

When you think about the health of your relationship, are you in the **green**, **yellow**, **orange**, or **red** zone?

Healthy

- Equality
- Respect
- Trust
- Communication
- Safety

The relationship supports each partner's balance, wellbeing and sense of self.

There is joy, peace, predictability and self-esteem. Partners have similar feelings about their relationship.

Stressed

- Pressure
- Dishonesty
- Lack of communication

The relationship changes from a place of relative stability and predictability to a place of tension and uncertainty.

Unhealthy

- Manipulation
- Guilt and shame
- Isolation

The relationship affects and disrupts a partner's balance, well-being, and sense of self.

There is isolation, guilt, shame, unpredictability, and low self-esteem.

Abusive

- Control
- Volatility
- Violence

Within the relationship, emotional, verbal, sexual, physical, financial, and/or social harm are occurring.

This is known as intimate partner violence. The relationship is unhealthy and unsafe.



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).

Where does my relationship stand?

	Healthy	Stressed	Unhealthy	Abusive
How does the relationship feel?	Secure Safe Comfortable	Unsettled Uncertain	Insecure Hyper-vigilant	Unsafe Fearful
How do we talk to each other?	Respectfully Active listening	Ignoring opinions Cold or distant	Harsh comments Mocking Isolating or avoiding Disrespectfully	Intimidating Belittling Name-calling
How do we treat each other?	Encouraging Caring for self Supporting dreams	Ignoring Discouraging	Demeaning Controlling Rejecting	Manipulating Hurtful Ridiculing
How are we intimate with each other?	Consensual Mutual fulfillment No pressure	No clear consent Passive manipulating	Guilt Coercion Degrading and shame	Non-consensual violence and force



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Where does my relationship stand? (Continued)

	Healthy	Stressed	Unhealthy	Abusive
How is our social life and network?	Network of friends and family Pursuing own interests	Tense with friends and family Withdrawing from social situations Questioning whereabouts	Friends and family are concerned Avoiding social interactions Isolating from friends Surveilling (social media, in-person)	Preventing social engagements Family and friends feel unsafe
How does our family get along?	Secure attachment Involvement in each other's lives Strong and clear boundaries	Limited engagement and time for family Inconsistent parenting	Tension Comparing and criticizing children Uninvolved in each other's lives	Scolding and intimidation Harsh verbal punishment Physical punishment
How do we handle money issues?	Sharing financial resources and decisions Transparency	One-sided financial decisions and spending Scrutinizing spending	Restricting spending Limiting/not sharing financial information	Moving money to prevent access Blocking access
How do we show anger?	Talking out problems Taking a break	Yelling Silent treatment	Indirect violence (breaking things, destroying property, slamming doors) Threatening violence (property, pets)	Direct violence (shoving, grabbing, shaking, hitting) Harming pets



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Healthy Relationships: During Separation and Divorce

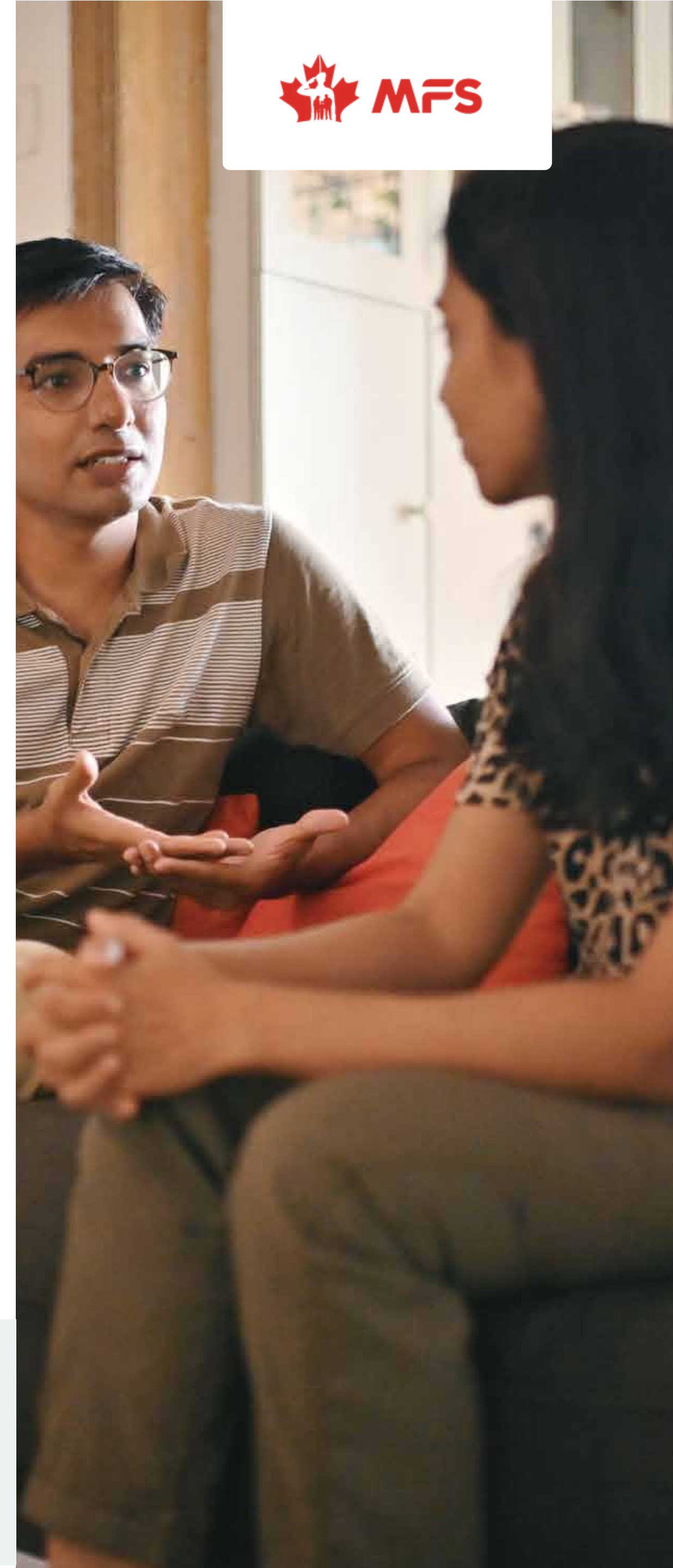
 This chart helps Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel and families reflect on their relationship experiences by considering actions, feelings, and patterns across healthy, stressed, unhealthy, and abusive behaviours in relationships.

- 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.



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 [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.

Healthy Digital Relationships



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	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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Envisioning Healthy 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.

Examples are included to help shape your understanding of healthy and unhealthy expectations. These examples are just some suggestions to help you reflect. You are encouraged to contact MFRC, MFS service provider, FIL or CAFKIDS to explore further.

Self-Reflection Prompts

Equality and teamwork to me looks like....

Feeling appreciated to me looks like....

Healthy

Equality and teamwork look like us making major decisions together.

I feel appreciated when my partner listens to me and acknowledges how I feel, as I do the same for them.

Unhealthy

Equality and teamwork look like I am the financial provider so I should make all the major decisions without any input from my partner.

I feel appreciated when my partner obeys me and does not question my authority.



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Self-Reflection Prompts

Boundaries that help me balance my relationship with my commitment to the CAF or CAF lifestyle are...

Repair after conflict to me looks like...

Maintaining connection during periods of high operational stress and transition to me looks like...

My expectations around sharing culture and traditions are...

My communication expectations during periods of living apart are...

My expectations around blended families are...

Healthy

When I am home, I make efforts to be present with my family.

I give my partner space to cool off and process the conflict.

I feel connected with my partner when they check in with me at agreed upon times.

We both agree on what traditions are important for us and make an effort to celebrate them.

I understand and will prepare healthy ways to manage periods apart when communication is not possible, including seeking support from my friends, family or community support.

We celebrate and embrace the diversity in our family.

Unhealthy

Never switch off from work mode and expect my partner to be alright that I rarely prioritize them.

We continue escalating the conflict.

I feel disconnected from my partner when I am ignored by them or my feelings are minimized.

I restrict or control my partner's cultural practices or family traditions.

I expect continuous contact and deny any impact that living apart has on me.

We emphasize and pick at differences when things aren't going well.



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Self-Reflection Sheet

Notes

Next steps



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