

same sex relationships

In many ways, same-sex male relationships face the same issues as all intimate relationships.

However, there are some concerns that are specific to same-sex male relationships, or are experienced in different ways.

Whatever the gender of the partners involved, it is important to discuss emotional issues on an ongoing basis.

Issues to consider

- One or both men may not have 'come out'. Some men are not 'out' at all. Others may not disclose their sexuality in particular aspects of their life (e.g. at work, to certain friends or family members). In such situations, a discussion of how this will impact on the relationship is important. When discussing this, it is essential to come from a point of respect and understanding. A person who is not out may have chosen to do so for a variety of reasons, including professional, cultural, political or social.
- If you or your partner is involved in the gay scene, a discussion around your level of involvement may come up from time to time.

Below are 10 tips to being a better partner

Relationships are at the core of our lives.

Relating to others can easily be a mixed bag of excitement, fear, anticipation, elation, struggle, closeness, dread, intimacy and loneliness. Relationships are dynamic and ever-changing.

In a positive relationship, both partners feel valued, loved and nurtured. To get the most out of your relationship, consider the following tips on being a great partner:

1. Develop a sense of trust - that is feeling that you can both be seen, heard, understood and accepted.
2. Recognise that physical closeness is only one expression of intimacy. Intimacy can be verbal (e.g. telling your partner why you love them or things that you love about them), and it can also be expressed by doing special things for your partner or generally helping out with daily living tasks.
3. Acknowledge each other's need to be autonomous and to make your own decisions sometimes.

4. Create a safe and open place, where you can both express problems, doubts, fears and weaknesses without fear of rejection or punishment.
5. Be willing to communicate. This often includes sharing feelings, needs and wants. Note: Listening to your partners problems does not necessarily mean you are responsible for solving them.
6. Be open to negotiate around your differences with respect and generosity. You are not going to get your own way all the time.
7. Aim to be aware of personal issues you bring to the relationship (sometimes called 'baggage'), and take responsibility for these. Also be aware of the expectations you may place on others and assess how realistic they are.
8. Regular time alone gives you space to recharge and rebalance. This will allow you to give more in your relationship in the long-run.
9. Maintain and build a supportive network of friends outside the relationship. No single relationship will meet every need.
10. Develop the capacity to not take yourself and everything else too seriously.

This tip sheet is part of a series of self-help tools for men. More tools can be found at www.mensline.org.au. For more information and assistance, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78.

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www.mensline.org.au

MensLine Australia is a professional telephone support, information and referral service for men, specialising in family and relationship concerns.

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