

Sexual Relationships **Glossary**

abusive relationship	A relationship in which one or multiple people are treated with cruelty or violence. Abuse can happen in any kind of relationship and might be physical, emotional or sexual.
ace	Another term for asexual.
asexual	A sexual orientation. Someone who is not sexually attracted to any person of any sex or gender or anyone may identify as asexual. Asexual is an umbrella term that exists on a spectrum. Another term for this is ace. Someone who is asexual may or may not experience romantic interest.
attraction	A feeling of interest or excitement towards another person or people. An attraction might be romantic, sexual, platonic, physical or aesthetic.
betrayal	Being disloyal or acting in an intentionally dishonest way.
bi	Another term for bisexual.
biological sex	Usually determined by a person's biological genitalia, their reproductive systems, the sex chromosomes in their body and the hormone levels they produce.
bisexual	A sexual orientation. Someone who is sexually attracted to two or more sexes or genders may identify as bisexual. This term exists on a spectrum, so someone who is bisexual may be more sexually attracted to a specific sex or gender. Another term for this is bi. Someone might be bisexual but have a different romantic orientation.
boundary	A physical boundary is a line which marks the limits of an area. As well as physical boundaries, people will also have mental and emotional boundaries. In a relationship, boundaries help to define what a person is comfortable with and how they would like to be treated by others.
break-up	The end of a relationship.
celibate	Choosing not to engage in sexual relations or marriage (sometimes for religious reasons).
cheating	When one or more partners in a relationship becomes involved with someone else in a way that goes against the rules of the relationship and/or wishes of the other(s). Cheating can occur in both monogamous and non-monogamous relationships depending on what has been agreed between partners. Also referred to as being unfaithful.



coercive control	A form of emotional abuse. An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten.
conditional love	Love with conditions, for example someone putting terms, restrictions or rules on the giving of their love.
disrespect	A lack of respect or courtesy.
emotional abuse	Using emotions to criticise, shame or manipulate people. This can include threats, intimidation, putdowns, controlling behaviour and betrayal.
flirting	Playfully behaving as though romantically or sexually attracted to someone.
gaslighting	A form of emotional abuse. Manipulating someone into doubting their own sanity.
gay	Another term for homosexual, typically used when referring to men who are sexually attracted to men.
ghosting	A slang term for when someone ends all communication and contact with a partner, friend, or similar individual suddenly and without warning or justification, by ignoring any attempts to reach out or communication made by them. The person who is on the receiving end of this is said to have been 'ghosted'.
guilt-tripping	Making another person feel guilty for something to get a desired outcome.
healthy relationship	A relationship that includes values of mutual respect, trust and honesty. A healthy relationship also means valuing each other and understanding each other's boundaries.
heterosexual	A sexual orientation. Someone who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex or gender may identify as heterosexual. Other terms for this are straight and hetero. Someone might be heterosexual but have a different romantic orientation.
homosexual	A sexual orientation. Someone who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex or gender may identify as homosexual. Men who are attracted to men may identify as gay, while women who are attracted to women may identify as lesbian. Someone might be homosexual but have a different romantic orientation.
intense	Expressing extreme feelings or over-the-top behaviour towards someone that can feel overwhelming for the person on the receiving end.
intimacy	The closeness between people in personal relationships. Intimacy might be emotional, mental, spiritual, physical or sexual.



intimate relationship	An interpersonal relationship that involves some form of intimacy (closeness between people). Although the term often refers to a sexual relationship, it may also be a non-sexual relationship.
jealousy	Feeling resentful of someone else because they have something that you want. In relationships, someone might feel jealous of the way their partner behaves towards someone else.
lesbian	A term used to refer to homosexual women.
love	An intense feeling of deep affection.
lust	A strong sexual desire.
masturbation	Stimulation of your own genitals for sexual pleasure. Also referred to as self-pleasure.
monogamy	Having sexual and/or romantic relations with only one partner at a time. Also known as being exclusive.
non-monogamy	Having sexual and/or romantic relations with multiple people at a time, where all of those involved are aware and in agreement. Also known as consensual or ethical non-monogamy to differentiate it from cheating. Usually used as an umbrella term to describe types of relations that are not monogamous, including polyamory, open relationships or casual dating with multiple different people.
open relationship	A type of non-monogamous relationship, where a couple agree that they are both free to have sex with other people, but where loving someone else is generally not okay.
orientation	A person's identity in relation to the gender(s) or sex(es) they are attracted to. A person's romantic orientation may be different to their sexual orientation.
pansexual	A sexual orientation. Someone who does not have a sex or gender preference when it comes to sexual attraction may identify as pansexual. Someone might be pansexual but have a different romantic orientation.
peer pressure	Influence on people by peers, or the effect on an individual who is encouraged to change their attitudes, values or behaviours to reflect those of the influencing group or individual. For the individual, this can result in either a positive or negative effect, or both. Peer pressure could be direct, for example people trying to persuade you to do something, or it could be indirect, for example feeling like you have to do something because your peers are.
physical abuse	Any intentional act of violence, such as hitting, punching, pulling hair and kicking.
platonic relationship	A relationship involving a deep love or friendship which is primarily based on companionship and shared interests. Does not involve sexual relations but often involves physical intimacy such as hugs and being physically close to one another.



queerplatonic relationship	A relationship featuring intimacy and closeness between partners, which often blurs the lines between platonic, romantic and sexual. You may rarely find two QPRs that are the same.
relationship	The way in which two or more people or groups are connected and behave towards each other.
respect	Treating or thinking about something or someone with due regard for their feelings, wishes and rights.
romantic relationship	A relationship involving a deep, passionate love which is usually associated with strong feelings of nervousness or excitement. It can be alongside a sexual relationship (but doesn't have to be) and often involves a level of physical intimacy that is not present in other relationships (but this is not always the case).
sabotage	Purposely ruining someone's reputation, achievements, or success.
self-pleasure	Another term for masturbation.
sex	Can refer to sexual activity, sexual intercourse or biological sex.
sexual abuse	Mainly used to describe sexual behaviour towards children, which might include perpetrators using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. It is a criminal offence.
sexual activity	Intimate or physical activity by oneself or with others that is considered sexual by those involved. This might include kissing, sexual touching, oral, anal and vaginal sex.
sexual assault	Any specific sexual act which a person does not consent to or which they are forced into is sexual assault. It is a criminal offence.
sexual attraction	Having feelings of sexual interest or excitement towards another person or people, which may include wanting to have sex with them. Sexual attraction may or may not happen alongside another type of attraction.
sexual consent	A person's agreement by choice to a particular sexual activity. Valid consent is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specific. Consent may be given to one type of sexual activity but not another.
sexual intercourse	Sexual contact between individuals involving penetration. This is just one type of sexual activity.
sexual orientation	A person's identity in relation to the gender(s) or sex(es) they are sexually attracted to. This includes orientations such as homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual and asexual. A person's sexual orientation is not necessarily the same as their romantic orientation.
sexual relationship	A relationship involving sexual activity and/or intimacy.



sexuality	Made up of someone's sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards themselves and/or others. This is unique to them and their sexual orientation is just one part of this.
straight	Another term for heterosexual.
unconditional love	Love without conditions, which is not based on what the other person does in return.
unhealthy relationship	A relationship in which one or more of the people involved exhibit behaviour that is not healthy or founded in mutual respect for the other(s). An unhealthy relationship is not necessarily an abusive relationship, but it can be.
value	A basic and fundamental belief that guides or motivates our attitudes or actions. These help us to determine what is important to us. Values describe the personal qualities we choose to guide our behaviour, the sort of person we want to be and the manner in which we treat ourselves and others.
volatility	Having a strong, unpredictable reaction that causes another person to feel scared or intimidated.