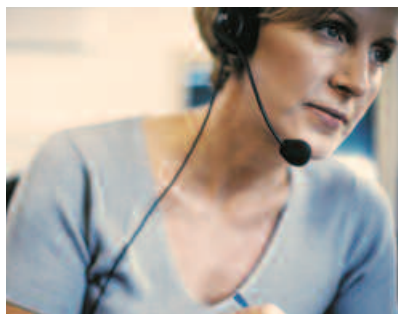


Is your relationship in trouble?

Men who are going through a separation often say that it has come as a complete shock.

This is because many men do not recognise the warning signs that indicate that their relationship is in trouble, or they choose not to respond to the signs in the hope that things will simply get better.

The experience of family breakdown or separation is distressing for all concerned, but it is particularly devastating if you did not initiate the breakup and it was totally unexpected.



There is no sure way to predict whether a relationship will end.

Every relationship is as unique as the two people in it and what one couple will put up with can drive another couple apart.

However, as with physical illness, there are usually clear warning signs that your relationship is in trouble. Recognising these and acting promptly may prevent a possible separation.

(See overleaf for some common warning signs.)



Your response to these warning signs is critical. Do you ignore them and act as though nothing is wrong? Do you blame your partner for what is happening, or expect them to fix it? Or do you simply hope that the problems will disappear with time?

Generally, leaving problems unacknowledged and unresolved makes them worse. It's important to remember that the health and well-being of a relationship is the responsibility of both parties and that there are many positive things you can do if you sense that all is not well.

(See overleaf for some positive responses.)

It's also worth noting that one of the secrets to a good relationship is to maximise positive moments and minimise negative ones. It's not fighting that does the damage to our relationships, but how we fight. Couples who share a high level of positive experiences, while keeping negative experiences low by fighting fair, have a much better chance of survival.

Is your relationship in trouble?

Common warning signs:

- The differences between you and your partner that were once appreciated are now criticised.
- Put-downs are more common than compliments.
- Communication is minimal and often negative.
- One or both partners choose to spend longer periods away from each other.
- One partner is not prepared to listen.
- Conflict leads to resentment rather than resolution.
- Fewer fun moments are had; humour is often at each other's expense.
- One partner indicates that they are unhappy with the relationship.

Getting things back on track:

- Listen to your partner's concerns about your relationship.
- Listen to what is not said as well as what is said.
- Use "I" statements like "I feel hurt when you say that".
- Make time to talk and connect on a regular basis.
- Show interest in your partner's life; know what's important to them.
- Be clear, but realistic, about what you need and want from the relationship.
- Do something kind - the favour is often returned.
- Talk about things that your partner is able to change, like their patterns of behaviour, rather than their personality.

1300 78 99 78
www.menslineaus.org.au



The only service of its kind, Mensline Australia provides confidential telephone counselling, information and referral to specifically enable men to enhance their relationships and manage the challenges associated with disruptions to their family life or primary relationships.

Managed through Crisis Support Services Inc, Mensline Australia is a national service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the cost of a local call.

Mensline Australia was established in September 2001 as part of the Commonwealth Government's Men and Family Relationships initiative. Since then, the service has been overwhelmed by calls from men around the country wanting to talk about their relationships.

Talk it over
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AUSTRALIA


crisis support services

Mensline Australia
is managed by Crisis Support Services