#)

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

isc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

[Spirituality Services](#)

One-on-one emotional and spiritual support. Recognize, affirm and work with your existing values and beliefs.

528 UMSU University Centre

spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca

204-298-2467

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/spiritual-services>

[Sexual Violence Resource Centre](#)

The SVRC provides support, resources, information and referral services for any student, faculty or staff member who has been affected by sexual violence

537 UMSU University Centre

svrc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-6562

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>

Off Campus Resources

Break-ups

Manitoba

[Manitoba Relationship Resources](#)

Learn about relationship resources available in Manitoba.

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/familylaw/relationships/relationship-resources.html>

[Thrive Community Support Circle](#)

Thrive provides free 1:1 counselling should you be experiencing a challenging time following a break up.

204-772-9091

<https://thrivecommunitysupportcircle.com/therapy/>

Online

[Love is Respect](#)

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/>

[The Gottman Relationship Blog](#)

gottman.com/blog/

[Planned Parenthood](#)

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships>

Online UM Resources

[Console](#)

Console is a mental health service available to UM students who have insurance through the university. Console offers 24-hour crisis support, daily journal, wellness assessment quizzes, mental health literacy training, and self-guided therapy. Console also connects students with mental health professional support VIA telephone.

https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_Console_Console