

Healthy Relationships: During Separation and Divorce

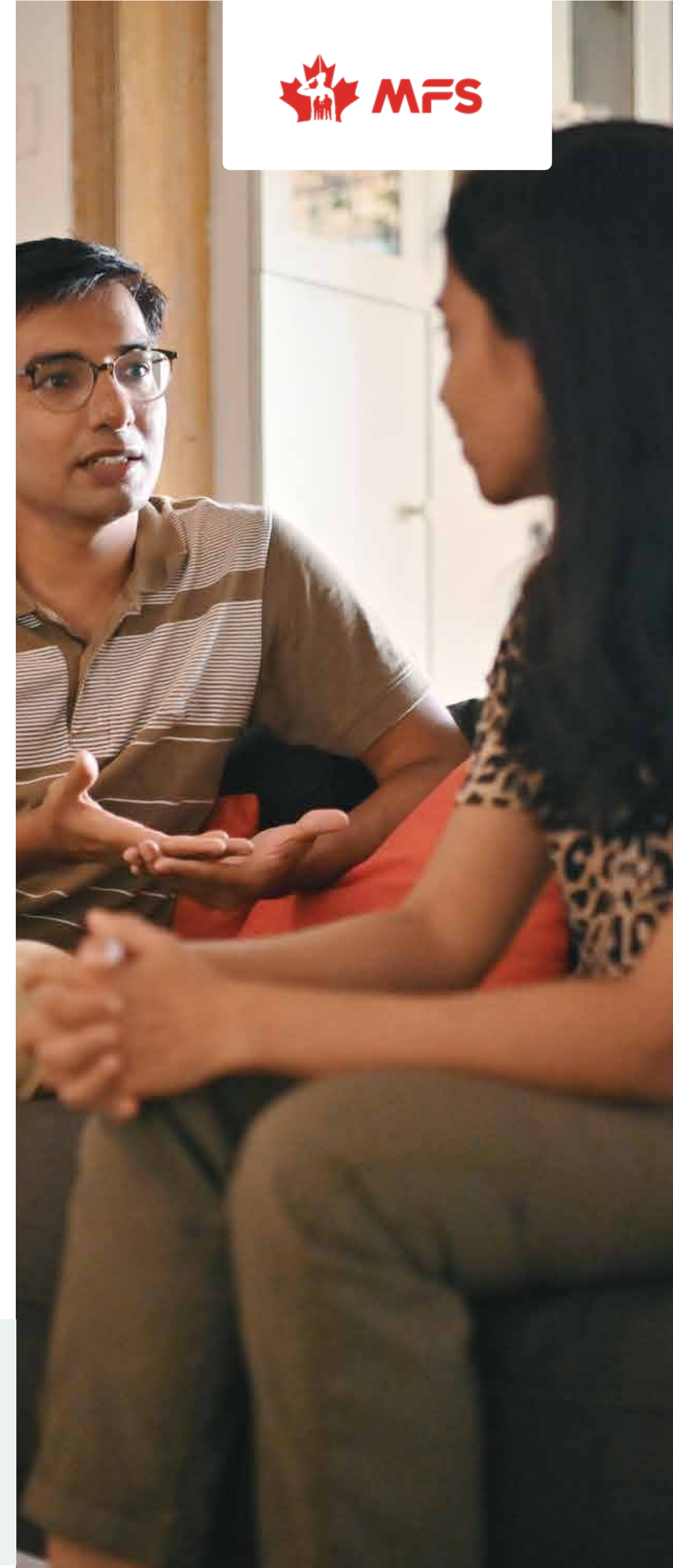
 This chart helps Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel and families reflect on their relationship experiences by considering actions, feelings, and patterns across healthy, stressed, unhealthy, and abusive behaviours in relationships.

- If you are a youth, please consult our specific tip sheets designed just for teens.
- Reflection can help you make choices that feel safer and are more supportive for yourself, and the broader military community. These examples are just a starting point and may not all be relevant for you. They are intended to prompt reflection and open conversations about what is working well in your relationship and where there may be challenges.
- This tool supports reflection and prevention and highlights relevant Military Family Resource Center (MFRC) and Military Family Services (MFS) services, such as the Family Information Line (FIL).
- If your experiences feel unhealthy or abusive, connecting with support services can help you explore options and move toward greater safety and well-being.
- If you are in immediate danger, contact 911 in Canada or your local authorities for OUTCAN.



If you'd like to talk, reach out to the Family Information Line.
1-800-866-4546 (North America) or 00-800-771-17722 (International).

 [CFMWS.ca/healthyrelationships](https://cfmws.ca/healthyrelationships)



How do we communicate?

How do we seek support from others?

How do we support dependents in the separation?

How do we respect expectations and boundaries during the separation?



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Healthy	Stressed	Unhealthy	Abusive
With honesty and transparency to build trust. Use agreed ways to communicate (email, text, phone).	Being selective with the truth. Can’t help reaching out by text, phone, email, etc., to argue or vent.	Dishonesty/lying. Ignore or break agreed communication rules.	Using lies to manipulate and control. Harassment and stalking through persistent messages by email, text, or social media that make someone feel pressured or afraid.
Respecting each other’s need for outside perspectives and help. Accessing the MFRC, FIL, MFS service providers, CAF services (counselling, chaplaincy services) or speaking to family and friends.	Feeling hesitant or fearful about saying support is needed/wanted. Isolating from family and friends.	Mocking or minimizing for wanting support. Turning to self-destructive coping mechanisms (substance misuse, neglecting health).	Spreading negative/incorrect information to peers in the unit or spouse group to intentionally harm (ex) partner's reputation. Blocking a (ex)partner’s ability to reach out for support, making threats for seeking support or weaponizing support systems.
Parents reassure children they are loved and are not to blame for their relationship issues. Prioritize arrangements around pets that acknowledge the needs of each partner’s relationship to the pet.	Arguing about children in front of them or when they can hear. Expect that pets are not shared in the separation.	Speaking badly about the other parent or asking children to take sides. Ignoring request to visit a pet.	Asking children to “spy” on the other parent or convey an abusive message. Intentionally restricting or blocking access to a pet.
Listening to requests to take a break in a heated conversation. Using a neutral third party when needed.	Following and continuing an argument when one walks away to get some space. Not following directions considered fair under the law or agreed with the third party.	Harassing an (ex)partner in an argument until they are forced to respond. Using complicated and expensive legal processes to delay separation/divorce proceedings as a control mechanism.	Physically blocking the (ex)partner’s attempts to walk away from an argument. Using fear and control tactics to keep the (ex)partner engaged and prevent them from moving forward.