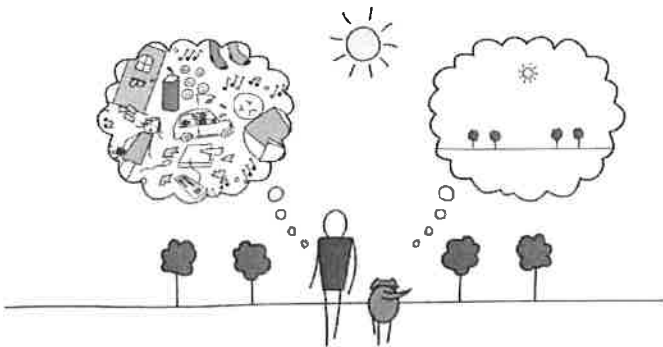


Recovering and Taking Care of Mental Health After an Unhealthy Relationship



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Going through a breakup is always difficult, no matter the circumstances. However, when someone has experienced unhealthy or abusive behaviors in a relationship, it can be even more challenging. Someone going through a breakup from a partner who used unhealthy or abusive behaviors can feel *anxious, worried or scared* about what could happen next. In fact, only 33 percent of teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse. They could also feel even more depressed or sad, especially if their ex-partner used verbally or emotionally abusive behaviors. Relationships with partners who have used abusive behaviors *can have serious ramifications*, putting the partner who was experiencing abuse at **higher risk for depression, risky sexual behavior, substance abuse and eating disorders.**

The good news is that the feeling of a breakup is temporary. If you are getting ready to break up or have recently broken up with someone while experiencing unhealthy or abusive behaviors, here are a few tips to keep in mind to take care of your mental health:

It's okay to be sad. Allow yourself a good cry (or several) if you need it. It might seem better to hide your feelings and appear strong, but it's healthy to release those feelings of pain so you can move on from the relationship.

Trust yourself. It's easy to think, "I've made a terrible mistake!" about your breakup, but you did it for a reason. Your ex-partner may even use unhealthy or abusive behaviors after the breakup to convince you that you were wrong to break up. Confront the doubt and realize that the decision you made was the right one.

Get creative. It might seem scary to try something new, but it's healthy to get involved in clubs, extra-curriculars, volunteering, athletics or artistic endeavors. If you don't feel ready to be around new people yet, you can always start a solo project, cook a great meal, catch up on Netflix or read a favorite book.

Go back in time. Did you have a favorite activity before you were in the relationship? Get back to your roots and try some of the hobbies you had that may have stopped because of your ex.

Spend time with others. Sometimes, unhealthy relationships cause people to unintentionally sever ties with loved ones. Reconnecting with the people in your life that you love, like your family and friends, will remind you that you are not alone.

Stay out of contact. You might be tempted to call or text your ex. Resist the temptation and try being alone for a while. Not only will this help you recover, but it can potentially prevent

your ex from believing it's okay to contact you if you do not wish to be contacted by them.

Rely on your support systems. Your friends and family care about you, and they can help you get through this. Talk to them about how you feel after the breakup. If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to someone you trust about anything unhealthy or abusive that may have happened during the relationship.

Tell other people what you want. Put your support systems on alert if you feel unsafe. Even if you decide not to tell them about unhealthy or abusive behaviors that happened while you were together, you can let your family, friends, co-workers and others know that you do not want to see your ex-partner at home, school or work.

Focus on the present. It's easy to dwell on the past rather than thinking about today and the future. Do your best to concentrate on what's happening now. Are you enjoying yourself? What makes you happy? The end of a relationship does not mean you can never discover a new passion or reclaim your life.

Love yourself. What happened has happened. You cannot go back and stop yourself from dating or falling in love with your ex-partner,

nor can you go back and try to change their behaviors. You've broken up, and you can move on from this. You are worthy of happiness!

If you're **concerned for your safety**, or the safety of someone else, alert administrators, managers or security at school or work. For example, at school, administrators can work to adjust a class schedule to help you or someone else feel safe. A manager at work can find someone to walk you to your car after work, or let security know not to let your ex-partner come in the building.

Want to create a safety plan? Contact Halton Women's Place. We have counsellors who can create a safety plan with you, and do a danger assessment if you are concerned about your ex-partner's behaviour. Because a life without violence is the only life to live!



EMM
ROY



Halton Women's Place Crisis Lines are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No appointment is necessary.

905-878-8555 – North Halton (Milton, Georgetown, Acton)

905-332-7892 – South (Oakville, Burlington)

Halton Women's Place
Healthy Relationships • Healthy Communities

<http://www.breakthecycle.org/blog/recovering-and-taking-care-mental-health-after-unhealthy-relationship>

What's the Risk?

Especially if you are in an abusive relationship, drugs and alcohol can make an unhealthy situation worse. Your abusive partner may get you drunk or high to take advantage of you. When you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you're more vulnerable to:

- Being sexually assaulted.
- Having unsafe or unprotected sex.
- Getting a sexually transmitted disease.
- Getting pregnant.
- Addiction.

If you have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse, don't be embarrassed to admit it. There is help! Chat with a peer advocate to learn more about what you can do at loveisrespect.org.

It's Not My Fault!

It's common for abusive partners to blame drugs or alcohol for their unhealthy behavior. Frequently, they do not accept responsibility for their actions or address the real reasons for the abuse. Drugs and alcohol do affect a person's judgment and behavior, but they are not a reason for violent behavior. Watch out for these common excuses:

- "I didn't mean what I said. I was drunk."
- "I would never hit you sober."
- "Drinking turns me into a different person. That's not who I really am."

It's important to remember that when your partner is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, their actions still reflect their personality. If your partner is violent when they are drunk or high, it's probably just a matter of time until they are abusive when they're sober.

Knowing the warning signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship will help you distinguish between healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

connect now!

Halton Women's Place

Crisis Lines:
905-878-8555
905-332-7892

www.haltonwomensplace.com

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged.
Please contact [loveisrespect](http://loveisrespect.org) for more information.

Not Just Physical: Domestic Violence Impacts Mental Health

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Being “hypervigilant” means a person may be in a state of increased anxiety, which can cause exhaustion. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. Concurrent disorders are when more than one issue (mental health and substance abuse) occurs at the same time. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse in which a victim is manipulated into doubting their own memory, perception, and sanity. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. Domestic violence only has an impact on our relationships and emotions. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. Someone experiencing violence at home may develop mental health problems over time. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. Having a mental illness is what causes people to behave abusively. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. It is uncommon for victims to develop a substance abuse problem as a response to experiences of violence. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Maladaptive coping strategies are highly effective ways of reducing the symptoms of stress, anxiety or depression in the short-term, but not the long term. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 9. Psychological trauma occurs after the experience of a negative live event which overwhelms the person’s capacity to cope (e.g., natural disasters; war; physical, verbal or sexual assault) | TRUE | FALSE |
| 10. Frequent heavy drinking can create an unhappy, stressful relationship that increases the risk of conflict and violence. | TRUE | FALSE |

