

Communication in relationships



There are many ways to communicate. When you are in romantic or intimate relationships, it is important to be able to communicate in the way that works best for you. It is also important to respect how your partner likes to communicate. This information sheet is about different ways to improve communication in romantic or intimate relationships.



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Different people have different ways they like to communicate

Here are some examples of ways people can communicate:



Writing with pen and paper



Email, direct message (DM) on social media, or text message



Using a computer or phone app that has symbols and pictures



Using a paper or digital augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) board with symbols and pictures



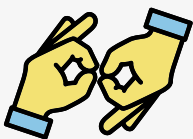
Speaking on the phone or by videocall



Speaking with someone in-person



Sharing pictures or videos



Using sign language



Using body language

Ask your partner how they like to communicate. Tell your partner how you like to communicate. Find some ways to communicate that you and your partner are both okay with.

Everyone is different:



People have different ways they like to communicate



People have different things they are good at and different things they need help with



Different things will upset different people



Different things are important to different people

Because people are different, this can sometimes cause people who are in a relationship to not understand each other. When this happens, it can be hard and frustrating.

Making rules for you and your partner









Making some rules for you and your partner can help you and your partner better understand each other. This can help you understand what your partner expects of you and can help your partner know what you expect from them.



If you and your partner make rules, it is important that both of you agree on the rules and follow the rules. You and your partner can also check in with each other sometimes to see if you are both still okay with the rules and if there are any rules you want to add, change, or take away.

Here are some examples of rules that could be helpful:

Make rules about:	Examples of rules:
 <p>What you can both do to avoid making the other person upset</p>	<p>One person gets upset if their partner is doing something else when they are trying to communicate with them.</p> <p>Rule: After dinner is our time to communicate with each other with no distractions.</p>
 <p>What to do if you and your partner do not agree on something</p>	<p>One or both partners get easily upset when the other person does not agree with them.</p> <p>Rule: If there is something we do not agree on, we will both consider the other person's thoughts and feelings first. Then, we will try to find a solution that we can both be okay with.</p>
 <p>What to do if one of you is upset</p>	<p>Some people might want to communicate about a problem right away, but some people might feel overwhelmed and shut down if they have to communicate right away.</p> <p>Rule: If someone is upset, we give that person the time they need to process their emotions alone. Then, we come back together to communicate about the problem calmly.</p> <p>Some people might find it easier to write down what they are feeling instead of saying it to their partner.</p> <p>Rule: When that person is upset, they will send an email to the other person explaining their feelings.</p>

Make rules about:	Examples of rules:
 <p data-bbox="402 247 714 478">What each of you can do to support the other person when they are sad or stressed</p>	<p data-bbox="763 220 1445 352">One partner just wants to vent when they are upset and the other person wants to problem-solve.</p> <p data-bbox="763 373 1445 506">Rule: The person who needs support will be clear if they want to vent or if they want advice.</p>
 <p data-bbox="402 625 714 751">How you and your partner can check in on each other</p>	<p data-bbox="763 546 1445 678">It can be hard for some people to know when it is okay for them to communicate about how they are feeling.</p> <p data-bbox="763 699 1445 831">Rule: Every Sunday morning, we will check in on each other and ask the other person how they are feeling.</p>
 <p data-bbox="402 877 714 1150">What you and your partner can do to help and support each other's different living styles</p>	<p data-bbox="763 871 1445 955">One person in a relationship is messier than the other person.</p> <p data-bbox="763 976 1445 1155">Rule: We will clean the house every Saturday. There will be one spot in the house where the messier person can keep their things the way they like.</p>