

Healthy Digital Relationships



 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

	Healthy	Stressed	Unhealthy	Abusive
How do we communicate?	Being on the same page about the frequency of communication. Trusting each other to openly discuss responsibilities, feelings, and roles including jealousy or resentment, especially during operational absences.	Ignoring messages or frequently dismissing them or answering with one-word replies. Demanding an immediate response when it may not be possible.	Intentionally “ghosting” during operational absences. Accusing and blaming the partner for lack of responses, without cause.	Preventing access to digital devices like cell phones and computers to control online communication. Surveilling or asking others to track a partner’s online activity or whereabouts, especially during operational absences.
How do we respect digital preferences?	Behaving in accordance with each other’s preferences and digital communications boundaries. Respecting time away from devices and means of communicating if required for personal or operational reasons.	Arguing and not accepting digital preferences. Picking fights when a partner is not available online.	Following through on digital preferences or expectations when it is convenient. Bombarding partner with messages/calls when feeling anxious during time apart.	Deliberately going against a partner’s digital preferences as a form of control. Repeatedly contacting a member’s chain of command or a partner’s workplace for non-emergent reasons, or to undermine their job.
How do we handle time offline?	Jointly identifying ways to stay connected during absences that are not necessarily digital, e.g., letters/mementos/pictures.	Sporadically making efforts to engage in the relationship when separated due to an operational absence.	Living as if you are not in a relationship during an operational absence, avoiding emotional connection or consideration for one’s partner.	Deliberately and inappropriately using deployment status as an excuse to not communicate/avoid responding to messages.
How do we respect digital privacy?	Having an open and continuing conversation of what each person requires and prefers regarding their digital privacy. Respecting the partner’s privacy and information that is stored in a digital space.	Not checking in before posting/uploading images or stories online. Asking to have access to all online accounts without cause.	Posting/uploading information or images online that you know will cause distress to your partner. Reviewing or surveilling a partner’s digital footprint.	Sharing or posting/uploading images of a partner without their consent and using it against them. Accessing private accounts without permission and using information against their partner.
How do we handle intimacy online?	Openly discussing preferences and boundaries around intimacy online, including for periods of operational absences.	Disregarding preferences for handling intimacy in digital ways.	Pressuring online intimacy such as images when a partner is not comfortable.	Threatening to or sharing intimate messages/images without consent to control actions.



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