**Tip sheet for managing relationship stress**



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As much as we care about someone and enjoy spending time with them, whoever they are and whatever they mean to you, relationships can be stressful. Sometimes it’s as simple as something your friend or colleague did or didn’t say or do. Sometimes it’s external forces or circumstances beyond your control, like work, money, children, the news, etc., making you feel out of sorts.

Here are 8 ways to manage relationship stress:

1. **Start with you.** People who have healthy self-esteem feel good about themselves and navigate tough times more easily. Learn to spot the triggers of feeling down or self-doubt and actively foster positivity in your thoughts and self-talk to cultivate a healthy relationship with yourself.
2. **Consider the source.** Sometimes we lash out at those closest to us when we’re feeling stressed out by things that have nothing to do with them. It could be as simple as feeling hungry, tired or overloaded, all of which can be fixed.
3. **Notice your conflict style.** Do you tend to face conflict head-on, avoid it or something else? By understanding your style, you can be better prepared to adjust based on situational needs, whether that means actively listening, speaking up or reaching out.
4. **Talk in person.** Stop yourself from firing off an angry or hurt-filled text or email. Arrange a time to talk in person or on a video call so you can calm down, gather your thoughts and be respectful.
5. **Give space.** Depending on how strained the relationship is, if you are invested in making a go of it, remind yourself that change takes time. Give yourself and the other person the time it may take to heal and adopt new behaviours.
6. **Focus on each other.** Sometimes we get so wrapped up in day-to-day life that we forget to take time to enjoy a loved one’s company. Set aside time to get together to do something you both enjoy so you can re-engage.
7. **Set boundaries.** Some relationship conflicts cannot be solved or resolved. Don’t compromise your own wellbeing by trying to make something work that simply doesn’t. Give yourself permission to leave relationships that do not serve you well.
8. **Get help**. Talk to a friend, family member or professional who can help support you.

**Sources**

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